



AT A GLANCE

Families served to date¹

127

Families served this year²

49

¹New houses and rehabilitations

²New houses, rehabilitations and repairs
in the year to June 30, 2010

— Updated January 2011 —

ONE OF THE WORLD'S FEW remaining communist states, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, or Laos, is also among the poorest countries in Asia. Poverty is concentrated in the rural areas where most people live. Eight in ten Lao people are employed in subsistence agriculture though little of the mountainous terrain is suitable for farming. Periodic floods and droughts add to the farmers' burdens.

Across the country, under half the population lacks access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities.

Due to ethnic diversity, house sizes and designs vary in Laos. Based on government census data, houses are made of either concrete, brick and wood, or concrete and wood. One-tenth of the population lives in semi-permanent shelters where floors, walls and roofs are made of bamboo or grass. Wood and bamboo houses built on stilts are a frequent sight in rural and mountainous areas where many ethnic minority groups reside.

To meet the housing needs in Laos, Habitat for Humanity International established its presence in 2006 by partnering with like-minded local organizations. Habitat's first partner was the local nonprofit association, Community Development and Environment Association (CDEA) that supported women-led savings groups in villages in the northwestern province which includes the capital, Vientiane.

By the end of 2009, the Habitat-CDEA project had served 128 families in six communities through house repairs and renovations, new toilets and through training on health and hygiene issues.

Laos was the smallest of the five sites which hosted international volunteers for the Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project in November 2009. Eleven families worked with Habitat volunteers from Thailand, Korea and the U.S. to make improvements such as roof extensions, new toilets or concrete floors. CDEA was Habitat's partner during the 2009 Carter Work Project. 🏠





COUNTRY FACTS

POPULATION: 6,993,767 (July 2010 est.)

CAPITAL: Vientiane City

LAND AREA: 236,800 sq. km.

ETHNIC GROUPS: Lao 55%, Khmou 11%, Hmong 8%, other (over 100 minor ethnic groups) 26% (2005 census)

LANGUAGES: Lao (official), French, English, and various ethnic languages

RELIGIONS: Buddhist 67%, Christian 1.5%, other and unspecified 31.5% (2005 census)
Literacy: 90.9% (2000 census)

LITERACY: 73% (2005 est.)

URBANIZATION: 31% (2008)

POPULATION LIVING BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINE: 27.6% (2005)

ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES: 57% (2009)

ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES: 53% (2009)

Sources: CIA World Factbook, World Bank



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