



HOUSING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CITIES

POLICY GUIDE TO HOUSING FOR
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CITIES

Urban Policy Guides for Indigenous Peoples

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It is the first guide out of a set of urban policy guides on challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples in the City.

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Foreword

The lack of recognition of the right of self-determination and the large-scale dispossession and degradation of their lands, resources and territories has had a devastating effect on indigenous peoples' livelihoods, cultures and overall socio-economic conditions. Widespread poverty and destitution flowing from this has had a significant impact on their housing. Indigenous peoples often lack security of tenure and live constantly with the threat of forced eviction from their homes and/or lands. In some countries, indigenous peoples are often found in over-crowded houses that are in poor condition and that often have neither schools nor hospitals nearby. Indigenous women and men face discrimination in most aspects of housing. Housing and development policies and programmes either discriminate against indigenous peoples directly or have discriminatory effects. The loss of traditional lands and housing contributes to the increased migration of indigenous peoples to urban centres, where barriers to adequate housing (such as unemployment/poverty, discrimination, and lack of affordable and adequate housing) are particularly acute.

Indigenous women in particular often bear the brunt of these inadequate conditions. At the same time, they experience gender-specific problems, such as domestic violence, together with discrimination and inequality as a result of institutional and cultural factors. These often curtail or prohibit women's access to, control over and the right to inherit land, property and housing. Indigenous peoples with disabilities, youth and children, elders and sexual minorities also experience greater adverse conditions in housing.

These inadequate and discriminatory conditions prevail even in those countries where domestic laws and mechanisms are supposed to promote equality and protect against discrimination in housing and/or legislation recognizing land title rights for indigenous peoples. In many instances, States have also ratified international conventions or treaties that secure the housing and land rights of indigenous peoples, but these international legal obligations often appear to fall by the wayside in the face of international trade agreements and development interests.

In some countries and cities, though, indigenous communities, as well as national and local governments, public and private institutions are taking initiatives to improve the housing conditions of Indigenous peoples migrating to cities. This guide aims to learn from these initiatives and best practices.

The development and implementation of housing policies based on international human rights is essential to the improvement of the housing and living conditions of indigenous peoples across the world. This policy guide is designed to assist with this challenge.



House construction by Hmong,
Sapa, Vietnam
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