

Country profile

INDIA



Habitat for Humanity in India

Habitat for Humanity began operations in Khammam, Andhra Pradesh state, southeastern India, in 1983. Among the largest Habitat programs in the Asia-Pacific region, HFH India has helped nearly 134,900 families gain access to decent shelter as well as rebuilt their homes and lives in the aftermath of disasters. By 2019, HFH India plans to reach out to 500,000 low-income families with improved housing solutions, safe sanitation and clean water and as well as post-disaster reconstruction.

The housing need in India

The world's largest democracy, India has seen rapid economic growth and made progress toward achieving most of the Millennium Development Goals. Income inequality remains a challenge though the poverty rate has been declining. World Bank data showed the national poverty rate has fallen from 37 percent in 2005 to 21.9 percent in 2012. To meet the country's vision of a home for all by 2022, India will need to build an additional 110 million housing units. This figure includes the current shortfall of 60 million units, according to a study conducted by National Real Estate Development Council and KPMG.

How Habitat addresses the need in India

Given the immense need for adequate housing in the country, Habitat for Humanity India engages donors, supporters and volunteers in its mission to ensure that everyone has a decent place to live. In India, nearly half of its population – 597 million people – practise open defecation. HFH India's "Sensitise to Sanitise" campaign aims to address the problem by building 100,000 sanitary toilets. Voluntary labor for Habitat's housing and disaster response projects comes from international teams under the Global Village program and from local corporates and schools.



Jaqueline Fernandez with Indian students who supported HFH India's fundraising effort for the Tamil Nadu floods

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	New Delhi
Population	1.25 billion (July 2015 est.)
Urbanization	32.7 percent of population lives in cities (2015)
Life expectancy	68 years
Unemployment rate	7.1 percent (2015 est.)
Population living below poverty line	29.8 percent (2010 est.)
Access to improved water sources	94.1 percent (2015 est.)
Access to improved sanitation facilities	39.6 percent (2015 est.)

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in India
1983

Families served*
Nearly 134,900

Volunteers hosted*
More than 30,000

*cumulative figure

Housing solutions

- Decent and affordable homes
- "Sensitise to Sanitise" campaign
- Disaster response and preparedness
- Engaging with volunteers



Decent and affordable homes

It is estimated that more than 73 million families in India do not have access to decent shelter. Habitat for Humanity India works with low-income families to build new homes and incremental housing as well as to repair and rehabilitate houses. In line with the Indian government's vision of "Housing for All" for all, HFH India believes that every person has the right to safe and adequate shelter.

Disaster response and preparedness

Since 1999, HFH India has been responding to disasters ranging from cyclones to earthquakes to floods. Among the largest projects was the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which helped more than 13,000 families. HFH India also implemented a community-based disaster mitigation and preparedness program which has trained more than 49,000 individuals. The most recent response to the 2015 flooding in Tamil Nadu has the support of actress Jacqueline Fernandez who appealed for funding and led a 150-volunteer build in Chennai. To date, HFH India has distributed about 7,500 humanitarian aid kits containing items such as tarpaulin sheet, nylon rope, water filter and a personal hygiene kit. In September 2015, a disaster insurance scheme developed by HFH India's partner, insurance firm HDFC Ergo, was launched. The scheme offers policies to help low-income families rebuild or repair their homes after disasters. Annual premiums range from 70 to 300 rupees (about US\$1 to US\$4.50)

"Sensitise to Sanitise" campaign

In India, nearly half of the population – 597 million people – defecate in the open, a problem that the Indian government seeks to end by October 2019 through Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission). Women and girls are particularly vulnerable when they lack access to proper sanitation. HFH India is part of a 12-member coalition that addresses the problem through the "Sensitise to Sanitise" campaign. It involves the construction of toilets in households, schools and communities as well as improving access to water. The multi-pronged approach also includes a program to raise awareness about the importance of sanitation and to create a demand for toilets through behavior change communication and community-led total sanitation.

Engaging with volunteers

India is a popular destination for Habitat's Global Village volunteers with teams coming from countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Local volunteers from corporations, international schools and universities also supported Women Build and the 2016 Habitat Young Leaders Build campaign.

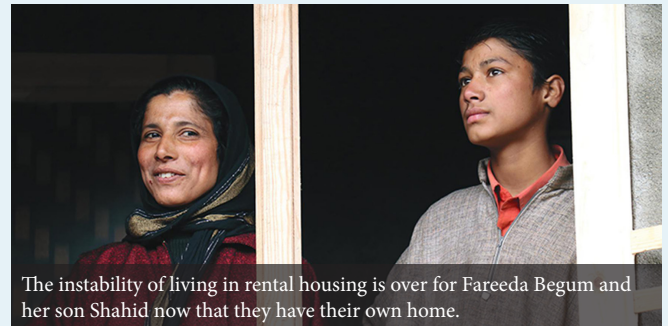
Meet a Habitat family

Fareeda Begum and her family had to escape from their house in Gulzarpora village in the Indian-administered region of Kashmir in September 2014 when water rushed in after a night of heavy rain. They joined others who were heading to a safer place in Rinchipura village. In the dark, her husband Mushtaq Sheikh became separated from them. "I searched desperately for him, wading through the flood waters, but he couldn't be found."

Fareeda and her three children were later helped into a boat that took them to Rinchipura. "I feared the worst and began to reluctantly accept that he was not able to make it. The future seemed bleak," she said. On her fourth day in Rinchipura, she heard an announcement over the village mosque's loudspeaker that her husband was looking for his family. "I froze in disbelief. With shaking knees, I got up and walked hurriedly toward the mosque to be reunited with him."

The family then went to stay with Fareeda's sister in another village. When they finally returned to Gulzarpora after 20 days, they found that their house was destroyed, along with Fareeda's son Shahid's textbooks and school bag. Shahid, who loves to study the Urdu language, wants to become a teacher. He now borrows textbooks from his friend.

Fareeda's family received a new house in a 22-house flood response project between HFH India and its long-term partner, the Aditya Birla Group. "The new home is beautiful; in fact better than our previous one. It has already given us huge mental comfort as we don't have to worry about our next rental deposit."



The instability of living in rental housing is over for Fareeda Begum and her son Shahid now that they have their own home.

What you can do

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


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