

# Transformation of Developmental Housing Towards SDGs in Saudi Arabia

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the transformation of developmental housing towards SDGs in Saudi Arabia. The paper adopts the descriptive approach and in-depth analysis of housing theories, previous studies, and government statistical reports. The paper concludes that transforming developmental housing towards SDGs requires reforming housing policies, including community participation, social justice, partnerships, diversifying subsidy programs, and community empowerment.

**Keywords:** Developmental Housing, Sustainability, SDGs, Saudi Arabia.

## 1. Introduction

Housing production is not limited to the physical dimension, but rather includes aligning the social needs, environmental conditions, and economic capacity of low-income households. Target 11.1 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals emphasizes "ensuring access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services, and improving slums by 2030. Yet, "developmental housing" plays a role beyond simply providing a housing for low-income, as it impacts the social and economic context. Therefore, the production of developmental housing can help improve living standards, bridge the economic gap between segments of society, and eliminate forms of social marginalization in a context consistent with the SDGs (Alzamil, 2025). Developmental housing DH attempts to fill the gap in demand for housing that meets the economic capacity of very low-income and extremely low-income groups, thereby facilitating their social and economic integration. Furthermore, developmental housing helps maintain high levels of social equity and reduce the uncontrolled growth of informal housing areas in cities.

### 1.1. The Problem

In Saudi Arabia, the housing sector has witnessed remarkable development with the launch of Saudi Vision 2030. Household ownership increased to 63.74% by 2023 (Ministry of Municipalities and Housing, 2024). The Ministry of Municipalities and Housing launched the Developmental Housing Program that target the most vulnerable families, who are unable to obtain direct

financing due to weak financial solvency. In cooperation with housing associations, the program provided options for the most vulnerable families, including financial support, rental subsidies, or prefabricated housing. However, there is a lack of an enabling approach to developmental housing to advance society and the population's economies in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (Alzamil, 2024).

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 The Concept of Developmental Housing

"Developmental housing" is described as a subsidy program based on participatory efforts to support vulnerable groups who lack the financial capacity to afford housing. Developmental housing is viewed as part of the development plan process because it helps provide a housing stock that meets the needs of low-income families, while simultaneously upgrading the community and building infrastructure that promotes urban development (Alhajri, 2022).

### 2.2 Developmental Housing and SDGs

Alzamil (2025) pointed out that developmental housing overlaps with the (SDGs), including its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Modern housing policies emphasize that providing housing is not a strategic goal. Sustainable housing policies support an approach of empowerment, social participation, social justice, the creation of economic opportunities, and the rationalization of resources. Therefore, reforming the housing subsidy system requires the creation of a fair housing market.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This paper adopted a descriptive approach by analyzing a wide range of theories and studies related to developmental housing. First, the study began by analyzing United Nations reports on sustainable development, including Goal 11. Local data was collected based on reports from the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing. Second, the study attempted to interpret the concept of "developmental housing" as a subsidy program that targeting vulnerable groups within

the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. Third, the study compared local housing efforts and their alignment with the (SDGs), arriving at a conceptual framework that achieves a balance between physical, economic, and social dimensions.

#### 4. Results

Developmental housing targets families with very low-incomes or extremely low-income who are covered by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (Social Security). The developmental housing program provided 41,000 housing units, benefiting 207,885 people in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, a tenant support program was launched in cooperation with the "Joodeskan" platform, to support vulnerable families benefiting 5,500 people (Sakan, 2025). The support provided to eligible families based on triple financing, with the beneficiary paying one-third of the housing unit's value, while the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing and housing associations contribute two-thirds. Support is also provided to residents of rental units in cooperation with the "Joodeskan". The developmental housing programme focuses on providing housing units for vulnerable families (physical dimension) without a comprehensive development programme consistent with sustainable development goals. As shown in Table 1. there is a disparity in the distribution of developmental housing between regions that does not match the size of demand. The distribution of support to eligible families is influenced by the housing market, including land availability, housing unit prices, and partnerships.

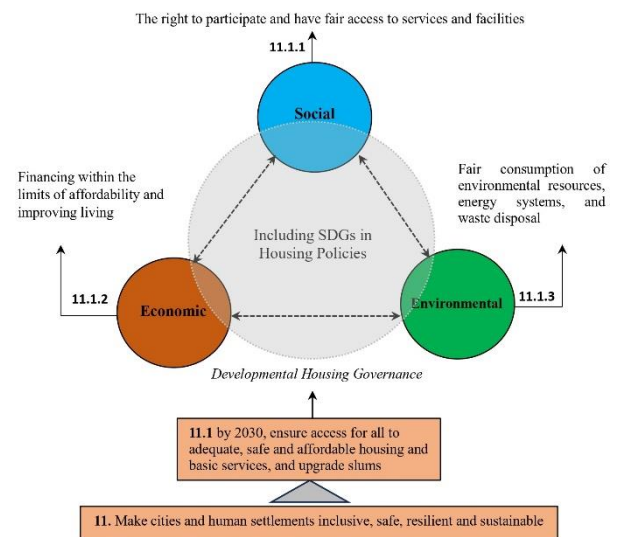
**Table 1.** Beneficiaries of DH

Regions	Code	No.	Ratio
Riyadh	RY	23,635	11
Makkah	MK	57,635	28
Eastern	ES	22,750	11
Madinah	MD	14,680	7.1
Asir	AS	17,370	8.4
Qassim	QA	12,645	6.1
Jazan	JA	16,275	7.8
Tabuk	TB	11,170	5.4
Hail	HA	8,370	4
Najran	NJ	5,815	2.8
Al Jowf	JO	8,540	4.1
Al Baha	BH	1,455	0.7
Northern	NO	7,545	3.6
Total		207,885	100

Recourse: (Sakan, 2025).

##### 4.1 Transformation model

To achieve SDG 11.1, housing policies should provide affordable housing with fair access to basic services and workplaces, efficient transportation, green spaces, and renewable energy systems in a way that serves current and future generations and achieves their social and economic well-being (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of developmental housing within SDGs. Recourse: Author based on (Mazáček, 2023), (Alzamil, 2016).

#### 5. Conclusion

Transformation of developmental housing towards SDGs in Saudi Arabia requires working to develop vulnerable families within a housing model that achieves a balance between social, economic and environmental factors. This can be achieved by reforming current housing policies to categorize eligible groups based on disparities in the housing market and average income. Housing policies should encourage collaborative efforts with the private and charitable sectors. This includes renovating dilapidated neighborhoods or housing unit maintenance. Furthermore, allocating affordable rental units in housing schemes and maintaining a housing expenditure ratio that does not exceed 30% of household income. Finally, development housing projects should not be limited to physical structures but also provide job opportunities and social development programmes.

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