



Bangladesh

Capacity Overview

Habitat for Humanity began operating in Bangladesh in 1999 and remains committed to partnering with the Bangladesh government, local organizations and communities to improve the lives of vulnerable families by removing the barriers that stand between them and a decent, healthy place to call home. Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh's integrated, multisector approach places a special focus on sustainable housing innovations; water, sanitation and hygiene, or WASH; slum upgrading; and disaster risk reduction and response.

Habitat for Humanity helped more than 35,000 people in Bangladesh build or improve their homes from 2015 to 2020. In 2020, we partnered with more than 11,000 people in six districts to improve health through housing and WASH interventions. Habitat's programs bring changes in the living conditions, productivity and health of families and individuals.

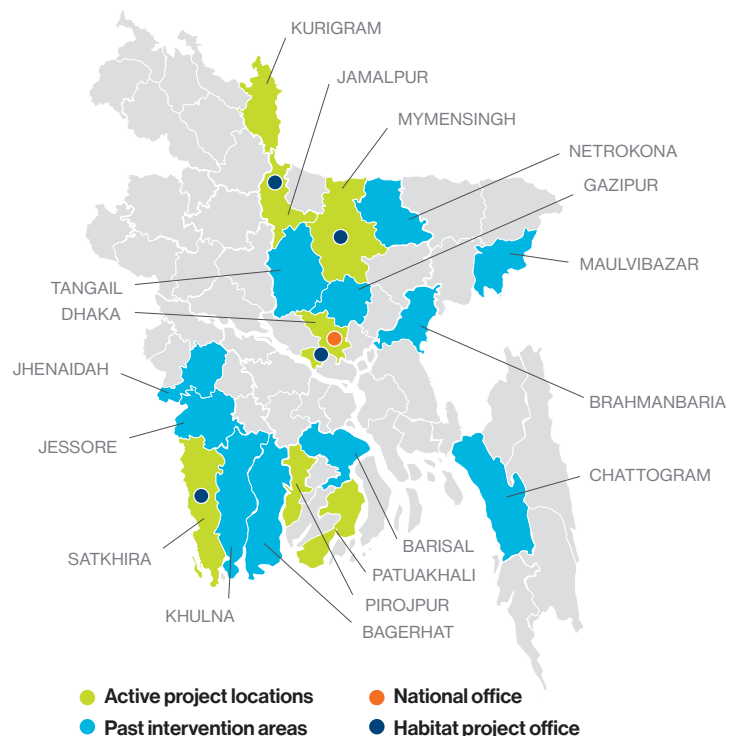
As a housing-focused organization, Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh is able to deliver inclusive interventions that are affordable, sustainable, customized to contextual needs, and integrated into the overall urban and rural settings. Habitat has a national team of experts and leaders with experience in housing, land tenure, house planning, urbanization, housing policies, project management, construction, WASH, disaster risk reduction and response, and housing advocacy.

Research tells us that safe, adequate and affordable housing leads to gains in **health**, education and **economic opportunity**, and these in turn promote broader reductions in inequality while building resilience against disasters and economic crises. A driver or catalyst for 13 of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, housing will be **particularly important in a post-pandemic world** as an essential component of any comprehensive approach to recovery and development in emerging economies, including Bangladesh's.



Country context

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with over 160 million people. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme, or UNDP, the population of Bangladesh is expected to grow to between 230 million and 250 million by 2050. Under the constitution of Bangladesh, all citizens have the right to have access to housing. According to UNDP Bangladesh, the Bangladesh government meets only 7% of the annual housing demand and relies heavily on the private sector to fill in the giant gap. The shortage is projected to reach 8.5 million units by 2021, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. In urban projects, private developers focus on upper- and upper-middle-income groups, and public land allotments for low-income households are negligible. Based on 2014 data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, over 2.2 million people were living in slums across the country. More than 5,000 of these slums were in Dhaka.



Sustainable housing innovation

From 2015 to 2020, Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh partnered with more than 35,000 people to build or improve their homes. Recent projects included a three-year partnership with the Korea International Cooperation Agency, or KOICA, to improve the living conditions of low-income families through climate-adaptive and affordable housing technologies and WASH interventions in Mymensingh division, northeastern Bangladesh.

From January 2018 to December 2020, Habitat partnered with 39,045 individuals in Mymensingh and Jamalpur districts to build 288 new houses using locally available, affordable construction materials. A total of 299 sanitary toilets with rainwater harvesting systems to improve sanitary conditions and 74 community tube wells to provide safe drinking water were also built. People from the communities learned about the impact of climate change on housing and how to use locally available and environmentally friendly materials to mitigate the effects. Others participated in skills training in masonry, carpentry,

electrical wiring and sewing, along with training in WASH and fire prevention and safety. Altogether, 10,450 people have improved their livelihood skills and safety and hygiene awareness through such training.

The partnership included the construction of two demonstration houses – one in Mymensingh and the other in Jamalpur – to showcase climate-smart features such as:

- Raising of plinths and applying water-resistant plastering to prevent flood damage.
- Strong hip roof and joints to improve resistance against high winds.
- Planting of trees around the house to reduce the impact of strong winds during storms.
- Bamboo ceilings to reduce heat in summer.
- Use of solar panels to save energy.
- Rainwater catchment systems to reduce groundwater usage.
- Smokeless stoves in the kitchen.





Water, sanitation and hygiene

Habitat Bangladesh is able to deliver inclusive WASH interventions that are customized, affordable, sustainable and integrated into the overall housing and urban ecosystems. Our WASH programs flow from community-driven processes. They include information and knowledge management opportunities, employ contextually appropriate technologies, and engage in responsible natural resources management and governance.

Habitat Bangladesh increases access to sustainable and safe water supplies for vulnerable communities by constructing water and sanitation facilities, improving hygiene practices, and enhancing the governance of water and sanitation systems by building the capacity of communities through the formation of community WASH

committees. Members of these committees oversee the installation of tube wells, water testing, water purification systems, and rainwater harvesting systems for reservoirs. Comprehensive WASH training, menstrual hygiene management training, and the distribution of WASH kits have helped families and adolescent girls improve their health and hygiene standards.

Habitat has supported 2,848 Bangladeshi families at risk of contracting COVID-19 by distributing sanitizers, face masks and food items, and through hand-washing demonstrations and campaigns that raise awareness of improved respiratory hygiene behavior in Khulna, Rangpur, Satkhira, Mymensingh and Jamalpur districts.

Slum upgrading

Research shows how critical adequate housing is to so many aspects of a family's life, from health and education to economic opportunity and resilience to disasters. In Bangladesh, 3 in 4 slum households live in one room and lack access to basic infrastructure and services, according to UNICEF. Slum dwellers face eviction threats in addition to natural disaster risks from living in low-lying areas. A United Nations think tank on global health highlighted that viral diseases and communicable diseases are increasing in Dhaka – the world's most crowded city, according to UN-HABITAT – because of poor hygiene and sanitation systems in the slums. In the country's slums, the mortality rate of children younger than 5 is almost double that of children in rural areas.

Based on Bangladesh's census in 2014, the number of slum dwellers is increasing 2.7% annually. Given the demand for affordable housing, Habitat has since 2012 been working with urban slum communities in Bangladesh to address issues such as the lack of safe and decent housing, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, and fire and disaster risks. In March 2020, Habitat began implementing a two-year project funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to enable slum dwellers in Dhaka to gain access to decent housing and improve communities' hygiene and sanitation facilities. Other donors such as KOICA had also funded urban slum upgrading projects. In the process, we are increasing access to WASH facilities and organizing communities into groups that help maintain WASH facilities and collect fees from users.

Project activities include building houses, community toilets with shared shower facilities, community water points, and drainage systems. As a result, families are able to move into new homes with access to improved sanitation and safe drinking water. We work to increase awareness of sanitation and menstrual hygiene, provide training in waste management, and promote saving practices. In implementing the projects, Habitat Bangladesh fosters sound relationships between service providers and urban slum communities. Such cooperation is key to providing and maintaining basic essential services. New partnerships engage various stakeholders, resulting in better solutions for the issues faced by

informal settlers. Community resilience is also increased by improving water, sanitation and drainage systems and building capacity for disaster preparedness.

More than 14,000 individuals have been served through the Dhaka slum upgrading project. By moving out of substandard houses, they gained access to improved kitchen and sanitation facilities, making for a healthier living environment.





Disaster risk reduction and response

In 2020, in response to severe flooding in the north of Bangladesh, Habitat supported 7,638 affected families with humanitarian aid kits containing items such as tarpaulin sheets, hand tools, blankets, utensils, bath soap and face masks.

Habitat Bangladesh draws upon Habitat's larger Pathways to Permanence approach to reducing the vulnerability of disaster-affected families, using a holistic program that puts them on a path to durable, permanent shelter solutions – an issue of particular importance given the tendency for affected families with shelter needs to engage in self-recovery and owner-driven reconstruction after disasters.

Pathways to Permanence focuses as much on the process of sheltering and risk reduction as it does on the products that may support it. Effective shelter

assistance and programs build on those efforts. Our goal is to restore not only physical structures but also social, economic, natural and cultural environments. Shelter assistance also serves as a platform for health, water, sanitation, livelihood protection, education and other post-disaster interventions.

After the first COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Bangladesh in March 2020, Habitat prioritized its efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Habitat Bangladesh provided 4,214 vulnerable families, including slum dwellers, in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Patuakhali districts with WASH and hygiene kits containing household cleaning and personal hygiene items. In addition, more than 11,000 leaflets were distributed among local communities and students in urban and rural areas to raise awareness of the need to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



The Habitat network

Habitat Bangladesh is supported by Habitat for Humanity International, an acclaimed global development organization that partners with a full range of stakeholders in more than 70 countries, implementing appropriate solutions for more than 5 million people per year in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Habitat advocates for policies that bring adequate housing within reach for the estimated 1.6 billion people worldwide who currently lack decent shelter, and we help make housing market systems more responsive to their needs.

Accountability

Habitat Bangladesh has a strong commitment to being accountable to the families and communities we work with, and to donors and other partners. We have developed systems for demonstrating our impact and ensuring we live up to our values, including financial responsibility; diversity and inclusion; and safeguarding our employees, partners and the people we work with every day.

Habitat Bangladesh employs a robust monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, or MEAL, system that has been set up to continually track and, if needed, modify and refine approaches. This commitment to MEAL is a hallmark of all Habitat for Humanity programs worldwide, including in Bangladesh. MEAL is used as an instrument not only for program quality assurance but also for continuous organizational learning. We have dedicated MEAL experts at the global, regional office and country levels, with a global leadership team steering and championing advancement of the MEAL approach in Habitat Bangladesh's programs.

everyone

needs a place to call home

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

James Samuel

Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh
House 12 (3rd Floor) Road 16/A
Gulshan Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: james@habitatbangladesh.org

GLOBAL POINT OF CONTACT

John Lindon

Associate Director, Foundations,
Organizations and Institutions
Habitat for Humanity International
3rd Floor, 111 Paseo de Roxas
Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines 1229
Phone: +63 917 3155573
Email: jlindon@habitat.org



285 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Suite 2700, Atlanta, GA 30303-1220 USA
322 W. Lamar St., Americus, GA 31709-3543 USA
(800) 422-4828 fax (229) 928-8811 publicinfo@habitat.org habitat.org