

# Country profile

# GUYANA



## Habitat for Humanity in Guyana

The Habitat for Humanity Guyana team believes that housing is a basic human need and right, and therefore it must be accessible to all. Since our launch in 1995, Habitat Guyana has supported approximately 5,000 families with improved access to housing and housing finance.

For more information, go to [habitat.org.gy](http://habitat.org.gy)

## The housing need in Guyana

Set like a gem in the crown of South America, Guyana's many waterways reflect the source of its nickname, "The Land of Many Waters." It is a country full of natural wealth, including savannahs, mountains and rustic eco-tourism paths for the adventurous. Guyana is the only English-speaking country on the continent and has a population of approximately 800,000 people, which is less than the number of Guyanese residing outside the country. Guyana's coastal zone is home to 90 percent of the country's population, creating significant urban density in Georgetown and rural density along the eastern and western coastlines.

## Habitat's contribution in Guyana

In 2012, a strategic planning process was initiated to update Guyana's program model in an effort to position the organization as a housing market facilitator in contrast with its traditional role as a direct provider of low-cost, nonprofit mortgages.

To better meet the changing housing needs of families, the new program model focuses on community-based disaster risk reduction, volunteerism, access to housing finance and advocacy.

Habitat Guyana continues to facilitate the provision of low-cost houses, but its strategies to mobilize financing have shifted from direct provision to a mix of externally financed and sponsored houses. It partners with local financial institutions to mobilize capital from the housing market. Local and international corporations provide annual donations and implement joint social marketing initiatives and corporate volunteer projects.



## COUNTRY OVERVIEW

<b>Capital</b>	Georgetown
<b>Date of independence or creation of the state</b>	May 26, 1966
<b>Population</b>	735,554
<b>Urbanization (percentage of people in cities vs. rural zones)</b>	28.4 percent (CIA World Factbook, 2011)
<b>Life expectancy</b>	68 years (CIA World Factbook)
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	11 percent (CIA World Factbook, 2007).
<b>Percent of the population living below the poverty line</b>	35 percent (CIA World Factbook, 2006).

## HABITAT FACTS

**Date when Habitat started working in the country**  
1995

**Families served**  
5,000

**Volunteers hosted**  
1,200

**Housing solutions**  
560 approx.



## Our programs:

### Beharry Build

Using social marketing as a strategy to mobilize awareness and financing, this project provides families with housing financing. This project is in its second year.

### Increasing access to externally financed low income mortgages

Through partnerships with local banks, Habitat for Humanity Guyana provides assistance to marginalized families to help them acquire low cost mortgages from local banks. Habitat Guyana is currently producing a report based on its research on access to housing finance and the impact of affordable housing on breaking the cycle of poverty in Guyana. *Status:* More advocacy support required.

### Scotia Bank Build-a-home

A pilot social-marketing initiative resulted in a three-year extension of this partnership to mobilize housing finance to single mothers and people with disabilities.

### Habitat Guyana Volunteer Program

Habitat Guyana's volunteer program, now in its second year, uses a structured approach to working with communities and volunteers in housing construction, disaster risk reduction, financial literacy, youth development and leadership training, and community mobilization and advocacy. A campus chapter is being established at the University of Guyana. Habitat Guyana also is seeking local and international partnerships and allies to expand its program.

**Please join us by raising awareness, building, volunteering, donating and most of all by inspiring hope for a world where everyone has a decent place to live.**

## What you can do

You can help needy Guyanese families who live in unhealthy, cold and overcrowded homes by taking one or more of the following actions:

### DONATE

Please contact us.

### TITHE

Establish a strong and rewarding tithe partnership to help build houses globally! Quote 822000, Guyana HFH on your checks sent to: Habitat for Humanity International, Attn: Affiliate Tithe, 121 Habitat St., Americus, GA 31709

To learn more about Habitat projects in Guyana please contact us.

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