

A Necessary Shift: Build a Better World with the Right to Housing - Q&A

- 1) **If everyone has a right to housing, how are we going to actually create the housing? How do we make the actual construction affordable?** *For me, the state has the core function and responsibility to ensure housing is being provided. It can do this via local municipalities, not for profit housing associations, cooperatives, in particular. It needs to create the public capacity to deliver housing.*
- 2) **Do you think people should own their houses or would you prefer council/stated owned houses/flats which people would be guaranteed to live in for the duration of their life?** *I think it depends on the country and the culture. What is not viable or sustainable is heavily indebted homeownership or unaffordable rents and insecure housing provided by corporate landlords. The most successful housing systems like Vienna in Austria have half the housing is state supported/non-market rental housing.*
- 3) **Thanks Rory. What role do you think Community Led Housing and Housing Coops can play in changing housing situations for individuals, groups and cities?** *For me, I think that has to be the future. To involve communities, citizens and populations in designing, delivering and managing their housing. Not in the neoliberal 'the state is no longer involved' way, but backed by the state, funded, supported. We have to replace predatory investor lead housing with community affordable housing*
- 4) **When we suffer from "natural disasters/God-made" disasters, the entire community comes together to assist those who are victims. However, when we suffer from "unnatural or man-made disasters" like homelessness, we politicize it and create many fighting perspectives. Why is this, and what can we do about it?** *A couple of things here...The romanticization of resistance initiatives (of survivors coming together to respond) purposefully forgets states' primary responsibility to act on behalf of these communities. It ends up weighting the already precarious conditions of vulnerable people. Most times, the capacity of people to respond has been depleted by "man-made disasters". We see on the ground people angry, exhausted, and more aware of the interplay between disasters, state neglect, and investors. But that is only happening - i think- because disasters have been nonstop. On what to do, i would say to amplify that relationship and to emphasize govt primary responsibility to act.*
- 5) **Hi does Canada has the right to housing enshrined in its constitution? Thanks.** *Canada does not have a constitutional right to housing, but it does have a legislated right to housing: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-11.2/FullText.html>*
- 6) **According to the Frameworks Institute, we need to think about ways to remessage our messages. For them, they think about system malfunctioning. How do we shift global thinking to a different perspective, namely that everyone needs a safe and secure place to live?** *I think the messaging is key - because at its heart is connecting with people. And people act when they feel connected to something. And that also answers your first question. It is interesting in Ireland - that what has connected with people is the idea that it is wrong that investor funds should be able to buy up the homes of families and convert them into unaffordable rental. What is the message- our housing system should ensure people can access affordable secure homes - not profitable commodities for investors. Housing is a human right - not an investment.*
- 7) **Statement : Ariadna, thank you for your direct challenges to philanthropy. I am on the Community Funding Committee for a small NYC based funder called the North Star Fund. I believe the NSF represents the philanthropic model you are referring to....www.northstarfund.org. Take a look! If you want to know more, my email is**

rob.robinson423@gmail.com *Hello Robert! I think we met some of your team during the EGA conference!*

- 8) To Ariadna particularly, as well as all panelists: given the long-haul nature of implementing the human right to housing and transforming the housing system - what advice would you give to Canada's Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, a newly-established human rights accountability mechanism with a focus on systemic issues? What would be the most important first steps for this mechanism once the Advocate is appointed? Indicators, indicators, indicators. Meet with local stakeholders and design indicators that resonate with IHRL but that may also work to sustain and assess your work!**