

Dignity and Human Rights in the Built Environment

A Framework for Action



Melbourne
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As investment in urban areas and infrastructure seeks to respond to the climate crisis and stimulate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, approaches grounded in human dignity will be essential. This involves active participation by local communities, respecting the rights of workers, expanding access to adequate housing and services for all, and ensuring that all decisions are free from corruption.

The Framework for Dignity in the Built Environment provides a vision for respect for human rights throughout the built environment lifecycle and guidelines for action. The Framework is not a new set of standards. Instead, it is based on international human rights standards and the Sustainable Development Goals: it aims to be globally applicable, and locally adaptable.

The Built Environment Lifecycle



Siloed, disconnected approaches will fail to address root problems or lead to long-term solutions. Therefore, the Framework seeks to strengthen collaboration and accountability, harness leverage and create space for innovation at two levels:

- **Project Level:** embedding human rights approaches from the earliest stages of the project lifecycle, demonstrating leadership and sharing insights through a community of practice
- **Policy Level:** to scale action by government, finance and industry (architecture, engineering, and construction)

For each stage of the lifecycle, the Framework provides: a high-level vision; guiding questions to prompt decision-making; international human rights standards and the Sustainable Development Goals; and examples of tools and innovation for scaling. The Framework recognises that no single actor can transform the built environment in line with human rights, but all have roles to play.

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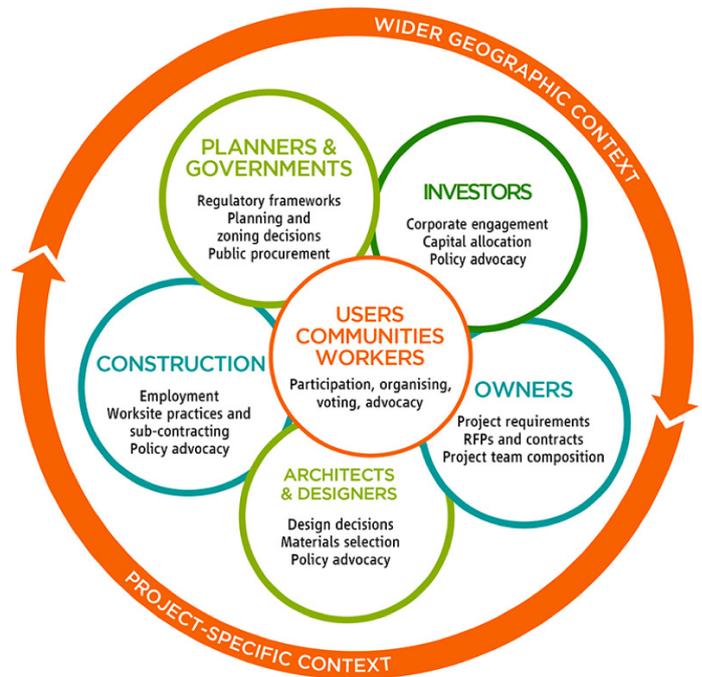


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Leverage Across the Built Environment

This infographic conveys the continuum of human rights risk and responsibility across the built environment lifecycle, the inter-relatedness of the actors, and points of leverage between them. The distribution of power between these actors largely determines the nature of the built environment - and whether it responds only to narrow financial interests or also to the needs of residents, particularly the most vulnerable.



Principles of a Human Rights Approach

Achieving a future of dignity and inclusion requires an approach that is based in human rights. Internationally-recognised human rights encompass civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

Find out more and get in touch
www.dignity-bydesign.org

ACCOUNTABILITY

Governments must create mechanisms of accountability for the enforcement of rights. Not only must rights be recognized in law and policy, but there must also be effective measures in place to hold governments accountable if the standards are not met – and for governments to hold third parties such as private sector actors accountable.

PARTICIPATION

People have a right to participate in how decisions are made regarding protection of their rights. Governments must engage and support the participation of civil society. Within the built environment this means that individual residents and communities must have clear avenues to have a say over the present and future of their neighbourhoods. Companies must consult local communities and other stakeholders prior to and during any project.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Human rights are universal. They must be afforded to everyone, without exception, and guaranteed without discrimination of any kind. This includes not only purposeful discrimination, but also protection from policies and practices which may have a discriminatory effect. Within the real estate, design and construction industries, non-discrimination applies to the context of their operations, and also to the recruitment, retention and advancement of employees.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency means providing information about decision-making processes related to rights, so that people know and understand how major decisions affecting rights are made.

