A great wave of urbanization is occurring during our lifetimes, which means that providing quality, affordable shelter for the billions of people moving into global cities is among the world’s most pressing challenges.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE & SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE HOUSING?

As more and more people live in cities, both great opportunities and major issues arise. In many countries rapid urbanization has led to the creation of economic, cultural and political strongholds, in others it lead to the formation of slums.

Cost is one challenge. Global consultancy firm McKinsey & Company estimates that the cost of providing affordable housing to the 330 million households currently living in substandard accommodation is $16 trillion.

Sustainability is another. While affordable housing development projects are being implemented, many do not consider the sustainability of such projects. This gap manifests itself in a reduced sense of ownership and community among home buyers, which in turn, can lead to abandonment of homes, defaults on mortgages, decline in brand value for developers, as well as unsafe neighborhoods.

Social sustainability in housing is about creating affordable, good-quality, inclusive, secure and healthy communities which are well-integrated into the wider urban systems. It takes into consideration cultural values, norms and traditions, as well as lifestyles and behaviors of occupants.

To build socially sustainable homes, it is important to understand and plan for complex issues, which are often not addressed at the conceptualization of an affordable housing project.

Social sustainability connects the design of the physical environment with how the people who live in and use a space relate to each other and function as a community. It is enhanced by development which provides the right infrastructure to support a strong social and cultural life, opportunities for people to get involved, and scope for the place and the community to evolve.

How do we ensure long term sustainability when building new residential communities?
ASHA (Affordable and Socially Sustainable Housing Application) tool, developed by IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, provides guidelines and good practice collected from both developed and emerging markets around the world, and aims to facilitate socially sustainable residential projects. The guide is focused on the social aspects of building new housing and the information is evidence-based with an emphasis on solutions. It is a global framework within which a more clearly defined context might be detailed.

**WHAT IS ASHA?**

ASHA has been developed as an on-line tool which enables its users to filter and customize results based on the size of the project, how critical or essential the guideline is and on resources the developer/builder is prepared to put into the housing development.

ASHA guidelines are categorized into the three phases of project development, namely: pre-development, master planning and design and post-occupancy.

Finally, ASHA also provides the user with additional, detailed information about each of the case studies that exhibit good practice or provide learning and which have been used as the basis of the guidelines provided within the tool.

**HOW TO USE ASHA?**

ASHA tool can be accessed on-line from the IFC website at www.ifc.org/asha. In order to start using the tool you will need to register by providing basic information such as your name, company and email address.

**QUESTIONS?**

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ASHA enables a developer, designer and policy maker to obtain guidelines based on the requirements and priorities of the housing project.
Guidelines resulting from good practice from around the world (38 case studies from both developed and emerging markets).

Evidence-based information with a strong emphasis on solutions'

VISIT
WWW.IFC.ORG/ASHA
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MAKING YOUR HOUSING PROJECT SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT OVER THE LONG TERM.
CASE STUDY

VBHC Vaibhav, Bangalore, India

Key Features are mixed use planning, amenities, access to finance, open spaces, energy efficiency, culturally appropriate layouts and community building.

Vaibhava Bangalore is a flagship project which is redefining the rules of affordable housing. It provides its clients with good quality construction at an affordable price. This particular project encompasses the development of 1.1 million sq ft which includes 1854 apartments, a primary health center, a commercial complex tower and other amenities.

A variety of apartment options are available and vary in size from 614 sq ft to 989 sq ft. The apartments are compact and have efficiently planned layouts that do not compromise on functionality. Smart design ensures every essential home need is provided — a kitchen counter, refrigerator, washing machine, loft storage, wardrobe niche, as well as adequate areas for living and sleeping. Provision of a separate WC, bath and wash basin allows simultaneous use of these by three people, so that the unit occupation can be higher without inconvenience. The sixth and seventh floors come with built-in solar geysers. The balconies serve as a multi-purpose break-out space.