



SOCIAL HOUSING

Definition and Characteristics

ABSTRACT

A house provided for people with low income or with particular needs, by government agencies or non-profit organizations.

A houses or apartments that are made available to be rented at a low cost to poor people.

Any Government-subsidized housing and local council housing are now often referred to as “social housing”.

Social housing is an umbrella term referring to rental housing which may be owned and managed by the state or by any non-profit organizations, or by a combination of the two usually with the aim of providing affordable housing. Social housing can also be seen as a potential remedy to housing inadequacy.

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What is Social Housing (Public Housing) – Examples from some selected countries

Description of Social Housing, also known as Public Housing:

1. A house provided for people with low income or with particular needs, by government agencies or non-profit organizations.
2. A houses or apartments that are made available to be rented at a low cost to poor people.
3. Any Government-subsidized housing and local council housing are now often referred to as “social housing”.
4. Social housing is an umbrella term referring to rental housing which may be owned and managed by the state or by any non-profit organizations, or by a combination of the two usually with the aim of providing affordable housing. Social housing can also be seen as a potential remedy to housing inadequacy.

Major Characteristic of Social Housing

Social Housing in England: Social housing gives people a home which will be cheaper to rent than privately rented housing and usually provides a long-term tenancy, giving renters the chance to put down roots. Social landlords

IN
ENGLAND

tend to be councils or housing associations. In England over 1.2 million households are on the social housing waiting list. More social homes must be built and we’re demanding the government takes action. Social rents are pegged to local incomes to keep rents more affordable. Changes to social rents whether up or down must be controlled by central government. Social rents are lower and set at up to 80% of the market rate. Social housing

is allocated on basis of need. Those with the most serious need are legally required to be given ‘reasonable preference’ in the allocation of social housing by councils. The councils can decide who qualifies to go on their social housing waiting lists and the level of priority that they are entitled to on the list. But the chronic shortage of social housing means it is severely rationed. We believe many more people should be able to access social housing.

Renting a social home means people have right to stay for years and make a house with much greater protections from eviction, instead of occupying the home for stay for a shorter time like 6 to 12 months. It must be remembered that, this condition prevails only in countries with social welfare system. Social landlords are generally councils or housing associations. The housing associations are independent from councils with all their surpluses going to managing and maintaining existing homes, providing associated services and in some cases building new homes. They are proactively economically regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing.

IN SCOTLAND

Social Housing in Scotland: Social housing in Scotland is housing owned and managed by public authorities (mainly councils) and housing associations (registered social landlords or RSLs). The concerned authorities there want to make sure that everyone in Scotland has access to good quality housing, no matter what their financial situation are.

Actions taken by the Government:

- Increasing the amount of council housing and protecting social housing for the future by ending the right to buy.
- Making sure that councils' and RSLs' housing stock meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Supporting good practice in housing management by providing advice and guidance for social landlords.
- Ensuring that social landlords are monitored through the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- Promoting tenant participation by providing advice and guidance for tenants' organizations and social landlords.
- Supporting affordable housing via the Building Scotland Fund.
- The Right to Buy was abolished for all social housing tenants in Scotland by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. This will preserve housing stock for the future and means that social landlords will receive a steady rental income.
- The Act changed allocation rules for social landlords to increase flexibility and allow them to make the best use of social housing. It also allows landlords to issue Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (Short SSTs) to address antisocial behavior and help homeowners in genuine housing need.
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 protects tenants' interests, supports improvements to housing quality and secures better outcomes for communities
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Housing Charter which sets 16 standards and outcomes that all social landlords should be meeting
- The Scottish Government has developed guidance to help landlords use the social housing provisions in the 2014 Act and guidance has now been formally published

Housing Management:

- Allocating housing to new and existing tenants
- Providing appropriate tenancy agreements and managing them
- Organizing repairs
- Providing housing support, information and advice

Tenant Rights:

- Security of tenure
- Right to apply for a joint tenancy
- Rights of succession
- Ability to assign your tenancy, exchange or sublet your house
- Right to repair
- Rights to compensation for improvements
- Rights to information and consultation

Social Housing in Spain: The right to housing is guaranteed by the Spanish Constitution. Social housing in Spain consists of the so-called *Vivienda de Proteccion Publica* (publicly protected housing). It is characterized by a peculiarity compared to social housing models in most EU countries, in that it is housing provided almost entirely for owner-occupation. Only a small proportion of this housing, currently on the increase, is offered for rent.

IN SPAIN

The main characteristic of protected housing is that construction, renovation and buying are subsidized by the State through reduced interest loans to providers. In exchange for this, dwellings complying with a number of conditions concerning size and quality are sold or let at prices below market to people with revenues below certain income ceilings. The entire home-ownership sector represents 85% of the total housing stock in Spain, while the rental sector is the smallest in Europe, corresponding to 11% of the total housing stock, and it is concentrated quite exclusively in few big cities such as Barcelona and Madrid. Just about 2% of the stock is social rental housing.

Who provides social housing?

Public support for protected housing is dwelling-based, and open to all sorts of providers: public developers, commercial developers as well as not for profit organisations and cooperatives, as well as individuals who alone or collectively want to buy or rehabilitate a home.

How is social housing financed?

Protected housing is mainly financed through funding from the National Housing Plan and to a lesser extent from regional plans as well as borrowing from private credit institutions. The state stipulates agreements with credit institutions, which commitment to providing loans at favourable conditions. Besides access to favourable loans, protected housing in some cases can also benefit from direct public aid in form of grants or subsidisation of loans.

Who can access social housing?

On the basis of income distribution, depending on the type of VPO, broadly speaking over 80% of households virtually has access to this type of housing. The person who buys / is allocated / builds for personal use the dwelling: must not own or have a permanent right to use another dwelling, must not have obtained financing from the Housing Plan over the previous 10 years, and must have an income below certain levels. Disabled people and depended persons have the priority, and the regional governments can establish other types of requirements.

(source: <http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-124/social-housing-in-europe>)

Social Housing in Philippine: The Government of Philippine established a Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC) is the lead government agency to undertake financing of social housing programs that will cater to the formal and informal sectors in the low-income bracket. To take charge of developing and administering **social housing** program schemes, particularly the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) and the Abot-Kaya Pabahay Fund (AKPF) Program amortization support and developmental financing program.

IN PHILIPPINES

Historical Background:

20 January 2004 - Signing of Executive Order 272 authorizing the creation of SHFC

- 21 June 2005 - Approval of SHFC registration to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
- 03 October 2005 - Appointment of Atty. Fermin T. Arzaga as the new SHFC President
- 24 October 2005 - SHFC Inauguration and First Board Meeting
- 03 November 2005 - Execution of Memorandum and Trust Agreements between NHMFC and SHFC
- 22 January 2007 - Transfer of SHFC to its corporate office at the Paseo de Roxas Avenue, Makati City
- 27 July 2007 - Creation of the Localized Community Mortgage Program (LCMP)
- 25 January 2011 - Appointment of Ms. Ma. Ana R. Oliveros as the new SHFC President
- 16 May 2011 - Approval of the Revised CMP Guidelines
- 17 May 2011 - Awarding of the first taken-out project under the LCMP (Sunrise HOA, IGACOS)

The Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC):

The SHFC was created through Executive Order No. 272 (E.O.272), which directs the transfer of the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), Abot Kaya Pabahay Fund (AKPF) Program, and other social housing powers and functions of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation to the SHFC, by 2022, SHFC shall have provided 530,000 organized homeless and low-income families with Flexible, Affordable, Innovative, and Responsive (FAIR) shelter solutions to their housing needs.

Key Function:

To empower and uplift the living conditions of underprivileged communities by Building Adequate Livable Affordable and Inclusive (BALAI) Filipino Communities through provision of FAIR shelter solutions in strong partnerships with the national and local government as well as the civil society organizations and the private sector to support the underprivileged communities.

The National Shelter Program (NSP) regulates housing production, regulation and financing for the Philippines' banner program for low-income housing provision. The NSP divides housing into 'socialized' (valued at less than USD 6,000, targeted at households up to the 30th income percentile) and 'economic' housing units (valued at up to USD 40,000, targeted at households up to the 50th income percentile).

Hindrances Facing by Government:

Several factors have contributed to hindering the outreach and sustainability of the NSP programs.

- (a) Philippines' general decentralization
- (b) Resettlement costs are increasing
- (c) Identifying suitable beneficiaries of government housing
- (d) Under the UDHA, both the government and the community must eradicate professional squatters
- (e) The awarding of home-lots
- (f) Housing finance programs have limited outreach. Moreover, private sector funds remain considerably untapped. For the housing sector to be more responsive to the needs of the poor, several key reforms are required.

Related to this, establishing a national resettlement policy will ensure a common framework for resettlement approaches, housing packages, and entitlement. NHA's role as lead agency should be strengthened, with funds from the various resettlement agencies integrated into a common fund.

Suriname's Social Housing Policy: The government of Suriname has repeatedly emphasized the importance it attaches to improving the living conditions and social wellbeing of its citizenry through housing and community development programs and the decline in real incomes, together with high mortgage interest rates, land market bottlenecks, and high building costs, have made housing unaffordable to all but the most affluent households. The average housing production was around one-half of household formation, which is estimated at 1,350 per annum nationwide. Government-assisted housing construction came to a halt until it was recently restarted. As a result, large a pent-up demand for new units accumulated over the years. In order to understand the housing policy outcomes in Suriname there are two basic aspects we need to take into account: the adequate supply of affordable houses, and the ownership structure.

IN SURINAME

Housing as social right:

The right to housing is best seen as a political "marker of concern" pointing out housing as an area for welfare state policy. The more precise meaning of the idea is always defined socially, in a specific national context of relations between state, citizen, and markets in housing provision. The same can be said for the development of the social housing sector for Suriname.

The main housing programs:

These are main categories of social housing.

The social house rental. This option is for those whose income or personal debt level makes them ineligible for a house mortgage loan to purchase a social house. Students, elderly and persons with disabilities also fall under this category, provided that there are houses available for them. Non-profit housing organizations and government led non-governmental housing organizations play a central role. In terms of policy outcome, this sector is lagging behind in the production of affordable rental houses for low income groups due to the high costs of production.

The social house purchase: Accessible for all income groups provided that they are in need of affordable housing, don't already own a house, and adhere to the house mortgage requirements from the bank. The target groups should be able to handover proof of formal employment and steady income, and only one house per household is allowed. The size of the house depends on the size of the household's income.

A special vulnerable group: the single parent household, in particular the Female Headed Households (FHH). According to a statistical report from the General Bureau of Statistics (General Bureau of Statistics, 2015) 33.4% of Surinamese households are FHH. In Paramaribo this number is 37.3% of all household. The IDB estimated the annual household formation at 1,350 per annum nationwide (Mc Hardy & Donovan, 2016, p. 84), which means at least an annual growth of 450 FHH. This group suffers the most from unaffordable housing and falls short of other basic provisions. Furthermore 80% of all applicants in need of a house registered at the government led Foundation of People's Housing are FHH.

Low Income Shelter program (LISP): This scheme is on project basis resulting from government borrowing at the IDB (or other financial donors). People can register for subsidy to rehabilitate or expand their house. They can also build a house provided that they already possess a plot of serviced land and a sufficient amount of personal savings and responsibility of the government to provide citizens with the land upon which they can access the housing schemes to build a house (The National Parliament of Suriname).

The role of the family in social provisions: The extended family

According to Torgersen's, there is a constant balancing of power between interest group in the interlocked relationship between the state activities, the housing market and the family's role in social provision. So far, we have not discussed the family's role which is important to understand how, despite the housing need there is no observable public unrest. It may be because of two things: the role of the family in general and the extended family in particular, which also is connected to informal ways of income earning to pay the high rents. Surinamese families across all ethnic groups tend to help each other financially, which helps reduce the pressure put-on low-income groups. The extended family which is especially prevalent among East-Indian ("Hindustani") Surinamese and Indo ("Javanese") Surinamese community, and Maroons (African-Surinamese mainly living in traditional villages in the interior, or in overcrowded households in Paramaribo) together they represent around 75% of the total population. In capital Paramaribo, and district Commewijne, the extended family respectively accounts for roughly 50% and 80% of the total households. Hindustani and Javanese extended families often live together, but otherwise the nuclear unit is the norm. Expensive housing in urban areas often forces three or more generations to live in the same household. A large share of women, especially among the Creole population, is single mothers. In Hindustani society, cohabitation and single motherhood are generally frowned upon, though families in Paramaribo tend to be more liberal than families elsewhere. Urban children may live with their parents during their twenties or until they marry. Unmarried children in rural coastal areas stay in the parental home longer than that (Culture Grams World Edition 2013: Suriname, 2013). The so called "Gotong Royong" is a characteristic of the Javanese Community. It is a self-help system where the families help with the construction and allocation of housing among themselves on land owned by the family (Dagblad Suriname, 2015). Such practices however are in the decline, but the cultural ideal of the family as a cooperative entity is still alive (van Niekerk, 2004). The role played by the family therefore acts as a cushion against the negative pressures emanating from the private housing market in the absence of adequate counteracting government activities, but the family structures are individualizing, which means that this cushion is slowly disappearing.

Social Housing in Egypt: Social housing has been a political issue for every Egyptian president ever since the formation of the Arab Republic. Gamal Abdel Nasser's industrialization policies led to a surge in rural migration at the time and led to the phenomenon of increased illegal urbanization with many informal settlements, while state housing programs proved unable to deal with this rush in the long run. Social housing, as well as social welfare in general have in the past served several different purposes. Despite the obvious effect of providing adequate housing to citizens, it can also be part of economic endeavors, part of



IN EGYPT

general policies and ideology or simply an element of election campaigns. While Nasser's socialist approach towards state and policies is likely to be part of his promotion of social housing, it was probably also an easy way for him to gain popularity and to further his industrialization program, which required some degree of urbanization. It can be stated that most programs follow very similar approaches. While some utilize the private sector and others rely on the state, they always provide subsidized social housing in specific projects and secluded areas. Nonetheless, these projects have thus far rarely been able to ease the pressure on society and the low-income market and never succeeded in making informal housing obsolete or reach a long-term solution for Egypt's housing issue. It remains to be seen whether future housing will begin to bridge the qualitative and quantitative gap between supply and demand.

Better homes in Egypt:

Social housing and more quality residences have been the focus of government efforts in housing over the past four years, with special attention paid to shantytowns

The Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development has "changed the concept of social housing. While during the rule of former president Hosni Mubarak, social housing units measured some 60 square metres, now units are 90 square metres in size, comprising three bedrooms and a living area and are sold fully finished, he said. These units were sold via a mortgage system, in which owners pay a down payment and then installments. "The down payment is LE11,000, with monthly installments ranging between LE400 and LE900 for up to 20 years".

Egypt's story highlights:

- As much as one quarter of Egypt's population of more than 80 million live in informal housing areas.
- Egypt needs to build about 300,000 new homes for newly formed households.
- Construction makes up about 5% of Egypt's GDP, while real estate represents another 3%, contributing to about 12.5% of economic growth and 7% of jobs.

WORLD'S MOST IMPRESSIVE SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECTS

As populations grow and cities become more crowded than ever before, public housing has become an increasingly important issue for governments around the world. However, social housing is no longer limited to characterless blocks of concrete. These days, the aim is often to provide low-cost housing to individuals and families who need it - but living in dignified way, in a beautiful environment, in an aesthetic manner!

These modern public housing projects frequently incorporate eco-conscious designs and elements, as efficient energy usage tends to be a priority. Here we look at 30 of the world's social housing developments that break the mold, undoing negative stereotypes and serving as remarkable works of architecture in their own right.

Some impressive social housing projects in the world

France: Social Housing (PLI and PLA dwellings), Jakob + MacFarlane, Paris XIX



Mirador Housing Project – Madrid, Spain:



Torre Plaça Europa – Barcelona, Spain:



Tetris Apartments – Ljubljana, Slovenia:



Vivazz, Mieres Social Housing – Asturias, Spain:



Social housing on Quaker Street in the Shoreditch area of East London:



Public housing In Inala, one of Brisbane, Australia:



Mexico: Social Housing, Arkham Project:



Egypt: Tahya Misr housing project in Al Asmarat district, in Cairo's suburb of Mokattam:



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