



World
Habitat Day

OCTOBER 6, 2008



Table of Contents

A message from Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International.....	5
World Habitat Day: Overview	7
Take action: World Habitat Day, October 6, 2008	9
World Habitat Day issue focus: Secure tenure.....	11
Background on secure tenure	11
Secure tenure FAQ's.....	12
Secure tenure: Stories from the field	13
Get involved: Educate, Advocate, Fund raise	15
Educate.....	15
Advocate	16
Fund Raise.....	17
Involve the media	18
Global talking points for use on World Habitat Day	19
Audience specific strategies	21
Faith relations.....	21
National offices	22
U. S. affiliates	23
Additional resources	25
Useful links.....	25
U.S. poverty facts	26
Global poverty facts	27
Appendix	31
Advocacy 101	32
Sample petition	33
Public awareness 101.....	34
Sample press release	35



EZRA MILSTEIN

Jonathan Reckford, Habitat CEO, at the U.N.

The United Nations has designated more than 50 international days in recognition of the many challenges that the global community faces. The mobilization around World AIDS Day is an example of the potential momentum that HFH with World Habitat Day can create in order to raise awareness about poverty housing. Launched on Dec. 1, 1988, World AIDS Day is now well-known with its red ribbons, created as an international symbol in 1991, concerts, conferences, and other events and fundraisers throughout the world. Habitat for Humanity has a long-term goal of making World Habitat Day as visible as World AIDS Day.

Dear Habitat leader,

As you and your many partners work tirelessly in your communities providing access to housing, supporting families in need of improved shelter, and helping improve housing policies, I hope you find in the enclosed “handbook” opportunities to expand those efforts—particularly in conjunction with World Habitat Day. Together, we can raise and leverage our collective voice; we can urge others to act in order to help increase access to housing around the world. In other words, we can become an even stronger force for good as we participate in a lasting solution, along with families in need of better housing.

Toward that end, on October 6, 2008, I urge you to participate in World Habitat Day. As you may know, the United Nations annually designates the first Monday in October as World Habitat Day in order to move people across the globe not only to reflect on the world’s housing crisis, but also to consider our collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat. While we view every day as an opportunity for this kind of reflection and action, World Habitat Day is a special chance for us to join the rest of the world both to highlight the need and importance of housing and to exchange effective ideas and solutions. This handbook will help us do that.

We chose our theme for World Habitat Day 2008 “A Place to Be” in order to emphasize the importance of feeling secure, safe and comfortable in one’s own home. Sadly, millions of families around the world lack this security because they also lack legitimate rights to the home in which they live or to the land on which their home sits. They live everyday in fear that they could be driven from their only shelter or that it could be bulldozed in the blink of an eye. Secure tenure gives families a place to be. A place to be safe. A place to be secure. A place to thrive. And this in turn creates better, stronger, and healthier families and communities.

We are at the dawn of a new urban era. Half of humanity now lives in towns and cities. It is estimated that by 2030, two-thirds of the world’s people will be urban dwellers. A staggering 1 billion people currently live in slums without access to adequate shelter, clean water or sanitation. If we factor in the conditions of human settlements worldwide, more than 1.6 billion people suffer some form of shelter deprivation. As a direct result each year, up to 10 million people die from preventable diseases. Infants die. Children suffer at school. Parents cannot make ends meet.

Secure tenure takes a variety of different forms. Yet it is an issue with universal implications globally. It is for these reasons that I urge you to stand up on World Habitat Day, to give a voice to the voiceless, to let it be known that durable, adequate housing should be made a priority everywhere – in your community, in your town, in your country, in our world

The enclosed handbook will equip you to do just that. It provides practical ideas to implement on World Habitat Day. I challenge you to explore it carefully, to embrace the ideas and to make them your own, to adapt them and use them to reach audiences in your area as you further spread the word about the urgency of moving more families into simple, decent, affordable homes—into A Place to Be.

Thank you for all that you do every day in every way to help move our mission forward.

Blessings,



Jonathan Reckford
CEO, Habitat for Humanity International



STEFFAN HACKER

The maze on the mall

For World Habitat Day 2007, Habitat for Humanity International exhibited a photo display in the form of a maze on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The display gave visitors an opportunity to view the realities of substandard housing through the journey of two young children, who live in poverty--one in a rural setting and one in an urban setting. Through photos and first-person written narrative, visitors learned about the children's daily existence and the causes and effects of living in substandard housing. The exhibit ended with an invitation to sign a global proclamation to end poverty housing.



World Habitat Day: Overview

In December 1985, the United Nations General Assembly declared the first Monday of October to be “World Habitat Day” in recognition of the state of human settlements and the basic need for adequate shelter for all. World Habitat Day also serves as a reminder to the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.

The international community has long recognized housing as a basic human right. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1976) include housing as part of an adequate standard of living. The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements (1976) elaborates on the need for decent housing: “Noting that the condition of human settlements largely determines the quality of life, the improvement of which is a prerequisite for the full satisfaction of basic needs, such as employment, housing, health services, education and recreation. . .”¹ The United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development (1969) more specifically calls for the provision of adequate housing and community services for large families and individuals with low incomes and urges governments to adopt low-cost housing programs in rural and urban areas.² In spite of the extensive international recognition of housing rights, much work remains to ensure decent, simple housing for all.

According to the United Nations, more than 100 million people in the world today are homeless. Millions more face a severe housing problem—living without adequate sanitation, with irregular or no electricity supply and without adequate security. Habitat for Humanity would need to build 2,000,000 homes per year for the next fifty years to solve the present worldwide housing crisis. Due to growth trends, at the end of those fifty years, there would still be a need for another 1 billion houses.

World Habitat Day’s purpose is to call attention to the current global state of the human habitat and push towards adequate housing for all. It is the hope that by raising awareness and advocating for universal decent housing that systems will be transformed and the plague of poverty housing, as evident worldwide, will subside. World Habitat Day is a day for grassroots action; A day for people to be united on their efforts towards eradicating poverty housing.

¹ “The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements,” <http://habitat.igc.org/vancouver/van-decl.htm>, (accessed 16 April 2008).

² “Declaration on Social Progress and Development,” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 11 Dec. 1969, [http:// www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/m_progre.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/m_progre.htm), (accessed 16 April 2008).



KIMI MACDONALD

During a Habitat house dedication in Lusaka, Zambia, the entire house work crew surrounds homeowner Jossy Chisala with prayer.

How to get started

As you consider how to engage your community, consider the following questions:

- What is my target audience?
- How will it participate?
- How can I make this activity most relevant to my community?
- How can I highlight the global housing crisis and the issue of secure tenure?
- Who will help coordinate the activity?
- What is my timeframe?
- How can I mobilize more individuals and groups in my community?



Take action: World Habitat Day October 6, 2008

On October 6, 2008, Habitat for Humanity International will use the day to highlight the lack of secure tenure around the world —whether due to poverty, corruption, excessive bureaucracy, lack of political will, gender discrimination or financial illiteracy. Secure tenure signifies that an individual has legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats. Secure tenure is a basic foundation for the future. It is essential for economic development, the long-term security of families and the reduction of conflicts within communities. For women, access to property rights means greater opportunity for economic empowerment and reassurance that their children will be able to inherit their mothers' properties. With secure tenure, families choose to invest in their homes and further strive to demand services and hold their government accountable. Habitat for Humanity's theme for World Habitat Day 2008 is **A Place to Be**.

A Place to Be speaks of the security of living safely in one's home —free of fear from evictions, unsafe structures, leaking roofs, and unsanitary plumbing. The theme can be used in any number of ways to suit your situation. For example: A place to be safe, a place to be happy, a place to be healthy, a place to be family, or simply a place to be.

Purpose of this handbook

Given the grassroots nature of World Habitat Day, the power to create and inspire action is in your hands. The following handbook has been created to aid the development of your efforts to celebrate World Habitat Day with your local community. This handbook is not comprehensive by any means but instead serves as a resource to spark the imagination of individuals who are passionate about promoting the need for decent and affordable housing for all. It is intended as a global handbook based on the action ideas of **Educate**, **Advocate**, and **Fund raise**. Although not all of the specific ideas outlined here are appropriate everywhere, they provide a basis for spurring actions best suited for engaging your community on World Habitat Day.

Educate

Organize a public awareness event for World Habitat Day 2008 that not only highlights the need for affordable housing in your own community, but also discusses the need for improved shelter for billions of people around the world. *See page 15 for public awareness ideas.*

Advocate

In addition to building homes in partnership with people in need, Habitat advocates to address the causes of poverty housing. Habitat for Humanity International defines advocacy as changing systems, policies and attitudes to achieve decent housing for all. Advocacy activities always include a specific “ask” such as asking supporters to sign a petition, send a message to an elected official or take part in a rally. *See pages 16 for advocacy ideas.*

Fund Raise

World Habitat Day is a great way to raise awareness and funds for Habitat in your area. A fund raiser can help educate the public and generate publicity for Habitat. Fund raisers should also seek to enlarge Habitat’s donor base and increase its visibility *See page 17 for fund-raising ideas.*

Whether you choose to educate, advocate or fund raise, along with any combination of these actions and others, we hope you will reiterate the global intention of World Habitat Day. It can be a day to recognize the losses and the rebuilding following the U.S. Gulf Coast hurricanes or the Indian Ocean tsunami. It can call attention to the slums of capital cities and the plight of the urban poor around the world. It can act as a way to highlight the amazing local work of your Habitat while educating your audiences about the lack of inheritance rights in Mozambique, for example, or legal illiteracy in Argentina. By uniting the local issues that your Habitat program confronts in creating affordable housing with the challenge of creating secure tenure for millions around the world, you can celebrate the true meaning of World Habitat Day as a means to stand in solidarity with all people denied this basic human right.

The following pages describe concrete ideas for you to bring to life on World Habitat Day and showcase examples of activities that Habitat has undertaken in past years. Additional resources include information on secure tenure, global poverty facts, and a sample press release and petition, among others. For national offices, U.S. affiliates, working on faith relations, please also refer to the information on messaging and actions for specific audiences in the Audience specific strategies (pages 21-23). The creators of this handbook hope it will be a useful document that encourages and supports your efforts for World Habitat Day. Together we can raise awareness and transform the systems that perpetuate poverty housing. Let’s be united in our message for decent and affordable housing for all.

Tell us your plan and share your results:

Tell us how you plan to take action for World Habitat Day! Send us pictures of your activity! If you have any questions or comments regarding this handbook or World Habitat Day, send them to WorldHabitatDay@Habitat.org.



World Habitat Day

Issue focus: Secure tenure

Focusing on secure tenure

Secure tenure was selected as the key advocacy issue for a Habitat for Humanity International U.S. advocacy campaign after surveying of Habitat for Humanity national offices and global staff, as well as other related research and analysis. The lack of secure tenure is a key barrier to improved housing around the world and Habitat for Humanity is committed to giving its voice to the issue in an effort to ensure more people have access to safe, decent and affordable shelter. We encourage all Habitat for Humanity stakeholders to understand the issue of secure tenure, educate others and take action to support efforts that will increase the poor's access to secure tenure, and in turn, enable improved housing conditions the world over.

Background on secure tenure

Security of tenure, or the ability to live in a place without fear of eviction, can increase economic growth, address inequalities, and reduce poverty in developing countries. Security of tenure can provide opportunities for investment and the accumulation of wealth when provided through clear legal title to the land. As a result clear legal title can encourage business development and stimulate economic growth, by providing collateral for loans. But security of tenure is about more than just economic assets. Secure tenure can provide a source of identity, status and political power and serve as a basis for the pursuit of other rights.

Security of tenure is out of reach of many in developing countries. 80 percent of the world's population does not have legal documentation of their property rights. For those seeking clear legal title to their land, without proper documentation, the potential benefits of land ownership, including wealth accumulation, remain out of reach. Without clear documentation of land title, it is very hard to access credit if credit is available.

Poor men and women can find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain titles to their land in some countries. For example, in the Philippines, to legally purchase state- or privately-owned urban land could take 168 steps involving 53 public and private entities; a process that could take as long as 25 years! In particular, women find it difficult to own land in many countries. Studies have shown that women own less than 15 percent of land around the world, even though they make up over 50 percent of the labor force. This is particularly unfortunate because investment in women has been shown to have a multiplier effect. When women have access to credit and the ability to increase their income, studies show that they are likely to put their earnings back into the health and education of their families.

There are many barriers to security of tenure which include informal legal systems, excessive land regulation, gender discrimination, lack of or incomplete land registration, corruption, inefficient land registration systems. Success in improving security of tenure lies in improving governance and creating effective systems (For example, this could include land registration programs or formalized legal structures). Secure tenure is about more than just clear title to land or legal land ownership. It is about the ability to live without fear of eviction. As a result, security of tenure is important to both renters and owners.

Secure tenure FAQ's

Q. What is secure tenure?

A. In essence, secure tenure is the ability to live in a place without fear of eviction. Secure tenure can take various forms, such as individual or collective ownership and renting. All forms of tenure require a supportive policy and legal environment to guarantee tenure security.

Q. Why is secure tenure important?

A. Secure tenure is important for ensuring the basic physical, economic and psychological security that accompanies adequate shelter. Without secure tenure, individuals and families are vulnerable to forced eviction which can result in displacement, loss of livelihood and property, and injury (both physical and psychological). Conversely, with secure tenure, individuals and families are more empowered to invest in shelter improvements, develop home-based businesses, and make investments using their land titles as collateral for loans. They are more likely to have access to basic services because governments are more willing to provide infrastructure to areas with secure tenure. Security of tenure therefore can serve as a means for economic growth, addressing inequalities, and reducing poverty in developing countries. Furthermore, its importance extends beyond just economic assets by acting as a source of identity, status and political power and serves as a basis for the pursuit of other rights.

Q. What are the obstacles confronting secure tenure?

A. Impediments to secure tenure range from excessive bureaucracy and corruption to gender discrimination and lack of political will. It is estimated that 80 percent of the world's population does not have legal documentation of their property rights. Poor men and women can find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain titles to their land in some countries. For example, in the Philippines, to legally purchase state- or privately-owned urban land could take 168 steps involving 53 public and private entities; a process that could take as long as 25 years! In particular, women find it difficult to own land in many countries. Studies have shown that women own less than 15 percent of land around the world, even though they make up over 50 percent of the labor force. This is particularly unfortunate because investment in women has been shown to have a multiplier effect. When women have access to credit and the ability to increase their income, studies show that they are likely to put their earnings back into the health and education of their families.

Q. How do secure tenure issues affect the work of Habitat for Humanity?

A. Habitat for Humanity has witnessed firsthand the consequences of insecure tenure. Habitat requires that family partners own secure rights to the land upon which their houses will be built. Without the assurance of secure tenure, often competing claims arise to the land during or after construction. Furthermore, Habitat has taken action by initiating financial literacy programs, as in Argentina, and training programs on inheritance law and will-writing, as in Mozambique. Recognizing the importance of security of tenure for eliminating poverty housing, Habitat for Humanity International has chosen to advocate for secure tenure on World Habitat Day 2008 and as the focus of the 2008 annual housing report to be released on World Habitat Day 2008.

Secure tenure: Stories from the field

Cambodia: Small loan returns right to land

Sopheha with the help of HFH Cambodia finally has a home. During the Khmer Rouge, Sopheha fled to a refugee camp in Thailand where her husband was killed during fighting in the camps. When she and her daughters returned to Phnom Penh after the war in 1993, they slept on the streets outside a pagoda. Eventually, she saved enough money to rent a room for US\$4 a month, and two months later was able to buy a piece of land in the slums of Phnom Penh. However, the slums were unsanitary and unsafe with drugs, prostitution, and thieves. In 1994 after meeting her second husband, Sopheha and her family were forced to move to a new village an hour outside of Phnom Penh due to a fire in the Phnom Penh slum. They borrowed \$200 from a loan shark with a monthly interest of \$30 to enable her husband to become a taxi driver. However, in April 2005 Sopheha's husband left her, and she had to find a way to pay off the loan shark herself. HFH Cambodia paid off Sopheha's loan so she could get her collateral back—her land tenure. She was then able to borrow a nonprofit loan in order to build a home.

Argentina: Legal literacy program empowers

In Argentina, nearly 95 percent of the individuals who apply for Habitat homes are not the legal owners of their land. Without a deed, they are unable to participate in HFH Argentina's work. Realizing how the bureaucratic system for obtaining land titles and the presence of predatory lenders taking advantage of uninformed borrowers put many families in risk of losing their land or homes, HFH Argentina took preventive action. HFH Argentina began a legal literacy program as an education and awareness-building program to provide low-income communities with basic knowledge of procedures, rights, dangers, and opportunities when applying for loans and purchasing homes. There are efforts underway to create a manual and course on legal literacy as well as training for affiliate volunteers and local NGOs. The success of the program has led local municipalities to request that the course be open to the entire community.

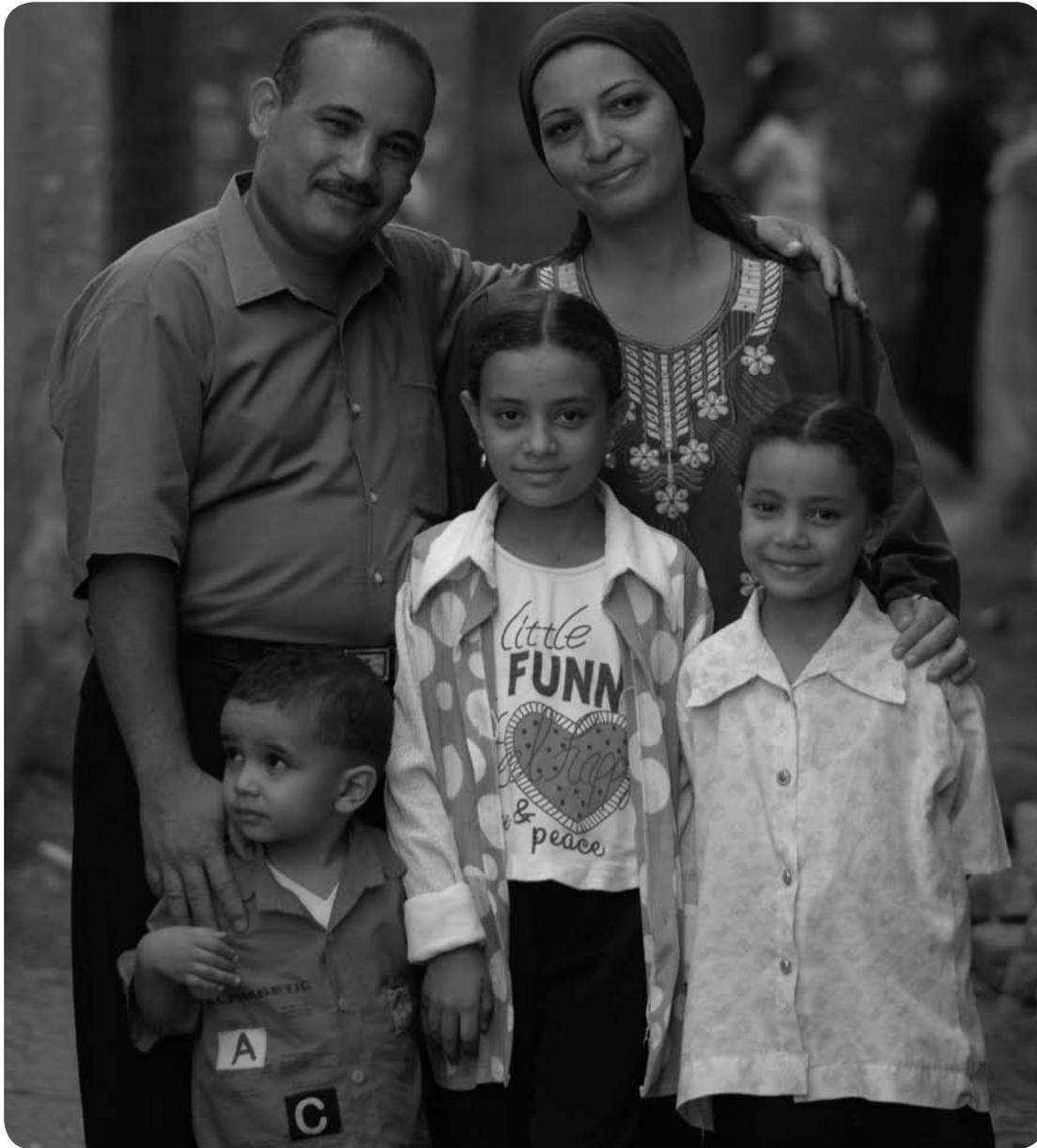
Mozambique: Inheritance security protects women, children

On the island of Ihaca in Mozambique, Olga, 30, feared for the future of her four children. In her polygamous marriage, Olga realized that her new Habitat home could be taken by her husband or his other wives in the case of her death. If her husband were to die, his relatives could evict her and her children. Recognizing this threat to secure tenure, HFH Mozambique (HFHM) initiated a training program for homeowners in inheritance law and writing wills. To encourage women to participate, HFHM offered a discount of six months of mortgage payments. On March 23, 2006, 21 widows and single mothers, all Habitat homeowners, prepared wills to protect their properties and possessions.

United States: Informal inheritance slows rebuilding

In an April 2008 story by National Public Radio (NPR), the importance of secure tenure is evident even within the United States. Due to the custom of heirship property—land inherited informally and by numerous heirs—nearly 20,000 New Orleans residents are ineligible for post-Katrina aid without a formal title to their land.³ Alice, 80, applied for government assistance to fix her house, yet was turned down at first by a state-run program. She was told that she had to first prove ownership against other potential heirs of her parents' property.

³John Ydstie, "No Title? No Easy Access to Post-Katrina Aid," NPR, April 28, 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90005954>, (accessed 30 May 2008).



KIM MACDONALD

Homeowner family Girgis Ayad and his wife Samya Bibawi and children, from left, Fady, 3; Phoebe 10; and Vivian, 6 in Minya, Egypt.

Housing needs on television

An international Christian satellite channel broadcasting throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Europe (in Arabic), hosted a program on October 18, 2007 to celebrate World Habitat Day. The discussion was about housing (in Lebanon in particular), and the featured speakers were Dani ElTayar, the HFH Lebanon national director, and the leaders of a partner organization called Dialogue and Development, Emile Eskander and Bishop Salim Ghazal. The speakers discussed Habitat for Humanity's work, including the Disaster Response program.



Get involved: Educate, Advocate, Fund raise

Educate

On World Habitat Day, teach others about not only the need for affordable housing in your own community, but also about the need for improved shelter for billions of people around the world. For more information about public awareness, see the Public Awareness 101 page in the Appendix.

- Add information to your newsletter and website about World Habitat Day.
- E-mail peers and co-workers and let them know that it is World Habitat Day. You may also direct them to www.AdvocateWithHabitat.org in order to take action by signing up to be online advocates.
- Host a candlelight vigil to reflect on poverty and the impact it has on our lives, the community and the world.
- Set up an information table about World Habitat Day on your campus or at work.
- Volunteer at a school in your area and educate youth about Habitat for Humanity and affordable housing.
- Join or support a Global Village Team. There are teams going to Ethiopia, India, Thailand, Hungary, Romania, and Chile during World Habitat Day. To join or donate to one of these teams, please go to www.habitat.org/gv.
- Invite local city officials or politicians to visit several build sites. Hold a press conference to highlight the successes and ongoing needs for affordable housing in your community.
- Create an awards ceremony to recognize the individuals in your community making significant contributions to end poverty housing. This could include public officials, community leaders, nonprofit organizations, and volunteers.
- Celebrate World Habitat Day with a one-day framing or a dedication ceremony. Invite local public officials, celebrities, and media.
- Screen the documentary “Building on Faith: Making Poverty History” or another film concerning poverty housing around the world.⁴ Invite a guest speaker or facilitate a discussion afterwards and highlight the work of HFHI, particularly HFHI’s tithe program and international programs.
- Inform volunteers about World Habitat Day and celebrate their contribution with a volunteer appreciation night. Present information on the Global Village Program and international tithing. Invite someone who has volunteered with HFH abroad to discuss his or her experience.

⁴ The documentary “Building on Faith: Making Poverty Housing History” is available from Mennonite Media at <http://store.mennonitemedia.org/p-224-building-on-faith-making-poverty-housing-history.aspx>.

- Organize a speaker panel regarding secure tenure. Consider working with a Habitat for Humanity campus chapter to co-sponsor the event at a local university or college.
- Design an essay competition for high-school students or an arts competition for children to paint their “dream city.” See if a local newspaper will print the winning essay or if a local art gallery or museum will display the children’s paintings. Include statistics about local, national, and international poverty housing. Consider other ways to work with schools or youth organizations through HFHI’s Youth Programs Department (<http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/int/default.aspx>).
- Host a Habitat photo exhibit. “Doors,” for example, is a beautiful compilation of images of Habitat homeowners from around the world in front of their homes. Another possibility includes “Operation Home Delivery: Habitat for Humanity Responds to the Gulf Coast Hurricanes.” Contact Youth Programs at youthprograms@habitat.org to learn more.
- Sponsor a film or play contest. Encourage people in your community to create a film or write a play addressing poverty housing. Show the films on World Habitat and announce the winner with a great prize.

Advocate

Habitat advocacy works to change systems, policies and attitudes to achieve decent housing for all. In this way, HFHI takes a holistic approach to advocacy, recognizing that organizing, consciousness-raising, and citizen-building can be as important as policy change in solving the problems of poverty housing.

Very often, advocacy involves raising awareness among the general public in order to put increased pressure on policymakers to change their views on the issue. For example, an affordable housing advocacy effort might pressure legislators to find a stable source of funding for housing trust funds. An advocacy effort focused on secure tenure may try to shape both government attitudes and policies toward people living in inadequate housing or slums.

In advocacy, information sharing is used as a deliberate strategy to influence specific decisions of policy makers. Building good relationships with policy makers is an important way to lay the foundation for advocacy. The media can also be used to deliver policy messages, encourage people to take a certain view on an issue and, hopefully, to communicate views with policy makers.

World Habitat Day provides an opportunity to engage policymakers and the public to take action. You can find more information about Habitat’s legislative priorities on HFHI Government Relations & Advocacy web page: www.habitat.org/gov. For more information about Habitat’s advocacy, please see the Advocacy 101 section in the handbook appendix. Also refer to the Advocacy toolkit available at the Government Relations and Advocacy Office’s page on My.Habitat for more in-depth information on advocacy.

Below you will find a list of activities that support HFHI’s advocacy agenda. Some are relevant in any setting, and some are specific for U.S.-audiences. Although many of these activities are based on experiences with advocacy in the U.S., they may be helpful in identifying ways to enhance advocacy efforts or inspire action in your community.

- In the United States, a simple way to help Habitat amplify our message to Congress is to visit www.AdvocateWithHabitat.org today and take action. U.S. citizens can easily send an email to Members of Congress on issues important to Habitat by using this online advocacy tool. This web page, www.AdvocateWithHabitat.org, has been created specifically for HFH affiliates in the United States and support organizations so you can be assured that no one who

takes action at www.AdvocateWithHabitat.org will receive fund-raising materials from HFHI as a result of doing so.

- U.S. affiliates can also forward an e-mail message to your volunteers and ask them to take action online. A pre-written email to your volunteers is available on the Government Relations and Advocacy section of MyHabitat.org. By sending this message to your e-mail list, you'll provide your volunteers with an opportunity to click on www.AdvocateWithHabitat.org and send a letter to their Members of Congress. In the U.S., affiliated organizations mobilize hundreds of thousands of volunteers each year. If even a fraction of these supporters used their voices to ask Congress to solve the world's housing crisis, imagine what Habitat could accomplish.
- Invite a public official to participate in your event for World Habitat Day. The official could be a city council member, a mayor, a state legislator, a governor, or a senator or representative. Contact the official's office to ask if he/she is available or first send a letter of invitation. Possible activities with the official could be to visit a work site, introduce a homeowner, visit the local affiliate office, a tour of housing in your area, or a speech to your community.
- Gather signatures for a petition and later take the signatures to a meeting with an elected official or his or her staff member. A sample petition is provided in the appendix of this handbook that can be modified to reflect the focus of your local advocacy efforts. You can also utilize the petition created by HFHI to support the U.S. national-level advocacy around secure tenure. You can access this petition on the [MyHabitat](http://MyHabitat.org) Government Relations and Advocacy page under "World Habitat Day"
- Visit an elected official or staff member to advocate on behalf of specific legislation.
- Start a letter writing or phone calling campaign.

Fund Raise

World Habitat Day is a great way to raise awareness and funds for Habitat for Humanity. A fundraiser focused on World Habitat Day will not only help raise funds but also help educate volunteers, supporters, and the general public about the importance of housing and affordable shelter. Fundraisers should also seek to enlarge Habitat's donor base and increase its visibility. Incorporate fundraising activities into any of the events and ideas previously mentioned in the Educate, Advocate and Engage sections or market any fundraising activities you already are planning for early October in relationship with World Habitat Day.

- Partner with local restaurants to hold a benefit night on World Habitat Day. Your Habitat program would provide free advertising for the restaurants and would also be raising awareness about World Habitat Day. Customers you attract would need to mention that they are specifically there for Habitat for Humanity and the restaurants would donate a percentage of their sales.
- Use sports as a fun way to engage your community. Organize a golf tournament or a soccer match, for instance. Or plan a 5k run or a bike race.
- Organize a concert, open mic night, karaoke night, or battle of the bands. In between songs, share statistics with the audience about poverty housing.
- Host an auction live or on eBay.
- Organize a bake sale, yard sale, car wash, or arts and crafts fair
- Design and sell t-shirts leading up to and on World Habitat Day
- Construct children's playhouses, garden birdhouses, or dog houses and use them in auctions, raffles, or special events
- Create Christmas cards and begin their sale on World Habitat Day

Involvement the media

Whether you choose to educate, advocate, or fund raise, inviting the media to your World Habitat Day activity can help publicize the event and heighten awareness about poverty housing. Below are tips for the involvement of media. A sample press release is available in the appendix.

Detailed media relations information is available on My.Habitat.org in the Affiliate Guide to Working with the Media. If you need assistance with your media relations plan, please contact Habitat for Humanity International Media Relations at (800) HABITAT, Ext. 7659 in the U.S. Outside the U.S., contact your HFHI area office communications director.

Tips for working with the media

- Send a media advisory two to three weeks ahead of your event. Media advisories are used to alert the media about an upcoming event. They are a “save-the-date” invitation to reporters and editors to put your event on their calendars. Create categories that answer the questions of who, what, when and where. It is OK to use other headings like overview, date, time and place. Include directions in the place or where line.
- Make a follow up call to ensure that the editor/reporter saw your media advisory and to encourage the media source to cover your event. Keep them updated on any changes to your event.
- The media is an excellent way to engage and inform the public of World Habitat Day both in preparation for and on the day of World Habitat Day. Write a media release to provide detailed information about your participation in World Habitat Day. Distribute the release, to radio, TV and newspapers, one to two weeks before your event if it is open to the public and on the day of the event if it is closed to the public. Media releases should be written like short news stories that could be printed in a publication. Consistency, accuracy, style and content are key with media releases. The most important and interesting materials are contained within the first two paragraphs of the release. Include at least one quote from the project spokesperson. Include your contact information and the local Habitat boilerplate (“about us”) information.



Global talking points for use on World Habitat Day

To have a truly global impact with World Habitat Day, we want to send the same overall message to all of our audiences. Regardless of how you bring attention to the day in your area or what housing issue you choose to focus on locally, we can work together to ensure a consistent frame through which to view the day. Thus, here are four global talking points that we strongly encourage every part of Habitat for Humanity to use on World Habitat Day, in addition to your locally relevant talking points:

1. Today, 1.6 billion people live in inadequate shelter around the world – 1 billion of those live in slums. By the year 2030 it is expected that 3 billion people will live in slum communities.
2. Providing secure tenure is a key to improving housing conditions for the poor and vulnerable, whether renters or owners, as one part of a multi-prong approach to ensuring adequate housing for all.*
3. Adequate housing leads to better health for families, stronger educations for children, and safer and more secure communities. Ensuring adequate housing is a key component in the fight to end global poverty.
4. The world's housing situation is a crisis in need of attention and action.

*For more information and details about Secure Tenure, please see pages 11-13.

Also, the following are some straightforward answers to questions you may receive as you begin to spread the word about World Habitat Day in your community. This information can be used in your own documents, on your websites, and in your presentations. We encourage you to find ways to localize each answer to make it appropriate to your audience while connecting back to the significance of this coordinated global effort.

What is World Habitat Day?

The United Nations designated the first Monday of October as World Habitat Day to reflect on the state of human settlements and to remind the world of its collective responsibility to address substandard housing. Like World AIDS Day, it is an opportunity to call attention to a global crisis that affects people in every city and country around the world. Here in our own community, [insert information about housing situation in your geographic or program area].

What is Habitat for Humanity’s role in World Habitat Day?

Habitat for Humanity recognizes the opportunity that World Habitat Day provides to raise awareness of substandard housing and to call for local and global action to address it. [Insert local call to action or information on your event.]

What is A Place to Be?

A Place to Be was chosen as Habitat for Humanity’s theme for World Habitat Day 2008. It speaks of the security of living safely in one’s home -- free of fear from evictions, unsafe structures, leaking roofs, and unsanitary plumbing. The theme can be used in any number of ways to suit your situation. For example: A place to be safe, a place to be happy, a place to be healthy, a place to be family, or simply a “place to be.”



Audience specific strategies

The purpose of this section is to provide various entities of Habitat for Humanity with messaging and action ideas for World Habitat Day related to their specific audience. You will find information to help tailor World Habitat Day to faith relations, national offices, and U.S. affiliates

Faith relations

Faith communities are a perfect audience to help support World Habitat Day. Faith communities are often on the leading edge in supporting not only poverty focused work locally – but are often leading massive, coordinated efforts involving global poverty issues. In addition, given that faith communities have been the key foundation of support for Habitat for Humanity work, engaging them in World Habitat Day should be a part of any local efforts to implement events on World Habitat Day.

Strengthen faith relations on World Habitat Day

Celebrate World Habitat Day by strengthening your faith partnerships or creating new ones. Do outreach to local communities of faith to come together on World Habitat Day to recognize the shared duty to provide shelter and strengthen communities. Whether by holding an event to raise awareness about Habitat for Humanity's work and the opportunities for long-term partnership or having a special discussion on local national and/or global housing needs the Sunday before World Habitat Day, your affiliate can use World Habitat Day to inform, unite and encourage action in faith communities around Habitat for Humanity's mission to end poverty housing.

Examples of faith relations activities for World Habitat Day

- Hold a special prayer service the Sunday before World Habitat Day.
- Show the film "Building on Faith" and have a discussion.⁵
- Work with youth groups to raise awareness about poverty housing.
- Plan a recognition event, such as a banquet or worship celebration. Present certificates, plaques, or other items to recognize the partnership efforts of each congregation.
- Begin a tithing program. Explain how Habitat builds locally and in developing countries and explain that affiliates are encouraged to set aside 10 percent of the money they raise locally to build homes in another location. Churches can choose where they wish their tithe money to go, and they can send work teams to help build the houses they are funding.
- Launch a Global Church Partnership project. Create long-lasting relationships among church partners by committing to build a number of houses over a period of time, generally three to five years.

⁵ The documentary "Building on Faith: Making Poverty Housing History" is available from Mennonite Media at <http://store.mennonitemedia.org/p-224-building-on-faith-making-poverty-housing-history.aspx>.

- Plan a candlelight walk through a community in which you are building houses and inviting the faith community to participate.
- Blitz frame a house or houses.
- Finish a build project and dedicate a house or houses.
- Invite churches to construct the walls of a house in their own parking lots and then bring them together for a house raising celebration and blessing.
- Host a fundraiser with your partners to raise money for a church-sponsored house
- Recruit advocates from faith communities for your affiliate, or for HFHI by having them sign up at www.advocatewithhabitat.org

Include Scripture on World Habitat Day, such as Acts 20:3 (more blessed to give than to receive); Luke 3:11 (whoever has two coats); 1 John 3:17 (if anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need); James 2:17 (faith without works is dead).

National offices

World Habitat Day offers a tremendous opportunity for national offices to raise awareness of local housing needs and educate communities and civic groups on how they can get involved in the solutions.

You can also use the day to elevate the work of Habitat for Humanity in your country in addressing the needs. Issue a press release about World Habitat Day and Habitat for Humanity's activities.

Hold a public discussion that invites other organizations and housing experts to share their ideas about resolving some of your countries toughest and most challenging housing-related issues.

Ideas for specific activities for World Habitat Day

- Prior to World Habitat Day, invite local universities to research the housing situation in your country (or possibly invite them to research the impact that a Habitat house has on families.) Hold a press conference to release the findings
- Organize a forum and invite other organizations and local housing experts to address some of the problems that we face every day. Enlist their help in resolving those issues.
- Invite your country's housing minister to a community where you work. Facilitate a community meeting where the minister and the community can exchange information and points of view.
- A week before World Habitat Day, call the assignment editors of the leading media outlets in your country. Tell them about World Habitat Day, the housing crisis in your city or country, and about Habitat for Humanity's work. Invite them to a house dedication or to meet a Habitat for Humanity homeowner.
- Is there a Global Village trip planned to your country for that week? Invite the media to meet with this international group during one of their build days.

U. S. affiliates

Community collaborations

Joining with others in your community who work for healthy families and neighborhoods is a great way to celebrate World Habitat Day. Why not use the first week of October this year to bring together all the agencies, organizations, school-based programs, and government officials in your community to kick off or strengthen a collaborative effort to improve the area's habitat! Forming alliances with like-minded people and organizations is a necessary strategy to alleviate poverty, encourage improved housing policies and build holistic communities.

Strengthen collaborative efforts in your community on World Habitat Day

Celebrate World Habitat Day by strengthening your local partnerships or creating new ones. Consider involving representatives from:

- Other housing and community organizations
- Child development centers
- Credit and financial counseling programs
- Literacy and adult education providers
- Homeowners and community residents

Examples of collaborative activities to consider for World Habitat Day

- Present to others the work of Habitat for Humanity and invite them to share what they are doing to improve the community and reach out to families in need.
- Explore opportunities to work in a more organized way with other community groups.
- Raise awareness of local, national and/or global housing needs.
- Direct action campaigns to focus attention on local community concerns (such as writing circles to generate letters to elected officials, call-in campaigns to representatives offices, or protests in front of vacant, trash-filled lots.)
- Advocate for improved housing policies at the local and national level (see Habitat for Humanity International's priority advocacy issues and advocacy tool at www.advocatewithhabitat.org).

Mobilize to advocate for our priority issues in 2009

We all know there is strength in numbers. Rather than go it alone and risk having little impact, why not:

- Encourage others to support our priority policy issues at www.advocatewithhabitat.org
- Build a state or local coalition to identify the three most pressing changes needed to improve housing conditions
- Organize your educational and advocacy efforts around these issues
- Evaluate, plan next steps and try again!



HFH MADAGASCAR

Celebrating in Madagascar

In 2006, HFH Madagascar celebrated World Habitat Day for the first time. They participated in an event organized by UN Habitat and the Madagascan government department in charge of decentralization and regional development.



Additional resources

Useful Links

UN-Habitat Global Campaign for Secure Tenure:
<http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=24>

Women and secure tenure:
<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=24&cid=2041>

UN-Habitat Secure Tenure at a Glance
http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/5196_96938_sec%202.pdf

UN-Habitat Secure Tenure Facts & Figures
http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/5195_13745_sec%201.pdf

What are slums?
http://www.unhabitat.org/documents/media_centre/sowcr2006/SOWCR%205.PDF

Fact sheet on slums, sanitation, and secure tenure:
http://www.unhabitat.org/documents/media_centre/sowcr2006/SOWCR%207.PDF

Fact sheet on slums, overcrowding, and safe drinking water:
http://www.unhabitat.org/documents/media_centre/sowcr2006/SOWCR%206.PDF

Fact sheet on future slum growth:
http://www.unhabitat.org/documents/media_centre/sowcr2006/SOWCR%204.PDF

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Fact Sheet on the Human Right to Adequate Housing
<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs21.htm#intro>

Research

U.S. poverty facts

- About 95 million people, one third of the nation, have housing problems including a high-cost burden, overcrowding, poor quality shelter and homelessness. (NLIHC: 2004)
- There are almost 16 million Americans paying 50 percent or more of their income for housing.
- One in three American households spend more than 30 percent of income on housing, and one in seven spends more than 50 percent. (JCHS: 2006)
- There is not a single county in the country where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford even a one-bedroom apartment at what HUD determines to be the Fair Market Rent. (NLIHC: 2006)
- 2.2 million subprime home loans made in recent years have already failed or will end in foreclosure, costing homeowners as much as \$164 billion. (CRL: 2006)
- Predatory payday lending now costs American families \$4.2 billion per year in excessive fees. (CRL: 2006)

Housing improves health

- The number of low-income families that lack safe and affordable housing is related to the number of children that suffer from asthma, viral infections, anemia, stunted growth and other health problems. About 21,000 children have stunted growth attributable to the lack of stable housing; 10,000 children between the ages of 4 and 9 are hospitalized for asthma attacks each year because of cockroach infestation at home; and more than 180 children die each year in house fires attributable to faulty electrical heating and electrical equipment. (Sandel, et al: 1999)
- Children in bad housing have increased risk of viral or bacterial infections and a greater chance of suffering mental health and behavioral problems. (Harker: 2006)
- Housing deprivation leads to an average of 25 percent greater risk of disability or severe ill health across a person's lifespan. Those who suffer housing deprivation as children are more likely to suffer ill health in adulthood, even if they live in non-deprived conditions later in life. (Marsh, et al.: 2000)

Housing has a positive impact on children

- Children of homeowners are more likely to stay in school (by 7-9 percent) and daughters of homeowners are less likely to have children by age 18 (by 2-4 percent). (Green and White: 1996)
- Owning a home leads to a higher quality home environment, improved test scores in children (9 percent in math and 7 percent in reading), and reduced behavioral problems (by 3 percent). (Haurin, Parcel, and Haurin: 2002)
- Children who live in bad housing have lower educational attainment and a greater likelihood of being impoverished and unemployed as adults. (Harker: 2006)

Homeownership builds wealth

- Owning a home, especially for lower-income households, is an important means of wealth accumulation. For low-income minority families, median average annual housing wealth appreciation is \$1,712 whereas there is no non-housing wealth accumulation. This wealth is achieved both through equity and forced savings resulting from mortgage repayment. (Boehm and Schlottmann: 2004)

- Homeownership increases intergenerational wealth accumulation through improved educational achievement in children, which leads to greater earnings when these children enter the workforce. (Boehm and Schlottmann: 2002)
- Homeowners live in larger, higher quality units; they enjoy better housing services with costs that fall over time; and they stand to make considerable returns if they remain owners for a long time. (Rohe, Van Zandt, and McCarthy: 2001)

Housing strengthens communities

- Homeowners are more likely to know their U.S. representative (by 10 percent) and school board head by name (by 9 percent), and are more likely to vote in local elections (by 15 percent) and work to solve local problems (by 6 percent). (DiPasquale and Glaeser: 1998)
- Homeowners are more likely to be satisfied with their homes and neighborhoods, and are more likely to volunteer in civic and political activities. (Rohe, Van Zandt, and McCarthy: 2000)
- Resident ownership is strongly related to better building security and quality, and to lower levels of crime. (Saegert and Winkel: 1998)

Global poverty facts

- By the year 2030, an additional 3 billion people, about 40 percent of the world's population, will need access to housing. This translates into a demand for 96,150 new affordable units every day and 4,000 every hour. (UN-Habitat: 2005)
- The World Bank has noted that a significant increase of investment in shelter and related infrastructure is necessary to meet the needs of the world's growing population. Yet since the mid 1990s only 10 percent of its shelter lending has gone to support low-income housing. (World Bank: 2006)
- One out of every three city dwellers – nearly a billion people – lives in a slum. (Slum indicators include: lack of water, lack of sanitation, overcrowding, non-durable structures and insecure tenure.) (UN-Habitat: 2006)
- More than 90 percent of slums are in the developing world where urbanization has become synonymous with slum formation. (UN-Habitat: 2006)
- Every week, more than a million people are born in, or move to, cities in the developing world. As a result, the urban population of developing countries will double from 2 to 4 billion in the next 30 years. (Kissick, et al: 2006),
- Across the globe, an average of one in every three city residents is living in inadequate housing with none, or few, basic services. In many sub-Saharan African cities, the slum population accounts for over 70 percent of the urban population. (UN-Habitat: 2006)
- UN-Habitat has reported that because of poor living conditions, women living in slums are more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than their rural counterparts, and children in slums are more likely to die from water-borne and respiratory illness. (UN-Habitat: 2006)
- More than 14 million refugees and internally displaced people live in tents or other temporary shelters. (Kissick, et al: 2006)
- As much as 70 percent of the urban housing stock in sub-Saharan Africa, 50 percent in South Asia, and 25 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean is of poor quality and not in compliance with local regulations. (Kissick, et al: 2006)
- Children under five living in Habitat for Humanity houses in Malawi showed a 44 percent reduction in malaria, respiratory or gastrointestinal diseases compared to children living in traditional houses. The effect of improved housing on the health of young children was as high as that of water and sanitation programs. (Wolf, et al: 2001)

- Housing construction, especially in low-income countries, creates job opportunities for migrants to cities and stimulates the creation of small business. The titling and registration of land occupied by informal settlements allows those residents to access credit products thereby helping to unlock fixed capital for productive investment. (Kissick, et al: 2006)
- Housing wealth is more equitably spread throughout society than other forms of wealth. Housing formation generates non-housing related expenditures that help drive the economy. (Kissick, et al: 2006)
- Investing in housing expands the local tax base. (Kissick, et al: 2006)

Resources/Bibliography

America's Neighbors: The Affordable Housing Crisis and the People it Affects, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Washington, DC (2004) www.nlihc.org

Boehm, Thomas P. and Alan M. Schlottmann, *Housing and Wealth Accumulation: Intergenerational Impacts, Low-Income Homeownership: Examining the Unexamined Goal*, Nicholas P. Retsinas and Eric S. Belsky eds., Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC (2002)

Boehm, Thomas P. and Alan Schlottmann, *Wealth Accumulation and Homeownership: Evidence for Low-Income Households*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Office of Policy Development and Research, December 2004

Buckley, Robert M. and Jerry Kalarickal, eds. *Thirty Years of World Bank Shelter Lending: What Have we Learned?* The World Bank: Washington, DC

Green, Richard K. and Michelle J. White, *Measuring the Benefits of Homeowning: Effects on Children*, *Journal of Urban Economics*, v 41, 441-461 (1997)

Dipasquale, Denise and Edward L. Glaeser, *Incentives and Social Capital: Are Homeowners Better Citizens?* *Journal of Urban Economics*, v 45, 354-384 (1999)

Harker, Lisa, *Chance of a Lifetime: The Impacts of Bad Housing on Children's Lives*, Shelter. September, 2006

Haurin, Donald R., Toby L. Parcel, and R. Jean Haurin, *Impact of Homeownership on Child Outcomes, Low-Income Homeownership: Examining the Unexamined Goal*, Nicholas P. Retsinas and Eric S. Belsky eds., Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC (2002)

King, Uriah, et al., *Financial Quicksand: Payday Lending Sinks Borrowers in Debt With \$4.2 billion in Predatory Fees Every Year*, Center for Responsible Lending, Washington, DC (2006) www.responsiblelending.org

Kissick, D., Leibson, D., et al, *Housing for All: Essential for Economic, Social, and Civic Development*, a 28-page manuscript prepared for the World Urban Forum III by PADCO/AECOM

Kothari, Miloon, UN Press Briefing by Special Rapporteur on *the Right to Adequate Housing*, November, 2005. < <http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2005/kotharibrf050511.doc.htm> >

Li, Guohua et al, *Neighborhood Characteristics and Emergency Department Utilization*, *Academic Emergency Medicine*, August 2003, Vol. 10, p 853-859.

Marsh, Alex, et al. *Housing Deprivation and Health: A Longitudinal Analysis*, *Housing Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3: 2000

McCarthy, George, Shannon Van Zandt, and William Rohe, *The Economic Benefits and Costs of Homeownership: A Critical Assessment of the Research*, Research Institute for Housing America. May, 2001

Out of Reach 2006, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Washington DC (2006) www.nlihc.org

Rohe, William, George McCarthy, and Shannon Van Zandt, *The Social Benefits and Costs of Homeownership: A Critical Assessment of the Research*, Research Institute for Housing America. May, 2000

Sandel, Megan, et al, *There is No Place Like Home: How America's Housing Crisis Threatens Our Children*, San Francisco, Calif., March 1999

Saegert, Susan and Gary Winkel, *Social Capital and the Revitalization of New York City's Distressed Inner-City Housing*, Fannie Mae Foundation: Housing Policy Debate, volume 9 issue 1, 1998

Schloemer, Ellen, et al, *Losing Ground: Foreclosures in the Subprime Market and Their Cost to Homeowners*, Center for Responsible Lending, Washington, DC (2006) www.responsiblelending.org

The State of the Nation's Housing 2006, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University. www.jchs.harvard.edu

UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2006/7*, www.unhabitat.org

UN-Habitat, *Financing Urban Shelter: Global Report on Human Settlements 2005*, www.unhabitat.org

UN-Habitat, *Global Report on Human Settlements 2003: The Challenge of Slums*, www.unhabitat.org

Wolff, et al., *The Effect of Improved Housing on Illness in Children under Five Years Old in Northern Malawi: Cross-Sectional Study*, *BMJ* vol. 322: 2001



Appendix

Advocacy 101

Why is Habitat for Humanity involved in advocacy?

Habitat for Humanity cannot address the worldwide problem of poverty housing by building homes only using the “one house at a time” model. Rather, we must accompany our successful building efforts with advocacy to change the systems contributing to poverty housing. Focused advocacy undertaken in conjunction with strategic partners at every level of the organization has become an intentional part of Habitat for Humanity’s mission. It is a necessary supplement to the important work of building homes in partnership with families in need.

- We cannot ensure housing for all simply by building more Habitat houses.
- Advocacy is a natural extension of the Habitat mission and supplements our house building.
- To reach the goal of safe, decent and affordable housing for all, we need to change the systems, attitudes, policies and institutional behaviors that lead to inadequate housing and homelessness.

Habitat for Humanity International’s definition of advocacy

Habitat for Humanity’s advocacy is working to influence public opinion and decision makers in all sectors to adapt policies and practices and transform systems that lead to the creation and preservation of housing for all, toward the goal of ending poverty worldwide.

What is not advocacy, according to HFHI’s definition?

According to HFHI’s definition, advocacy is working to transform systems so everyone has access to affordable housing. While raising public awareness about poverty housing issues is an important step in the process, any advocacy effort should require action to help change the systems that lead to poverty housing.

- Information, education, and communication without a call to action: Advocacy is not about launching a public campaign to inform about specific issues, without a call to action. Educating the public can be a very important part of advocacy work, but it is not an end unto itself.
- Informing governments about Habitat: While becoming an effective advocate requires you to establish your credibility with policy makers, advocacy is not just about informing government officials about Habitat’s work and strategies.
- Raising public awareness about HFHI and its affiliates: Often, HFHI disseminates information through the media to raise our profile or visibility. The same techniques can be used for advocacy, but the purposes are different.
- Fundraising: The primary purpose of advocacy is not to increase an organization’s budget, but rather to influence a governmental agenda, corporate behavior, a specific public policy, or the implementation of a policy.

How can I advocate on World Habitat Day?

An advocacy action can be as simple as gathering signatures for a petition while on the worksite or at a World Habitat Day event. There are two options for petition signing:

- (1) You can modify the petition on the next page to reflect the focus of your local advocacy efforts and later take the signatures to a meeting with an elected official or his or her staff member
- (2) You can utilize the petition created by HFHI to support the U.S. national-level advocacy around secure tenure. You can access this petition on the My.Habitat Government Relations and Advocacy page under “World Habitat Day.” Once the petition drive is over, please mail completed forms to HFHI’s Office of Government Relations and Advocacy so they can be delivered in person to key decision-makers. Send your petitions with signatures to:

Habitat for Humanity International
1000 Vermont Ave NW Suite 1100 Washington, DC 20005.

Public Awareness 101

Habitat for Humanity has a strong tradition of incorporating communications in everything it does. Even the forerunner of HFH, Koinonia Partnership Ministries, had a three-pronged course of action that began with communications. Indeed, nearly two-thirds of Habitat for Humanity's "Ultimate Goal" is about communications:

The ultimate goal of Habitat for Humanity is to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the face of the earth by building adequate and basic housing.

Furthermore, all of our words and actions are for the ultimate purpose of putting shelter on the hearts and minds of people in such a powerful way that poverty housing and homelessness become socially, politically and religiously unacceptable in our nations and world.

How do we put shelter on the hearts and minds of people everywhere? By educating them about the issue of poverty housing, telling compelling stories, providing enriching experiences that cause them to care, and showing them how they can be a part of the solution. Public relations and communications are the foundation upon which other activities within our ministry can grow. People need to understand and care before they give, before they volunteer, and before they become advocates.

Public relations can take many forms. It includes reaching out to media, organizing a special event, publishing a brochure, creating a website. Publicity can help you find volunteers, encourage donations, gain sponsors, form partnerships and increase good will toward homeowners.

But it isn't just about how much you say or how often. Effective public relations reach a specific target audience with a well-defined and consistent message. You must decide who you are trying to reach and what you want them to do with the information you are giving them before launching a successful public relations program or activity. Do you want more corporate donors? That is a different message than the one you would prepare to recruit volunteers ... and different still than the message to educate government officials. The core message about the need for affordable housing in your area and Habitat's role in fulfilling those needs can and should remain consistent. It is important to find relevant messages for each specific audience you want to reach.

Habitat for Humanity International – both in the US and the area offices – have templates, tools and resources to help Habitat entities around the world develop and implement effective communications campaigns. For more information, please contact Habitat for Humanity's public relations department at publicinfo@habitat.org or your area communications director.

Sample press release

Logo/Affiliate logo goes here

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

[Your First and Last Name]

[Affiliate/Campus Chapter Name] Habitat for Humanity

[Your Phone Number]

[Your E-mail Address]

[Your affiliate or campus chapter Web site address]

[Affiliate or Campus Chapter Name] Habitat for Humanity advocates for secure tenure on World Habitat Day 2008

[Your CITY, St.] [(Month, Day, 2008)]—In recognition of World Habitat Day 2008—A Place to Be, [Affiliate/Campus Chapter Name] Habitat for Humanity will address the lack of decent housing around the world, including the need for affordable housing in [Fill in your local area].

Focusing on this year's theme, secure tenure, [Affiliate/Campus Chapter Name] Habitat for Humanity will [Fill in details about your event including a short description with date, time and location.]

“[Include a quote from an Affiliate/Campus Chapter spokesperson.]”

According to UN-Habitat, one out of every three city dwellers—nearly a billion people—live in slums. Many slum residents lack secure tenure without any legal documentation of their property rights in addition to living in severely inadequate housing conditions. Secure tenure not only facilitates opportunities for investment and wealth accumulation, but also provides a source of identity, status and political power and serves as a basis for the pursuit of other rights.

About [Affiliate/Campus Chapter Name] Habitat for Humanity
[Insert Affiliate or Campus Chapter boilerplate statement.]

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 250,000 houses worldwide, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1 million people. For more information, visit www.habitat.org



INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 121 Habitat St. Americus, GA 31709-3498 USA
(229) 924-6935 (800) HABILITAT fax (229) 928-8811 publicinfo@habitat.org
www.habitat.org