

Country profile

NEW ZEALAND

Habitat for Humanity in New Zealand

Active in New Zealand since 1983, Habitat for Humanity now has a national office in Auckland, 10 affiliates and a network of 13 ReStores spread across the North and South Islands. HFH New Zealand gives families a hand up to improve their housing situation and also supports projects across the Asia-Pacific region, especially Samoa.

The housing need in New Zealand

New Zealand has been described as the most expensive country in the world to buy property when compared with household income, according to international ratings agency Fitch. In Auckland, where demand outweighs supply, housing cost has more than doubled in recent years. This has locked many families out of the prospect of owning homes for generations, and placed pressure on rental availability and cost. About one third of New Zealand's total housing stock, about 1.3 million houses, consists of rental houses with the other 67 per cent owner-occupied. The effects of cold and damp housing on children's health in New Zealand are well documented, particularly with poorly insulated and badly maintained rental properties. Urban dwellers who cannot afford to rent a house may share accommodation with relatives. Entire families including children are known to live in uninsulated garages. In rural areas, Habitat has encountered low-income families who live without electricity, running water or proper bathrooms as well as those who can't afford maintenance and repairs on houses which are nearing the end of their structural life span.

How Habitat addresses the need in New Zealand

HFH New Zealand works with volunteers, corporations, NGO partners and donors, and through funds raised via ReStores to enable families to build decent, affordable homes. Through its 10 affiliates, Habitat also provides assistance through "A Brush With Kindness", a critical home repair program, unique regional activities such as social rentals, reconstruction following the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, group accommodation facilities and partnerships with government agencies.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Wellington
Population	4.4 million (July 2015 est.)
Urbanization	86.3 percent lives in cities (2015)
Life expectancy	81 years (2015 est.)
Unemployment rate	5.8 percent (2015 est.)
Access to improved water sources	100 percent (2015 est.)

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in New Zealand
1993

Families served*
More than 490

Volunteers sent**
More than 1,500

* cumulative figure since 1993

** cumulative figure since 1995

Housing solutions

- Assisted home ownership
- Disaster response
- Global Village volunteer program



Assisted home ownership

Across New Zealand, 10 affiliates build homes with families in need of decent housing and carry out critical home repairs through “A Brush With Kindness”. The affiliates also operate 13 ReStores which provide further opportunities for volunteers to be part of Habitat’s work. The ReStores accept donated goods and resell them to the general public at a fraction of the retail price to help the Habitat affiliates fund the construction of homes within their communities.

Global Village volunteer program

HFH New Zealand’s Global Village program offers New Zealanders the chance to participate in small and large volunteer builds around the world, helping families achieve a decent place to live. In 2016, volunteer destinations include Samoa, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Fiji, Cambodia, India and Chile.

Disaster response

Following the devastating February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, HFH New Zealand continues to work with the government to house 21 affected families. Eleven families have moved into their new Habitat homes in 2015. HFH New Zealand also lends a hand to its Pacific Islands neighbors such as Samoa which was hit by Cyclone Evan in 2012. A total of 108 “faleo’o” (meaning “lean to”) cyclone-resilient shelters were built by two of HFH New Zealand’s most experienced volunteers working alongside Samoans. Currently, Habitat is helping Samoan families through a three-year, NZ\$1.49 million (over US\$1 million) project funded by the New Zealand government. About 260 families are expected to be trained in financial literacy as well as in the cyclone-strapping of roofs and maintenance. In 2015, HFH New Zealand undertook a new housing initiative in Samoa and is raising funds for rebuilding in Fiji following February 2016’s Cyclone Winston. In April 2016, HFH New Zealand inked a memorandum of understanding with the government of Tonga, committing to helping families whose shelter may be affected by disasters.

Meet a Habitat family



Margaret (right) receiving the key to her house from one of the builders, Mike.

Margaret, a single mother, found herself looking after five children with no money in public subsidized housing. While attending a course, she was introduced to the Habitat for Humanity model by a tutor. Partnering with HFH New Zealand, Margaret invested sweat equity by using her own labor to build not only her home but the houses of others as well. In the five years that she is a Habitat home partner, she has been maintaining a high standard and savvy with finances.

“We have a well thought out budget...I was very fortunate because my daughter helped on the building site, and through this experience I have taught her that each of us has responsibilities,” said Margaret.

Margaret ambitiously holds down two jobs to reach her goals. “My goal is to get as much of the Habitat loan repaid as quickly as I can and by joining KiwiSaver I now have hope that I can own my own house and have money to live on by the time I retire. I never ever dreamed this would be possible for me and my family before Habitat came into my life.”

What you can do

DONATE or **VOLUNTEER** to help families break the poverty cycle through decent homes. To learn more about Habitat projects in New Zealand, please contact us.

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