



# Ethiopia

## Capacity Overview

Habitat for Humanity began operations in Ethiopia in 1993 and remains committed to partnership with the Ethiopian 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's integrated, multisector approach in Ethiopia places a special focus on water, sanitation and hygiene, or WASH; slum upgrading; disaster risk reduction and response; and housing microfinance.

In fiscal year 2020, Habitat partnered with more than 66,000 people in 18 communities in Ethiopia to improve health through housing and WASH interventions. Overall, since 1993, Habitat has supported more than 608,000 Ethiopians in their journeys to securing safe, decent homes. Habitat's programs bring changes in the living conditions, productivity and health of families and individuals.

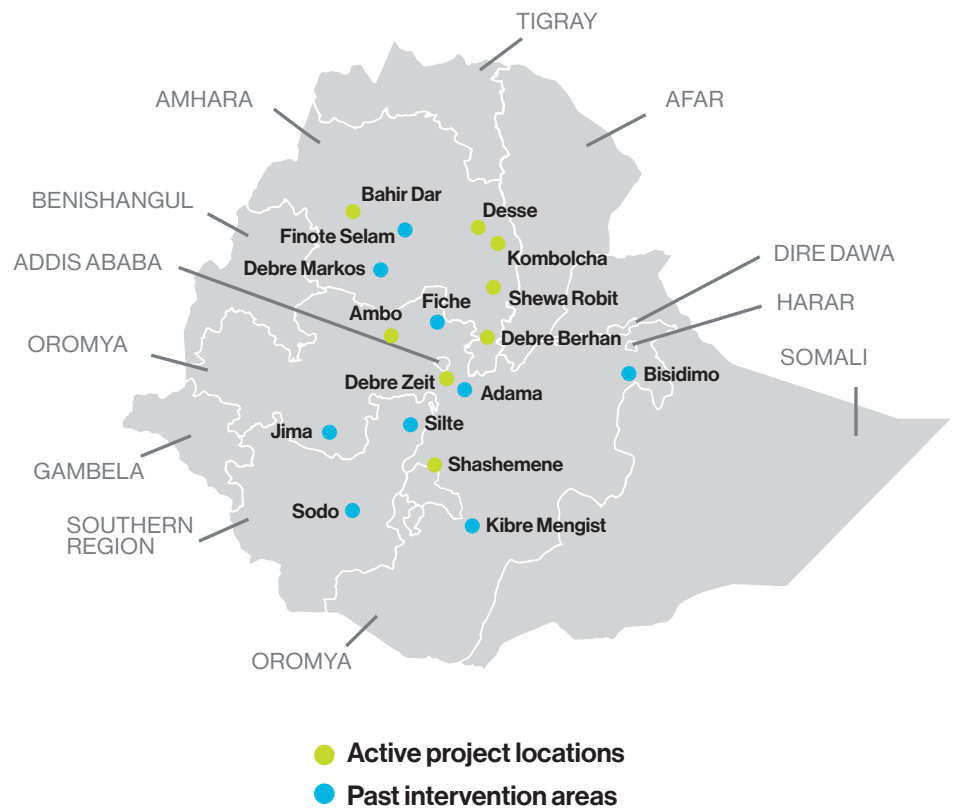
As a housing-focused organization, Habitat for Humanity is able to deliver inclusive interventions in Ethiopia that are affordable, sustainable, customized to contextual needs, and integrated into the overall urban and rural settings. Habitat has a national team of experts and leaders with experience 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 Ethiopia's.

## Country context

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa, with more than 109 million people. The population is projected to grow to more than 133 million by 2032 and nearly 172 million by 2050, according to Ethiopia's 2018 Demographic Health Survey. The vast majority of Ethiopians live in poorly built, cramped houses that lack basic water and sanitation facilities.

- Roughly **70%** of the housing units have only one room, and **24%** have two rooms. Most houses are made of wood and mud, with cracked walls, leaking roofs and dirt floors.
- Some **57%** of people have access to safe drinking water countrywide.
- A mere **28%** of households have access to adequate sanitation.



# Water, sanitation and hygiene

Habitat Ethiopia 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 Ethiopia has built partnerships with donors such as the Korean International Cooperation Agency, LG Electronics, the Towerbrook Foundation, the COINS Foundation and BERA GmbH to implement WASH programs around the country.

Habitat Ethiopia 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 such as

Dessie Town, Debre Markos, Finote Selam and Shewa Robit in the Amhara region and Shashemene, Ambo, Adola and Adama in the Oromia region. This includes partnerships with schools, from constructing toilet facilities to improving sanitation and hygiene awareness. Construction projects have included reservoirs, communal water points and pipelines, communal toilets, and drainage lines. Habitat Ethiopia's WASH work has had a special focus on drier regions where water sources can be scarce, such as the West Arsi zone of Oromia region, to improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation services for 37,500 drought-affected people.

Habitat Ethiopia has supported more than 1,000 families at risk of contracting COVID-19 through support in sanitation materials, provision of face masks, livelihood support through distribution of food items linked with awareness-raising campaigns, and handwashing demonstrations in Addis Ababa and Legetafo town.

# 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. One study found that tuberculosis rates in Ethiopia were associated with housing quality, as measured by factors such as the number of windows, space per person, location of kitchen, and presence of a ceiling. Another report, from the World Bank, noted that formal channels to produce quality housing have not kept pace with rapid urbanization across sub-Saharan Africa, including the lack of financing options and housing investment. This has resulted in the growth of slums throughout the region, including in Ethiopia.

It is within that context that Habitat Ethiopia is implementing a three-year slum upgrading project in Addis Ababa, where roughly 3 million of the city's 5 million residents live in slums. With funding from donors such as the Towerbrook Foundation, the COINS Foundation and LG Electronics, Habitat Ethiopia is helping families who live

in poverty gain access to decent housing and improving the hygiene and sanitation of communities. In the process, we are increasing access to income-generating activities for unemployed women and young people. By organizing into groups that help maintain communal toilet facilities, these women and young people are able to collect fees from users.

Project activities include building houses, communal toilets, communal water points, walkways and ditches. As a result, families are able to move into new homes with access to improved sanitation and safe drinking water. We work to increase hygiene and sanitation awareness and promote saving practices.

More than 1,650 families have been served through the slum upgrading project since July 2019. Families and individuals moved out of substandard houses and gained access to improved kitchen and sanitation facilities, making for a healthier living environment.





## Housing finance

Habitat Ethiopia has partnered with families to construct houses through a mortgage program supported by a revolving fund and also builds houses with very low-income families who are not required to pay a mortgage. Under a project funded by Habitat affiliates in the United States, the Guernsey Overseas Aid & Development Commission, and Habitat Northern Ireland, Habitat Ethiopia aims to improve the housing conditions of vulnerable families in the Oromia and Amhara regions who live in poverty and face health challenges or have disabilities.

Homes are 26 meters wide on average and feature two rooms, a ventilated pit latrine and a kitchen. The houses are built with locally sourced woods, corrugated iron sheets, metal doors and windows. Building materials include stabilized soil blocks, hollow concrete blocks and fire bricks. The families who received the houses through the mortgage program are on a 10-year repayment

schedule, helping maintain a revolving fund account established at the local bank within the community to continually support more homebuilding. These families have been selected based on their level of vulnerability, including those living with leprosy or other physical disabilities; their age; their income; and whether they are part of a group facing discrimination.

When the Ethiopian government decided to invest in a health center serving residents of the Debre Birhan and Debre Markos settlements in the Amhara region, it and other health facilities were positioned near neighborhoods where Habitat was partnering with families to build new homes and improve existing ones. The government provided key infrastructure such as roads, bridges, electricity and transportation – all increasing access to the Habitat-supported residential areas.

# Disaster risk reduction and response

In 2017, in response to severe El Niño-induced drought, Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia expanded its partnership with communities in the Oromia Region of southern Ethiopia to include WASH and resilience building. Habitat Ethiopia increased access to a sustainable and safe water supply for vulnerable communities by constructing water and sanitation facilities, including a 100-cubic-meter reservoir, 17 public water points and 32 kilometers of water pipelines. The project also included hygiene awareness and training efforts with communities and local schools. Habitat Ethiopia also distributed nonfood items to help families cope with the consequences of droughts.

Habitat Ethiopia 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.

Habitat Ethiopia's housing quality standards, for example, require access to clean water within 500 meters of a home. After the first COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Ethiopia in March 2020, Habitat Ethiopia made COVID-19 prevention efforts a priority, launching a program aimed at improving sanitation and hygienic conditions for families who live in slum areas and were facing both a public health and economic crisis. Habitat Ethiopia provided sanitary kits and food items to the most vulnerable families in the Lideta section of Addis Ababa and in the town of Legetafo in the Oromia region, reaching more than 1,000 families.



# The Habitat network

Habitat Ethiopia 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.

Habitat for Humanity International has invested in an Africa Hub in Nairobi that allows Habitat to multiply impact through centralized programmatic support. Those resources and expertise can be flexed into African countries such as Ethiopia, in support of programming.

Habitat Ethiopia also has access to the expert support in the Nairobi office of Habitat's Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter, which applies market systems development approaches to help fill the void in affordable and quality housing. The Terwilliger Center works with the private sector to pilot new products and approaches related to housing finance and construction materials, services and practices, then scales the best of those innovations. One example is Habitat's MicroBuild Fund, the first housing-focused microfinance investment vehicle dedicated to helping low-income families. The MicroBuild Fund reached its eighth year in 2020, having disbursed US\$136.9 million to 55 microfinance institutions across 32 countries.

Habitat knows that low-income families around the world, including in Ethiopia, are underserved by formal housing markets. They tend to build in stops and starts, often with limited access to sound construction advice and quality, eco-friendly materials. These incremental builders form a large but invisible segment of the housing market.





# Accountability

Habitat Ethiopia 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 Ethiopia 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 Ethiopia. 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 Ethiopia's programs.

Habitat Ethiopia operates with the highest level of financial accountability and integrity. We adhere to strict financial policies and regularly conduct internal audits. Our ethics policy protects the people and communities we serve from exploitation and abuse and condemns any activities that violate these standards. Habitat for Humanity International also provides staff members, volunteers, vendors, donors and the public at large a platform to confidentially and anonymously file a notification when they suspect or identify unethical activity. In accordance with our global whistleblower policy, we expressly prohibit any form of retaliation against whistleblowers who raise concerns related to improper conduct.

# everyone

## needs a place to call home

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