

## Fiji



### Habitat for Humanity in Fiji

Habitat for Humanity started working in Fiji in 1991. Since then, Habitat has helped over 69,500 people to build homes and hope through partnerships with governments, bilateral and non-profit organizations and international volunteers. Habitat works on a range of projects throughout the country including disaster response and recovery through repairs and temporary housing when needed, construction or improvement of water and sanitation systems in rural and remote areas, and disabled access housing projects. In the financial year ended June 30, 2017, Habitat for Humanity Fiji has helped more than 4,500 families through disaster response and over 2,000 families in more than 55 communities through water and sanitation improvements and built over 1,300 new houses to date.

### The housing need in Fiji

An estimated 140,000 people currently live in substandard housing conditions in informal settlements, and the number has increased by 5 percent from 2007 to 2012. Poverty and inequality continue to be a challenge. According to official statistics, 31 percent of the population lives in poverty. The rising cost of living and disasters such as 2016's Cyclone Winston increased the poor's vulnerability. The most vulnerable households also lack piped water, adequate sanitation, electricity or rubbish disposal.

### How Habitat addresses the need in Fiji

Habitat for Humanity's activities in Fiji range from new house construction to helping families rebuild after cyclones and other disasters to improving water and sanitation access in various communities. Habitat homes are typically built with a combination of locally supplied timber, concrete, and metal roofing. Low-income families contribute their own labor to build their new homes.



Volunteers showing support for Habitat Fiji's first Women Build at Nakorovou village, Rewa province.

### COUNTRY FACTS

<b>Capital</b>	Suva
<b>Main country facts</b>	Gained independence in 1970
<b>Population</b>	Over 920,900
<b>Urbanization</b>	54.5 percent live in cities
<b>Life expectancy</b>	73 years
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	5.5 percent
<b>Population living below poverty line</b>	31 percent

Source: World Factbook

### HABITAT FACTS

**When Habitat started in Fiji**  
1991

**Individuals served in FY17**  
830\*

\*Includes construction and market development

**Volunteers engaged in FY17**  
1,718

### Key programs

Affordable homes and retrofits; water and sanitation facilities; disaster response; volunteer engagement "Build Back Safer" training; volunteer engagement



## Community water projects

Since 2010, when its program began, Habitat Fiji has been constructing or improving water and sanitation systems in rural and remote communities throughout the nation. Funding support comes from bilateral donors such as the European Union, Japanese Embassy and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and New Zealand Aid through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Through its community water program, Habitat trains communities to manage and conserve water resources and maintain water systems that have been installed. The program has assisted more than 5,000 families in close to 100 communities to date.

## Disaster response

Habitat for Humanity Fiji forms part of the Pacific Task Force with Habitat Australia and Habitat New Zealand, helping families hit by disasters such as 2015's Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu. In responding to 2016's Cyclone Winston, Habitat exceeded its target by helping over 7,000 affected families through the distribution of emergency shelter kits. In the recovery phase, programs include community training for water, sanitation and hygiene, cyclone retrofitting for homes, repairs and construction of houses and water and sanitation facilities, and "Build Back Safer" training.

## Meet a Habitat family

Takeo, 59, and his wife Makitalena, 56, had prayed that something good would happen after years of living in a 12-square-meter shack without any access to electricity and water. The blessing that the partially blind elderly couple had never dreamt of came upon them in October 2017. They received a new Habitat home that has been built in the capital Suva by Habitat Fiji's board members as part of an annual initiative. "I never thought something as good as receiving a house could happen to us. When it rained, it was very bad for us as one wall was a tarpaulin cover and there were lots of holes on the old tin roof and on the side walls," said Takeo who earns about US\$20 a month from cutting grass. "Life has been hard for us but it is true that there is hope. I feel very lucky and happy that I have a good house now and that we will feel safe during bad weather. Water used to come inside the old house and our things got wet. This house looks very strong and it is the best thing anyone could give to us," he said. Takeo is now thinking of installing a water facility and electricity in his new house.



Takeo, his wife Makitalena with their granddaughter at their Habitat home.

## Building resilient communities

To help disaster-hit families get back on their feet, Habitat works with donors and partners to increase local communities' resilience. More than 1,300 participants including women from over 260 communities have received "Build Back Safer" training. Those who have been trained form a ready pool of skilled labor to assist other affected families build safer homes. About 115 houses were constructed with the support of United Nations Development Fund, the Australian and New Zealand Governments, International Organization for Migration, Shelter Cluster Fiji, the FIJI Water Foundation, Partner Housing Australasia and Habitat for Humanity Australia.

## Volunteer engagement

Under the Global Village program, Habitat hosts international volunteer builders who come from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan and USA. A total of 241 Global Village volunteers from 17 teams built 18 homes in fiscal year 2017 for families. Habitat Fiji continues its support of the annual regional Habitat Young Leaders Build campaign with a soft launch in Suva in December 2017.

## What you can do

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

### DONATE

USD \$: [habitat.org/donate](https://www.habitat.org/donate)

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

### VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to Fiji 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 **FIJI** 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 Fiji or in other parts of the region, please contact us.

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