

# EL SALVADOR

With a population of 6.1 million, El Salvador is both the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. It is estimated that the housing deficit exceeds 944,000 units and continues to grow as the population increases, meaning that six out of 10 families are living in inadequate housing. With approximately 36.5% of the population living in relative or extreme poverty, many families don't have access to financing for better housing. Salvadoran families and their homes also are vulnerable to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and flooding. In addition, a 12-year civil war that ended in 1992 killed roughly 75,000 people and displaced many families. Decades later, complications with land legalization limit access to adequate housing, and social violence continues to drive many families from their homes.

## Habitat for Humanity El Salvador

Habitat for Humanity El Salvador advocates for adequate housing and drives transforming and sustainable community development. Through accessible credits, we use housing as a means to help families overcome poverty. When low-income families have access to an adequate home through home construction or an improvement, it can be a catalyst that contributes to the family's overall development, benefiting their welfare, education and health.

## Project Context

El Salvador continues to struggle with high rates of poverty, inequality, and crime - in particular, high rates of gang-related crimes and juvenile delinquency. During the last five years, Habitat for Humanity El Salvador hosted more than 3,350 volunteers per year (1,125 international and 2,225 national). National volunteers, however, tend to come from organizations that can afford their participation. Local community groups in areas where Habitat El Salvador builds have reached out seeking to engage their local youth in productive, positive activities with Habitat but these youths and their organizations are unable to afford or fundraise their volunteer expenses.



### country facts

Capital	San Salvador
Population	6,125,512
Urbanization	62.6% live in cities (2014)
Life expectancy	74 years
Unemployment rate	6.1%
Population living below the poverty line	34.5%
National volunteers hosted	14,220
International volunteers hosted	9,319

### country map



# BUILDING YOUNG NEIGHBOURS FOR PEACE IN EL SALVADOR

The Building Young Neighbours for Peace project brings together young people in three local communities in San Vicente, San Salvador and La Libertad to participate as volunteers on six different home builds. The purpose of this project is to strengthen relationships between regional Habitat offices and community groups, enhance national volunteering, and engage vulnerable youth in productive activities that keep them away from potential risks in their communities. In addition to benefiting six families with new, safe and adequate homes, this project is a model that other countries in the region could use to enhance their national volunteering efforts.

## Project Objectives

1. Create opportunities for 600 young people to get involved in volunteering activities
2. Transform the lives of six families through the construction of six new houses
3. Host 30 Canadian GV teams to participate in housing construction activities, working with beneficiary families and vulnerable youth volunteers.

This project provides six families with adequate homes. These families are selected by prioritizing families who are identified as particularly vulnerable (i.e. single mothers, those impacted by natural disasters, etc.).

In the process of transforming the lives of six families through improved, safe and adequate shelter, Habitat for Humanity also gives 600 vulnerable local youth an opportunity to volunteer on the six home builds. There is already an expressed interest by local organizations including youth groups, churches and schools to engage young people in productive activities that strengthen their communities. Each regional Habitat for Humanity office works with local partners to identify a total of 600 vulnerable youth to participate in local home building activities.

All of the youth selected to participate in this project show a demonstrated willingness to improve their communities. This opportunity to participate in local builds not only gives students a productive task but also teaches them invaluable leadership skills and team work.



## Meet Brenda del Carmen

Brenda is 18 years old and lives with her parents and three younger siblings in the rural community in San Vicente. In high school Brenda began volunteering with Habitat for Humanity El Salvador, participating in several builds, motivating her classmates, and completing her service hours working at the Habitat offices for three months.

Brenda graduated high school in 2015 and even though she is currently supporting her family so that her younger siblings can stay in high school, Brenda still finds time to support the families in her local areas as an active Habitat for Humanity El Salvador volunteer two days per week in her own community in San Vicente.

