WORLD HABITAT AWARD WINNERS IMPROVE LIVES OF 1.1 MILLION PEOPLE

The World Habitat Awards were established in 1985 by the Building and Social Housing Foundation as part of its contribution to the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Two awards are given annually to projects from the global north as well as the south that provide practical and innovative solutions to current housing needs and problems.

Every year an award of £10,000 is presented to each of the two winners at the annual United Nations global celebration of World Habitat Day. Travel and accommodation costs are also met for one representative of each winning project to attend the awards ceremony.

This year’s World Habitat Award winners and finalists are together improving the living conditions of more than 1.1 million people around the world, as well as generating sustainable livelihoods, reducing energy consumption, providing access to housing finance and empowering marginalised groups.

1. COMMUNITY PROGRAMME FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT, MEXICO

A community initiated neighbourhood improvement programme using a participatory approach to improving public spaces in informal settlements and low-income neighbourhoods.

The Community Programme for Neighbourhood Improvement (PCMB) is a community-driven programme that was established in 2007 by the Social Development Secretariat (SDS) of the Federal District government of Mexico City. It uses a participatory approach to improving public spaces in informal settlements and low-income neighbourhoods, particularly those with high levels of social conflict, marginalisation and/or urban decay. Projects developed through the programme include illumination and paving of streets, provision of recreational, community and sports facilities, rain collection and drainage systems as well as small parks. Funds are distributed directly to the local communities, who are given full responsibility for delivering the projects selected, after training in financial and project management and with the support of the municipality. Over 500 million pesos (US$40 million) have been disbursed to date and the programme is ongoing, with 600 projects due to be completed by 2012.

2. HOUSING FOR HEALTH PROGRAMME, AUSTRALIA

Improving the health of Indigenous Australians by ensuring access to safe and well functioning homes and an improved living environment.

Initiated in 1985, the Housing for Health programme aims to improve the health of Indigenous people in Australia, by ensuring they have access to safe and well functioning housing and an improved living environment. It uses a survey and fix methodology for testing whether the houses are safe to live in and have functioning electrical and water supply systems. The Nine Healthy Living Practices pioneered through the project are now part of current federal and state government policy and knowledge gained through the Housing for Health projects has been used to develop a national Indigenous housing design code that respects cultural traditions and norms.