

# Mongolia

## Country Profile

⊕ National Office and affiliate ● Affiliates ◆ HFHM committee



**NESTLED** between Russia and China, Mongolia is a vast beautiful country blessed with wide open steppes, desert lands and snow-capped mountains. Temperatures ranging from  $-35^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $+35^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Nomadic herders still roam the landscape as they have done for generations. By contrast, Ulaanbaatar is a thriving, modern capital city of what was once the world's greatest empire, the creation of the formidable Chinggis Khan in the 13th century.

Mongolia is a country in transition since the fall of the Soviet-style communism in 1990. A centralized subsidized economy has given way to a market economy. But not without pain: high inflation, low wages and unemployment. More than one third of Mongolians live below the poverty level. Many have drifted into towns and cities in search of work, but unemployment is great, wages low and rents high. Decent housing has proved a particular problem with over crowding and homelessness common and building materials expensive.

HFH Mongolia began in 1999 and operates three affiliates. It has rolled out "Save & Build" and "Save & Renovate" concepts, which are being used by dozens of savings groups involving hundreds of families.

The primary three-room house design used by HFH Mongolia covers up to 36 sq. m. Toilets are built separately. The houses are made from brick or concrete blocks, with wood, concrete roof sheeting and styrofoam for insulation. The buildings have to protect families against winter snows and summer dust storms.

Construction usually takes about 20 days, though building is only possible from May to October. Homeowners sign up for six-year mortgage terms and repay about US\$24 a month.

### COUNTRY FACTS

**Population:** 2,751,314

**Capital:** Ulaanbaatar

**Area:** 1,565,000 sq. km.

**Ethnic Groups:** Khalka Mongols 85%, Kazakhs 7%, Tungusics 4.6 %, others 3.4%

**Languages:** Khalka Mongol 90%, Turkic & Russian

**Religions:** Tibetan Buddhist Lamaism 96% , Muslim, Shamanism and Christian 4%

### HABITAT FACTS

Families Helped

**326**

Cost Of One House\*

**US\$2,620**

As of April 2005

\* international sponsorship cost

### Habitat Highlights

- Hosted more than 20 volunteer work teams from Korea, US, Japan, Singapore and China
- Successful "Building on Faith" program launched in 2002.
- 2003, 100th new house was completed; first house renovation.
- Partnerships with United Nations Development Program World Vision, Norwegian Lutheran mission, Community Habitat Finance, Korea Overseas International Co-operation Assistance, Joint Christian Services

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### HFH Mongolia

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