

# Portugal

## Habitat for Humanity in Portugal

A group of volunteers concerned about poverty housing in Braga, in northern Portugal, started a Habitat affiliate there in 1996. Two groups of international and local volunteers helped build Portugal's first Habitat house in the town of Vieira do Minho in 1999. In 2002, Habitat expanded its activities to renovating existing homes of low-income families. Habitat in Braga partners with local municipalities to build and rehabilitate homes with people living on small incomes.

## The housing need in Portugal

Housing is a major concern of low-income Portuguese families, who often live in dilapidated homes in rural areas or shacks in the big cities. Successive governments have liberalized key areas of the economy over the past 20 years after decades of military dictatorship, but economic growth has been slowing, especially after the 2008 crisis. Many people are still without jobs or savings to improve housing conditions.

At the same time, the need for housing is growing, especially in urban areas. The state cannot support the development of new social housing units. Portugal has been a destination for immigrants, mainly from Africa and Brazil.

## How Habitat addresses the need in Portugal

Habitat for Humanity Portugal helps low-income families by building new homes on family-owned land and by renovating houses in the municipalities of Braga and Amarante. Homes are made of traditional local materials: bricks, red roof tiles, shutters on the windows, and ceramic tiles inside. Recently, have been looking for local opportunities to raise funds to build more homes.



## COUNTRY FACTS\*

<b>Capital</b>	Lisbon
<b>Main country fact</b>	Joined the European Community, now European Union in 1986
<b>Population</b>	10.83 million
<b>Urbanization</b>	63.5% live in cities
<b>Life expectancy</b>	79.3 years
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	11.3%
<b>Population living below the poverty line</b>	18.7%

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

## HABITAT FACTS

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

**Individuals served in FY17**  
40

**Volunteers hosted in FY17**  
608

**Housing solutions**  
New homes, rehabs, repairs



# Our programs

## Home construction with volunteer labor

Habitat Portugal has an effective volunteer program. It attracts the enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers a year. At the same time, local volunteers are showing their commitment to improving their communities by working on the construction sites. They are building homes with low-income families who partner with us.

## Working with companies

We host corporate partner builds with such long-term Habitat supporters as Whirlpool and Thrivent Financial. Many international churches and women's associations have also found Braga to be a prime building location. Some international Habitat affiliates also have worked with Habitat in Portugal.

## Working with international schools

Habitat Portugal works with international schools from Switzerland, Norway, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, United Arab Emirates and Austria. Strong partnerships have been built with schools in Braga, Lisbon and Porto. Students come to build camaraderie and to build homes alongside families living in poor conditions.



## Meet a Habitat family

For many years the Lage family has dreamed of having their own home. The family is comprised of Madalena and Fernando, and their three children. Their daughter Ana suffers from a mental impairment, and although she is physically independent, she needs monitoring and assistance. The family presently live in a rented house with poor living conditions, including very limited space, high levels of humidity, an outdoor bathroom, and low indoor temperature as some exterior walls are made of wood. The house Habitat Portugal is going to rehabilitate is a family inheritance, but is currently not suitable for living. In this project, outdoor and indoor renovations will be done and after so many years, this family will finally have their own home, where they can have a happy life.

# What you can do

You can help Portuguese 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 Portugal or lead your own. [Contact us](#) to learn more.

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

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