

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is the second-largest nation in the Caribbean and has the third-largest population with 10.6 million people, of which almost 80 per cent live in urban areas. The nation has the most vibrant economy in the Caribbean and Central America, focusing on services such as construction, manufacturing and tourism. It also holds the title as the most visited destination in the region thanks to its year-round attractions and warm climate. Despite the promise of its economy, inadequate housing, inconsistent electric services, and access to a quality water supply continue to be problems that affect the population. Although there has been impressive improvement in access to water supply and sanitation, the quality of these services remain poor for the region. These problems are further exacerbated due to unemployment and income inequality.

Habitat for Humanity Dominican Republic

Habitat for Humanity Dominican Republic is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes the right to adequate housing for all. Since its inception in 1986, the organization has served more than 7,000 families with a decent and safe housing solution. These solutions include home construction and renovation, as well as offering services that help families access microcredit or update land tenure, and providing training in various topics such as financial education, master builders, risk management, and basic construction.

Project Context

In the Dominican Republic, the housing deficit is estimated to be more than one million units. Families are facing not only a deficit of homes leading to overcrowding but also an even greater deficit of safe, decent housing meaning that the number of families living in inadequate and unsafe housing is greater than the number of families without homes. Existing homes are unsafe and pose health risks due to constant dust, dirt, rodents, and insects. In many cases, healthy sanitation options are non-existent in these communities. The housing deficit in the Dominican Republic grows annually by an average of 50,000 to 60,000 homes and, due to the high cost of construction services, low-income families are unable to access formal means of construction and improve their living conditions.



Country Facts

Capital	Santo Domingo
Population	10.6 million (July 2016 est.)
Urbanization	79% live in cities (2015)
Life expectancy	78.1 years (2016)
Unemployment rate	14% (2015)
Population living below the poverty line	41.1% (2013)
Access to improved water sources	84.7% (2015)
Access to improved sanitation facilities	84% (2015)

Source: World Factbook

Country Map



BUILDING IT TOGETHER FOR FAMILIES

In the Dominican Republic's southern provinces of San Juan and Azua, families struggle to acquire adequate housing. The combined population of these two provinces is approximately 450,000 people. Both provinces are recognized by the government as priority areas due to the level of poverty (70 per cent for San Juan and 62 per cent for Azua). Housing solutions available are generally high priced rentals in very poor conditions. The types of houses found in these areas are often dilapidated and unsafe, either made with plated zinc roofs sustained with wood walls or sticks, palm leaves and dirt, and most houses do not have sanitation facilities. Families in these areas earn small incomes from agriculture, fishing, and forestry or service industries such as food shops, beauty parlors, clothes stores, and more. Due to their limited income, families have little or no access to credit to obtain a decent and affordable home.

Project Objectives

1. Construct 36 prefabricated homes for 36 low-income families in San Juan

2. Provide innovative and affordable safe shelter solutions for low-income families in San Juan and Azua using prefabricated home designs

Project Impact

Through the "Building it Together for Families" project, 36 families in the San Juan and Azua provinces will benefit from the construction of 36 homes, positively impacting a total of 180 people.

The homes constructed in this project are innovative, prefabricated homes that are lower cost than other models. The savings, which comes from time and labour due to faster construction time on these prefabricated homes, better serve families who cannot access traditional loans because of their low income level.

Prefabricated homes are manufactured off-site in advance, in standard sizes and sections that can be easily transported and assembled, allowing families to invest in quality materials with a faster total construction time. Habitat for Humanity's Global Village volunteers are a particular support in the construction and assembling of prefabricated homes, ensuring that families can quickly move in and enjoy their new, safe, and affordable homes.

Meet Brenda Liz Mateo Valdez and Livio Figuero

Brenda Liz Mateo Valdez and Livio Figuero have been living in their Habitat home with their two boys for three years. The house they previously lived in was inadequate and unsafe, and Livio was making rental payments on what was essentially a shack. "Now I pay less, and it's for something that's mine," he says. "My children are able to learn better in school now. Thanks to Habitat, I'm living a better life with more peace of mind."

Brenda, too, credits her ability to work at a pharmacy while studying primary education at a university in Santo Domingo to her Habitat home. "Now that I go to the university, I feel happy. My life has changed. I feel that I've achieved one of the most important things by owning my own home."

