

China



Habitat for Humanity in China

Habitat for Humanity China began operating in Yunnan province in 2002 and opened offices in neighboring Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in 2004. Habitat provides simple, decent homes to low-income rural families in these regions. Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan, is the location of an office which was started to coordinate rebuilding work after the devastating May 2008 earthquake. In 2009, Habitat opened an office in the financial hub of Shanghai to raise awareness and create partnerships in the Yangzi delta area.

The housing need in China

China has an impressive record in reducing poverty. The world's most populous country lifted more than 600 million people out of poverty between 1981 and 2004. Rapid growth and urbanization and economic reforms have been central to China's poverty reduction in the past few decades. However, inequality has increased and poverty has become concentrated in rural and minority areas, according to the World Bank. Many of the poor lack access to affordable housing, shut out by soaring land and house prices, and the inadequate supply of low-cost accommodation. The central government announced in September 2011 that it would build 10 million government-subsidized affordable housing units in 2011 and 36 million units over the next five years. Still, much remains to be done.

How Habitat addresses the need in China

Habitat for Humanity China works with local partners and the government in mostly rural areas to build simple, decent homes with the help of international volunteers. Low-income families often lack adequate access to clean water and safe sanitation. Habitat homes are typically made of more durable materials such as bricks and include proper sanitation facilities. The homes rebuilt after the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan included single detached, row houses, townhouses and apartment buildings. Habitat also constructed classrooms in Sichuan and community infrastructure in Yunnan, Guangdong and Guangxi. In Shanghai, corporate volunteers helped to renovate homes and improve safety of low-income elderly people.



Habitat homeowner Xianfa and his family in front of their new home in Guangdong province.

COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Beijing
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1949
Population	Over 1.3 billion
Urbanization	55.6 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	75.5 years
Unemployment rate	4 percent
Population living below poverty line	6.1 percent

*Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in China
2002

Individuals served in FY16
1,180*

*Through construction

Volunteers engaged in FY16
1,009

Housing solutions

Rural reconstruction; urban renovation; disaster response; Global Village; water and sanitation



Rural reconstruction

Habitat China partners with local governments to rebuild houses in dangerous conditions by providing selected families with no-profit housing loans and mobilizing volunteers to participate in the construction. Grants are also provided to certain families in need who cannot afford to make loan repayments. Habitat China improves the infrastructure by building retaining walls to protect against landslides, and constructing recreational and communal facilities.

Urban renovation

In the aging cities of Shanghai and Guangzhou, many elderly people choose to live alone at home instead of nursing homes. Built decades ago, their homes have become danger zones, with faulty electrical wiring, cracked walls or ceilings and slippery bathrooms and kitchens. Habitat China works with social service organizations to renovate the seniors' homes to prevent accidents and fires as well as to raise awareness about the state of the elderly people's living conditions.

Global Village

Short-term Global Village trips to Habitat China's project sites offer transformative experiences to volunteers. They work hand-in-hand with homeowners to build homes, communities and hope. Guangdong has hosted volunteers from Hong Kong for the Habitat Young Leaders Build. Sichuan also had its share of volunteer builders in post-disaster rebuilding.

Disaster response

China is vulnerable to earthquakes and tropical storms which particularly affect low-income families. They continue to live in their damaged houses as they cannot afford to rebuild their homes. Habitat China contributes its technical expertise in post-disaster reconstruction such as rebuilding about 1,400 houses together with the local government after a magnitude-8.0 earthquake hit Sichuan province in 2008. Earthquakes in Sichuan in 2013 and the neighboring province of Yunnan in 2014 saw Habitat China distributing kits with essential items and building disaster-resilient homes for affected families.

Clean water and safe sanitation

Many villagers in China rely on self-dug wells, a water source which is prone to contamination from pesticides, chemical fertilizers and waste products. In recent years, the water in the wells has also been depleting due to climate change and mining in surrounding areas. Habitat China installs water facilities in villages, enabling low-income households mostly headed by women to have adequate access to clean drinking water. Women in rural areas bear the bulk of the responsibility for farming and taking care of children and the elderly as menfolk seek part-time work in the neighboring regions.

Meet a Habitat family

Huaqiong used to wake up at four o'clock every morning to make the first of her 10 daily trips to the mountain stream to fetch water. Due to climate change, the quantity of water had been depleting over the years. The water was also prone to contamination from pesticides, chemical fertilizers and animal waste. Recognizing the pressing need of villagers in Chanle, Wuzhi township, Sichuan province, Habitat China partnered with the local government to build a water supply system with funding from a donor. About 20 villagers including women received training in basic construction skills and water project management and maintenance. The project enabled 21 families to have access to clean drinking water. Huaqiong, who heads the household while her husband works in the town, is happy. "Now, the water is cleaner than before. I feel I am healthier."



Having access to clean water in her house makes a big difference in Huaqiong's life.

What you can do

You can help Chinese families improve their living conditions by taking one or more of the following actions:

DONATE

USD \$: [habitat.org/donate/china](https://www.habitat.org/donate/china)

VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to China or lead your own. For more information go to: [habitat.org/gv](https://www.habitat.org/gv)

TITHE

Establish a strong and rewarding tithe partnership to help build houses globally! Quote **CHINA** 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 China or in other parts of the region, please contact us.


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