

Figure 10.2.10. Inadequate housing

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravated by problems

Network nodes: 126

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&CL=2&DR=C0449>



The residential environment has a most profound impact on human health, behaviour and satisfaction, since this is where people spend the greatest part of their lives, live as children and rear their own children and develop social habits. Although decent shelter is a basic human need, there are enormous shortcomings all over the world. More than a million people live in appalling housing conditions and there is a formidable global shortage of dwellings. This situation is likely to worsen rather than improve, particularly in urban areas. Mere statistics fail to capture the true dimension of the urban residential crisis. At the community level, it is aggravated in many countries by a growing polarization of the population according to the location and quality of their houses. Although overall living standards have risen in most countries over the past decade, the supply of housing to low-income families remains far too small. The urban poor also bear the greatest burden of the mismanagement of the urban environment, as it is in the poorer areas that essential services are of the lowest standard. The residential crisis looms largest in the metropolitan areas of the less industrialized countries, resulting in slums, scattered housing developments, mixed land uses, high rents, overcrowding and clandestine land occupancy.