

Country profile

FIJI



Habitat for Humanity in Fiji

Habitat for Humanity started working in Fiji in 1991. Since then, Habitat has helped over 28,600 people to build homes and hope through partnerships with governments, bilateral and non-profit organizations and international volunteers. Habitat's work goes beyond the construction of homes. HFH Fiji 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, 2015, HFH Fiji has helped more than 3,140 families through disaster response, over 1,300 families in more than 45 communities through water and sanitation improvements and built over 900 new houses.

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 poorest 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.



Global Village volunteers (in blue) working on a house together with HFH Fiji's staff.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Suva
Population	more than 909,000 (July 2015 est.)
Urbanization	53.7 percent lives in cities (2015)
Life expectancy	72 years (2014 est.)
Unemployment rate	8.8 percent (2014 est.)
Population living below poverty line	31 percent (2009 est.)
Access to improved water sources	95.7 percent (2015 est.)
Access to improved sanitation facilities	91.1 percent (2015 est.)

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Fiji
1991

Families served*
Over 5,000

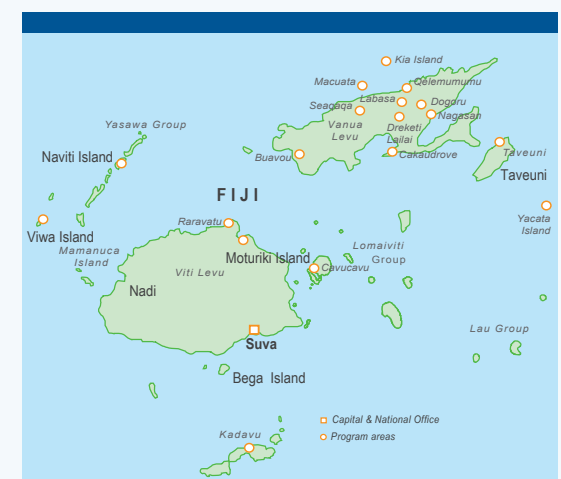
Volunteers hosted**
About 1,500

*since 1991

**since 2005

Housing solutions

- Community water projects
- Decent homes for vulnerable groups
- Disaster response
- Engaging with volunteers



Community water projects

Habitat for Humanity Fiji helps remote communities to gain access to reliable water supply with funding support from various bilateral donors such as the European Union, Japanese Embassy and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and New Zealand Aid through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Since 2011, the Japanese government has donated more than 500,000 Fijian dollars (about US\$242,000) to HFH Fiji for water, sanitation and hygiene projects. The European Union has donated more than 1 million Fijian dollars toward Habitat's water projects which have helped more than 675 families in 27 rural communities. DFAT's funding of over 450,000 Fijian dollars enabled more than 375 families to have reliable access to water. Through its Community Water Program, HFH Fiji trains communities to manage and conserve water resources as well as to maintain water systems that have been installed.

Decent homes for vulnerable groups

Funding support from the European Union enabled HFH Fiji to help a total of 470 families build or repair or improve their houses. In August 2014, the three-day Sugar Build launched the final year of a three-year project in Bulileka, Labasa, on Vanua Levu island. In 2015, HFH Fiji had completed a total of 85 shelter projects in 2015 impacting the lives of hundreds.

Meet a Habitat family

Bale Siteri, a widow, feels that she has finally settled down in life after moving into her Habitat for Humanity house in 2014. She lives in the resettlement community of Etatoko in Ba district, Viti Levu island. She shared a tent with her 16-year-old son Jone Waqanisau for two years after her house was destroyed by severe floods.

According to Bale, women bore the full brunt of living without adequate shelter and clean water. "We had more worries than the men like bathing and feeding the children, preparing children for school, washing clothes, cooking and cleaning the house. We used to travel more than a kilometer (on foot) to wash clothes and then carry it back after washing," she said.

"It's like I am living my dream now," Bale said of her Habitat house. "Before, the biggest headache was access to clean water. I used to wake up in the middle of the night and stay up the whole night just to collect rainwater. Rainwater was our hope — for drinking, cooking and doing household chores."

Not only does she have decent shelter, she also has running water. "It gave my family a new life," Bale said. She can now focus fully on providing her son with a good education.

Her house was built with support from the New Zealand Aid Programme while her solar-powered water system connection was installed under Australian Aid's Fiji Community Development Programme.

Disaster response

HFH Fiji forms part of the Pacific Task Force with HFH Australia and HFH New Zealand, responding to disasters such as 2016's Cyclone Winston in Fiji and 2015's Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu. Habitat has helped about 5,000 families hit by Cyclone Winston through the distribution of emergency shelter kits and aims to assist another 4,000 families through the restoration of water supply in affected communities. In response to 2013's Cyclone Evan and severe flooding in 2012, HFH Fiji built transitional shelters and new houses, and repaired damaged homes and water supply systems. To help families affected by 2010's Cyclone Tomas, HFH Fiji built 46 new houses and repaired three schools. Funding came from New Zealand Aid Programme, the Fiji government, UNICEF and other donors.

Engaging with volunteers

HFH Fiji hosts close to 20 Global Village teams each year with volunteer builders coming from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan and USA. In 2014, HFH Fiji launched the Habitat Youth BUILD campaign, later known as Habitat Young Leaders Build, with a special build at a park in the capital Suva. The following year, HYL B was marked by a poster competition for close to 50 children in western Fiji. In 2015, nearly 140 Global Village volunteers from eight teams worked with Habitat families to build 14 homes.



With a decent home, Bale Siteri has a reason to smile as she gets ready to cook her family's meal.

What you can do

DONATE, VOLUNTEER or **TITHE** to help families break the poverty cycle through decent homes. To learn more about HFH Fiji's work, please contact us.

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