

Sri Lanka



Habitat for Humanity in Sri Lanka

Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka seeks to provide decent and affordable housing to marginalized and vulnerable communities across the country. Established in 1994, Habitat Sri Lanka has enabled more than 25,400 families to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter. Habitat also implements water, sanitation and hygiene projects. To rebuild lives and increase resilience, Habitat Sri Lanka works with disaster-affected families to build homes and conducts training in disaster risk reduction.

The housing need in Sri Lanka

Despite great advances made by Sri Lankan housing programs, the need for safe, secure and permanent housing in the country is made more pressing by poverty, civil strife and natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, landslides. A decade after the 26-year-long civil war ended in 2009, many families are still identified as internally displaced persons, living in temporary tin sheet shacks in the north and east of the country. It is estimated that one in two people living in the capital Colombo is a slum dweller who lacks adequate access to clean water and safe sanitation. The lack of decent housing for tea, rubber and coconut plantation workers is another area of concern. These poverty-stricken workers live in inadequate housing known as line houses without proper water and sanitation facilities.

How Habitat addresses the need in Sri Lanka

For nearly 25 years, Habitat Sri Lanka has partnered with supporters and volunteers to build decent and affordable homes for families in need of adequate housing. Following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami nearly 3,000 families were supported to rebuild their homes through the reconstruction housing project led by Habitat Sri Lanka. In May 2013, a 4,000-home housing project funded by the Indian government for internally displaced people in the Eastern Province was launched. In February 2017, a 14-million-euro (more than US\$14.8 million) project funded by the European Union broke ground in the Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Batticaloa districts. The multi-faceted housing project will support 2,455 war-affected families in northern and eastern Sri Lanka and feature the use of locally made construction materials. In 2018, Habitat Sri Lanka constructed nearly 100 homes for rural plantation workers with funding from the Indian government, and 37 homes were constructed for flood-affected families in Kalutara.



Volunteers from Korean company KEPCO built alongside internally displaced families in Batticaloa. Photo: Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka/Kaavya Pathirana.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Colombo
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1948
Population	Over 22.5 million
Urbanization	18.5 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	77.1 years
Unemployment rate	4.4 percent
Population living below poverty line	6.7 percent

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Sri Lanka
1994

Individuals served in FY18
39,365*

**Includes construction and market development*

Volunteers engaged in FY18
572

Housing solutions

Decent homes; alternative construction materials and technology; water, sanitation and hygiene; disaster risk reduction and response



House construction

Habitat Sri Lanka works with families to build decent, affordable homes about 51 square meter (550 square feet) in size with two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and toilet. Building their core house incrementally gives families the option of expanding it when funds are available. Under the homeowner-driven construction approach, the future Habitat homeowner contributes to the house design and chooses the materials and suppliers while Habitat Sri Lanka provides technical support and construction expertise. Families are also trained in the use of eco-friendly locally made construction materials and alternative construction technologies.

Disaster response

Habitat Sri Lanka helps disaster-affected families through the distribution of emergency shelter kits and clean-up kits in the aftermath of a disaster. Transitional shelters and core houses may also be provided at a later stage. Habitat Sri Lanka constructed 80 houses for families who were affected by landslides following May 2016's Cyclone Roanu and distributed emergency hygiene kits to 1,000 families in Galle and Kalutara

districts following 2017's Cyclone Mora. With funding from the European Union, Habitat is building 2,455 homes with internally displaced persons in Kilinochchi, Batticaloa and Mullaitivu districts. In addition, 37 families who lived in temporary shelters in a flood-prone community in Kalutara partnered with Habitat Sri Lanka to construct their own homes.

Water and sanitation

With chronic kidney disease being a serious health problem, particularly in rural Sri Lanka, Habitat is committed to providing families with access to safe drinking water to contain the threat. The works include the installation of water tanks, distribution of water filters and training in water purification, construction of wells and latrines. Through training conducted in schools and rural communities, Habitat aims to instill good hygienic practices. With support from Hatton National Bank, Habitat provided 50 families in Batticaloa with access to safe drinking water through the donation of water storage tanks and more than 150 students with access to safe sanitation through the construction of three toilets.

Meet a Habitat family

When Indika's wife Sudarshani was diagnosed with epilepsy, he gave up his livelihood of deep sea fishing to become a daily wage laborer so he could take care of his family. Living from hand to mouth, his family of six including Indika's mother had to stay put in their temporary wooden shelter in Kalutara in the Western Province. In 2018, the family had the opportunity to build a secure permanent home when Habitat Sri Lanka started a project to rebuild the homes of flood-affected families. Excited that her wish is fulfilled, Sudarshani says: "This is the beginning of a brand-new chapter in our lives."



Indika (back, second from left) with his wife Sudarshani (center) and his mother and three children in their Habitat home. Photo: Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka/Kaavya Pathirana.

What you can do

You can help Sri Lankan 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 Sri Lanka or a specific cause by clicking the designation option.

VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to Sri Lanka 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 **SRI LANKA** 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 Sri Lanka or in other parts of the region, please contact us.

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