



“We Need to Talk About Housing”

A Discussion on What’s Working and What’s Not in the Face of Extreme Housing Inequalities.

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM | 12 February 2025 | Virtual

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Co-organized by Pathfinders, IIED & ASFFE, LSE

Right now, **2.8 billion people are experiencing some form of housing inadequacy** across the world. Housing should be a basic human right, and we know that access to adequate housing has enormous social value, boosts economic growth, and improves well-being. Yet, too often, it’s reduced to one thing: money.

In many cities, there’s a stark tension between the responsibility of political actors to provide housing for the public and the relentless drive to extract wealth. **The global real estate market is valued at USD 379.7 trillion**, as housing is increasingly treated as a privilege, an asset, and a lucrative investment. These financial forces distort priorities, favoring wealth accumulation and speculative investments over the basic human right to housing, and broadening the gap between those benefiting from housing systems and those who cannot afford a place to live in.

Rather than an accident or an inevitability, housing inequalities are a result of deliberate public policy decisions. Housing policies are often captured by wealthy elites and powerful interest groups, prioritizing profit over equity. Zoning laws that favor luxury developments, tax benefits for property investors, and weak

enforcement of tenant rights are just a few examples of how policy shapes and perpetuates inequality.

Furthermore, the lack of affordable, decent housing fuels grievances and social unrest, deepening mistrust and disillusionment. It fosters narratives of scarcity and competition, often misdirecting fear and anger toward groups perceived as having better access or as straining public resources, rather than focusing on those who shape and benefit from an unjust housing market.

It's easy to feel disheartened, as though we're facing a David-and-Goliath battle and yet, there are movements to push for more equitable housing systems across countries and geographies. Whether it is communities at the forefront of the fight against evictions in Brazil and the United Kingdom, governments working with residents to upgrade informal settlements in Indonesia, or bold property tax reforms from Spain to Sierra Leone, many actors are working together to push back, fostering solidarity, and offering innovative, people-centered housing solutions.

Join the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, the International Institute for Environment and Development, and the London School of Economics on **February 12th** as we create a space to share experiences and ideas. We want to hear from policymakers, activists, academics, and advocates from around the world. Together, we'll discuss what's working, what isn't, and how we can ignite public and political imagination while grounding rhetoric in reality.

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