

Hungary

Habitat for Humanity in Hungary

Habitat for Humanity has been serving families in Hungary since 1996. That year, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and more than 500 volunteers came to build 10 homes in a week in Vác. Since then, we have supported more than 2,600 families with innovative programs tailored to the local need.

The housing need in Hungary

About 33 percent of Hungary's population is challenged by the threat of poverty and social marginalization. While the number of the poor grows constantly, incomes are further polarizing. Housing costs are an ever growing burden for families. Many of them lose their homes unable to pay for the expenses.

In recent times, there has been much debate on the issue of homelessness. The parliament has declared habitual residence in public places a violation, and although it was criticized heavily by international organizations and the Constitutional Court, sadly the legislation was not changed.

How Habitat addresses the need in Hungary

Our goal is to see everyone live in decent housing that allows them to live a healthy and active life. We provide direct help for many to achieve this. By providing cheap building materials, volunteer labor and trainings, we help families and communities make a difference in their housing conditions. We have also been working on advocacy for many years to achieve fair and inclusive housing policies.



COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Budapest
Main country facts	Joined the EU in 2004
Population	9.9 million
Urbanization	71.2 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	75.7 years
Unemployment rate	7.7 percent
Population living below poverty line	14 percent

*Sources: CIA World Factbook, World Bank, UN

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Hungary
1996

Families served
More than 2,600

Volunteers hosted
More than 2,700

Housing solutions
Renovating municipality owned rentals for homeless persons and families
Advocacy



Housing first

Homeless shelters do not necessarily provide real solutions for homeless people living in public space to break out from homelessness. Our Housing First program prepares homeless people living on the streets to live a self-reliant life. The aim of the program is to enable homeless people move into and maintain their rented apartments, get employed and gradually reintegrate into society. We renovate empty municipality owned rental apartments partly with the help of volunteers. Those moving in are also supported by complex and intensive social work to help them keep their homes.

Advocacy

The aim of our advocacy work is achieve a fair and inclusive housing policy. As a result of our advocacy work so far, the European Union has included provisions for pilot programs creating access to affordable rental housing based on the concept developed by Metropolitan Research Institute and Habitat for Humanity Hungary. If the pilot successfully validates the concept, it is expected to inspire policy change creating access to adequate housing for thousands of vulnerable people.

Second chance

The scarcity of affordable housing is an enormous problem in Hungary. There are around 200-300 thousand families in need of low cost rental housing. Around 50 000 of these families are in severe housing crisis and on the edge of homelessness. These families are forced to live either with relatives or friends without knowing how long they can stay, or in housing with insecure tenure, or in temporary homes. The Second Chance program helps families living in temporary shelters to move into affordable rentals, and provides them with social work care and services.

Annual report on housing poverty

HFH Hungary publishes annual reports on housing poverty in Hungary. The aim is to provide regular accounts on the status and trends in housing poverty, and to analyze annually how and to what extent each year's policies have contributed to its reduction. Our aim is to elevate the issue of housing poverty into a proper position in public discourse, and to support the development of fair and inclusive housing policy.

Meet a Habitat family

Anna and Laci have been homeless and longing for a home for a very long time. Laci (38) moved to Budapest in 2011, trying to find a job in the capital. He met Anna (42) two years ago and they have been inseparable ever since. They strived for an independent life, trying hard to create a place they could call home and built themselves a shack by the Danube river. Unfortunately, it was built on private territory and the owner did not hesitate to demolish it. Currently the couple live in a workers' hostel. The subsidy they receive will be gradually reduced until they would need to pay the full price which they cannot afford. The couple realized that Habitat for Humanity Hungary's Housing First program could be their chance of a lifetime. You can only imagine their joy when they were chosen to participate! Having been selected for the program has given them strength and confidence that helped them find permanent jobs. We believe that their relationship and re-gained strength is something they can build a new life on.

What you can do

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

DONATE

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

VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to Hungary 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 **812200, HUNGARY** 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 Hungary or in other parts of the region, please contact us.

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