

## Country profile

# MYANMAR



### Habitat for Humanity in Myanmar

Habitat for Humanity's involvement in Myanmar arose after the devastating Cyclone Nargis struck on May 2, 2008. Together with its partner World Concern, Habitat for Humanity built and repaired more than 1,700 core houses in the worst-hit Ayeyarwady delta as part of World Concern's integrated multi-sector disaster recovery program. In January 2014, Habitat for Humanity began projects in water and sanitation with disaster risk reduction with World Concern. In September 2014, Habitat for Humanity received government registration allowing it to directly implement programs in Myanmar.

### The housing need in Myanmar

Myanmar is among the poorest countries in Asia with one in four people living below the national poverty line. Most of the poor live in rural areas which also tend to be affected by civil conflict or natural disasters such as forest fires, landslides, floods and storm surges. A 2011 joint survey by UNICEF and the Myanmar government in 24 townships showed that more than 60 percent of the population has access to improved water and sanitation facilities. However, just over one in 10 persons handled water safely before drinking while 85 percent of population still defecated in the open.

### How Habitat addresses the need in Myanmar

Since January 2014, HFH Myanmar and its partner World Concern have been working in 11 villages to improve 965 families' health through water and sanitation facilities such as wells, water points and latrines as well as two rural health centers. Local communities are involved in raising personal hygiene standards and families make decisions to build their own sanitation facilities. In addition, HFH Myanmar has built a cyclone shelter to reduce the risks from future disasters. The projects are supported by Nissan and HFH Australia.



A cyclone shelter that is used as a school during times when there are no disasters.

## COUNTRY FACTS

<b>Capital</b>	Nay Pyi Taw (administrative capital)
<b>Population</b>	more than 56.3 million (July 2015 est.)
<b>Urbanization</b>	34.1 percent lives in cities (2015)
<b>Life expectancy</b>	66 years (2015 est.)
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	5 percent (2015 est.)
<b>Population living below poverty line</b>	32.7 percent (2007 est.)
<b>Access to improved water sources</b>	80.6 percent (2015 est.)
<b>Access to improved sanitation facilities</b>	77.4 percent (2012 est.)

Source: World Factbook

## HABITAT FACTS

**When Habitat started in Myanmar**  
2008\*

**Families served\*\***  
More than 3,500

\*Through implementing partner

\*\*Cumulative figure

### Housing solutions

- Water and sanitation facilities and hygiene training
- Disaster risk reduction



## Improving water and sanitation facilities / disaster risk reduction

Habitat for Humanity currently works with World Concern in 26 villages in Myanmar through two new projects that began in March 2015. In Mon state, about 6,330 people in 14 villages will benefit from clean water and improved sanitation by June 2016. In the Ayeyarwady delta region, about 5,000 people in 12 villages will gain access to improved sanitation and clean water as well as a cyclone shelter which will double up as a school when there are no disasters.

## Disaster response

In response to the devastating Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, Habitat and World Concern built and repaired more than 1,700 basic houses in 18 communities in the Ayeyarwady delta. Habitat houses used strengthened timber-frames and were built on lightweight concrete stilts. Walls and floors

were made from woven bamboo, and roofs were fitted with galvanized iron sheets. Each house came with a latrine and water catchment system. Habitat also helped to supervise the construction of jetties and the repair of roads through a cash-for-work program funded by World Concern.

## Healthier communities

In Mon state and the Ayeyarwady delta region, the lack of clean water drains families' limited incomes on buying water. Women and children also have to walk longer distances and spend time fetching water from another village. With support from Habitat for Humanity Australia, wells are being installed and water filtration systems distributed to families in Mon state. Through training, communities are educated on the importance of safe sanitation and inspired to build their own toilets. In the delta region, funding from Nissan has enabled families to improve their health through water and sanitation facilities as well as the construction of a cyclone shelter to protect lives in future disasters.

## Meet a Habitat family

The lack of adequate water supply plagued Ma Cho, like many other families in Kyauk Phyar village in Kyeik Hto town, Mon state. She used to walk for 30 minutes up the hill to fetch water from a small stream. Her four children, aged between one and 10, often suffered from diarrhea, skin infections and other waterborne diseases. Spending money on medicine reduces the daily earnings of between 4,000 kyats and 6,000 kyats (between US\$3 and US\$5) from her husband Ko Kyaw Soe's job as a street vendor.

As Ma Cho had to fetch water several times a day, she was unable to work to supplement the family income. Her life changed when Habitat for Humanity and World Concern installed a gravity flow water supply system with 17 water points in the village. As one of the water points is near her house, her time is freed up and her family income is doubled since she started helping out her husband. She is now saving money to be able to send her eldest daughter to the local high school in Kyeik Hto town in two years' time.

As part of the water project, Ma Cho and her family also attended the sanitation and hygiene training. She believes that her family members' health has improved since they adopted hygienic practices.



With a water point near her house, Ma Cho (right) has seen improvements in the income and health of her family.

## What you can do

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


## Habitat for Humanity Myanmar

477/479, 6th and 7th Floors, Aye Yeikthar 2nd Lane  
New University Avenue, Bahan Township  
Yangon, Myanmar

Tel: +95 1 557 355 / 401 554

Cell: +95 925 331 2923

Email: [GLian@habitat.org](mailto:GLian@habitat.org)

 [habitat.org/asiapacific](http://habitat.org/asiapacific)