



Habitat for Humanity Vietnam

Habitat's work in Vietnam is undertaken through a branch of Habitat for Humanity International. Habitat's presence began in Danang, central Vietnam, in 2001. HFH Vietnam currently has projects in Hai Duong, Thai Binh and Ha Tinh provinces in the north; Quang Nam province in the central region; and Dong Nai, Long An, Tien Giang and Kien Giang provinces in the south. There are offices in Hanoi, Hiep Duc in Quang Nam province and in Ho Chi Minh City, plus a Habitat Resource Center in Rach Gia. HFH Vietnam specializes in implementing integrated shelter, water and sanitation solutions in partnership with local government partners and microfinance institutions. HFH Vietnam's disaster response program started in 2009 after Typhoon Ketsana – the country's worst typhoon in 30 years – hit south central Vietnam. There is a disaster response project in Dong Thap province in the south after severe flooding in the summer of 2011. HFH Vietnam is also helping families in Ha Tinh province in the north who are affected by 2010 floods.

Housing needs in Vietnam

An emerging middle income country, Vietnam has made impressive progress in reducing poverty. Official data showed that the general poverty rate fell from 58.1 percent in 1993 to 9.45 percent in 2010. Poverty is concentrated among ethnic minorities who live in remote mountainous areas and among rural dwellers. Towns and cities are growing due to rapid urbanization driven by economic development. Around 25 percent of housing stock is classified by the government as substandard or temporary. Vietnam is also one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Approximately 70 per cent of the population is at risk of typhoons, flooding, mudslides, severe storms and drought.

HABITAT FACTS

Families served this year¹

1,182

Families served to date²

8,419

¹New houses, rehabilitations and repairs in the year to June 30, 2011

²New houses, rehabilitations, repairs and other assistance

Key Activities

- **Housing, water and sanitation solutions through microfinance services**
- **Disaster response, disaster mitigation and preparedness**
- **Financial literacy training for home partners and local government partners**
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene training**
- **Construction training including how to build disaster-resilient houses**
- **Hosting of domestic and international volunteer teams**

How Habitat for Humanity works

Habitat for Humanity Vietnam mobilizes material and financial resources and voluntary labor to build or repair houses with vulnerable families. Habitat home partners help to build their own house and pay toward its cost, typically through a housing microfinance loan. Their repayments go toward a fund which enables more families to build or improve their homes. Habitat builds up the capacity of its local government partners and home partner families and their communities through training and skills development. The areas covered include ensuring that houses best suit the local environment, managing household finances, gaining access to clean water and sanitation, increasing awareness of hygienic practices, training communities to manage disaster risks as well as adapting to climate change. For example, a rural project in southern Kien Giang province, which began in 2009, provides increased access to water and sanitation facilities, alongside training in basic hygiene awareness. At least 184,000 people, many from four of the most impoverished districts in the province, will have benefited by the project's completion in 2012. Habitat also incorporates disaster-resilient and sustainable construction such as wind-proofing roofs or using non-fired bricks in housing and water and sanitation facilities.

Volunteers

HFH Vietnam hosted 21 international teams from Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, Singapore and the U.S. comprising over 400 volunteers, in the year to 30th June, 2011. In addition, five corporate and school teams from within Vietnam, some 156 volunteers, also built with Habitat.

Partners

Habitat continues to develop relationships with donors and

COUNTRY FACTS



partners as its housing, water and sanitation programs expand across Vietnam. Partnerships with multilateral and bilateral organizations include those with UNDP, UK government's Department for International Development, Korea International Cooperation Agency, Jersey Overseas Aid Commission, Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development, Engineers Without Borders Australia and others. Corporate support comes from Chevron, Dow Chemical, ExxonMobil, Holcim, among others. HFH Vietnam also works with other non-profit organizations such as Water Charity and Communities for Communities and receives funding support from other Habitat programs in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and the U.S. In addition, government partners such as the provincial Unions of Friendship Organizations and Women's Unions provide key support.



Habitat for Humanity Vietnam

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POPULATION: 90,549,390 (July 2011 est)

CAPITAL: HANOI

AREA: 331,210 sq km

ETHNIC GROUPS: Kinh (Viet) 85.7%, Tay 1.9%, Thai 1.8%, Mu-ong 1.5%, Khmer 1.5%, Mong 1.2%, Nung 1.1%, others 5.3% (2009 census)

LANGUAGES: Vietnamese (official), English (increasingly favored as a second language), some French, Chinese, and Khmer, mountain area languages (Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian)

RELIGIONS: Buddhist 9.3%, Catholic 6.7%, Hoa Hao 1.5%, Cao Dai 1.1%, Protestant 0.5%, Muslim 0.1%, none 80.8% (1999 census)

LITERACY: 94% (2009 census)

URBANIZATION: 30% (2010)

POPULATION LIVING ON US\$1.25 A DAY: 13% (2009)

ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES: 94% (2009)

ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES: 75% (2009)

Sources: World Factbook, World Bank

Habitat Highlights

- **December 2011:** Over 100 volunteers supported by Korean steel company POSCO built in Tien Giang province in the south. Earlier in the month, about 40 volunteers from Australia kicked off the Nine Dragons build in Long An province, also in the south.
- **November 2011:** First-ever housing design competition launched simultaneously in Thailand and Vietnam with Habitat's partner Siam Cement Group on the theme of "Sustainable Shelter in an Age of Climate Change and Disasters".
- **September 2011:** HFH Vietnam launched its a photo competition to celebrate its 10th anniversary and to help raise awareness about housing issues as part of World Habitat Day.
- **In mid-2011:** Habitat for Humanity Vietnam and Holcim partnered for the second time on a pilot project in construction technology to reduce the negative environmental impact associated with kiln-fired clay bricks. Cellular lightweight concrete is being used to build the walls of 21 houses at the Rainbow Village in Kien Giang province, southern Vietnam
- **June 2011:** A 20-member team from HFH Greater San Francisco became the first volunteer team to build in Quang Nam province in central Vietnam. HFH Greater San Francisco made a tithe donation of US\$200,000 to HFH Vietnam to support the long-term housing recovery of those affected by 2009's Typhoon Ketsana.
- **April 2011:** Habitat welcomed seven more families at its Rainbow Village project in Kien Giang province. To date, 52 houses have been completed with the help of international volunteers and teams from Australia's Communities for Communities. With funding from HFH Australia, HFH Vietnam has been able to extend the project, which began in late 2007, to its current second phase.



Meet a Habitat family

THI THI HOA, a 66-year-old blind widow, was among those affected when Typhoon Ketsana hit Quang Nam province, central Vietnam, in September 2009. With the help of Habitat for Humanity Vietnam and the local government, Hoa and her family were able to celebrate the Lunar New Year in February 2011 in their new house.

Hoa lives with one of her sons, Phan Minh Hai, 30; his wife Phan Thi Hoan, 28, and their two-year-old daughter, Phan Thi Thuy Hang. Her son and daughter-in-law are often away, working on other people's agricultural land. Hoa's other children – another son and five daughters – are married and live elsewhere.

Despite her lack of sight and age, Hoa does the housework and tends to the vegetables which she planted at the back of her Habitat house. Her new home was built about 100 meters away from where her old house stood.

After Typhoon Ketsana, all that remained of Hoa's house where she lived for 40 years was a skeletal structure of wooden posts and purlins. The thatched walls and corrugated tin roof sheets were piled up on the ground. According to Hoa,

termites had infested the wooden posts even while they were living in the old house. For years, she depended on neighbors for water from their wells as hers dried up. The family used a hole dug in the ground outside the house as their toilet. They only started having electricity 10 years ago.

Hoa's new house has concrete columns, plastered brick walls, raised cement floor and a tiled roof and a new toilet. Her son and brothers-in-law helped to build her house together with international student volunteers. The volunteers dug the ground for a septic tank for the toilet as well as built brick walls. Hoa said her neighbors, who were excited to meet the volunteers, came together to cook meals and make soya bean milk for everyone. Hoa's face brightened when she talked about the volunteers and pointed to their group photograph hanging on the living room wall.

Hoa said her health has improved because she now has a clean and secure house which is safe from severe weather such as flooding, storms and strong winds. "I hope that my family will always have good health and will come back more often, now that there is a gathering place for everyone," said Hoa.



What volunteers say

"It's impossible to put what we've all experienced in the past ten days into words. Our time here has meant so much to so many people. It's true, we weren't just building a house; we built so much more. You can make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give. That is something that we all learned firsthand here in Vietnam."

– Joelle Schonberg, a student from Stamford Collegiate, which is part of District School Board of Niagara International in Canada. She built in Tien Giang province, July 2011.