

# WORKING TOWARDS A PLURALISTIC FUTURE

NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP  
NGO WITH SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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# WELCOME TO OUR SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

## DIRECTORS NOTE

BY DR JASDEV SINGH RAI (SHRG DIRECTOR) (LONDON OFFICE)

September is another busy month for the Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG) as the Human Rights Council (HRC) is in Session offering several opportunities to engage and make statements. Due to continuing COVID restrictions, the Human Rights Council is still restricting 'in person' attendance for civil society.

SHRG continued with its theme of pluralism through its statements. It raised its suggestion for the HRC to engage constructively with civil society NGOs and the need for human rights to be integrated across all UN and international agencies including the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

SHRG said that WTO tends to lean towards Big Corporations and western interests at the expense of human rights. SHRG stressed that WTO policies should pay attention to human rights, inequalities and poverty and that the HRC could insist upon them to be integral to any decisions.

SHRG requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to consider providing regular statistical record of NGO engagements with the Office of the High Commissioner from various sections of civil society. This would give confidence in the United Nation's commitment to inclusivity and engagement of civil society at the UN.

SHRG also raised its concerns over coercive methods adopted by some countries by enforcing economic sanctions on countries that they disagree with. Such sanctions need to go through the UN Security Council. They end up effecting the most vulnerable rather than targeted Governments.

SHRG reiterated its position that a pluralist approach to environment is needed. It reminded the Council that many civilisations had and/or have a long understanding of environmental issues and had and/or have well developed approaches to sustainability.

SHRG again raised its proposal for a Declaration on Diversity. The Declaration will compliment current human rights instruments and promote proactive policies to make all forms of diversity inclusive.

The statements are reproduced here in full and links to the actual video statements are also provided. SHRG is also increasing its scope of engagements and areas of work. It is building relationships with other NGOs to develop collateral projects consistent with its pluralistic approach.

**Dr Jasdev Singh Rai**  
**SHRG Director**

*Dr Jasdev Singh Rai*



# WELCOME TO OUR SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

## EDITORS NOTE

BY MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT

(EDITOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER & PROJECT COORDINATOR AT THE SHRG)

Welcome to the September 2021 edition of the Sikh Human Rights Groups newsletter informing you of our ongoing work. Unfortunately, we are not able to cover everything that we do in this brief newsletter. Nevertheless, and as you will see we are engaged in a wide variety of international human rights issues to promote our founding doctrine of Pluralism.

We have also recently taken on a number of interns who take up research, take notes during United Nations events and conferences and write reports. Consequently, we always try to encourage them to contribute to our newsletter.

If you would like to get involved in any of our ongoing projects or for anything else then please contact us via email at [info@shrg.ngo](mailto:info@shrg.ngo)

I very much hope that you enjoy the contents of this months edition.

**Mr Carlos Arbuthnott**  
**Editor and Human Rights Officer & Project Coordinator**

*Mr Carlos Arbuthnott*



# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On the 14th of September 2021 Sikh Human Rights Group Director, **Dr Jasdev Rai**, attended the 48th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and made the following oral submission. Specifically, under **Agenda Item 2 (General Debate)**:

## **Full text:**

The High Commissioner works hard to increase inclusivity of civil society in the Human Rights Council and engagement with the Office of the High Commissioner.

The High Commissioner has been a champion of civil society. After all human rights affect civil society and not States. Without active participation by civil society human rights discussions are merely academic without context and reference to reality.

It will be immensely helpful to have some reference to inclusion and engagement undertaken and opportunity offered by the Office of the High Commissioner and indeed the Human Rights Council in regard to civil society.

An audit, with statistics of incremental engagement in the High Commissioner's report on how many minority based organisations, disability organisations, LGBT+ organisations, regional organisations, environmental organisations etc... were met by the office would reassure civil society of the hard work undertaken by both NGOs and the High Commissioner.

While we recognise that not all issues raised here can be responded to, it will be heartening to know whether the Special Rapporteurs and Panels also engage with questions or issues raised by NGOs.

We raise this as there is often criticism in the general public that the UN is exclusivist and does not really engage equitably with civil society. We are sure, like us, the High Commissioner will be keen to dispel misunderstandings with statistical facts.

**To watch the full video please click [here](#)**



# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On the 15th of September 2021 **Ms Monica Gill** (Human Rights Officer at the SHRG) (New York Office) attended the 48th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and made the following oral submission. Specifically, at the **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Water and Sanitation**.

## Full text:

The Sikh Human Rights Group commends the Special Rapporteur on a forthright report on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. We strongly agree with his concern in **Point B11** that the conceptual and practical development of the human rights to water and sanitation remains a challenge in impoverished rural areas and with regard to hygiene requirements including from a gender perspective.

We believe that education in rural areas on water and sanitation needs to be promoted by the State. In many vulnerable societies, neither the simplest of amenities such as access to latrines nor the education on their necessity exists thus becoming a hindrance to sanitation.

We strongly support the suggestion in **Section D** that special consideration must be given to the needs and requirements of groups in vulnerable situations and that the institutions or entities responsible for water and sanitation management and services, including service operators, must regularly make available information and report to the public in a clear, easily accessible and transparent manner.

There has also been a tendency of some Governments to shut down water and sanitation services during times of dissent to further their own political prerogatives. Thus, we would also like to strongly highlight the Special Rapporteur's statement that water and sanitation services must be of quality, available and accessible to everyone on a permanent basis, without discrimination.

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On the 16th of September 2021 **Mr Ivan Lorenci de Francisco** (Human Rights Officer at the SHRG) (Geneva Office) attended the 48th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and made the following oral submission. Specifically, at the **Biennial Panel on Unilateral Coercive Measures with the Special Rapporteur on Truth**.

## Why is this important?

The objective of the Biennial Panel Discussion is to increase awareness among all stakeholders, including United Nations human rights mechanisms, of the negative impact that unilateral coercive measures have on the enjoyment of human rights in the targeted and non-targeted countries. It is also a platform for a continued exchange of views and experiences among Member States, academics and civil society experts, civil society organizations, human rights mechanisms and other relevant stakeholders, on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights. This year's panel discussion focused in particular on issues of jurisdiction and extraterritoriality that arise in connection with unilateral coercive measures and on 'overcompliance', made by public and private entities resulting from the intended interpretation of the expansion of extraterritorial jurisdiction.

## Full text:

We welcome the report on unilateral coercive measures. It is certainly a comprehensive compendium of information on unilateral coercive measures.

Likewise, we thank the Special Rapporteur for her efforts.

However, we are saddened to see how States and regional organisations make use of these measures without taking into account the Security Council, which is the main organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. This, unfortunately, is a deterioration in the rule of law.

At the forefront of the States that apply these measures are mainly Western countries, which often claim to be the champions of liberal democracy. However, this group of countries has been joined by others belonging to the Global South.

With regard to unilateral economic measures, it seems urgent to recall that, according to the definition given in **Article 7** of the **Rome Statute**, financially blocking a State is a crime against humanity.

Coercive practices used during armed conflict have been regulated at the international level over time in order to protect the civilian population. However, the regulation of non-forcible coercion outside armed conflict; in other words, economic coercion, is still in an embryonic state.

It is, therefore, necessary to work towards establishing clear and forceful legal limitations to unilateral economic measures as well as to work together for constructive dialogue solutions at the international level.

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



*Mr Ivan Lorenci de Francisco*

# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On the 17th of September 2021 Sikh Human Rights Group Director, **Dr Jasdev Rai**, attended the 48th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and made the following oral submission. Specifically, at the **Interactive Dialogue with the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development**.

## Full text:

We commend the members of the Expert Mechanism for their insights and achieving so much within a short time as is evident in the report.

We fully support **paragraph 41(b)** asking the Human Rights Council to authorise wider participation from civil society including NGOs without Consultative Status. Civil society is central to right to development.

In reference to **paragraph 17**, we support the suggestion that right to development should also be considered as a human right in the collective sense as well.

Debt plays an extremely important part in inequalities. Many developing countries cannot afford to provide even the basic the social protection necessary for their citizens due to the debt servicing.

We would like to propose that the right to development be inclusive of human rights and poverty as important markers and be made main stream across UN bodies, particularly the World Trade Organisation, and other institutions such as IMF and World Bank, that are important in development.

WTO policies favour developed countries and the big Transnational Corporations. Their puritanical approach to the market are hostile to the protections that countries have to introduce to address poverty and right to development at the community level.

We urge the experts to look into integration of poverty, human rights and right to development in WTO, IMF and World Bank policies particularly in areas such as small farming where WTO policies are antagonistic.

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On the 20th of September 2021 **Mr Carlos Arbuthnott** (Human Rights Officer and Project Coordinator at the SHRG) (London Office) made the following oral submission regarding climate change at the United Nations Human Rights Councils 48th Session. Specifically, at the **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development**.

## Why is this important?

This is important because *'it is only when people rediscover the reverence for nature, biodiversity, and other life forms in their own way, through their own customs, beliefs and cultures that our global population [as a whole] will act with greater passion for the protection of our environment, take ownership of their development and move away from what is currently found under the prevailing utilitarian, legalistic and rationalistic approach'*.

## Full text:

The Special Rapporteurs **Report A/HRC/48/56** offers a thorough and enlightened analysis into the many issues surrounding climate change and the right to development.

It is indisputable that almost all cultures, civilizations and community belief systems have some concept of the human relationship with the environment based on a deep understanding, reverence and experience.

Furthermore, we refer to **paragraph 104** of the Special Rapporteurs report that in order to integrate the right to development into climate action, Governments should consistently promote open channels for participation at all stages of the planning, implementation and monitoring of climate-related policies and programmes for all relevant stakeholders.

Opportunities should be provided for equal and meaningful participation of the most disadvantaged sectors of society, including persons with disabilities, women, children and young people, minorities, indigenous peoples, peasants, and members of other disempowered and marginalized groups.

However, what has occurred amongst State Governments and/or prominent environmental organisations and agencies is the gradual marginalisation of the environmental and climate wisdoms that cultures and community belief systems carry and which were embedded in traditions, customs, festivals and outlooks.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that it is only when people rediscover the reverence for nature, biodiversity, and other life forms in their own way, through their own customs, beliefs and cultures that our global population will act with greater passion for the protection of our environment, take ownership of their development and move away from what is currently found under the prevailing utilitarian, legalistic and rationalistic approach.

To watch the full video please click [here](#)





# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On the 21st of September 2021 Sikh Human Rights Group Director, **Dr Jasdev Rai**, attended the 48th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and made the following oral submission. Specifically, at the **Interactive Debate with the Independent Expert on International Order**:

## **Full text:**

We thank the Independent Expert for a forthright and ground breaking report on international order, particularly focussing on necessity of multilateral approach to tackling COVID and COVID vaccination.

We share his dismay that western countries, with the admirable exception of United States, are opposed to temporary waiver of patent protection for COVID Vaccination. These countries often lecture the world on human rights poverty reduction, reducing inequalities etc..., but at the time of humanity's need, their sermons ring hollow as they fail to walk the talk.

We support the call to end unilateral coercive action. Currently the people of Afghanistan will be in need of assistance to tackle COVID and impending humanitarian crises. The political factions that now govern have come through a twenty year war with scars and emotions of their own that may obscure their commitments to international human rights norms for some time.

We have faith that the OHCHR will be sensitive and diplomatic in its statements on and engagements with Taliban to ensure humanitarian assistance and COVID vaccination are not hindered for ordinary Afghans.

We take this opportunity to commend various Governments who brought out people under threat in Afghanistan and particularly the Indian Government for ensuring safe passage out and sanctuary for Sikh and Hindu minority community. This was multilateral international order at work.

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

At the start of September **Ms Bethan Walters** (Human Rights, Communications and Media Officer at the SHRG) (London Office) attended the **Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on 'Conflict Prevention and the Protection of the Human Rights of Minorities'** and made a statement that addressed how one solution to help protect minority groups and marginalised communities is for the United Nations to adopt a Declaration on Diversity. In the Special Rapporteurs, Dr Fernand de Varennes, closing statement he offered his support for a Declaration on Diversity and expressed how he hopes to be a part of this project.

Later in September, Ms Walters spoke at two events at the UN Human Rights Councils 48th Session. The first was under **Agenda Item 3** where she reiterated the need for a Declaration on Diversity to ensure those who are being ignored feel heard and represented and should not need to be at breaking point and/or a at the point of pure desperation until they get the support and recognition that they need.

The second event was on the **Annual Discussion on Integration of a Gender Perspective**, where Ms Walters spoke on the need to see an integration of gender intersectionality as a perspective. She reiterated if we see women of all walks of life and cultures involved at every level of decision making, then we can start to challenge the narrative that feminism has succeeded just because white women have made it into those positions.

## **Agenda Item 3: The Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

### **Full text:**

Item 3 is a wide agenda with many human rights issues raised. It also shows that human rights have progressed stage by stage and in parts - as various groups and issues have successfully drawn the attention of the United Nations bodies.

There are many different instruments that essentially derive legitimacy from the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The piecemeal approach also shows that various groups, especially the marginal communities often have to compete, campaign and struggle to reach recognition let along gain protection

Even at domestic level within States, diversity has been addressed mostly through a rights-based regime where groups and communities have to demand or struggle for respect, dignity and recognition.

We have been proposing a complimentary approach through a **Declaration on Diversity**, more comprehensive than the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

This will unify and compliment the current array of rights-based approach to diversity by encouraging States to take proactive steps to endorse and promote diversity. It will encourage society to accept rather than just tolerate the vast forms of diversity and biodiversity as the most natural of phenomenon and embrace it.

A **Declaration on Diversity** will complement the many different conventions, treaties and instruments through a single declaration of intent. It will be a voluntary commitment that States can sign up to as they feel ready and through exchange of best practices.

**To watch the full video please click [here](#)**

# 48TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

## Annual Discussion on Integration of a Gender Perspective

### Full text:

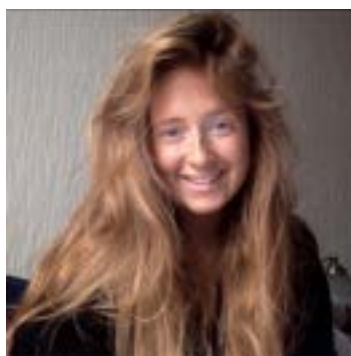
In many western societies Feminism is defined by the priorities of white women and how stability and success measure up for them. In these societies' poverty, access to food, education and shelter is often overlooked, as white women in the country do not generally face these issues.

We need to see an integration of gender intersectionality as a perspective. For too long the success of feminism has been based off the success of white women both in society and internationally. In contrast women of colour are more often the victims to gun violence, poverty, sex trafficking, undiagnosed or unaddressed health issues and are more likely to go missing or murdered.

We need to ensure we have women representation in all walks of life across the globe. We should not be content with tokenism but promote genuine representation from all cultures, demographics, races, classes, beliefs and value systems.

If we see women of all walks of life and cultures involved at every level of decision making, then we can start to challenge the narrative that feminism has succeeded just because white women have made it into those positions. I fear the world is becoming less tolerable and we need to stop that. To be an ally to the feminist movement you need to be involved in every form of injustice all women face, even if you cannot identify with that injustice or victim personally.

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



Ms Bethan Walters

# TOMORROW'S BATTLES ARE BEING LOST TODAY

BY MR IVAN LORENCI DE FRANCISCO (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (GENEVA OFFICE)



The United States, the United Kingdom and China, apart from being the three member countries of the United Nations Security Council, have something else in common. Live Facial Recognition or LFR. This technology is capable of cross-referencing in real-time the facial patterns of thousands of people with those of a police blacklist, which theoretically includes wanted criminals.

Intending to combat the use of violence, the exploitation of minors and helping to protect the most vulnerable, the Metropolitan Police Service (London) is willing to use LFR, a technology with an 86% false-positive rate (figures from the test carried out at Oxford Circus). On top of that, not only are they not helpful in recognising people, but in a display of effectiveness, this technology is riddled with racial bias. What is worse, if someone is arrested based on the LFR technology and it later turns out that they are not the person being sought, their arrest remains in the system.

Today, in an age where technological advances are outpacing legislators, we see these types of technologies being used indiscriminately in direct contravention of privacy rights and data protection laws, among others.

Civil society must become aware of the fact that, as Great British courts have previously concluded, a facial biometric template (such as those used by LFR systems) is intrinsically private information. This awareness is necessary in order to unveil the extent to which this technology invades personal privacy. And more precisely, this awareness is more than ever essential in the UK because of the normalization that has been given to video surveillance in that country. Currently, in fact, there are just over four million cameras throughout the country, more than half a million of which are in London alone.



# PUNJABI DIASPORA FARMING

BY MS MONICA GILL (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (NEW YORK OFFICE)

The year 2020 will go down in history as the year which woke up the consciousness of the entire globe. We saw the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed the Black Lives Matter movement come into full effect, and we saw millions of Punjabi diaspora members get vocal about the Farmers Protest happening in India.

The Indian Farmers are protesting laws which the Indian Parliament hurriedly passed in contravention of normal Parliamentary procedure rules in mid-2020 with a voice vote and without a debate. Indian Farmers see these laws as death sentences for their livelihoods. But how does this concern the Punjabi diaspora?

It appears that the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi bowed down to pressure from big international agribusiness and some western countries, notably Canada, the USA and Australia. Canada has been campaigning at the World Trade Organization (WTO) for over twenty years for India to stop what it calls exorbitant Minimum Support Price usually termed MSP.

MSP in some states of India ranges from 150% of production cost to 180%. Production costs include all inputs, such as seeds, fertilisers, water, labour, transport, costs of running farm machines etc... For a small farmer to make a decent living the MSP is set at around 150%, that is 50% over the production cost. Over 90% of farms in India are small farms ranging from 2 hectares to 10 hectares.

The WTO's rules permit developing countries to set MSP or what the WTO in its official jargon calls MPS, that is Market Price Support to be at 110% of production costs. This is heavily weighed in favour of big agribusiness who farm over thousands of Hectares. Through economy of scale, a very large farm can make a good profit at 105% for developed countries, and 110% for developing countries. But a small family farm less than 10 hectares cannot make a living on 110%, that is 10% above production cost.

Canada in particular has been accusing India of distorting the market and has been raising the issue of MSP repeatedly almost every year at the World Trade Organisation. Australia and the USA have also been raising issues.

In 2019, Australia filed an official complaint against India regarding its heavy subsidy for sugar cane. Canada and the USA have expressed interest in being part of the mediating committee.

The advantage to these countries who all have large grain producing farming industry, is that it will no longer be possible for a Punjabi farmer to live on 110% MSP, so the farmer will stop planting grains. This gives opportunity for Canada, Australia and the USA to sell wheat and other grains in the vast Indian market.

While this pressure has been going on for over 20 years, what is new under the current Indian Government is that it failed to protect its own citizens. Governments under previous Prime Ministers have robustly defended the 150% MSP through creative accounting.

It is possible that the sudden decision by the western camp to make an official complaint through Australia may have pushed the Indian Government into action against the interests and livelihood of its own citizens. However, there is a general anger among farmers and the Punjabi diaspora that the current Indian Government has let its own people down in favour of big Corporate sectors and western countries such as Canada.

To make matters worse, India has decided to protect its food security by introducing laws and means for big corporate sectors in India to move into farming. This will displace small farms and destroy the traditional, millennia old way of life for millions of small farmers in India.

# PUNJABI DIASPORA FARMING

BY MS MONICA GILL (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AT THE SHRG)

Farming throughout India has been going through difficulties with farmers being unable to make ends meet due to unending debt cycles, decreasing ground water and corporate monopolies. These laws not only augment those harsh realities but also pin their way of providing and surviving against the wall. Without doubt this will threaten future generations way of life and survival.

Indian farmers and Punjabi Diaspora members strongly believe that these laws have been written in a way which unequivocally pushes farmland into the hands of corporate entities thus eradicating the legacy and mark left by past generations.

Punjab, which was once called the 'Breadbasket of India' is home to the Sikh Religion, the Punjabi language, and the Punjabi culture. The question then arises whether this rich heritage can still be kept alive without farming.

As we have seen in America in the 70's, once corporations come into agriculture and farms get bigger and bigger, small farms cease to exist and the families which once lived on them are left in the dust. They are forced to move into other areas. Suburban towns become destitute as people and youth mass migrate into cities in search of jobs.

Without people, a land loses its heritage. You need people to keep alive the religious beliefs, speak the language, and celebrate the culture. As the people move away, so does this heritage, customs and norms that have ruled that area for hundreds of years if not longer.

This is what the Punjabi diaspora across the globe is protesting. Just as we honour those who came before us, they too are trying to keep their names and ancestral work alive. These laws abolish and eliminate the history of many small farmers who up until now have not only fed the country but been a huge source of inspiration for the rest of the country whether it be through movie, entertainment or mentality. These farmers expected their Government to stand by them just as western countries are promoting the interests of their large agribusinesses. They feel let down and they are growing support from around the world, especially the Punjabi diaspora.

These farmers have an unwavering faith and sense of determination that is not only renown in India but worldwide. They are determined to force their Government (Indian) to repeal the laws and stand up against Canada, the USA and Australia.



# FROM THE IMPOSSIBLE TO THE IMPROBABLE (LIVING BUILDINGS)

BY MS AMELIA JEFFORD (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)



In a world where we are bombarded with conflicting ideas, wanting to sustain prolonged economic growth whilst fighting against an ever snowballing threat of climate change, the issue of how we can build housing and work spaces that somehow allows both of these ideas to coexist can be very challenging.

This is where the living building comes in.

At its core the concept of a living building is one that tries to reduce human beings and subsequently our buildings impact on the environment around us. By having plants scaling the walls of skyscrapers, replacing the drab and brutalist concrete we are not just making the landscape look more natural, but are actually providing habitats for wildlife. This encourages an ecosystem to thrive. Knowing that lack of biodiversity is one of the worst things for our planet, it is clear to see why this, especially if implemented in cities all over the world, can help create real positive change for our environment and climate.

Living buildings, however, are not just buildings that 'look' green, they are buildings that have 'green' running through every step of their construction. Built using non toxic and recycled bricks, as to not create more waste. Built with self sufficient power, like solar panels. Being a living building means that at every turn an eco-friendly focus has been had and that every step to reduce carbon footprint, added waste or destruction of local ecosystems has been taken.

One company has actually aimed to set out a framework from which designers, architects, planners and engineers can try and achieve a 'living building' making it easier to get the project up and running by providing a kind of jumping off point. The **International Living Future Institute** calls this framework the 'Living Building Challenge', and even provides its own accreditation if the institute believes you have created a suitable living building.

At its core the aims of a living building, within the goal of the certification, are to create 'healthy, efficient, ecologically restorative spaces for their community' for all property types, including commercial, educational, institutional and residential. This means that they should be:

- Self sustaining, only using the resources created by the building and its land itself to run its electricity, heating and water needs; and
- Connect their occupants to nature by incorporating green spaces into the fibre of its construction.

# FROM THE IMPOSSIBLE TO THE IMPROBABLE (LIVING BUILDINGS)

BY MS AMELIA JEFFORD (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

The 'Living Building Challenge certification requires actual, rather than anticipated, performance demonstrated over twelve consecutive months'. The Living Building Challenge is organized into seven performance areas called Petals. Each Petal is further subdivided into Imperatives, which address specific issues through detailed requirements.

A visualisation on these 'petals' can be seen below:

## SUMMARY MATRIX

The 20 Imperatives of the Living Building Challenge: Follow down the column associated with each Typology to see which Imperatives apply.

 Imperative omitted from Typology  Solutions beyond project footprint are permissible

	LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE 3.1			
	BUILDINGS	RENOVATIONS	LANDSCAPE + INFRASTRUCTURE	
PLACE				01. LIMITS TO GROWTH
	SCALE JUMPING		SCALE JUMPING	02. URBAN AGRICULTURE
			SCALE JUMPING	03. HABITAT EXCHANGE
				04. HUMAN-POWERED LIVING
WATER			SCALE JUMPING	05. NET POSITIVE WATER
ENERGY			SCALE JUMPING	06. NET POSITIVE ENERGY
HEALTH + HAPPINESS				07. CIVILIZED ENVIRONMENT
				08. HEALTHY INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT
				09. BIOPHILIC ENVIRONMENT
MATERIALS				10. RED LIST
			SCALE JUMPING	11. EMBODIED CARBON FOOTPRINT
				12. RESPONSIBLE INDUSTRY
				13. LIVING ECONOMY SOURCING
				14. NET POSITIVE WASTE
EQUITY				15. HUMAN SCALE + HUMANE PLACES
				16. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO NATURE + PLACE
			SCALE JUMPING	17. EQUITABLE INVESTMENT
BEAUTY				18. JUST ORGANIZATIONS
				19. BEAUTY + SPIRIT
				20. INSPIRATION + EDUCATION

The international living future institute says that it doesn't just provide a checklist approach for the teams working on their own living buildings but would rather them work together to find a more holistic approach to achieving the living buildings aims. Examples given by the institute include:

- A water system's power needs must factor into the energy budget;
- Materials must be non-toxic and low impact to satisfy the demands of the Materials Petal; and
- Projects must integrate local culture, biophilic elements and beauty in order to foster community and natural connections.

The institute says 'The program outlines a design framework that promotes the highest standard of sustainability for the built environment. Rather than a checklist of current best practices, the LBC includes a series of performance goals empowering project teams to find creative design solutions'.



# FROM THE IMPOSSIBLE TO THE IMPROBABLE (LIVING BUILDINGS)

BY MS AMELIA JEFFORD (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

## Can living buildings work for ordinary people?

We are used to the idea that sustainable housing has to come with a huge price tag. Yet **Josh Gordon and Ben Spencer** have founded **GS8**, which they are aiming to make the UK's most sustainable construction company that will create reasonably affordable housing. They are currently testing new building methods with eco-friendly building materials at their housing development, Orford Mews which is located in North East London. At this housing development they are creating a community garden where residents can plant and eat their own foods. In the spirit of eliminating waste, all soil dug up when creating the foundations of the buildings will be used as wall insulation. Further the site has a 'no skip' rule helping to ensure any possible materials are reused. Walls will have living walls and moss roofs with the aim of improving air quality, along with bare bricks to avoid using toxic paints. All power generated by the house's solar panels and heat pumps will be recycled back to the National Grid. Prices start from £600,000 and an example of these houses can be seen below:



The UK Government has a 'Green Homes Grant' to encourage eco friendly improvements to be made to currently existing homes. For more information please click [here](#)

Sustainable build UK also has information regarding different grants that can be applied to the construction of new homes and altering existing ones. For more information please click [here](#)