Habitat for Humanity in Haiti

Habitat for Humanity Haiti is dedicated to helping low-income families gain access to decent housing and accompanying them along their pathways to permanent housing. Habitat has served more than 57,000 families in Haiti, many of them through the 2010 earthquake recovery program.

For more information, go to habitathaiti.org or facebook.com/habitathaiti

The housing need in Haiti

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 80 percent of the population living on less than US$2 per day. Political instability, food shortages, unemployment, tropical storms and hurricanes have kept most Haitians locked in a cycle of poverty for generations. Access to housing is equally desperate. Before the 2010 earthquake, Haiti already faced a severe shortage of houses. The earthquake damaged nearly 190,000 houses, and 105,000 more were destroyed, adding to the pre-existing backlog of 300,000 houses required to meet the growing shelter needs of the country. Of the more than 2 million affected survivors, more than 1.5 million were left homeless. Today, land tenure remains the biggest roadblock to rebuilding in Haiti. Only clear and transparent land transfer processes can ensure that long-term housing reconstruction and redevelopment can take place.

Habitat’s contribution in Haiti

Habitat’s work in Haiti encompasses new home construction, community rebuilding (including retrofits, training and capacity building) and land reform advocacy.
Before the 2010 earthquake, Habitat constructed more than 2,000 permanent homes in the towns of Cabaret, Hinche and Flammands. As part of its earthquake recovery program, Habitat constructed 300 more homes in the Santo community of Léogâne. In 2011, 100 houses were built by volunteers as part of the 28th annual Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project. Fifty-five more houses were built by volunteers from Haven, an Irish NGO. In 2012, Habitat's 29th Carter Work Project returned to build an additional 100 homes in Santo. Habitat also constructed 1,500 upgradeable shelters that can be turned into permanent housing.

In 2010, Habitat launched its multiyear community action plan for Simon-Pelé, a densely populated urban neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, to help families improve their living conditions and gain access to critical services. The plan includes the implementation of infrastructure programs, such as building and repairing roads, removing rubble, adding street lighting, and installing water points for clean water and drainage; retrofitting more than 650 homes (a structural retrofit improves the original house by strengthening it against future natural disasters); training 5,000 residents in vocational skills, basic and advanced construction, financial literacy, disaster-risk reduction, basic home maintenance, conflict management and gender equality; and capacity building of the local community council.

In 2014, Habitat launched the multi-year Canaan project to assist more than 30,000 families in need of decent, affordable, safe housing and sustainable neighborhoods. Support will include technical assistance and training to define a communitywide development plan; identify and prioritize community needs; and help families meet international building standards as they build or upgrade their homes. Habitat will also advocate for the formal recognition of this new settlement and for land tenure so that families will have a secure foundation on which to rebuild their lives.

In 2011, Habitat created the Haiti Property Law Working Group, which continues to develop and implement goals, objectives and priorities to help Haiti deal with long-standing land tenure issues — an essential step in helping people gain access to housing.

Meet a Habitat family

Elmire Normil is the mother of three children; Eliannestar (19), Santiana (13), and Ernica (2). Their home in Simon-Pelé, a densely populated neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, was severely damaged by the 2010 earthquake. With no other options available, the family had to live for more than three years in a nearby camp where life was difficult and unsafe. Recently, Elmire and her children moved back into their home after Habitat retrofitted it as part of its community action plan. “After the earthquake, all of the walls of my house were damaged,” Elmire says. “Now, Habitat has rebuilt the house with good material, resulting in a strong house.”

The sense of security provided by their retrofitted home gives them great comfort and peace. “Me and my children feel secure in our home,” Elmire shares. “I no longer worry about thieves and bad weather, like hurricanes.”

What you can do

You can help needy Haitian families who live in unhealthy, unsafe and overcrowded camps by taking one or more of the following actions:

DONATE

www.habitat.org/cd/giving/one/donate.aspx?link=227

TITHE

Establish a strong and rewarding tithe partnership to help build houses globally! Quote 820600, Haiti HFH on your checks sent to: Habitat for Humanity International, Attn: Affiliate Tithe, 121 Habitat St., Americus, GA 31709

To learn more about Habitat projects in Haiti please contact us.

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