Inclusive Housing for Marginalized Communities in Uganda

Submitted By: Initiative For Persons Infected and Affected Masaka

Organization Profile

Organization Name: Initiative For Persons Infected and Affected Masaka

Organization Type: Civil society

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Practice Details

Country(ies): Uganda

City(ies): Western and Central Uganda

Start Year: 2021 **Ongoing:** Yes **End Year:** N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:



Relevant SDGs:



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Problem & Context

Uganda faces a deepening housing crisis marked by rapid urbanization, high rental costs, and exclusionary policies. Marginalized groups particularly LGBTQI+ persons, womn, and displaced individuals are most affected, often denied access to safe and affordable housing due to discrimination, harassment, and arbitrary evictions. Existing housing policies do not address their realities, leaving gaps in protection and support. Criminalization of LGBTQI+ identities worsens vulnerability, forcing many into informal, unsafe, or overcrowded settlements. At the same time, communal and self-build housing models that could offer alternatives remain under-supported. The absence of disaggregated data on marginalized groups further limits evidence-based interventions, while community-led shelters and safe housing initiatives remain underfunded and excluded from national frameworks.

Solution Developed

Our housing practice responds to the exclusion and discrimination faced by marginalized groups in Uganda, especially LGBTQI+ persons, womn, and those displaced by violence. We established safe shelters and communal housing models that provide secure accommodation and access to essential services such as water, sanitation, health referrals, psychosocial support, and legal aid. These spaces ensure dignity and protection for those at risk of eviction, homelessness, or harassment.

The objectives are: (1) to provide immediate, safe, and affordable housing for marginalized individuals in crisis; (2) to safeguard housing rights and reduce exclusion; and (3) to pilot scalable, community-driven housing approaches that can influence national policy.

The practice is unique in combining peer-led housing management with rights-based advocacy. Residents co-govern shelters, building solidarity and resilience, while the model simultaneously pushes for inclusive housing policies. This dual approach delivers immediate safety while offering a replicable pathway to long-term housing justice.

Implementation

Implementation involved a combination of safe shelter provision, communal housing models, and advocacy for inclusive housing rights. Actions included identifying and securing safe housing spaces, equipping them with basic services, training peer leaders in housing management, and linking residents to health, psychosocial, and legal support. Community dialogues and policy engagement complemented service delivery to push for long-term inclusion.

Key actors included local NGOs and CBOs (led implementation, managed shelters, provided services), community groups (peer-led governance, mobilization, solidarity), and international

partners (technical and financial support). Limited engagement with local authorities occurred mainly in referrals and advocacy spaces.

The process began with planning and needs assessments in 2022, pilot shelters launched in 2023, and scaling through 2024–2025. Resources included donor grants, in-kind community contributions, and partnerships with health providers and legal aid organizations. Together, these inputs sustained housing provision and ensured replicability.

Enablers & Obstacles

Enablers: Implementation was supported by strong community engagement through peer-led governance, fostering ownership and solidarity. Local NGOs and CBOs, together with donor funding and partnerships with health and legal service providers, enabled effective shelter management and service delivery. Data collection and needs assessments guided targeting of vulnerable populations.

Obstacles: Limited government support, restrictive policies, and social stigma hindered access to housing for LGBTQI+ persons. High demand and resource constraints also strained capacity. These were addressed through community mobilization, partnerships with sympathetic service providers, and combining direct shelter provision with rights-based advocacy to ensure continuity and protection of marginalized residents.

Results & Impact

The housing practice has delivered significant quantitative and qualitative results. Since inception, over 700 marginalized individuals, including LGBTQI+ persons, womn, and displaced persons, have accessed safe and secure housing, with 85% reporting improved safety and reduced exposure to eviction or harassment. Peer-led governance has enhanced community cohesion, with all residents participating in decision-making and management of shelters. Access to basic services water, sanitation, health referrals, and psychosocial support has improved living conditions and promoted dignity.

Low-income households and marginalized groups benefited directly through affordable, inclusive housing, reducing reliance on informal settlements and unsafe accommodations. Residents reported enhanced mental well-being, social inclusion, and economic stability, with some engaging in income-generating activities enabled by secure housing.

Broader impacts include strengthened community resilience and solidarity networks, demonstrating a replicable model for inclusive, rights-based housing solutions. The initiative has informed advocacy for more inclusive policies, promoting social equity and contributing to long-term urban stability. Environmentally, communal housing reduces urban sprawl and encourages efficient use of existing infrastructure, supporting sustainable urban development.

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Replication & Scale Up

Replication is possible with strong community engagement, peer-led governance, and partnerships with local NGOs/CBOs. Key factors include protective legal frameworks, access to basic services, and social solidarity networks. Funding constraints remain a critical challenge; sustainable replication requires donor support, government backing, or local resource mobilization. Adaptation to local culture, infrastructure, and population needs is essential to maintain inclusivity, safety, and scalability in diverse contexts.

The practice can be scaled up by partnering with NGOs, CBOs, and government agencies to expand safe shelters and communal housing. Peer-led governance and community engagement ensure sustainability. Documenting best practices and creating toolkits or guidelines support replication. Expanding reach requires diverse funding sources, including donors and public-private partnerships, while maintaining inclusivity, safety, and quality services for marginalized populations.

Policy Uptake

This housing practice is a new or innovative practice that is not yet adequately or fully integrated into formal policy frameworks.

Governments should recognize inclusive housing as a rights-based approach, protecting LGBTQI+ persons, womn, and displaced groups. Policies should support community-led housing models, provide incentives for affordable and safe housing, and integrate services like health and legal aid. Strengthening data collection will guide evidence-based decisions. Formalizing partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, and the private sector ensures sustainable funding, scalability, and long-term impact.

Lessons & Takeaways

In hindsight, greater government engagement could reduce regulatory barriers and enhance formal support. Diversifying funding sources earlier would improve sustainability and allow more shelters. Strengthening data collection and impact monitoring would enhance targeting and policy advocacy. Expanding community sensitization on LGBTQI+ inclusion would reduce stigma and foster acceptance, making the initiative more scalable, resilient, and effective across diverse contexts.