



Children gather in 2017 outside one of the homes built through a partnership between Habitat and Evonik Industries in Hòa Binh province.



Vietnam

Capacity Overview

Habitat for Humanity began operations in Vietnam in 2001. We partner with vulnerable and marginalized families to help them build better lives and homes while managing economic, social and environmental stresses through a holistic, people-centered approach. During our first two decades in the country, we helped 16,700 low-income families achieve strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter.

As a housing-focused organization, we deliver inclusive interventions that are affordable, sustainable, customized to contextual needs, and integrated into the overall urban and rural settings. Habitat's programs in Vietnam focus on water, sanitation and hygiene, or WASH; disaster risk reduction and response; and housing microfinance. Habitat has a national team of experts and leaders with experience in housing, land tenure, house planning, urbanization, housing policies, project management, construction, WASH, and disaster risk reduction and response.

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, or SDGs, 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 Vietnam's. Habitat's programs bring changes in the living conditions, productivity, education and health of families and individuals.

As Vietnam sets its sights on achieving middle-income status by 2025, Habitat will continue to play a catalytic role in meeting the need for housing that is a basic right under Vietnam's constitution. We facilitate multisector alliances of the Vietnam government, institutional donors, multinational and local corporations, and nongovernmental



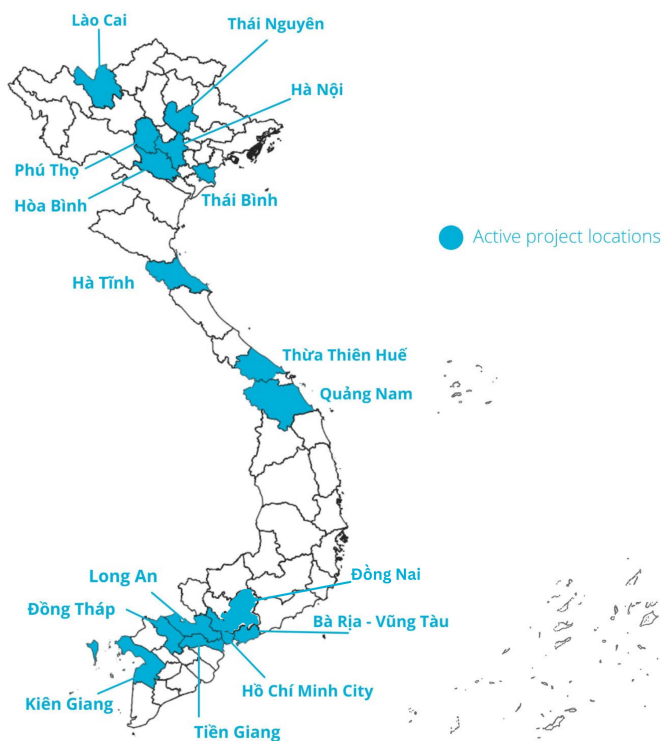
organizations. Our partners include the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Korea International Cooperation Agency, the Citi Foundation, Jersey Overseas Aid, the Hong Kong government, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We also work with Samsung Electronics, Samsung C&T, POSCO, LG, Procter & Gamble, Pfizer and the GE Foundation, along with local companies such as SonKim Land and NS BlueScope Vietnam.

Country context

Vietnam has lifted more than 45 million people out of poverty since the early 1990s because of rapid economic growth spurred by economic and political reforms known as Doi Moi. The vast majority of Vietnam's remaining poor people are ethnic minorities. Among ethnic minority households, those in remote and mountainous areas had the least access to clean water and safe sanitation compared with others in the Mekong Delta region, according to a [local study](#) in 2019.

The government's 2019 population and housing census showed the number of households living on boats and floating houses fell tenfold from 2009 to 2019. But some households continued to live in old, poor-quality houses that were unsafe. One in 2 Vietnamese will be urban dwellers by 2040, and the World Bank estimated an additional 374,000 housing units will be needed in cities each year.

About 70% of Vietnam's population lives along the coast and low-lying deltas, making them vulnerable to disasters such as river and coastal flooding. In 2020, 270,000 homes were inundated and an additional 37,500 houses were damaged by floods in central Vietnam. The government estimated that by 2025, about 30 million people will be living in disaster-prone areas, and hazards are expected to worsen because of climate change.



Water, sanitation and hygiene

In a 2018 voluntary national review of the SDGs, Vietnam cited achievements such as getting access to clean water sources for 93.4% of households and ensuring 83.3% of the households were using sanitary latrines. Aside from the Kinh/Hoa majority, however, just over 70% of ethnic minority households had access to clean water, and only 27.2% of them had access to hygienic latrines in 2016. The gaps were highlighted in a joint report between the Vietnam government and the United Nations Development Programme.

Access to safe water remains a public priority, as the Vietnam government has key policies to implement SDG 6. The government's development plan for rural areas and poverty reduction are particularly focused on meeting the water needs of ethnic minorities, the poor, and people living in remote areas. In Vietnam, Habitat's WASH programs

– with inclusive solutions and partnerships – are driven by the communities' needs. We also help people with disabilities, who make up 7% of the country's population, and vulnerable groups by increasing their access to sustainable, safe water supplies. With support from Pfizer and other donors, Habitat Vietnam has partnered with 29 families who have members with disabilities, helping them improve the accessibility of their homes and sanitation facilities.

From 2019 to 2021, Habitat Vietnam worked with 273 families who are ethnic minorities or have members with disabilities in Que Son district, central Quang Nam province, and Kim Boi district, northern Hòa Bình province, helping them improve their housing and water and sanitation facilities.

Support for Habitat's WASH programs came from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Techtronic Industries Co. Ltd., ECK Foundation, P&G and Dow. Habitat Vietnam has provided families with household water tanks and water pipelines. In schools, we have built communal water points, including filtration systems, and community toilets with private space in female latrines for menstrual hygiene management. Habitat promotes behavioral change through a community-based participatory approach that includes activities to raise awareness of water, sanitation and hygiene and hand-washing practices. In Thái Nguyên and Hòa Bình provinces, Habitat has trained ethnic minorities to manage gravity-fed water systems as a sustainable solution.

Since 2001, Habitat Vietnam has partnered with more than 4,400 families, or 22,000 individuals, to build water and sanitation facilities and provide housing support services. Donors such as Pfizer supported the distribution of hygiene and essentials kits to more than 2,330 vulnerable families, and awareness-raising campaigns were held to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.



Disaster risk reduction and response

Vietnam is ranked 13th among the countries most affected by extreme climate events between 2000 and 2019, according to environmental think tank Germanwatch. The country's overall development is threatened by various hazards, based on a joint report by the United Nations Development Programme in 2020. Each year, five to six typhoons hit Vietnam's coastlines, and northern parts of the country are prone to landslides and flash floods during heavy rains and storms. Disasters caused a 1.5% loss in Vietnam's annual gross domestic product every year, **according to the government**. Economic losses from disasters mount as more infrastructure and people are concentrated in vulnerable areas, such as floodplains and the coast.

The first Habitat disaster response project in Vietnam was launched in Danang province in 2001, the year that we started working in the country. Since then, we have been responding to disasters such as typhoons, storms, droughts and flooding almost annually in the south, central and north. To date, Habitat Vietnam has helped 26,000 families rebuild their homes and lives after disasters.

We draw upon Habitat's larger **Pathways to Permanence** approach to reduce 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.

In the aftermath of a disaster, Habitat Vietnam typically distributes nonfood items, including water, sanitation and hygiene kits that contain items such as water filters, chloramine-B tablets for disinfecting water, and buckets. Local communities also receive leaflets explaining the use of these items. Through emergency shelter kits, we help typhoon- or flood-affected families secure a safer place to stay while moving toward recovery. Families and masons also receive training in building or repairing homes to withstand future disasters.

Recent projects in 2020 included helping families prepare for drought and saltwater intrusion in Tien Giang province in the Mekong Delta by distributing WASH kits and installing water tanks and pipelines. In addition, Habitat Vietnam provided emergency shelter kits and shelter repair kits to typhoon-hit families in the central region.

Together with local authorities and communities, we developed safer techniques for building back that were shared with families and masons via videos, booklets and guidelines. Local community members received training in building more disaster-resilient homes, thus improving their livelihood options. Habitat also encourages disaster-affected villages to eliminate the use of asbestos-containing materials through information, education and communication materials and community-based demonstrations of safe and affordable alternatives, such as corrugated iron roofing sheets.



Residents of Quang Nam province participated in a simulation activity in 2017 as part of a community-based disaster risk management project funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Housing microfinance

In its 2018 voluntary national review of the Sustainable Development Goals, Vietnam noted there was rapid improvement in housing given the country's strong urban development. Yet despite government support and subsidies, poor and near-poor households with limited earnings still lack access to safe and affordable housing.

Many low-income Vietnamese families have members engaging in informal work and are unable to qualify for loans from commercial banks. Their limited options include dipping into their meager savings or taking out collateral loans with high interest rates. Organizations at the national and provincial levels, such as the Women's Union, have a poverty reduction mandate and offer microloans at interest rates that low-income families can afford. Habitat Vietnam partners with these organizations to integrate housing microfinance services into their projects, particularly in rural areas. This housing finance model helps to ensure project sustainability and is supported by Habitat Vietnam's donors, such as Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Korea International Cooperation Agency, Citi Foundation, and Samsung C&T.

Habitat partnered with the Kien Giang Women's Union, a provincial branch of the Vietnam Women's Union, in its first housing, water and sanitation microcredit project in Vietnam. Between 2005 and 2012, 4,359 families in seven districts in Kien Giang took out loans for renovating homes and building water and sanitation facilities, with Habitat providing construction technical assistance. Since Habitat Vietnam closed its Kien Giang office in 2013, the provincial women's union has continued to manage the project with minimal monitoring and support from Habitat.

To date, 14,900 families have improved their homes and water and sanitation facilities through housing microfinance loans from Habitat Vietnam and its partners.

A family in Ba Ria-Vung Tau province join a 2017 event to dedicate new homes constructed as part of a partnership between Habitat and South Korean steelmaker POSCO.



The Habitat network

Habitat Vietnam 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 a Mekong Hub that allows Habitat to multiply impact through centralized programmatic support. Those resources and expertise can be flexed into Mekong countries such as Vietnam, in support of programming. The hub is located within existing Habitat national organizations in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam.

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

Accountability

Habitat Vietnam has a strong commitment to being accountable to the families and communities we work with, and to donors and 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 Vietnam 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 Vietnam. 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 and country levels, with a global leadership team steering and championing advancement of the MEAL approach in Habitat Vietnam's programs.

everyone

needs a place to call home

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