

Bangladesh

Country Profile

BANGLADESH is essentially a giant delta region formed by the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. The country is exceedingly flat, low lying and subject to annual cyclones and flooding, even in major cities. Flooding brings diseases such as cholera and dysentery and contaminates water wells. For poor Bangladeshis, flooding is one more burden.

The country is one of the world's poorest and least developed. With a population of some 140 million people, Bangladesh is also one of the most densely populated countries.

One-in-two Bangladeshis are classified as living below the poverty line. Poverty also means a lack of decent housing. Too many families rely on inadequate and unhealthy shelter lacking basic sanitary facilities and safe water.

Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh began in 1999 with the formation of the Mymensingh affiliate, about 120 km. north of the capital Dhaka. There are five affiliates: Durgapur, Haluaghat, Jessore, Kaligonj and Mymensingh.

HFH Bangladesh uses the "Building in Stages" concept, which allows a family to extend their home once the initial mortgage has been repaid. A core two-room house measures between about 13.5 sq. m. and 20 sq. m.

HFH Bangladesh also uses "Save & Build", a micro-finance program that enables poor women in the community to build through savings and personal contribution. Some 14 savings groups, each of some 10-12 families, are active.

In September 2004, HFH Bangladesh signed an agreement with the local offices of World Vision and World Concern to introduce "Save & Build" to families they work with who need decent housing. Habitat is initially working with four World Vision groups in Savar and Sathkira and two World Concern groups in Brahmanbaria. HFH Bangladesh recently formalized its partnership with Hunger Free World.

Land is at a premium in Bangladesh, but many families own a plot of land on which to build their house. Building materials vary from brick blocks to mud bricks according to what is available to the region. Corrugated metal sheeting is used for roofing. Building a house takes up to three weeks. Habitat homeowners pay an average monthly repayment of approximately US\$8.00.

HFH Bangladesh has an active program of hosting international volunteer builds.

📍 National Office ● Affiliate



COUNTRY FACTS

Population: 141,340,476
Capital: Dhaka
Area: 144,000 sq. km.
Ethnic groups: Bengali 98%, tribal groups, non-Bengali Muslims
Language: Bangla (official, also known as Bengali), English
Religions: Muslim 83%, Hindu 16%, other 1%

HABITAT FACTS

Families Helped

353

Cost Of One House*

US\$1,470

As of April 2005

*international sponsorship cost

Habitat Highlights

- Seventy-one houses built in Tala, located in Satkhira District where the Jessore affiliate operates.
- Hosted two international volunteer teams of English-language teachers from Japan, a student team from Doshisha University, Japan, and one church team from Hong Kong
- "Building Across the Borders" with 24 students from India joining 25 local students to build four houses in Jessore.
- A "Children's Summit" on housing rights for children attracted about 250 students from 17 local schools to raise awareness of poverty housing through paintings, speeches, theatre
- US marines joined Bangladesh troops to build five houses in June 2002.

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