

Build Change: Official Statement for Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2022

Bali, INDONESIA. Build Change is pleased to present this statement at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. We commit to reduce the risk of disasters in the housing sector.

Build Change mobilizes people, policy, money, and technology to transform systems for regulating, financing, building, and improving houses around the world. Together with our global partners, Build Change has helped safeguard more than \$1.8 billion in housing infrastructure assets around the world, improving the lives of 600,000 people and making over 100,000 buildings safer. Many of those buildings are right here in Indonesia, where we have been working since 2005.

The Urgent Opportunity for Better Housing

Now is the moment to invest in better, safer, and more equitable housing. By 2030, UN-Habitat estimates that three billion people—about 40% of the world’s population—will be living without adequate housing, a number that is increasing as a result of disasters.

In the case of earthquakes and windstorms, most deaths can be attributed to the collapse of poorly designed and built housing units. But hazards do not have to be destructive or deadly. Lives can be saved and disasters can be prevented by changing the way that we build. We can build better before the next disaster strikes.

Helen & Eusi’s Story

We have seen this in our work at Build Change, and I want to share the story of what disaster resilience means to homeowners.

When Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Philippines, Helen and Eusi Raloso and their children hid under a table. Their home was destroyed by the wind, along with those of most of their neighbors. The Raloso family was one of the first Build Change’s partners in the Philippines, receiving a grant to rebuild their house using safe practices.

Eusi and Helen led the rebuild of their home, telling us what they needed for a happy and functional home, and we made sure they were staying safe. They successfully rebuilt their home.

The story doesn’t end there. Just two months later, another massive storm, Typhoon Ruby, struck their town. They invited their neighbors to take shelter in their newly-completed house,



which passed our inspection for disaster-resistant standards. They sheltered 17 of their neighbors in their home, and there were no casualties. Everyone remained safe in the house that Helen and Eusi built with their own designs and with their own hands.

Build Change's Commitment to Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

Build Change stands firmly in its commitment to reduce the loss of life, housing and livelihood caused by disasters. We have made a voluntary commitment to the Sendai Framework, which we could not achieve without our partnerships with governments, businesses, philanthropists, financial institutions, engineers, and others.

Build Change commits to the following actions:

First, we advocate for prevention in addition to disaster response and recovery. In almost every country today, the greatest housing deficit is qualitative, not quantitative. In spite of this, most housing policies focus on building new homes, rather than strengthening and improving existing homes. New construction alone will not be able to safeguard the vast majority of the global population - we must make existing buildings the homes of today and the homes of tomorrow. On average, improving existing housing costs only 23% of rebuilding new in the same location. Providing resilient housing for all is within reach, if we look first to improving existing buildings.

Second, we empower homeowners to be change agents in housing resilience, in particular women and marginalized groups. Empowering the home occupant as the decisionmaker, i.e., the homeowner-driven approach, continues to be the most successful implementation model, and the most conducive to permanently changing unsafe construction practices. By prioritizing homeowner-driven approaches, we can secure greater homeowner satisfaction, leverage existing resources, and put money in the pockets of local workers.

Third, we strengthen the intersection between disaster resilience and climate resilience. The global community must facilitate approaches that improve the resilience of both new and existing housing through measures that strengthen their ability to withstand disasters and climate hazards and reduce the carbon footprint of the housing sector.

Against an increasingly uncertain future, a home is the ultimate protection for families. By improving existing housing and reducing vulnerabilities through prevention approaches, we can start saving lives and improving living conditions without delay. Let's end the vicious cycle of disasters and build stronger houses for a resilient future.