

Poland

Habitat for Humanity in Poland

Habitat for Humanity Poland was established in 1992 as the first Habitat presence in Europe. It has offices in Warsaw and Gliwice and so far it has helped over 1,400 families in Poland.

The housing need in Poland

There is a serious housing shortage with Poland having the lowest rate in Europe of number of homes for its population (360 per 1,000 individuals), and among the highest rates for people living in overcrowding conditions (44.8 percent vs. the EU average of 17 percent), according to national statistics and Habitat Poland Housing Report 2015. The deficit of affordable housing units is between 600,000 and 1.5 million, while other housing stock deteriorates and requires urgent repairs. Approximately 15 percent of the population lives in substandard shelter, defined as a lack of roof overhead and/or living in substandard conditions (with no bathrooms and toilets and no central heating or buildings deemed technically unsafe). The severe housing deprivation rate is high at 10.1 compared to 5.2 EU average (Housing Europe 2015). Poland ranks in the bottom third of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries in terms of housing conditions for children (average rooms per child and children in homes that lack basic facilities). The most common waiting period for social housing in Poland is between two and seven years; however, situations where it exceeds 10 years is not uncommon.

Habitat's contribution in Poland

Habitat for Humanity activities in Poland include construction of new affordable houses, renovations of condominium blocks and advocacy initiatives aiming to build a large coalition of partners for affordable housing. Renovation projects have been completed throughout the country in partnership with homeowners' associations and construction is done by local and international volunteers as well as Habitat homeowners. Habitat Poland's advocacy initiatives focus on achieving system changes within government policy that will benefit the most vulnerable. Currently Habitat Poland is advocating for legislative changes to increase access to housing for people most in need with a focus on social rental housing. It is also working to raise public awareness and mobilize the general public around the housing issue in Poland and pushing key debates such as lack of fuel and lack of decent first into social and political spheres.



COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Warsaw
Main country facts	Joined NATO in 1999, joined EU in 2004
Population	38.52 million
Urbanization	60.5%
Life expectancy	77.6 years
Unemployment rate	8.5%
Population living below the poverty line	17.3%

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

HABITAT FACTS

Date when Habitat started working in the country
1992

Individuals served in FY17
590

Volunteers hosted in FY17
860

Housing solutions
New homes, incremental, repairs, market development



Our programs

Emergency renovations for individual families

The program is focusing on the needs of individual families who live in poor housing conditions in the Warsaw area and the southwest area of Poland. Habitat Poland provides technical assistance for home improvement works, along with non-profit loans and volunteer labor. To date, the program has benefitted over 80 families, including 15 families in Warsaw through the partnership with Procter & Gamble which donated 50 percent of renovation costs. The rest was contributed by the beneficiaries and held in Habitat's revolving fund to assist future families.

'Self-Build Housing Cooperative' pilot project

Habitat Poland is creating a solution for families with poor credit ratings through a self-build housing cooperative initiative. In the pilot project, Habitat Poland is supporting a cooperative consisting of eight families who collaborate in order to build a multi-family building. The families have already bought a plot of land on the outskirts of Warsaw. Habitat Poland is now guiding the group through the legal and financial arrangements, including the process of securing a mortgage. During construction, Habitat Poland will help to lower the cost of works by engaging volunteers and obtaining in-kind donations from corporate partners.

'Trampoline' project

There are approximately 80,000 young people who live in foster care in Poland. When they turn 18, they have to leave foster care despite not being adequately prepared for independent life. No housing assistance is currently offered and, as a result, many end up in homeless shelters. The 'Trampoline' project involves the development of seven apartments in unused attic space, which are rented to young people at a low and affordable rate for up to two years. This supports their transition from foster care to autonomous living.

In addition to housing, beneficiaries receive finance and energy efficiency training, as well as some assistance with first employment opportunities. The project offers a model solution addressing the time gap between young people's departure from foster care institutions and the time they can access social housing. The beneficiaries help renovate the attics alongside international construction volunteers and local corporate volunteers.



Meet a Habitat family

Agnieszka, Andrzej and their three children (Angelika, 17; Adam, 12; and Laura, 5) moved to a public housing apartment in November 2014, after many years of waiting. Even though the municipal authorities replaced old windows and repaired the electrical wiring, the apartment still required extensive renovations. Agnieszka and Andrzej managed to do some work on their own: they replaced the central heating pipes and renovated the living room and kitchen. However, they could not make the apartment fully habitable due to insufficient funds. They occupied only one room until Habitat Poland helped them to complete the renovation. The other two rooms were repaired, in addition to the bathroom, which also required an urgent intervention.

What you can do

You can help Polish 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 Poland 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 **POLAND**, 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 Poland please contact us.

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