



## HABITAT FACTS

Families served this year<sup>1</sup>

**245**

Families served to date<sup>2</sup>

**1,904**

<sup>1</sup>New houses, rehabilitations and repairs in the year to June 30, 2011

<sup>2</sup>New houses, rehabilitations, repairs and other assistance

### Key Activities

- Decent and affordable housing through new constructions, house renovations or repairs.
- Hosting international and locally-based volunteer teams.

### Habitat for Humanity in Mongolia

Habitat for Humanity 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 affiliates are in Darkhan, Erdenet and Khangai. The latter also operates program centers in Arvaikheer and Kharkhorin. In addition, Habitat helps low-income families in Bulgan and Khentii provinces through a partnership with World Vision Mongolia.

### Housing needs in Mongolia

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 livestock. There have been very heavy snowfalls in recent winters. Known locally as *dzud*, such heavy snows leave rural people even more vulnerable to poverty. In 2009/2010, a particularly severe dzud affected the livelihoods and food security of half a million rural inhabitants.

According to government statistics, the number of people living below the national poverty line dropped five percentage points in the past decade to about 35 percent of the population.

Mongolia's capital city of Ulaanbaatar, where one-third of the population lives, is growing rapidly. The growth is especially fast around the outskirts where people from the inner city as well as rural migrants have settled in *ger* areas. (Gers are traditional Mongolian tents.) Ger areas are long strips of fenced-in, unserviced housing plots that are a common sight around Mongolian towns and cities. Inside each area people erect gers or build their own houses, but the families lack proper heating, water or sanitation services.

### How Habitat for Humanity works

Habitat has rolled out a variety of housing microfinance mod-

els to help families to build, renovate or repair their homes. One is Habitat's Save & Build model where families save between 30 percent and 40 percent of the cost of their new houses before construction begins. Habitat and its partners contribute the remaining funds to enable a few houses to be built at a time. Families also put in "sweat equity", or their own labor, to build their own homes. Under the Save & Repair model for small repairs, low-income families save between 10 and 50 percent of the cost of house repairs.

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

A typical Habitat home measures up to 36 sq. m. in area. It is constructed with polystyrene or concrete blocks, wood, with metallic roof sheeting. Styrofoam is installed for insulation against harsh winters. Toilets are built separately.

Construction usually takes about eight days. Because of the weather conditions, building is only possible from May to October each year. During the winter months, Habitat and families usually work on repairs inside the houses. The average loan repayment period is about four years with home partners repaying between US\$24 and US\$50 a month.

### Volunteers

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, New Zealand and the United States. In July 2010, some 400 local and international volunteers constructed 30 houses during the week-long Blue Sky Build blitz build. International volunteers are being sought for Blue Sky Build II, which is scheduled to take place in July 2012.

# COUNTRY FACTS



**POPULATION:** 3,179,997 (July 2011 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:** 62% of total population (2010)

**POPULATION LIVING BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINE:** 35.2% (2008)

**ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES:** 76% (2010)

**ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES:** 50% (2010)

*Sources: The World Factbook, World Bank*



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## Partners

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

## Habitat Highlights

- ▶ **March 2012:** HFH Mongolia held a charity dinner to mark International Women's Day and raise funds for Blue Sky Build II. The week-long blitz build will be held from 1 to 7 July 2012 when international volunteers and Habitat home partners will construct 20 houses in Ulaanbaatar.
- ▶ **October 2011:** Habitat celebrated its 2,000th family served in Mongolia.
- ▶ **October 2011:** HFH Mongolia celebrated World Habitat Day with house dedications in Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet and Khangai. The Khangai program team also highlighted the need for decent housing through distributing HFH Mongolia's newsletters and Habitat flyers to the local community.
- ▶ **July 2011:** Completion of a house in Ulaanbaatar built with polystyrene blocks with better insulating properties than the usual concrete ones. The design will be a model for the houses to be built during Blue Sky Build II in July 2012.
- ▶ **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 who 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 have access to water from a well built by partner World Vision as well as electricity.
- ▶ **March 2010:** HFH Mongolia organized a charity dinner, Curry for a Cause, to generate interest, raise funds and attract volunteers for Blue Sky Build.
- ▶ **September 2009:** For the Building on Faith program, 96 volunteers from 25 churches helped build Habitat homes in Arvaikheer, Darkhan and Erdenet.
- ▶ **June 2009:** Staff from the US Embassy in Ulaanbaatar helped to build a home together with a family who had been living in a ger for a decade..
- ▶ **January 2009:** HFH Mongolia and XAC Bank signed a memorandum of understanding to assist 300 families to improve their housing conditions through the provision of housing finance.
- ▶ **Between April 2007 and the end of 2011,** HFH Mongolia and partner World Vision helped more than 250 families in Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet, Darkhan, Bulgan, Arvaikheer and Khentii to build or renovate their homes.

## Meet a Habitat family

Barkhasbaatar Chuluunbaatar and his family used to live in Dornod province in eastern Mongolia before they moved to Ulaanbaatar in 1996. For a decade, Barkhasbaatar, 35, his wife Tserendarkhi Dugar, 38 and daughter Enkhtuya, 19, lived in either houses or gers which they rented. They used to pay between 20,000 and 25,000 tugrik (between US\$16 and US\$18) a month in rent.

Barkhasbaatar had both his legs amputated in 1998 when a train ran over his legs. He was trying to cross the railway track over to the other side of the road when he slipped and fell down on the track. Before his accident, he used to work as a carpenter, cleaner and road construction worker, among other jobs. After he lost his legs, Barkhasbaatar received 53,000 tugrik (about US\$40) in government welfare benefit for disabled people.

Later, the government provided the family with a plot of land. In 2006, Barkhasbaatar built a 12 sq. m. house which became home for five years. With little income, the family could not afford to maintain or repair the property.

Tserendarkhi did various jobs in the past, such as a tailor, cleaner and baby sitter. She stopped work to look after her daughter Enkhtuya who fell down from a horse when the latter was four years old. Enkhtuya has hearing problems and suffers from a nervous disorder. The disorder often causes her to pass out, especially in the summer when the weather is hot.

Barkhasbaatar and his family moved into their 32 sq. m. house in Ulaanbaatar in 2011. Their two-room house has an attached kitchen with a toilet outside. The walls are made of bricks with fiberglass and Styrofoam insulation for the inside walls.

In his old 12 sq. m. house, Barkhasbaatar hardly had space to move around. He was frustrated by the lack of exercise which



he said led to weight gain and overuse of his hand muscles. He is pleased with his bigger Habitat house. “I have more privacy and can better move around.”

Barkhasbaatar’s wife found a job as a cleaner in a local café before house construction began. He has bright hopes for the future. “Everything looks amazing to me now. My future will be just like my home; bigger, better, and beautiful and I believe it fully.”



## What volunteers say

“Mongolia was my first Habitat Global Village experience. But it won’t be my last. Because we worked side by side with the Habitat families, we got to know them. I was afraid this wouldn’t happen due to the language barrier, but gestures worked beautifully. We laughed and joked and worked... and shed tears together when we had to leave. I’ll never forget the warmth of the Mongolian sun and the Mongolian people. I believe everyone involved was blessed by this common experience. I am grateful for it.”

- Marla Knight-Dutille from the United States. She built with Habitat in August 2011 in Bayanzurkh district, Ulaanbaatar city.