

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. According to official data, the world's most populous country lifted more than 790 million people out of poverty between 1981 and 2012. Rapid growth and urbanization and economic reforms have been central to China's poverty reduction in the past few decades. By 2020, six in 10 persons living in China will be urban dwellers. However, inequality has increased and poverty has become concentrated in rural and minority areas, according to the World Bank. There are more than 70 million rural Chinese still living below the country's poverty line of 2,300 yuan (over US\$360) in annual income. 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. China's central government has committed to eliminating poverty from impoverished rural areas by 2020. 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 and domestic 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 and Guangzhou, corporate volunteers helped to renovate homes and improve the safety of low-income families.



Congcai (left) worked with Anko Blokzjil and other Dutch volunteers to build his Habitat home in Wuding, Yunnan province, in November 2017. Photo: Habitat for Humanity China/Jerry Li.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Beijing
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1949
Population	Over 1.37 billion
Urbanization	57.9 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	75.7 years
Unemployment rate	4 percent
Population living below poverty line	3.3 percent

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in China
2002

Individuals served in FY17
830

*Through construction

Volunteers engaged in FY17
1,045

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 ~~TYbeATU_X~~ 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. In addition, Habitat China assists families with home repairs where needed.

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. Through home renovation, Habitat China helps low-income families to create independent study and rest areas for their children.

Global Village

Short-term Global Village trips to Habitat China's project sites offer transformative experiences to volunteers. They partnered with homeowners to build homes, communities and hope in Yunnan, Guangdong, Guangxi and Sichuan provinces. At the culmination of the Habitat Young Leaders Build campaign, Hong Kong volunteers worked on homes alongside their Chinese counterparts in Guangdong. Sichuan also had its share of volunteer builders in post-disaster rebuilding.

Meet a Habitat family

When the 2008 earthquake struck China's Sichuan province, Xinghai's decades-old mud house was among many that were badly damaged. Despite the house having collapsed partially, his family of four continued living in it because they had no other place to go to. The local government had provided affected families each with a subsidy of 20,000-yuan (about US\$3,160) but Xinghai did not have the means to complete reconstruction. With additional funding support from Habitat for Humanity China, he was able to rebuild his house. By the time his family moved into their Habitat home in January 2018, his old house had completely collapsed. Expressing his appreciation to Habitat, Xinghai said: "When we were in urgent need, you brought hope and confidence to us. Finally, we can live in a new home without worrying about leakage and collapse on rainy days."



Xinghai and his wife in front of their Habitat home that was being built. Photo: Habitat for Humanity China/Kevin Shang.

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 work in the neighboring regions.

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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