

IFHP & the City of Vienna: Catching up on social housing and the role of cities in implementing the UN SDG's

On May 10th, the IFHP took part in hosting a delegation of visitors from the City of Vienna at a visit to Bloxhub. The City of Vienna, a melting pot of languages, culture and ethnicity, consistently ranks high in international surveys on livability. In 2018, the City of Vienna was ranked as the world's most livable city by [The Economist Intelligence Unit](#) in its *Global Liveability Ranking*. Mercer's *Quality of Living* survey has consistently ranked Vienna on top [for a decade](#). Additionally, Monocle ranked



Above: IFHP Presents to Viennese delegates at Bloxhub

Vienna third in their [Quality of Life Survey](#) in 2018. The delegate visit was occasioned by an interest in the town planning and land area use practices of the City of Copenhagen and its proximate areas.

The delegates were interested in learning about the Copenhagen approach to residential area development as well as sustainable urbanization. With regards to the prior, the city of Copenhagen offers insight on how to ensure that housing policy and practices integrate the scales that make up social, inspiring cities. With regards to the latter, the City of Copenhagen offers inspiration on how to increase the density of greenery in an urban area, to accommodate for the discharge of rainwater and to improve air quality.

For the IFHP, the visit occasioned a tour down memory lane in recollection of its multiple previous collaborations in and with the City of Vienna. Back in 1926, the IFHP held its 10th IFHP Congress in the city of Vienna. As a result of the Congress, the City of Vienna took inspiration of the Garden City Movement, initiated by IFHP founder Sir Ebenezer Howard, as a model for delivery of affordable and accessible housing. IFHP Congresses have subsequently been held in Vienna, in 1956, 1974 and most recently in 2003.

IFHP admires cities like the City of Vienna for their strong social tradition of affordable housing, which is a key element of social sustainability on all levels, from the individual household to the social fabric of a neighborhood to the social make of a city at large. Cities are the domain of multiple emerging narratives that all bear important lessons on how we can and should improve them. Whether the object is smart cities, sustainable urbanization, circular urbanism or something else, working towards sustainable cities requires the recognition that cities are built by and for the people that inhabit them. Therefore, as one delegate remarked, *“A smart city is not just a sharing city, it is not just a social city, a smart city is a caring city.”*



This insight aligns completely with the background of the IFHP Social Cities Programme. The ambition of the IFHP Social Cities Programme is not only to encompass a broad range of parameters of social sustainability, but to above and beyond embrace both sharing and caring for our cities, neighbourhoods and households.

Above: The presentation occasioned a recollection of past collaborations

The delegates consisted of members of the Vienna City Administration, as well as members of its External Advisory Board, representing the Austrian Society for Landscape Architecture, the Vienna University of Technology, the Chamber of Labour Vienna, the Austrian Economic Chamber, as well as several private firms.

If you are interested in learning more about the Copenhagen approach to urban development or in setting up a delegate visit to Copenhagen, please reach out to us at info@ifhp.org.