

HabPost

Updates from
UN-Habitat

UNHABITAT

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Fundraising: The power of
storytelling — and data

Editor's note

Dear Reader,

It is soon the end of a very unique year. Unique for the world as we continue to fight the ongoing pandemic, and unique for us as an agency having to grapple with the added challenges brought about by the effects of the disease on our work and the communities we serve.

In this last issue for the year 2020, we focus on tips and tricks to better tell our story. As we move towards another year of challenges, we need to recognize that the way we communicate our impact will be crucial in making us stand out. We hope to continue to produce content to help you in your work, so do not hesitate to get in touch with feedback and suggestions.

And with the year closing to an end, our Executive Director has a message for you in HabPost. Don't miss it!

Happy Holidays, and happy reading.

The HabPost Team



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Alerts

COVID-19

- As of 14 December 2020, there were over 70 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including close to 1,6 million deaths, reported to WHO. Monitor the situation [here](#).
- The Op-Ed by the Executive Director promoting cities as catalysts of change and mentioning the upcoming Cities and Pandemics Report is now on the Thomson Reuters Foundation [website](#).
- The [Donate Now](#) button to our corporate website is now available. The function will allow individual contributions to support UN-Habitat, particularly in our rapid response to emergencies and crises, and can be used for fundraising efforts, crowd sourcing and other outreach with the public.
- The UK announced that they have vaccinated [tens of thousands](#) of people against COVID-19.
- As the world prepares to distribute COVID-19 vaccines, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director General of IOM stressed that [health services must be inclusive of all people](#), including migrants, refugees and internally displaced and stateless people.
- Ahead of the holidays, review ventilation tips in this [visual guide](#) by researchers from University College Cork!



► Season's greetings from the Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

The year 2020, which was to be our year of implementation, has been defined by a global pandemic that continues to hold the world in its grip. UN-Habitat has played its part in contributing to the Secretary-General's advisory on COVID-19 in an Urban World. In our own small way, we have successfully completed 13 immediate response projects providing basic services, policy guidance and on the ground remedial assistance to the most vulnerable communities in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Brazil, the Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Iraq, Tunisia, and Egypt.

At the same time, we need to be pragmatic. The difficult financial situation we find ourselves in today makes it hard for us as an agency to deliver at the levels we want. If this situation does not improve by the end of the first quarter of 2021, we will be forced to seek the intervention of the Secretary-General. This can take the form of an official downsizing, which we hope to avoid at all costs. Accordingly, I have already submitted an appeal to the Secretary-General to prioritize UN-Habitat in 2022.

In the rebuilding of the post-COVID world, we must still live up to the promise of our mandate. And this mandate cannot be implemented without you, the personnel of UN-Habitat. So allow me to take this opportunity to recognize, thank, and acknowledge the good work of all: the impact of your contribution is well-acknowledged by donors, recipient communities, and also by the wider UN family. We are all indebted to your resilience, and I am indeed personally most grateful for the continued support — you can count on me to support our mission to leave no one and no place behind.

Against this backdrop, I send season's greetings to all of you and hope for a healthy, successful year ahead. I truly hope you will be able to breath, connect with loved ones, and take care of yourselves during the Holiday period.



Once again, thank you all. I look forward to our continued collaboration in 2021 for sustainable cities and communities.

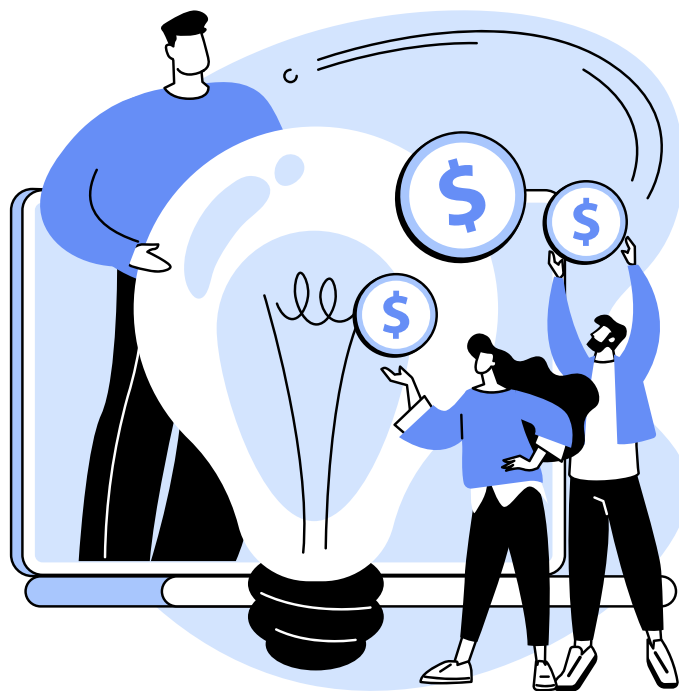
Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director, United
Nations Human Settlements
Programme (UN-Habitat)

Fundraising: The power of storytelling — and data

Over the past few years, UN-Habitat has been operating in an increasingly competitive funding environment, where the need to show results has never been greater. General purpose funding has shrunk, and the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to secure funding. But this decline is not specific only to UN-Habitat.

As we know, the UN System as a whole has been experiencing a decline in assessed contributions. In his address to the Fifth Committee in 2019, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, “we are at a tipping point and what we do next will matter for years to come... The solution lies not only in ensuring that all Member States pay in full and on time, but also in putting certain tools in place.”

Since 2018, UN-Habitat has been working diligently to regain the confidence of Member States by putting in place tools and systems to enhance transparency, accountability, and impact. A comprehensive Resource Mobilization Strategy was developed, and steps have been taken to diversify our donor base; UN-Habitat is notably one of the first UN Secretariat agencies to feature a [Donate Now](#) button on its website to encourage contributions from wider sources. The agency has further focused on engaging systematically with the private sector and has also looked at ways to structure outreach via a Foundations and Philanthropy Platform to explore areas of common interest and support sustainable urban development.



And to improve engagement with donors, a donor focal point system was established this year within UN-Habitat.

To meet fundraising targets for 2021, a whole-of-house approach will be essential. As the year comes to an end, this issue of HabPost aims to provide some helpful fundraising tips, and for this first series in particular, to highlight the importance of communicating results through impact storytelling.

Power of storytelling

We hear a lot about “impact storytelling” in the development sector, and for a good reason. Evidence shows that [stories have a unique power of persuasion](#), especially when they are told using the right mix of rhetoric and facts.

In recent years, impact storytelling has emerged as a popular and important strategy for capturing

and communicating the results of programmes or projects to various audiences around the world. Traditional approaches to programme evaluation that rely on structured questionnaires and statistical data fail to give programme participants, donors, and implementing partners the chance to tell their stories in their own words. Stories have the power to uncover the social reality of a certain problem, provide information missing from traditional data-gathering strategies, and help formulate more localized and bottom-up informed actions to solve issues. Incorporating impact storytelling in traditional qualitative and quantitative approaches to evaluating programmes can prove a powerful tool for inspiring action, driving change, influencing thought leaders, increasing accountability, and providing donors with an idea of the micro-level dynamics of their impact.

Block by Block

One example of impact storytelling can be found in UN-Habitat's work on Block by Block — the collaboration between UN-Habitat and the gaming company Mojang Studios. Block by Block is an innovative approach to public participation which uses [Minecraft](#), the most popular video game in history, as a co-creation tool for the work of UN-Habitat on public space. Since 2012, the partnership has raised around USD 10 million for the Global Public Space Programme, enabling UN-Habitat to implement a sustainable public space approach leading to improved public spaces in more than 87 cities in 49 countries.

One of the top reasons why donors don't give again is because of a lack of communication: they don't know how money is being used. Make sure they know you couldn't do it without them, update them on the financial status, progress and results throughout the grant period, and on impact beyond. Don't forget to thank donors for their contributions.

Impact storytelling was quickly identified as a key communication strategy given the non-traditional nature of the funding partner. The [Block by Block programme](#) has been producing several high-quality videos focusing on telling stories including a [promotional video](#) and several project videos such as the one on [Kosovo](#) showcasing the participative transformation of a public space and featuring the voices of participants. Together, these videos have reached nearly one million viewers, demonstrating the communicative potential of the Minecraft brand. The project has also been using images and videos to document the more than 120 projects so far implemented, and has kept the donor informed of progress with regular reports.



Media outreach has been successful, with stories appearing in several global media outlets, including Le Monde, The Guardian, Time Magazine, Mashable, El Pais, and Der Spiegel. In 2016, a feature-length documentary, [Gaming the Real World](#), was released by a TV production company, and in 2019, the [New York Times](#) wrote a major cover story on UN-Habitat's use of Minecraft for community participation.

After the acquisition of Minecraft by Microsoft in 2015, UN-Habitat, Microsoft and Mojang jointly created the Block by Block Foundation, a nonprofit organization aiming to fundraise for UN-Habitat's efforts to improve public space. As part of the launch of the Foundation, Microsoft Story Labs — an impact storytelling department at Microsoft — wrote an impact story about Block by Block called [Block Party](#), which reached

a major audience inside Microsoft. Capitalizing on the success of Block by Block, UN-Habitat and Microsoft signed in 2019 a long-term strategic collaboration agreement to develop new initiatives on urban digital transformation.

But impact storytelling is a continuous process that requires constant focus and renewal. UN-Habitat is currently working closely with colleagues at Minecraft, Block by Block, and Microsoft to design and deliver appropriate impact stories so that all can become Block by Block — and UN-Habitat — champions in the future.



Coming up

As we get into the new year, we will be releasing more content on fundraising, best practice, communication, tips, and more to best engage with your donors.

Stay tuned!



Capturing and visualizing data and impact

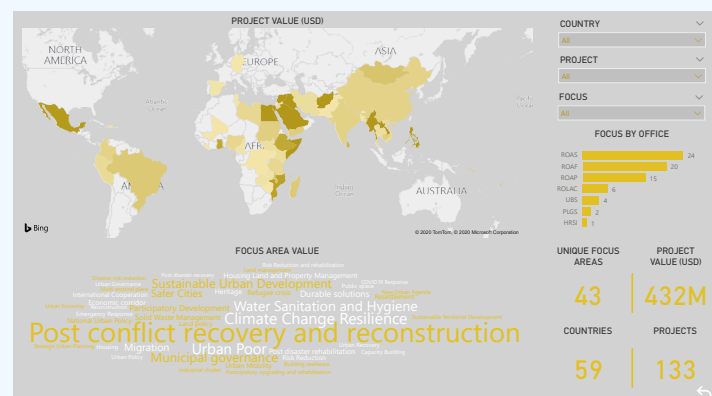
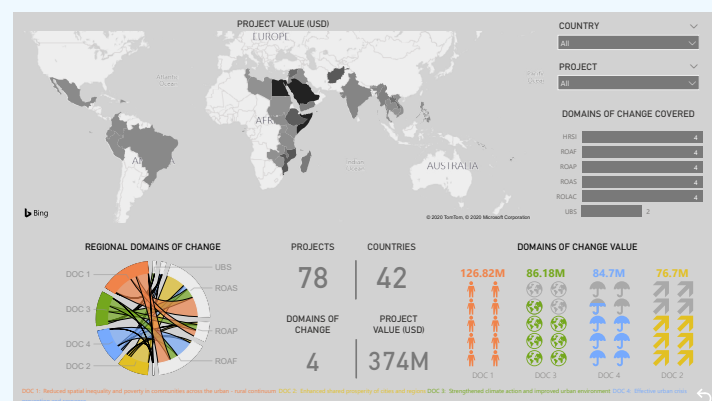
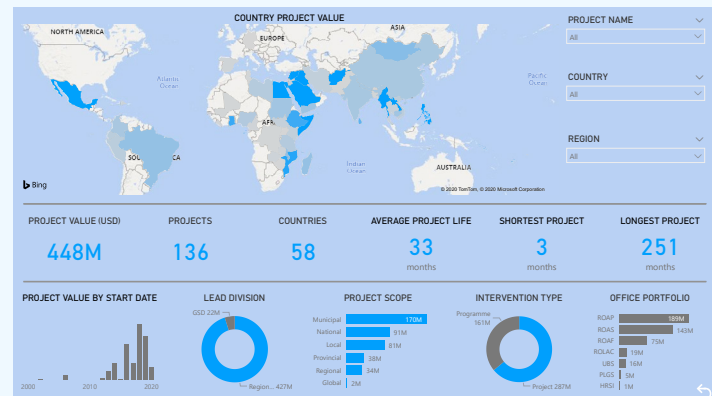
One of the most crucial means of maintaining trust with our donors and being transparent about our activities is to report, share information, and communicate about our work, delivery, and impact.

One tool donors appreciate is live data visualization that helps them to grasp information at a glance by offering strong, summarized interactive insights.

In March 2020, and as part of ongoing restructuring efforts, the premises for such a platform were laid down with the creation of the [Global Presence Dashboard](#). The Dashboard aimed to map our physical presence around the globe as well as capture a snapshot of our project portfolio across a number of entry points such as themes, project value, or domains of change.

The Dashboard was designed based on data retrieved from PAAS and completed by regional offices and the Global Solution Division. The platform stores information as of March 2020.

To take this to the next step and migrate towards a live, impact-oriented automated dashboard, efforts are currently being made to review and upgrade our information management systems. So far, project data and insights have been stored online in the [Project Accrual and Accountability System](#) (PAAS) and donor information in the [Donor Information System](#) (DIS). These two platforms, while useful, have shown some limitations and will be transformed to improve information collection and workflows, ensure systems integration, monitor our work, and provide a central and accurate repository of project information and visual insights.



This initiative goes hand-in-hand with the new operating modalities of the Project Review Committee (PRC) to make sure that all processes are connected in our efforts to remove redundancies in our work and improve the overall efficiency of our procedures.

And as always, feedback is appreciated — and needed — to make sure we leave nothing behind. You are encouraged to reach out to Rachad Nassar (rachad.nassar@un.org) for any information on the current Dashboard, and suggestions for improvement in future.

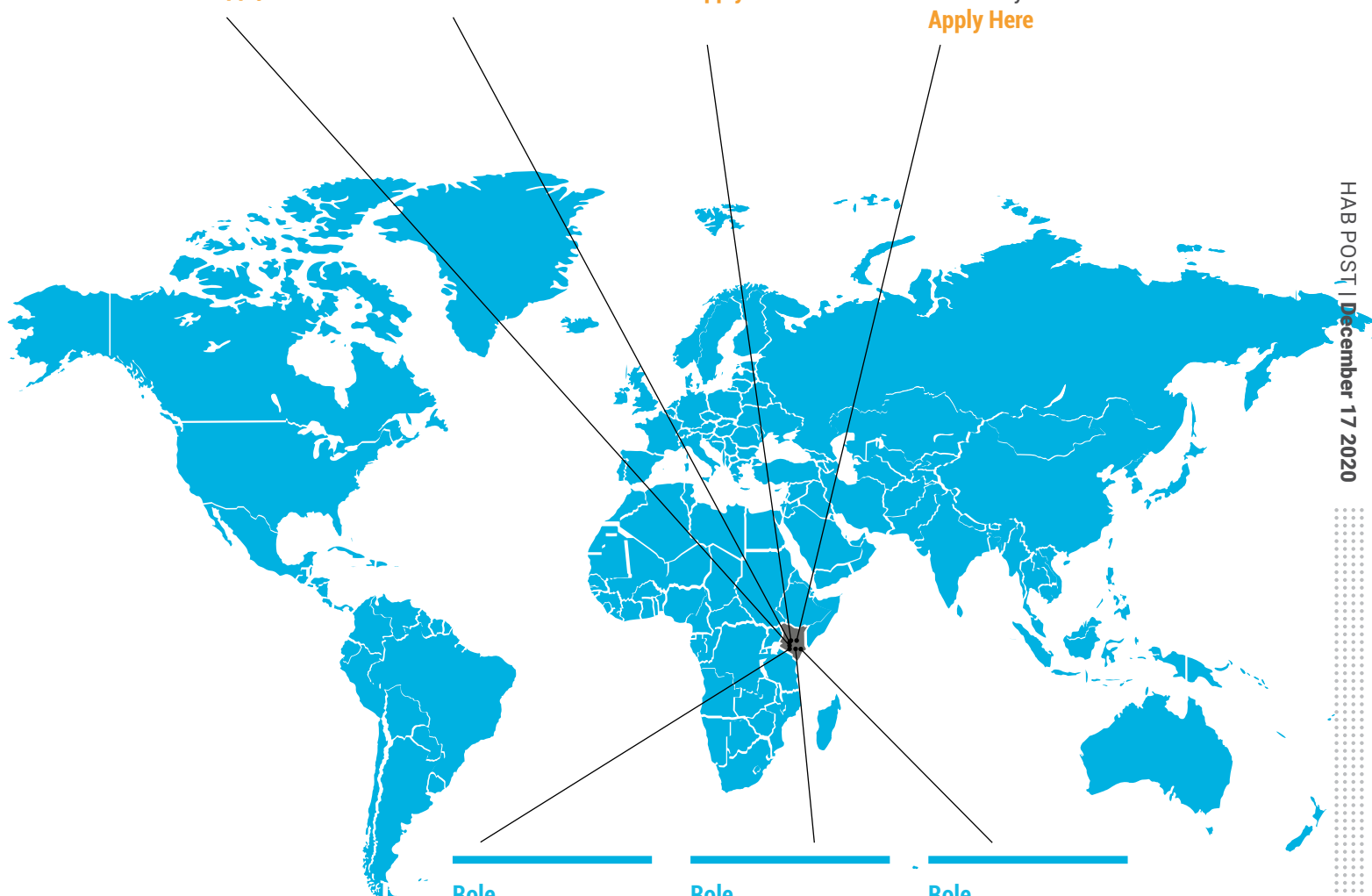
> Vacancies

Role
 Programme
 Management Officer,
 Human Settlements,
 P4
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 15 January 2021
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Programme
 Management Officer,
 P4
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 3 January 2021
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Chief of Management
 Advisory and
 Compliance Service,
 D1
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 2 January 2021
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Director, External
 Relations, Strategy,
 Knowledge and
 Innovation Division,
 D2
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 1 January 2021
[Apply Here](#)



Role
 Programme
 Management Officer,
 Human Settlements,
 P3
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 23 December 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Public Information
 Assistant
 (Temporary), G5
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 23 December 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
 Senior Research
 Assistant, Social
 Affairs, G7
Duty Station
 Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
 18 December 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Learning

Mandatory Courses

It is almost the end of the year. Have you completed all your mandatory courses?

Log in to [Inspira](#) to check!

The mandatory courses for all staff members include:

1. **BSAFE**
2. **Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse by United Nations Personnel – Working Harmoniously**
3. **HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Orientation Programme**
4. **Ethics and Integrity at the United Nations**
5. **Information-security Awareness Foundational**
6. **United Nations Human Rights Responsibilities**
7. **I Know Gender**
8. **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Personnel**
9. **Preventing Fraud and Corruption at the United Nations**

Happy learning!



Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at unhabitat-habpost@un.org.

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