

All of Habitat Ireland's advocacy efforts are focused on achieving Habitat for Humanity's vision of 'a world where everyone has a decent place to live'. Therefore, we concentrate our advocacy efforts on promoting policies and practices that support this vision.

In alignment with Habitat for Humanity's strategy, Habitat Ireland's advocacy programme seeks to 'build sector impact', partnering with stakeholders, thought leaders and politicians within our sector to influence policy, raise awareness and engage individuals across Ireland to increase shelter access. In addition, Habitat Ireland's advocacy efforts aim to 'build societal impact', by inspiring action to end poverty housing.

The goals of Habitat's advocacy programme are to:

- Raise awareness about housing issues in Ireland and around the world.
- Influence public policy to support affordable housing initiatives.
- Engage communities in advocacy efforts to amplify their voices.
- Promote and support Habitat for Humanity International's Global Advocacy Campaign.
- Build partnerships with other organisations and stakeholders.

How do we advocate?

Influence local government:

- Habitat Ireland regularly advocates for action on empty homes, affordable housing, equitable access & shared future.
- We connect with politicians at all levels of government, across both jurisdictions, to lobby and engage them on the local issues (listed above), as well as global housing points such as sustainable development, energy poverty, climate change, slum upgrading and tenure security.
- Habitat Ireland frequently attends relevant 'All-Party Groups' which engage MLAs in Northern Ireland – specifically in the areas of International Development and Social Enterprise.
- As part of Habitat EME's work across the region, Habitat Ireland attends events such as Europe Housing Day and the European Housing Forum, to connect with colleagues, stakeholders and politicians across Europe.
- Habitat ReStore, the organisation's social enterprise, provides strong messaging around equitable access to materials for home improvement. This is particularly relevant in the midst of the cost-of-living crisis in our local context.

Develop collaborations with other NGOs:

- Habitat Ireland engages with, and is a member of, several relevant networks which enable us to increase our reach/capacity and collaborate with like-minded organisations across the sector in Ireland. Habitat Ireland currently engage with:
 - Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN)
 - Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI)
 - Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies Northern Ireland (CADA NI)
 - Social Enterprise Northern Ireland
 - Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland
 - Dochas
 - Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)
 - The Wheel
 - Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
 - Environmental Protection Agency – Local Circular Solutions Network
- These connections allow us to attend or organise events which engage a variety of audiences in our advocacy efforts, including: the general public, young people, corporates, churches, current supporters and other relevant stakeholders in the sector.

Develop partnerships that unlock finance or provide leverage:

- We aim to develop and grow partnerships with corporates, funding bodies and community organisations, to unlock funding which enables us to build influence in Ireland. Examples of these organisations:
 - Irish Aid
 - Rethink Ireland
 - M&G
 - Greenview Group
 - Girl's Brigade Northern Ireland
 - Northern Ireland Housing Executive
 - The National Lottery's Community Fund

Grow capacity to become a leading voice on global housing and shelter in Ireland:

- Empty spaces, furniture poverty, green transition and the circular economy are live issues which resonate locally, enabling Habitat to connect the local and global issues for our supporters.
- Habitat Ireland regularly hosts events which engage a wide audience on a variety of issues and include voices from the Global South, as well as Habitat staff from around the world.
- As part of wider Habitat-led events, Habitat Ireland creates programmes which facilitate global engagement opportunities for local people.

Grow capacity for advocacy, building on previous successes to engage and motivate more people to action:

- Partnerships with universities in Ireland has allowed Habitat Ireland to reach thousands of local students with Habitat's messaging and engage them in the Home Equals campaign, and previously the Build Solid Ground campaign.

- Our creative and interactive schools and youth programmes engage children and young people in our mission; providing an opportunity to serve and grow into active citizens who can make a real difference in our own community and around the world.
- The ‘Community Connections’ programme (funded by Irish Aid) has underpinned our capacity to develop and deliver Global Citizenship Education for local volunteers.
- Habitat Ireland’s extensive social media presence has a reach of over 13 million per year, engaging more than 100,000 people with messaging around local and global housing-related issues.

Advocate for quality development education/global citizenship education for all learners on the island of Ireland:

- Habitat lobbies donors and policymakers for adequate, diversified, funding and support for quality DE/GCE including decent work, pay and conditions in the sector.
- We continue to highlight Habitat Ireland’s good practice to decision-makers and other national/international stakeholders, as well as emphasising that systemic support for DE/GCE is vital to achieving solutions for a better world.
- We aim to shape local, national and international policies by engaging in policy processes and contributing to submissions on issues related to DE/GCE. This is carried out both independently and through contributions to sector network working groups.

For more information about Habitat’s advocacy work in Ireland, get in touch: info@habitatireland.org

Learn more about Habitat’s global advocacy campaign here: www.habitatireland.org/homeequals