

New Zealand



Habitat for Humanity in New Zealand

Active in New Zealand since 1983, Habitat for Humanity now has a national office in Auckland, 10 affiliates and a network of 17 ReStores spread across the North and South Islands. Habitat New Zealand gives families a hand up to improve their housing situation and also supports projects across the Asia-Pacific region, especially Samoa.

The housing need in New Zealand

New Zealand has been described as the most expensive country in the world to buy property when compared with household income, according to international ratings agency Fitch. In Auckland, where demand outweighs supply, housing cost has more than doubled in recent years. This has locked many families out of the prospect of owning homes for generations, and placed pressure on rental availability and cost. About one third of New Zealand's total housing stock, about 1.3 million houses, consists of rental houses with the other 67 per cent owner-occupied. The effects of cold and damp housing on children's health in New Zealand are well documented, particularly with poorly insulated and badly maintained rental properties. Urban dwellers who cannot afford to rent a house may share accommodation with relatives. Entire families including children are known to live in uninsulated garages. In rural areas, Habitat has encountered low-income families who live without electricity, running water or proper bathrooms as well as those who can't afford maintenance and repairs on houses which are nearing the end of their structural life span.

How Habitat addresses the need in New Zealand

Habitat New Zealand works with volunteers, corporations, NGO partners and donors, and through funds raised via ReStores to enable families to build decent, affordable homes. Through its 10 affiliates, Habitat also provides assistance through "A Brush With Kindness", a critical home repair program, unique regional activities such as social rentals, reconstruction following the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, group accommodation facilities and partnerships with government agencies.



COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Wellington
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1907
Population	Over 4.4 million
Urbanization	86.3 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	81.2 years
Unemployment rate	5.1 percent

*Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in New Zealand
1993

Individuals served in FY16
980*

**Includes construction and market development*

Volunteers engaged in FY16
6,085

Housing solutions

Assisted home ownership; disaster response; Global Village volunteer program



Assisted home ownership

Across New Zealand, 10 affiliates build homes with families in need of decent housing and carry out critical home repairs through “A Brush With Kindness”. The affiliates also operate 17 ReStores which provide further opportunities for volunteers to be part of Habitat’s work. The ReStores accept donated goods and resell them to the general public at a fraction of the retail price to help the Habitat affiliates fund the construction of homes within their communities.

Global Village volunteer program

Habitat New Zealand’s Global Village program offers New Zealanders the chance to participate in small and large volunteer builds around the world, helping families achieve a decent place to live. In 2017, volunteer destinations include Samoa, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal, India and Cambodia.

Brush with Kindness

Following the devastating February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, Habitat New Zealand worked with the government to house 21 affected families. Habitat New Zealand also lends a hand to its Pacific Islands neighbors such as Samoa which was hit by Cyclone Evan in 2012. A total of 108 “faleo’o” (meaning “lean to”) cyclone- resilient shelters were built by two of Habitat New Zealand’s most experienced volunteers working alongside Samoans. Currently, Habitat is helping Samoan families through a three-year, NZ\$1.49 million (over US\$1 million) project funded by the New Zealand government. About 260 families are expected to be trained in financial literacy as well as in the cyclone-strapping of roofs and maintenance. In 2015, Habitat New Zealand undertook a new housing initiative in Samoa and raised funds for rebuilding in Fiji following February 2016’s Cyclone Winston. In April 2016, Habitat New Zealand inked a memorandum of understanding with the government of Tonga, committing to helping families whose shelter may be affected by disasters.



Margaret (right) receiving the key to her house from one of the builders, Mike.

Meet a Habitat family

Margaret, a single mother, found herself looking after five children with no money in public subsidized housing. While attending a course, she was introduced to the Habitat for Humanity model by a tutor. Partnering with Habitat New Zealand, Margaret invested sweat equity by using her own labor to build not only her home but the houses of others as well.

“We have a well thought out budget...I was very fortunate because my daughter helped on the building site, and through this experience I have taught her that each of us has responsibilities,” said Margaret.

Margaret ambitiously holds down two jobs to reach her goals. “My goal is to get as much of the Habitat loan repaid as quickly as I can and by joining KiwiSaver I now have hope that I can own my own house and have money to live on by the time I retire. I never ever dreamed this would be possible for me and my family before Habitat came into my life.”

What you can do

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

DONATE

habitat.org.nz/shop/donate.html

VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to one of the Habitat projects around the world or lead your own. For more information, contact globalvillage@habitat.org.nz

To learn more about Habitat projects in New Zealand, please contact us.

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