

# Hungary

## Habitat for Humanity in Hungary

Habitat for Humanity has been serving families in Hungary since 1996. That year, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and more than 500 volunteers came to build 10 homes in a week in Vác. Since then, we have supported more than 2,600 families with innovative programs tailored to the local need.

## The housing need in Hungary

About 33 percent of Hungary's population is challenged by the threat of poor living conditions and social marginalization. While the number of people living in poor condition grows constantly, incomes are further polarizing. Housing costs are an ever-growing burden for families. Many lose their homes because they are unable to meet expenses.

In recent times, there has been much debate on the issue of homelessness. The parliament has declared habitual residence in public places a violation, and although it was criticized by international organizations and the Constitutional Court, legislation was not changed.

## Habitat's contribution in Hungary

Our goal is to see everyone live in decent housing that allows them to live a healthy and active life. Through affordable, quality building materials; volunteer labor and trainings, we help families and communities make a difference in their housing conditions. We have also been working on advocacy for many years to achieve fair and inclusive housing policies.



## COUNTRY FACTS\*

<b>Capital</b>	Budapest
<b>Main country fact</b>	Joined the EU in 2004
<b>Population</b>	9.9 million
<b>Urbanization</b>	71.2%
<b>Life expectancy</b>	75.9 years
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	6.8%
<b>Population living below the poverty line</b>	14.9%

\*Find more country facts on:  
**CIA The World Factbook – Hungary**

## HABITAT FACTS

**Date when Habitat started working in the country**  
1996

**Individuals served in FY17**  
150

**Volunteers hosted in FY17**  
332

**Housing solutions**  
Rehabs, repairs,  
market development



# Our programs

## Housing first

Homeless shelters do not necessarily provide real solutions for breaking out from homelessness. Our Housing First program prepares homeless people living on the streets to live a self-reliant life. The aim of the program is to enable homeless people to move into and maintain rented apartments, become employed and gradually reintegrate into society. We renovate empty municipality-owned rental apartments partly with the help of volunteers. Those moving in are also supported by complex and intensive social work to help them keep their homes.

## Advocacy

The aim of our advocacy work is to achieve a fair and inclusive housing policy. As a result of our advocacy work so far, the European Union has included provisions for pilot programs, creating access to affordable rental housing based on the concept developed by Metropolitan Research Institute and Habitat for Humanity Hungary. If the pilot successfully validates the concept, it is expected to inspire policy change, creating access to adequate housing for thousands of vulnerable people.

## Second chance

Scarcity of affordable housing is an enormous problem in Hungary. There are around 200,000 to 300,000 families in need of low-cost rental housing. Around 50,000 of these families are in severe housing crisis and on the edge of homelessness. These families are forced to live either with relatives or friends without knowing how long they can stay, or in housing with insecure tenure, or in temporary homes. Our Second Chance program helps families living in temporary shelters to move into affordable rentals, and includes social-work care and services.

## Annual report on housing

Habitat Hungary publishes annual reports on housing in the poorest places in Hungary. The aim is to provide regular accounts on the status and trends in substandard housing, and to analyze annually how and to what extent each year's policies have contributed to its reduction. Our aim is to elevate the issue of housing into a proper position in public discourse, and to support the development of fair and inclusive housing policy.



## Meet a Habitat family

Anna and Laci had been homeless and longing for a home for a very long time. Laci, 38, moved to Budapest in 2011, trying to find a job in the capital. He met Anna, 42, two years ago and they have been inseparable ever since. They strived for an independent life, trying hard to create a place they could call home and built themselves a shack by the Danube River. Unfortunately, it was built on private territory and the owner did not hesitate to demolish it.

The couple then began living in a workers' hostel. The subsidy they receive will be gradually reduced until they would need to pay the full price which they cannot afford.

The couple realized that Habitat for Humanity Hungary's Housing First program could be their chance to obtain a permanent home. They applied at Habitat and were selected to participate. The program has given them strength and confidence, and they have been able to get permanent jobs.

# What you can do

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

## Donate

**Volunteer** Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to Hungary or lead your own. [Contact us](#) to learn more.

**Tithe** All affiliate tithe gifts are sent internationally to serve families outside of the United States.

To support the work of Habitat **HUNGARY**, please send your tithe to: Habitat for Humanity International P.O. Box 6598 Americus, GA 31709-3498

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

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