

China



Habitat for Humanity in China

Habitat for Humanity has been working in China since 2002 and has supported more than 40,000 individuals to build or improve a place they can call home. Currently, Habitat China runs programs in Shanghai city as well as the southern provinces of Sichuan, Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan. With the support of donors, volunteers and advocates, Habitat works with families in China to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter.

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 secure, affordable 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.



Future homeowner Bailian (left) working with Canadian volunteers John Ekins (center) and Barbara Lesage (right) in Sancun village, Guangdong province, southern China. Photo: Habitat for Humanity China/Wesley Wei.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Beijing
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1949
Population	Over 1.38 billion
Urbanization	59.2 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	75.8 years
Unemployment rate	3.9 percent
Population living below poverty line	3.3 percent

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in China
2002

Individuals served in FY18
1,000
*Through construction

Volunteers engaged in FY18
844

Housing solutions

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



Rural reconstruction

Habitat China partners with local governments to rebuild houses in dangerous conditions by providing selected families with 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

Global Village volunteers partner with families 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.

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.

Meet a Habitat family

Now that Zhimin, 31, is a father of two girls, he wants to ensure that his children have a better life than him. He remembered the difficult days growing up in a crowded, damp and leaky house in Guangdong, southern China. Things changed in 2006 when his parents built a new home made of fired bricks and concrete roof with Habitat for Humanity China, working alongside Global Village volunteers. The family felt the difference after moving in. "We no longer have to worry about leaks through the roof and the unsafe walls," said Zhimin's father Yongchu. Their family has access to piped clean water from a mountain spring and a toilet inside their house. Zhimin plans to build new rooms for his daughters. As the Chinese saying goes, "one generation plants the trees, another gets the shade." Zhimin's story underlines the better life that Habitat homeowners create for the next generation through safe, secure housing.

What you can do

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

DONATE

In Hong Kong: habitat.org.hk/donate

In the U.S: habitat.org/donate

** You can designate your donation to Habitat China or a specific cause by clicking the designation option.*

VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to China or lead your own.

For more information go to: info@habitchina.org

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



(Clockwise from top left): Zhimin, his father Yongchu, Zhimin's wife Meiling with their youngest daughter Youyou and eldest daughter Xinyi, and his grandmother Nanjiao, in front of their Habitat house in Guangdong, China. Photo: Habitat for Humanity/ Jason Asteros.

To learn more about Habitat projects in China or in other parts of the region, please contact us.

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