Country profile

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**Habitat for Humanity South Africa**

Founded in 1996, Habitat for Humanity South Africa is a national organization of Habitat for Humanity International and part of Habitat's Europe, Middle East and Africa region. Habitat South Africa is entirely self-funded and works in partnership with all stakeholders to serve the poor and marginalised in our country. Based on the firm belief that decent shelter provides the greatest opportunity for families to break the cycle of poverty, Habitat works with all people to give a hand up in building homes, communities and hope.

**The housing need in South Africa**

Housing in South Africa reflects the inequalities in wealth the still exist between the country's rich and poor. Some homes rival the most imposing in the world; there are mansions, security villages, golf estates and neat suburban rows. But tin shanties and 'informal' or squatter settlements blight most South African cities and towns. In 2010, there were some 2700 of these informal settlements, accommodating over 1.2 million households.

**How Habitat addresses the need in South Africa**

Habitat South Africa is dedicated to the long-term development and sustainability of South Africa's low-income housing sector. Using holistic interventions that emphasise a partnership approach to achieve safe, decent and affordable shelter, Habitat South Africa is focused on strengthening the well-being and future of families. At the same time, we aim to build the capacity of communities to address, improve and self-manage overall living conditions and economic wellbeing for all residents. This includes the markets in which communities are located and the systems, policies and regulations which govern them. By incorporating collaborative advocacy and partnership with the government on policy development and implementation, we are able to extend our impact to the broader South African housing sector – making the dream of thriving integrated human settlements a reality for low-income families.
Habitat South Africa focuses its capacity building programme at two levels: beneficiaries and leadership. Workshops are organized and tailored to suit the project specific context and are facilitated using a participatory and experiential approach. Assessment and evaluation tools are used to gather information which will help to assess the impact of each workshop and to further refine the education curriculum. Coaching of beneficiaries empowers them to self-reliantly maintain their community, therefore encouraging future growth and self-development.

Patricia was living in a squatter camp in Lavender Hill, a gang-ridden area rife with violence and crime. She inhabited an informal dwelling with 5 other adults and 10 children. Six months ago her neighbour had an argument with gang members outside Patricia’s shack. Later that night, the gang members returned and burnt down 13 shacks in retaliation, including Patricia’s. She lost everything – her clothes, furniture, fridge, stove, and identity documents. No one was injured in the fire, but her twin grandchildren who were only 2 weeks old at the time were left without baby clothes or blankets. Her neighbours and friends came to her aid and gave her clothes and whatever else they could spare. She approached the council for help, and received 25 pieces of corrugated iron with which to rebuild her home. She said that this temporary dwelling was far too small to accommodate everyone and leaked in the rain. She is so grateful to have a permanent brick house for the first time in her life that was built by Habitat volunteers. Her eyes well up with tears as she says that the most amazing thing about this process has been seeing how strangers have given up their time to build a home for her. She cannot believe that people care so much.

Partnerships between the community, the private sector, governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the sector are critical for the transfer of skills and expertise into the existing urban environment and to the development of social cohesion. Stakeholder analysis/power mapping activities are conducted to encourage strong linkages with these entities to bring about more integrated, area-based development.

Partnership formation is at the core of the Habitat’s model to ensure sustainable development. The Community Action Plan that has been developed will identify the gaps in terms of service provision and support. As a facilitator in the process, Habitat South Africa will seek to identify suitable partners to formalize sustainable partnerships to address these areas that are under-resourced. Strategies are developed by the leadership committee to implement the special community initiatives related to and connected to the development of socially and economically thriving communities.

Habitat is ideally placed to have an impact on the formulation and development of sustainable and integrated human settlements across cities and towns in South Africa. In advocacy, Habitat is currently championing the issues of community participation in informal settlement upgrading and formal housing developments.

Meet a Habitat family

What you can do

To help South African families get access to better living conditions, you can take one of the following actions:

DONATE
Go to habitat.org/donate and designate your gift to Habitat South Africa.

VOLUNTEER
Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to South Africa or lead your own. For more information go to: habitat.org/gv

TITHE
Establish a strong and rewarding tithe partnership to help build houses globally! Quote 865300, SOUTH AFRICA on your checks sent to: Habitat for Humanity International, Attn: Affiliate Tithe, 121 Habitat St. Americus, GA 31709

CONTACT
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