

# Lesotho

## Habitat for Humanity Lesotho

Habitat for Humanity Lesotho seeks to empower and transform communities in Lesotho by helping build decent, clean and affordable shelter with Basotho families.

## The housing need in Lesotho

Lesotho is classified as one of the least developed countries in the world, with 57.1 percent of the people living below the poverty line. HIV and AIDS is also an impediment to Lesotho's development as it exacerbates social ills, such as vulnerability among children and those living in poor conditions. Adult prevalence rate is estimated at 25 percent. This in turn, triggers rapidly increasing numbers of orphans and other vulnerable children in the country. 27.5 percent of children under age 18 are orphans and the proportion of orphaned children increases rapidly with age.

Most housing structures in Lesotho do not meet any local standards for decent living. The majority of these houses are built out of mud, stones or sticks and often lack proper ventilation due to absence of windows. Safety in such houses is minimal as the doors are of poor quality and often lack proper door locks. Living under such circumstances put the vulnerable groups' lives at a high risk of break-ins. Many orphaned Basotho children lack a safe place to call home. Land ownership disputes related to inheritance rights have also contributed to the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, with many becoming victims of disinheritance and property and land grabbing, leaving them in desperate need of a decent and affordable place to live.

## Habitat's contribution in Lesotho

Habitat Lesotho's work in Lesotho encompasses new home construction, sanitation, training and capacity building. There is a new program in advocacy for enhancing access to decent and affordable places to call home with secure land tenure.



## COUNTRY FACTS

<b>Capital</b>	Maseru
<b>Date of independence</b>	1966
<b>Population</b>	2 million
<b>Urbanization</b>	34.2%
<b>Life expectancy</b>	53.7 years
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	65.8% men, 34.2% women
<b>Population living below the poverty line</b>	57.1%

## HABITAT FACTS

**Date when Habitat started working in the country**  
2001

**Individuals served in FY18**  
3,410

**Volunteers hosted in FY18**  
175

**Housing solutions**  
New homes, repairs,  
professional services



# Our programs

## Vulnerable groups housing

Under this program, Habitat Lesotho constructs durable two-room homes with concrete blocks and roofs of corrugated iron sheets. A ventilated pit latrine is constructed to improve sanitation. Additionally, Habitat Lesotho advocates for security of tenure and initiates ownership processes for vulnerable households to ensure they legally own the land before Habitat Lesotho helps them build a home. Local authorities, including the land administration authority, local councils and chiefs working with Habitat Lesotho are instrumental in assisting vulnerable households to legally own land. Since Habitat Lesotho's program goal is to transform communities,

prospective homeowners and their communities are further empowered through various trainings. Habitat Lesotho provides direct training on inheritance rights and security of tenure to guard against unlawful evictions, property grabbing and disinheritance. Home maintenance trainings ensure that the home provides long-term shelter for the homeowners. The knowledge gained through inheritance and property rights trainings has seen an increased number of wills registered in various Habitat projects.

In all interventions, Habitat Lesotho works in close collaboration with the government, development partners, NGOs as well as local organizations to address the needs of vulnerable

families that often extend beyond the need for a decent shelter. This way, an all-round approach to addressing the needs is adopted while ensuring community ownership of projects is prioritized.



## Meet a Habitat family

For years, Neo, 59, lived with his wife until her passing in 2002 after a short illness. Since that time he lived alone at Molumong village, Ha-Mofoka, in a corrugated iron sheet shack. It did not have any windows for ventilation and it leaked whenever it rained.

Lesotho's Ministry of Social Development gives Neo a social welfare grant of M750.00 (about US\$63) quarterly. As a self-taught cobbler, Neo uses his skills in his village to keep busy and earn a supplement the grant. In October 2017, Neo's life changed completely as 31 volunteers from the Netherlands partnered with Habitat for Humanity Lesotho to help build a two-room home and a ventilated pit latrine.

"It is true that God never abandons his children," Neo said. "Before, I had lost hope that I would own a beautiful home like my Habitat home, especially because of my disability."

During the house dedication/handover, Neo thanked everyone who made it possible. He concluded by thanking the volunteers from the Netherlands for travelling a long distance to help someone they hardly knew and wished them a safe journey home.

## What you can do

**You can help needy families in Lesotho improve their living conditions by taking one or more of the following actions:**

**Donate** Go to [habitat.org/donate](https://www.habitat.org/donate) and designate your gift to Habitat Lesotho.

**Volunteer** Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to Lesotho or lead your own. [Contact us](#) to learn more.

**Tithe** All affiliate tithe gifts are sent internationally to serve families outside of the United

States. To support the work of Habitat **LESOTHO**, please send your tithe to: Habitat for Humanity International P.O. Box 6598 Americus, GA 31709-3498

**Contact** To learn more about Habitat projects in Lesotho or in other parts of the region, please contact us.

**Mathabo Makuta**, National Director,  
Habitat for Humanity Lesotho  
[mmakuta@hfhl.org.ls](mailto:mmakuta@hfhl.org.ls)