



AT A GLANCE

Families served to date¹

1,631

Families served this year²

275

¹New houses and rehabilitations

²New houses, rehabilitations and repairs
in the year to June 30, 2010

— Updated Jan 2011 —

FLANKED BY GIANT neighbors Russia and China, Mongolia is a vast country with wide open steppes, desert lands and snow-capped mountains. Known as the Land of the Blue Sky, Mongolia's extreme temperatures mean hardship for the population, many of whose lives still revolve round herding.

Droughts, and unusually cold and snowy winters, have in the past wiped out livestock and destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of nomadic herding families.

Over the past three decades, Mongolia has been a country in transition. The fall of the Soviet-style communism in 1990 resulted in a planned economy giving way to a market one. Investors now flock to the mineral wealth; tourists to the natural beauty. But the transition has not been without pain: many people face low wages, unemployment and a lack of affordable housing.

There has been a construction boom within the country with many new residential blocks being built. However, they are often expensive. Many families continue to live in run down Soviet-era apartments and in overcrowded conditions.

The capital, Ulaanbaatar, where one third of the population lives, is growing rapidly. The growth is especially fast in the outskirts where people from the inner city as well as rural-urban migrants have settled in *ger* areas. (*Gers* are traditional Mongolian tents.)

More than 30 percent of Mongolians live below the poverty level. In Ulaanbaatar, poverty is highest among migrants and those living in *ger* settlements, according to a United Nations-funded survey. In addition, these *ger* residents face problems of overcrowding as well as a lack of access to water supply and health services.

HFH Mongolia was set up in 1999 to address the need for decent and affordable housing. It has four affiliates. One in the capital operates program centers in Zuunmod, Bagakhangai, Baganuur and Nalaikh. The other three affiliates are in Darkhan, Erdenet and Khangai. The latter also operates program centers in Arvaikheer and Kharkhorin.

Habitat has rolled out a variety of housing microfinance models to help families to build, renovate or repair their homes. One is Habitat's Save & Build model where families form groups to save between 30 percent and 40 percent of the cost of their new houses. Habitat and its partners contribute the remaining cost to enable a few houses to be built at a time. Habitat home partners also put in "sweat equity", or their own labor, to build their own houses as well as those of others in the savings group. The Save & Renovate model enables low-income families to make specific home improvements while the Save & Repair model allows families to make small repairs.

Habitat enjoys a good relationship with local government authorities, resulting in families receiving land certificates and achieving secure land tenure. The local authorities usually also provide families with access to electricity and water.

A typical Habitat home measures up to 36 sq. m. in size and is constructed with bricks or concrete blocks, wood, concrete roof sheeting and Styrofoam for insulation against the harsh winter. Toilets are built separately.

Construction usually takes about 20 days. Because of the weather conditions, building is only possible from May to October each year. The average loan repayment period is about four years with home partners repaying about US\$24-50 a month.

HFH Mongolia has built partnerships with international agencies, non-governmental organizations and corporations to extend the reach of its programs. Its partners include World Vision Mongolia, Vision Fund Mongolia, the Korea International Cooperation Agency, United Nations Development Program, the British Embassy, United States Embassy, Xac Bank and local mining company South Gobi Sands Resources.

Mongolia is a favorite destination for Global Village build teams. Over the years, HFH Mongolia has hosted dozens of teams from places like Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and the United States. 🏠

COUNTRY FACTS

POPULATION: 3,086,918 (July 2010 est.)

CAPITAL: Ulaanbaatar

LAND AREA: 1,564,116 sq. km.

ETHNIC GROUPS: Mongol (mostly Khalkha) 94.9%, Turkic (mostly Kazakh) 5%, other (including Chinese and Russian) 0.1% (2000)

LANGUAGES: Khalkha Mongol 90%, Turkic, Russian (1999)

RELIGIONS: Buddhist Lamaist 50%, Shamanist and Christian 6%, Muslim 4%, none 40% (2004)

LITERACY: 97.8% (2000 CENSUS)

URBANIZATION: 57% (2008)

POPULATION LIVING ON US\$1.25 A DAY: 22% (2009)

ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES: 76% (2009)

ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES: 50% (2009)

Sources: CIA World Factbook, World Bank



HFH MONGOLIA Highlights

► On 4th October 2010, HFH Mongolia celebrated World Habitat Day with the dedication of 52 houses in Ulaanbaatar, Khangai, Erdenet and Darkhan. The Khangai program team highlighted the need for decent housing among local NGOs, churches, the media, governors and government representatives.

► In early July 2010, HFH Mongolia celebrated its tenth anniversary with a week-long "Blue Sky Build" event. Some 400 local and international volunteers constructed 30 houses in Bayanzurkh district, Ulaanbaatar. Volunteers came from the U.S., China and Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore and Nepal built together with Habitat families and local technical college students and workers. Families now have access to water from a well built by partner World Vision as well as electricity.

► In March 2010, HFH Mongolia organized a charity dinner, Curry for a Cause, to generate interest, raise funds and attract volunteers for Blue Sky Build.

► In October 2009, Habitat celebrated its 1,500th family served in Mongolia.

► For the Building on Faith program in September 2009, 96 volunteers from 25 churches helped build Habitat homes in Arvaikheer, Darkhan and Erdenet.

► In June 2009, staff from the US embassy in Ulaanbaatar helped to build a home together with a family who had been living in a traditional *gertent* for a decade.

► HFH Mongolia and XAC Bank signed a memorandum of understanding in January 2009 to assist 300 families to improve their housing conditions through the provision of housing finance.

► Between April 2007 and the end of 2009, HFH Mongolia and its partner World Vision helped more than 180 families in Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet and Darkhan to build or renovate their homes.



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