




**Human
Settlements
in Crisis**

Interlocking Stabilised Soil Blocks


Appropriate earth technologies in Uganda



Please send your feedback and suggestions
(including further case studies for consideration) to:

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foreword

I am pleased to share with you this publication, which is based on a collaboration between UN-HABITAT and Good Earth Trust (GET). GET is an organisation that promotes the adoption of high quality and environmentally friendly construction technologies in East Africa. By developing and promoting low-cost and sustainable building materials and construction technologies it is therefore contributing to the attainment of the Habitat Agenda and the overall goal of “adequate shelter for all”.

The civil war in Northern Uganda left thousands without homes and stripped the landscape of a good part of its trees and foliage. Inspired by UN-HABITAT’s Strategic Policy on Human Settlements and Crisis, our response has focused on helping to speed up the return of displaced persons and the process of reconstruction and recovery. Putting in place critical infrastructure and services is essential to this task. In a war-ravaged landscape, appropriate construction technologies help to ensure the recovery of the environment which is so essential in supporting people’s livelihoods. Darfur, Eastern Congo, and Somalia are other examples in the region where similar approaches have been piloted successfully and will hopefully be more widely utilized.

This publication also demonstrates how environmentally-friendly building materials and construction technologies can be made more affordable to the urban poor while still meeting rigorous building standards. These techniques also help in mitigating climate change by avoiding carbon emissions during the production of building materials and construction as well as by saving thousands of trees. This publication is intended to help promote the use of earth construction in a wider region where conditions permit, as part of our efforts to address the global challenges created by climate change.

It is my sincere hope that this publication will be a source of inspiration to all those who want to help change the way we deal with our environment while meeting the urgent housing needs of people in places like northern Uganda.



Anna K. Tibaijuka
Executive Director
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preface

Meeting the need for adequate housing of the world's population requires sustained investment and continued innovation, particularly in appropriate technologies that lower the cost of construction and the cost to the environment.

Interlocking Stabilised Soil Block (ISSB) technology is one such technology that is gaining growing recognition, notably in East Africa. Compared with alternatives such as fired brick, it offers lower construction costs at comparable quality, is suitable for a wide range of environments, and dramatically reduces the impact on the environment. With a growing number of organisations using the technology there is a need to improve communication and knowledge-sharing, to quantify and verify the benefits, and to develop efficient approaches for its promotion and adoption.

The purpose of this publication is to promote the use of the technology by sharing some case studies of successful ISSB adoption and adaptation to local contexts. It also highlights some of the challenges faced in developing and promoting the technology with some key lessons learned from the growing amount of practical experience. It is a contribution to the process of information exchange and a tool to build awareness amongst key stakeholders interested in the sustainable development of human settlements.

As the UN agency concerned with human settlements, UN-HABITAT is committed to supporting the development and promotion of this technology. The Good Earth Trust, which is dedicated to the promotion of such technologies and focusing specifically on ISSB, welcomes this publication as an important and timely contribution.

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