



Programme Declaration:

Sustainable Housing - A Right for All

This paper explains how we will create a new global cooperative housing programme, how we will contribute international perspectives to Swedish housing policy and pave the way for a new model of cooperation. The goal is to create business value and contribute to global development.

Background

Having a place to live is a human right, yet one in four people lack a dignified home. Although housing is a prerequisite for people to leave poverty, it is a low priority area for many governments.

We Effect is one of few international organisations that works with the right to housing, also through methods that are cost-effective, sustainable and that reach those people who are furthest from the ordinary housing market.

We Effect supports people living in poverty with organisation, training, advisory services, networking and support in seeking finance for land purchase and construction. We Effect works to strengthen people's own capacities, with a special focus on women. The goal is for more people to have a dignified home.

Housing – a human right

The right to housing is enshrined in both the UN Convention on Human Rights and the Swedish Constitution. Housing is highlighted as a social right both in the UN Declaration (Article 25) and in the Swedish Instrument of Government, Chapter 1.

Sweden has unique experience of cooperative housing solutions and over two million Swedes currently live in a tenant-owner association. HSB and Riksbyggen's cooperative story can be further strengthened with a global perspective.

A changing landscape

Swedish development aid has been reduced and linked more closely to the Government's thematic priorities, such as economic development, trade and migration. Funding for civil society has decreased considerably. In this changed landscape, there is a risk that our work with the Right to Housing and support for housing cooperatives in developing countries will be lost.

At a time when poverty and insecurity is increasing, where the effects of climate change are increasingly affecting people already living in vulnerability, we risk losing momentum and opportunities to support people to not only secure dignified housing, but housing that also resists climate change and contributes to reduced vulnerability.

We live in a challenging time that requires reprioritisation, but which can also be the start of a new way of working between HSB, Riksbyggen and We Effect. This will require changes in our organisations, working methods and in how we finance our work.

The way forward

We are starting a new chapter. We are building on 30 years of successful development cooperation by developing a more integrated collaboration between HSB, Riksbyggen and We Effect. We are developing a new housing programme, in which HSB and Riksbyggen contribute with networks, expertise and advocacy, and where We Effect strengthens its role as a strategic expert organisation.

Stronger collaboration between HSB, Riksbyggen and We Effect opens new opportunities. We can position ourselves as a new and strong player in the housing issue. We can also help position cooperatives as a sustainable and resilient solution – both in Sweden and internationally. The new housing programme contributes to stronger support for people's right to adequate housing and can contribute to brand-strengthening communication for all parties.

The Swedish Government has highlighted business cooperation as a core value in the new development aid policy. Our way of working is well in line with this. HSB and Riksbyggen, but also many other Swedish companies, have experience in construction and management of housing. Including housing in development aid can create opportunities for Swedish companies. Several construction and housing companies are already operating in other countries.

The development of a joint programme can also form an important basis for support to the reconstruction of Ukraine, where the international cooperative movement has major commitment.

Target

The overall goal of the housing program is to contribute to more people living in poverty enjoying the right to adequate housing through cooperative solutions. The programme will support people's organisation, but also contribute to the construction of housing.

The goal will be achieved by working in an alliance where cooperative companies, authorities and civil society work together to contribute to the global goals. Both the UN and the EU highlight the right to housing as a prerequisite for poverty eradication.

Another goal of the program is to strengthen HSB, Riksbyggen and We Effect's reputations and brands. This, in turn, will also result in increased pride among employees that the employer lives up to its values, takes responsibility and actively contributes to sustainable global development.

Our commitments

1. We Effect, HSB and Riksbyggen ensure human resources to collaborate in the programme. We Effect has operational responsibility for coordination and implementation.
2. HSB and Riksbyggen undertake, together with We Effect, to identify and open doors to new financiers. HSB and Riksbyggen have no requirements for funding beyond agreed fundraising.
3. HSB and Riksbyggen undertake to actively communicate about the program among members and employees. We Effect is committed to providing up-to-date information about the business.
4. HSB and Riksbyggen undertake to involve We Effect in Swedish housing policy, where and when relevant. We Effect is committed to ensuring its own expertise in global housing issues.

Next steps

1. A maximum of 5 partners in East Africa and Latin America will be selected and guaranteed "survival funding" in 2025. Funds are taken from funds raised by HSB and Riksbyggen.
2. A working group is appointed, consisting of responsible staff from each organisation.