

Global Village Program International Orientation Handbook



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Welcome to Global Village

Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity's Global Village program is about much more than building houses. You are joining a community of people from around the globe committed to a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to call home. During your Habitat Canada Global Village experience you will work alongside volunteers, local masons and homeowners to support families and communities build strength, stability and self-reliance.

Housing is not only about having a safe place to live, but also a prerequisite to accessing employment, education, health and social services. Housing also sits at the very heart of the Sustainable Development Goals.

During your build, you will take part in constructing a new home or renovating an existing one, whether it's laying bricks, mixing cement, stripping bamboo, or digging a latrine. You and your team will be immersed into a community and have the opportunity engage with and learn about people's experiences in the community as well as the local Habitat staff. The experience will be challenging both physically and mentally, leading you to encounter different cultures and reflect on your own context.

We at Habitat Global Village are here to make this experience as rewarding as possible. The Habitat Global Village staff and your team leader will work very hard to prepare you for your build, work with you in the field and help you get the most out of your experience on your return home. If you have questions about anything in this manual, or about your build, please contact your team leader or Global Village at globalvillage@habitat.ca

You are also encouraged to check out the [resource library in the Habitat Canada Global Village site](#), which includes key resources on fundraising, making payments, insurance coverage information, volunteer checklists and much more. In addition, the staff at each Habitat country program has developed specific resources about the region, including its culture and projects. Your team leader will share these resources along with a learning guide that can deepen your understanding of Habitat for Humanity's community development approach to addressing the housing deficit worldwide.

In addition to reviewing the resources shared by your team leader, each volunteer must acknowledge the volunteer waiver and [volunteer code of conduct](#) as part of your program registration and watch [Habitat's safeguarding orientation video](#) before departure.

You are about to begin a special journey. It is our hope that your experience through the Global Village program will begin a lifetime journey for you to become a strong advocate for adequate housing around the world.

In partnership,
Your Global Village Team

Chapter 1: Introduction to Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity is a global development organization with national offices in more than 70 countries. Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 as a grassroots effort on a community farm in southern Georgia. The organization has since grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in local communities across the U.S. and in more than 70 countries. Families and individuals in need of a hand up partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. Through shelter, we empower.

To learn more, visit [habitat.org](https://www.habitat.org).

The Global Village program began in 1989 in response to requests for international short-term volunteer opportunities. In the first year, 12 countries invited 30 teams to volunteer in house-building work and to learn about Habitat in their country. For over 30 years, the Global Village program has helped expand the far-reaching, worldwide impact of Habitat's work by empowering volunteers to build and improve homes alongside families in over 30 nations across the globe.

Habitat for Humanity Canada

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada, a member of Habitat for Humanity International, believes everyone deserves a safe and decent place to live, both locally and globally, and that it benefits all of society when we do. Habitat for Humanity Canada is a charitable organization working toward a world where everyone has a decent and affordable place to call home. Habitat for Humanity brings communities together to help families build strength, stability and independence through affordable homeownership. With the help of volunteers, Habitat homeowners and 46 local Habitats working in every province and territory, we provide a solid foundation for better, healthier lives in Canada and around the world.

For more information, please visit www.habitat.ca.

Habitat for Humanity Canadian Local Offices

[Find a Habitat Near You.](#)

Habitat for Humanity Global National Offices

[Where We Work, Globally.](#)

What does Habitat do and why?

Addressing the Global housing situation

Currently, more than 2.8 billion people globally do not have access to adequate housing.¹ The World Health Organization says those living in poor conditions are exposed to greater personal and environmental health risks. These vulnerable groups are less well-nourished, have less information and are less able to access health care, thus they have a higher risk of illness and disability.

By 2030, the U.N. estimates that 3 billion people — about 40% of the world's population — will lack access to adequate housing. This translates into a demand for 96,000 new affordable and accessible housing units every day². If we truly want to bring about a world where everyone has decent shelter, we must continue to address the barriers families face to accessing affordable and adequate housing. To do this, we are listening, learning and engaging the global community as they mobilize to change the trajectory of this reality. Here are some ways in which Habitat is working in solidarity with our partners:

- Placing **people at the center** of all our work and highlighting their role in defining and realizing the ways they will improve their lives.
- Examining the root causes of inadequate housing, from the power imbalances caused by **systemic inequities** to stressors and shocks.
- Understanding the drivers of the housing deficit that support or hamper people on their housing journey.

Habitat's Work:

Affordable homeownership program

Habitat Canada with the help of volunteers and generous donors, **we build decent and affordable homes** that provide a solid foundation for people to build better, healthier lives in Canada. Habitat homeowners volunteer 500 hours and pay an interest-free, affordable mortgage – geared to their income – to buy their home.

Our model of affordable homeownership bridges a gap for people who face barriers to homeownership and would not qualify for a traditional mortgage. We provide working families on low incomes with the opportunity to purchase their own Habitat home.

All Habitat homeowners go through an application process to determine their level of housing need, their ability to repay Habitat's interest-free mortgage, and their willingness to partner with us, which includes 500 hours of volunteering.

¹ UNHabitat: <https://unhabitat.org/news/13-jul-2023/the-world-is-failing-to-provide-adequate-housing>

² UNHabitat: <https://unhabitat.org/topic/housing#:~:text=The%20Challenge,accessible%20housing%20units%20every%20day.>

Qualified Habitat homebuyers are:

In need of better housing: Potential homebuyers may be dealing with poorly maintained, unhealthy or overcrowded housing, unaffordable rent, or inaccessible housing for people living with disabilities.

Willing to partner with Habitat: Habitat homebuyers put in hundreds of volunteer hours with their local Habitat. This typically involves helping build their own home or the homes of others in the program, volunteering in their local Habitat ReStore or taking classes in personal finance, home maintenance and other homeownership topics.

Able to make affordable mortgage payments: Habitat homeowners buy their home for the fair market value. Mortgage payments are made affordable because they do not exceed 30 percent of the gross household income and income is evaluated on a yearly basis.

By the numbers:

- In 2023, 192 families (737 people) became new homeowners by partnering with Habitat for Humanity Canada.
- 47% of families are women-led, single parent households.
- 21% of families have one member living with a physical or mental disability.
- 38% of homes are partially or fully accessible.
- 12% of families have at least one member who identifies as Indigenous.
- 11 % of families self-identify as Black.
- 13% of families have at least one member who is a recent immigrant to Canada.

To learn more, [click here to read Habitat Canada's 2023 Annual Report](#).

Global Neighbours

Habitat for Humanity Canada mobilizes and invests in programs around the world to serve the 1.6 billion people in need of access to decent shelter. Our Global Neighbours Program work is designed to empower families to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter solutions. We work in partnership with communities in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Supported by local Habitats and donors in communities across Canada, our efforts help people build better, healthier lives through holistic community development projects managed in partnership with local Habitats around the world that build and repair homes, assist in disaster recovery, as well as offer skills training and financial education. We work alongside communities, including women, youth, and people living with disabilities with the tools they need to improve their own lives – that includes providing people with education in areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene, financial literacy, basic construction and home maintenance, and land access or ownership rights.

In addition to the donations that help fund our global work, we also provide volunteer opportunities for thousands of Canadians to contribute their time and build on Habitat projects both at home and abroad through Habitat for Humanity Canada's Global Village.

For more information on our global projects, please visit www.habitat.ca/international

Chapter 2: Habitat Canada Global Village

A Habitat for Humanity Global Village build empowers volunteers, homeowner families and communities to build better lives. Volunteer teams learn about the global housing need and roll up their sleeves and work side by side with local partners and homeowners to make a tangible difference.

Working alongside families to help build strength, stability and self-reliance through decent housing solutions is a powerful experience that makes volunteers reflecting on their own situation. Beyond the physical construction of a home, Habitat Global Village builds create unique bonds between volunteers, families, communities and local staff bridging differences through a commitment to a common purpose, **a world where everyone has a decent place to live.**

All it takes to volunteer on a Global Village build is an openness to adapting, a commitment to getting your hands dirty, and a willingness to learn. No other skills are required; there will be experienced local staff to guide you along the way.

Travelling and working in different places can be challenging. Volunteers will need to be flexible and open minded in response to the inevitable changes that come with volunteering in different contexts.

Builds are usually one week in length in duration but are preceded by 8 to 12 months of careful planning and preparation. This is an integral part of ensuring a safe and impactful experience.

Three important people will be working closely together to make your Global Village experience a success: your Habitat Canada Global Village staff, your team leader, and the local Habitat for Humanity office.

Global Village Staff (GV staff)

Your GV staff offers knowledge of the procedures required to ensure a safe and rewarding experience. They are the liaison with the country program staff and team leader and will provide instrumental support in crafting the itinerary, budget and providing educational support pre-build. The GV staff is responsible for recruiting and training team leader and providing teams with financial services and administrative support. They are there to help with emergency situations 24/7 while teams are in the field and conduct debriefs with the team leader upon return.

Team Leader

Your team leader, an experienced and committed volunteer, works with the VPS and the local Habitat host to plan and then lead your Habitat Global Village build. The team leader is your main point of contact and serves as a guide and liaison from start to finish. Your team leader will work diligently each day to bring together all of the details that will make your build experience a success.

Local Country Program Staff

The country program is a primary contact and partner in planning and organizing your team's build. The country program helps to plan the itinerary and make arrangements for accommodations, local transportation, meals, etc. They are instrumental in ensuring that the team's build is a positive experience for team members and the local Habitat, the community and the homeowner family. They are invaluable in orienting the group and assisting with communication, cultural awareness and risk management and safety support in country.

The Team

Global Village team members come from all walks of life, but all join the team with the purpose of providing their time and resources to ensure everyone has decent place to live.

Each team member brings to the group unique experiences and a unique personality. During your Global Village build, you may face situations you have not encountered before. You will be in different surroundings, away from family and friends. You might be living in close quarters with others, spending the majority of your time together – sharing accommodation and eating all of your meals together. The accommodation most likely won't be what you are accustomed to; the food might not always be to your liking. Flexibility, understanding and compassion will go a long way towards overcoming these new experiences.

Teamwork is an important ingredient of a successful Global Village experience – on and off the build-site. Every team member brings a diverse set of life circumstances, values and talents to the project. No one can do it all, but each team member has strengths and abilities to offer the group. The challenge and reward in being part of a team is to discover and value what each person brings. Working together harmoniously day after day doesn't always happen – expect a few speed bumps on the road but an open mind and communication can overcome. Getting along requires patience and a willingness to compromise.

Chapter 3: Expectations

Volunteering on a Global Village build comes with unique and exciting challenges. You'll be immersed in a different culture, try new foods, communicate across language barriers, and work and live alongside new people. Being well-prepared and flexible will help ensure your build experience is a success. The following chapters provide essential information about organizational expectations for volunteers, engaging with the community, the build experience, best practices, and more.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Becoming a Habitat volunteer comes with great rewards and responsibilities. Volunteers like you are representatives of Habitat for Humanity as an organization. When you accept a volunteer role with Habitat for Humanity (“Habitat”), you are committing to act in a way that promotes Habitat’s work, respects the local community, and ensures the safety of all participants. In addition to complying with all laws, regulations and Habitat for Humanity policies, all volunteers are expected to follow the volunteer code of conduct outlined below.

- 1. Promote a respectful community:** Treat all volunteers, employees and community members with respect, courtesy, and dignity. This includes avoiding the use of humiliating, demeaning, offensive, degrading or otherwise insensitive language that fails to respect the dignity of the person. Volunteers are also expected to refrain from engaging in intimidation, discrimination, physical, sexual, and/or emotional violence toward others. Volunteers must not engage in any abuse of authority, position or influence by withholding/restricting access to support/support services, manipulating selection or targeting processes for those we intend to serve. We promote a welcoming, respectful environment by making efforts to understand and honour the local culture and by following all rules and policies set forth by a Habitat program staff member or supervising volunteer. Use of social media should be governed by the principles of respecting and protecting vulnerable populations while preserving their dignity and privacy. You are discouraged from posting anything on social media that permits communities and families with whom we partner with to be identified and/or traced.
- 2. Respect the human rights of all people and protect beneficiaries and community members from exploitation and abuse.** All Habitat volunteers must model behaviour consistent with the Habitat Safeguarding Policy, which protects staff, beneficiaries, and community members (especially vulnerable adults and children) from exploitation and abuse. Inappropriate physical or sexual relationships with other volunteers is prohibited. Under no circumstances may volunteers engage in sexual activity with a child (a person under the age of 18, regardless of the legal age of consent and local laws), any Habitat staff or beneficiaries, or any community members. This includes not procuring commercial sex acts, even where such activities are permitted by local laws.
- 3. Prioritize site safety:** Safety rules and guidelines on the volunteer site have been created to keep you and others safe as you volunteer and must be followed. Activities that pose a safety

risk to yourself or others should be avoided. Report any unsafe working conditions to the onsite supervisor.

4. **Uphold a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol, drugs and weapons:** The purchase or possession of drugs or weapons is strictly prohibited on Habitat for Humanity property and volunteer sites. The purchase or possession of alcohol is also strictly prohibited on Habitat for Humanity volunteer sites, even if permitted by local laws or by the laws of the volunteer's home country.
5. **Follow the gift giving policy:** To avoid potential misunderstandings, embarrassment, injured feelings or jealousy, volunteers are asked not to exchange gifts with Habitat beneficiaries, staff members or community members without consulting Habitat staff. Volunteers may speak with a staff member about appropriate ways to exchange gifts and our staff is happy to suggest gifts that will benefit the entire community.
6. **Protect organizational assets:** Use reasonable care to protect all Habitat for Humanity resources. Stealing, misappropriation or diversion of Habitat for Humanity funds, property, or other assets for personal benefit is not permitted, nor is otherwise engaging in fraudulent activity regarding Habitat for Humanity's assets, operations, or families we partner with.
7. **Maintain confidentiality:** Build trust with other volunteers and Habitat for Humanity by respecting the confidentiality of volunteers, staff, Habitat beneficiaries, and community members. Unless you receive prior written approval from Habitat, you will not disclose confidential Habitat member information or confidential information given to you by others.
8. **Speak up!:** Habitat for Humanity embraces a "see something, say something" culture. If you become aware of potential misconduct, help reinforce our culture of courage and accountability by sharing your concerns with an appropriate Habitat staff member or supervising volunteer. You can also anonymously report potential misconduct by reporting a claim to the confidential [Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line](#).

Volunteer Learning Guide

The following definitions and examples will provide you a deeper understanding of Habitat for Humanity's theory of change and our guiding principles that we apply to our programming including Global Village.

People-centered development

People-centered development aims to ensure that all people have equitable opportunities to enjoy their rights as human beings and full members of society, able to live their lives in dignity, justice and peace. People-centered development proceeds on the basis of people's autonomy — people as the agents of their own development, free to make decisions on the basis of their own values, needs and aspirations. This development approach focuses on improving local communities' self-reliance, social justice and participatory decision-making. The people themselves drive the solutions we need through people-centered development.

Example: Habitat for Humanity Zambia uses the participatory approach for safe shelter awareness, or PASSA, methodology to live into people-centeredness in its work to reduce disaster risk. In Zambia, communities living in slums are disproportionately affected by climate change, as their housing units are often built with cheap materials such as mud and are unable to withstand the heavy rains and winds that are increasing in intensity. Habitat Zambia is using PASSA to raise awareness of the “everyday vulnerable” and “everyday risks” to foster locally appropriate safe shelter and settlement practices. Local communities can now identify their own solutions and realistic comprehensive strategies for addressing spatial and environmental planning, local building cultures, and construction techniques. This approach also fosters partnerships among local authorities, communities and supporting organizations to prepare for, cope with and recover from disasters.

Systemic inequities

Systemic inequity refers to the discrimination or marginalization of particular people or communities and occurs because of power imbalances within a particular system or society. It inhibits a population's ability to enjoy their rights as equal members of society and to live in dignity, justice and peace. Systemic inequalities are specific policies, standards and practices — as well as attitudes and prejudices — combined to create institutionalized and even structural problems of inequality in workplaces, schools, religious institutions, politics, etc. In every country, substandard housing is most frequently encountered by specific populations who are subject to certain underlying biases within their cultural, social and economic contexts. These biases often manifest in traditions, customs, policies, regulations and standards that dictate access to public goods such as education, public spaces, markets and housing, in addition to discrimination based on personal characteristics.

These underlying inequities contribute almost imperceptibly to the housing deficit at the community level and undermine equitable access to adequate housing for all. Systemic inequity is a driving force of poverty, which is perpetuated by dominant power dynamics and inequitable access to resources.

Example: Habitat for Humanity Nepal works with indigenous people and marginalized Dalits, who are considered the lowest social class under the traditional caste system. This includes members of landless communities such as Suntals, Haliyas, Kamaiyas, Badis and Musahar, along with other disaster-affected groups. These groups continue to endure historical and systematic discrimination. Examples of caste-based discrimination against Dalits include lower-class occupations, weak exercise of political rights, and inability to access financial resources. Helping to uphold Nepal's 2015 Constitution, Habitat Nepal is partnering with various parts of the government to secure land rights and housing for these vulnerable groups.

Drivers or the housing deficit

Many global and local factors drive the housing deficit. Each country hosting Global Village co-designs its work with community members to address their specific needs. However, we would like to highlight some key drivers for all Global Village countries. These trends or short-term disruptions exacerbate the global housing deficit in places where the housing supply falls well short of demand.

Humanitarian crises

A humanitarian crisis is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of the health, safety or well-being of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large land area. The past decade saw the highest ever number of people internally displaced by conflict and violence, with many locked in a state of protracted displacement. In addition, increasingly severe weather and rising numbers of natural disasters are exacerbating chronic vulnerabilities and are being made worse by climate change.

Example: Habitat El Salvador has provided humanitarian assistance to more than 56,000 families affected by various disasters since 1998, including a series of tropical systems in 2020: tropical storms Amanda and Cristóbal and hurricanes Eta and Iota. In partnership with local governments, private companies and humanitarian networks, Habitat helped families rebuild their houses and make roof improvements and provided emergency supplies and shelter to bridge the gap until homes were once again livable.

In another example, Habitat and our partners have provided a comprehensive humanitarian response for 47,000 families vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many received hygiene kits and information about how to prevent the spread of the virus, while others partnered with Habitat to improve their homes, including upgraded water supplies. These actions were coordinated with community leaders, civil protection agents and local health officials, among others, to ensure solutions are part of a more integrated, community-led effort.

Climate change

Everywhere in the world, households living in substandard housing are already suffering the most from the effects of climate change. In Central America, climate change is making life even more difficult for rural communities in the Dry Corridor, which stretches from Mexico to Panama, by causing more frequent and intense extreme weather events, land degradation, pests and infestations.

Migration

Migration is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from their place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. As of the end of 2020, the number of international migrants was estimated to be approximately 281 million people globally, representing 3.6% of the world's population. The number of refugees also increased to 26.4 million, with an additional 55 million internally displaced people — 48 million because of conflict and violence, and 7 million because of disasters.

Migration, both within and between countries, has a critical impact on the capacity of the housing sector to deliver adequate and affordable housing for all. With governments working to meet the housing needs of the local population, migration is often seen as adding further stress to public budgets rather than as a necessity for ensuring the safety, resilience and success of communities.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees records that nearly 8.1 million refugees from Ukraine have spread across Europe since February 2022. This mass migration of people is a direct result of Russia's war on Ukraine. Habitat for Humanity has been responding in neighboring Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia to help meet the shelter needs of both families on the move to other destinations and those seeking a place to live for at least the next few months. Habitat for Humanity Romania secured hotel accommodations and distributed kits at two border crossings. Habitat for Humanity Poland is operating a housing help kiosk at one of Warsaw's main train stations through a partnership with the city, helping match refugees with midterm accommodations.

Urbanization

Urbanization is the increase in the proportion of a population living in urban areas or the process by which a large number of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming cities. A globally recognized attribute of rapid urbanization is the demand for housing rapidly outpacing supply, most notably for housing that is adequate and affordable. This has resulted in increasing rates of informality, overcrowding, inequality and substandard housing. Urbanization can lead to rapidly expanding informal settlements, which strain infrastructure and public services while also increasing wealth disparities and creating social and economic challenges.

In Bangladesh, the number of communities in slums is increasing 2.7% annually. Given the demand for adequate and affordable housing in these communities, Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh has been working to address issues of safe and decent housing, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, and disaster risk in slums since 2012. Activities include building houses, community toilets with shared shower facilities, community water points, and drainage systems. As a result, families are able to move into new homes with access to improved sanitation and safe drinking water. More than 14,000 individuals have been served through Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh's Dhaka slum upgrading project.

Change through advocacy

Habitat for Humanity addresses these housing deficit drivers and other essential housing needs in more than 70 countries worldwide. We recognize, however, that we need to do more than build to fully reverse these housing realities.

That is why Habitat also engages in advocacy at every level of government and society at large to influence housing related policies and systems to lower barriers to affordable housing and reduce threats to housing security.

Habitat's global policy and advocacy agenda includes:

- Ensuring access to adequate housing options for all.
- Expanding affordability through housing finance options.
- Promoting secure tenure rights and equitable access to land for shelter.
- Enabling stakeholder engagement and community participation.
- Fostering resilient and responsive communities through housing.

We encourage you to actively be engaged in the ways Habitat is addressing inadequate housing, to learn about the impact of volunteering, and to be an advocate for adequate and affordable housing. Thanks to your passion and commitment, we will continue to see lives improved and communities transformed around the world.

Home Equals campaign

Habitat for Humanity's global advocacy campaign, Home Equals, is dedicated to achieving policy change at all levels to ensure that people living in informal settlements have equitable access to adequate housing.

Currently, the more than 1 billion people around the world living in informal settlements, such as slums or favelas, are not treated as equals. Their homes often lack basic services, land tenure security and climate resilience. Recognizing the need for diverse solutions, Habitat for Humanity calls attention to policy solutions organized under four areas of focus:

- Empowered participation.
- Inclusive basic services.
- Climate resilience.
- Tenure security, which is the legally defensible right to occupy land.

As a global housing leader, Habitat for Humanity has a unique opportunity to ensure that access to adequate housing is prioritized around the world. Together we can advance policies that unlock the potential for everyone to obtain a decent home.

Managing Our Own Expectations

Each build is unique, but there are ways to prepare for the experience.

Start examining your expectations early by reviewing these reflection questions. If the answers to your questions bring up any concerns, discuss them with your team leader.

- What is your main motivation for volunteering with a Global Village or Habitat and Thrivent Worldwide build?
- What do you hope to contribute through the volunteering opportunity?
- What do you hope to learn and take away from the experience?
- What do you expect from your fellow volunteers and your team leader?

Some Things to Think About and Expect:

- **Embrace differences:** Different isn't wrong—it's just different.
- **Expect the unexpected:** Schedules may not go as planned.
- **Stay flexible:** Flexibility is key and will continue to be one of the most valuable mindsets throughout your build experience.
- **Practice patience:** No matter the situation, you'll often encounter the unexpected.
- **Be forgiving:** Both you and your teammates will make mistakes. Forgive others, and don't forget to forgive yourself. You'll learn to accept those who disagree with you and accept yourself when things don't go as you expect.
- **Be open to growth:** Be willing to be stretched, challenged, and changed.
- **Manage your expectations:** Not all of your expectations will be met, and that's okay.
- **Take breaks when needed:** Builds are physically demanding, often in hot weather, so don't hesitate to rest.
- **Understand the process:** The team may not finish the home. Some builds are more complex, requiring slower, more technical progress.

Chapter 4: Community Interaction

Volunteering on a Global Village build is more than simply building houses. You'll be totally immersed in the community you visit. Being a visitor and working in a new community requires awareness and consideration for the community and its customs. Each team member is expected to act responsibly and with respect for the local culture and norms. This chapter prepares you for what you can expect and what is expected of you.

Respecting Other Cultures

The country program community can be different from what you are accustomed to at home. Language or accents, accommodations, and the way people dress, and act may be new experiences for you. People might greet each other in different ways or might be mildly offended by your well-intentioned yet unfamiliar attempts to demonstrate friendliness. You will be exposed to local customs and local food. You will spend time with people from diverse backgrounds.

We do not all react to or recognize cultural differences in the same way. Some people withdraw; others become overly energetic about trying to fit in. It is recommended that Habitat volunteers embrace the opportunity to learn about the culture and community.

A recommended way to adapt to cultural difference is to be open, practice humility and embrace differences. Attempt to learn some basic words (e.g., hello, goodbye, good morning) in the local language. Learn more by asking your country program coordinators about the area, their way of life, their families and their experiences. Show as much interest and respect toward your country program coordinators, as they will help you better understand.

Open the lines of communication. If you become confused, distressed, or border on information overload, talk with your team and team leader; seek a better understanding from your hosts; write your experiences and observations in a journal and/or record them on film. Chances are that you are not the only one feeling this way. Being immersed in a new culture is an exciting opportunity that promotes personal growth and is an opportunity to create new relationships.

Country Program Community

Habitat volunteers are visitors in the country program community. It is imperative that team members' actions reflect the values of Habitat's mission, which are humility, courage, accountability and safeguarding.

In addition to the [volunteer code of conduct](#), we expect Habitat volunteers to adhere to these ethics while in the country program community:

- Correct use of personal devices, which includes not taking photographs of children, at-risk adults or others living in vulnerable contexts, and correct use of social media (i.e., no "friend requests" between Global Village team members and the people we partner

with).

- Clothing should be appropriate for the work site or after-work event. Team members should dress comfortably yet modestly. The dress code in your country program community often will be different from how you might dress at home. Before you depart, you will receive recommendations for dress in the location you are visiting.

Gift Giving

Habitat for Humanity takes a very strict stance on avoiding paternalism and fostering any sense of dependency or inequality among our partnering communities. Team members may not bring gifts for individual families. Even with good intentions, any gift can create jealousy, competition and injured feelings.

Donations to the local Habitat program that benefit an entire community, such as school supplies, small tools and clothing, are welcome and appreciated. They will be distributed by the program staff after your team departs. Your country program coordinator will give you more details during the orientation.

Team members are sometimes approached by community members about sponsoring a child or directly donating to other local groups. Inform your program coordinator if these requests are asked of you; they will address it. Please do not make private commitments or agreements with community members.

Cross Cultural Exchanges

Once you are settled in, you will be given a welcome orientation session by the local Habitat. This will reinforce information and tips you will have received prior to departure and give you an opportunity to ask questions.

Working in another culture can be one of the most enriching and challenging parts of the whole build experience. Respecting the culture, you are living and working in is essential to the success of your time within the community. Your team leader will be sending you cultural information about the country you are going to. This will include appropriate dress, behaviour and greetings. Greeting someone in their own language is a great way to show respect.

Global Village team members are guests in the host country they visit. It is imperative that the actions of team members reflect the values of Habitat for Humanity.

It is important to remember that different things are valued in different cultures.

For example:

- Domestic animals such as cats and dogs may not get the same treatment you are used to.
- Time is often not as important; it is the quality of the relationship or conversation, not the time it takes.
- Degrees of freedom may not be what you are used to, especially for women.

In some cultures:

- It is important to greet by asking how one's family is before getting onto the main point of the conversation.
- **You must ask permission before taking a photograph of someone or of a sacred, cultural place.**
- Women may be required to cover their shoulders, or knees, or to wear skirts at all times. Men wearing shorts may be frowned upon.
- It is considered rude to disagree or say no to guests. If you do ask someone something, especially if the answer is particularly important, ask one of the local Habitat for Humanity staff to ensure you get the right answer, and not just the polite answer, so that you don't risk offending someone.

The rules of thumb are:

- Ask if you don't know.
- Be flexible and ready to apologize if necessary.
- Smile and be willing to learn.
- Appreciate the local country and community, rather than comparing it with 'back home'.

Remember - You are a visitor, and you are not there to criticize or change but rather to respect, learn and experience.

Social Learning Exchange Activities

Social learning exchange activities, organized by the country program staff, provide a valuable opportunity for Global Village volunteers, local volunteers, and community members to share cultures, ideas, practices, and experiences. These activities showcase community-led programs and initiatives, demonstrating local skills, ingenuity, and ways of working.

The activities will vary by country and may include site visits to locally-led enterprises, observing youth-led projects, or interacting with community savings groups, housing associations, or arts groups (e.g., dance, music). Each learning exchange will conclude with a debriefing session, allowing Global Village volunteers and local participants to reflect on their experiences together.

Chapter 5: Building and Worksite Safety

By joining a Global Village team, you are joining a community of people all committed to the goal of ensuring everyone has a decent place to call home. While a major part of this commitment is to donate your time and raise funds to build physical homes, these builds also create relationships between volunteers, local habitat staff, homeowner partners and communities. Through these relationships we build awareness, breakdown barriers and continue to advocate for safe, affordable and decent shelter, globally.

The construction project

Each community Habitat works in faces different challenges and identifies construction projects to meet specific community needs. The volunteer work varies by location and depends on the phase of construction and the type of project. Sometimes teams are divided into smaller work units that will assist at multiple build sites.

You will not see much machinery on the build site. It will be common for volunteers to perform more manual labor and routine tasks. Everything you do on a construction site, whether it is digging footers, hauling water, sifting sand, removing or placing fill dirt, mixing cement by hand, or passing buckets of concrete to crews, is important to the completion of the construction project.

A professional mason or contractor is hired by the Habitat country program or the homeowners to supervise the construction project. Keep in mind that the mason or contractor may not have previously supervised a group of volunteers without construction experience. It is important to be patient and respect the process and decisions of the mason or contractor in charge. Consider the following to make sure you are prepared for the work:

- **Be prepared to leave an unfinished construction project at the end of the week.** Global Village teams do not typically complete a construction project in one week's time.
- **Show up to the build site with a spirit of service and humility, ready to follow the work schedule prepared by the project team.** While you or your teammates may be ready to get back to work after a quick 20-minute lunch break, be courteous of the masons and construction staff and wait until they are ready to resume work.
- **Homeowners may or may not be available.** In many locations, homeowners are able to visit the work site and work on their future home with the team, but in some instances, it is not possible because of their work or other daily commitments. At times, Habitat is able to organize additional times for the team to interact with the homeowners and community for deeper engagement, but this may not always be possible.

Working on Site

Daily tasks will be set by the local masons and Habitat staff and several activities will be happening simultaneously, all tasks are important and need to be completed. As a volunteer you are encouraged to try every task and change tasks throughout the day/week. However, if there is a task that you are not comfortable doing don't hesitate to notify your team leader or local Habitat host. Communicate with your team leader, there is a job for everyone on the site so be open and honest if you would like to try a different activity or you feel you cannot do what you have been asked to. Often the work is very labour intensive so remember to take breaks and drink lots of water.

Typical manual labour for a team could include:

- Clearing and levelling a site; hauling dirt
- Digging footings
- Transfer or delivery of materials such as sand, gravel, cement blocks and bags of cement
- Manually pressing cement blocks
- Manually mixing cement for pours, or for mortar
- Finishing slab floors
- Forming latrines
- Chipping concrete blocks
- Cutting and forming reinforcement bars
- Filling masonry joints with cement
- Assisting with a physical inventory of construction materials

Everything you do on a construction site, whether it is hauling water, sifting sand, removing or placing dirt, mixing cement by hand or passing buckets of mortar to crews, is helping a homeowner family achieve a safe, affordable and decent place to live. Regardless of the work you perform, the team supports and encourages the families and community by sharing the experience of the construction process. You do make a difference and are greatly appreciated!

Work Site Safety

Safety is everyone's concern and a paramount focus at all Habitat build-sites. Since Habitat teams often include inexperienced volunteers, everyone must:

- Pay extra attention to safety. An observer can often see danger better than the worker directly involved in a task.
- Be cautious at all times and ask questions if you are uncertain how a task is performed, or if you should be performing it.

Safety is based on knowledge, skill and an attitude of care and concern. The on-site construction supervisor will instruct volunteers in the correct and proper procedure for performing each task and will familiarize you with the potential hazards, and how such hazards can be minimized or eliminated.

Your team leader and local Habitat staff work together to maintain a safe working environment and ensure that everyone at the site is following safe work habits. It is important that every volunteer knows about safe work practices and follows the direction of the team leader and local staff. The final responsibility for each team member's personal safety lies with themselves.

Attitude

Safety begins with a safe attitude. Please keep the following in mind when working on site:

- Pause and think before you begin a task.
- If you are uncertain about how to perform a task or how to use a tool, ask.
- Avoid distractions and concentrate on the task at hand.
- Inspect all tools, ladders and scaffolding before use.
- Immediately advise the team leader of any unsafe or hazardous tools or conditions.

Know where the first aid kit is located and how to summon emergency help.

Dressing for Work

For safety and practicality, it's important to dress appropriately for the tasks at hand. Follow these basic guidelines:

- **Clothing and Footwear:** Wear clothes and gloves suitable for the work and weather conditions. Loose clothing can be hazardous. Work boots or thick-soled shoes must be worn at all times on site. Volunteers wearing sandals or inappropriate footwear will not be allowed on site.
- **Hard Hats:** Hard hats are required during demolition and framing phases. They will be provided at each work site if necessary.
- **Protective Gear:** Use protective glasses to prevent eye injuries. Wear a dust mask when sanding or installing insulation. Earplugs are recommended when using power tools for extended periods and will be available at each work site if needed.

These recommendations represent minimum safety standards. Depending on the work being performed, the on-site supervisor may require additional safety measures.

Personal Precautions

It is easy to overexert yourself on the build site. Most volunteers are not used to intensive physical labor — at times in high heat. It is important that you recognize your limitations and work within them so that you do not get injured.

- **Lifting**—always use the proper lifting technique: bent legs and straight, vertical back. Do not exceed your lifting capacity.
- **Over-exertion**—recognize your limits. Avoid struggling to keep up with other team members. When you get tired, take a break; sit down and rest often.

- **Hydration**—physical work causes you to perspire which, unless lost liquid is replenished will result in dehydration. When working on a Habitat project, always drink more water than normal. Every job site will have safe drinking water available. Drink plenty.
- **Sun**—many work sites are without shade. Under these conditions, always wear sunscreen and a broad-brimmed hat. At the first indication of sunburn, reapply sunscreen and cover exposed areas with clothing.

Power Tools and Other Electrical Equipment (if applicable)

- You must be 18 years or older to operate power tools on the build site.
- Ensure you are wearing appropriate safety gear each time you operate a power tool.
- A power tool should not be used without proper instruction in its use and explanation of the potential consequences of misuse.
- Defective tools should not be used; they should be labeled and reported to the team leader immediately. Do not wait until the end of the day to report a defective tool.

Hand Tools

- Always select the correct type and size of tool for the task, and make sure it is sharp or properly adjusted.
- Do not use a tool if the handle is loose or in poor condition.
- When using tools hold them correctly. Most cutting tools should be held in both hands with the cutting action away from your body.
- Avoid using your hand or fingers as a guide to start a cut.
- Handle and carry tools with care. Keep sharp-edged and pointed tools turned downward.
- Never place a tool on a sloping overhead surface or in a precarious position where it could fall.
- When not in use, tools should be returned to their place of keeping —special boxes, chests or cabinets.
- Do not use a power nail gun unless you are proficient in its use and the immediate work area is clear of volunteers. This tool can be very dangerous to you or others!

Maintaining a Safe, Clean, Secure Work Site

“A clean workplace is a safe workplace” refers to the neatness and good order of the work site. Good housekeeping prevents accidents.

- Clean up the build site daily. Do not permit scraps of wood, nails, empty cans, pipe, wire or other materials to accumulate around the work site.
- Keep tools and equipment that are not in use in their proper place. This protects both tools and workers.

Working up High

Working above ground level on ladders, scaffolding, or roofs presents significant risks. Injuries from falls are often serious and can result from not following proper safety precautions.

Ladders

- Check the ladder for wear and tear, loose rungs, and defects. If the ladder is unsafe, do not use it.
- Use a ladder that reaches your work area. An extension ladder should extend at least three feet above the work level.
- Move the ladder with your work. Avoid overreaching; both shoulders should remain within the ladder's side rails. Follow the four-to-one rule: for every four feet of ladder height, move the bottom one foot away from the wall.
- A ladder is at the correct angle if you can comfortably grasp the rungs at shoulder height.
- Place the ladder on solid footing. If the ladder could move while you work, tie it down. If it could be hit, barricade it.
- If the ladder's feet are uneven, dig out the ground beneath one foot instead of using a block to raise it.
- Face the ladder while climbing and keep your hands free. Use proper carrying devices for tools and materials.

Scaffolding

- Ensure scaffolding can support at least four times the combined weight of workers and materials.
- Be aware that scaffolding in some regions may not meet North American standards. Do not use scaffolding if it appears unsafe.
- Do not mix incompatible scaffolding components.
- Inspect scaffolding each day before use.
- Use adequate sills and base plates. Use adjusting screws instead of blocks on uneven ground.
- Do not force end braces.
- Use only inspected lumber for planking. Check daily for splits and knots and remove defective planks immediately.

Roofs

- Only individuals over 18 years of age are permitted to work on roofs.
- Do not cut roof materials while on the roof. Measure and cut materials on the ground whenever possible.

- Always be aware of your position relative to the edge of the roof.
- Avoid leaving tools or other items on the roof when not in use.
- Secure building materials to prevent them from sliding or being blown off.
- Some tasks near the roof edge are safer when performed from a ladder below.
- Do not allow scrap materials or sawdust to accumulate on the roof.
- Do not work on the roof when the surface is wet.
- Secure the access ladder to the roof edge to prevent movement.
- Do not throw items from the roof unless the landing area is declared “all clear” and monitored to prevent others from entering until the item lands.
- Avoid wearing leather-soled or slippery-soled shoes while working at heights.

Build-Site Emergency Medical Care

If someone is injured on the job site, contact your team leader immediately. They will use the first-aid kit or summon additional medical help, if needed. Make the injured person comfortable and attempt to stabilize the injury until medical help arrives. Your team leader possesses an emergency management plan that outlines specific procedures to follow in any emergency, including injury or illness. Your country program coordinator will discuss emergency procedures with you during the orientation.

Chapter 6: Health and Personal Safety

Your team leader and country program coordinator have taken steps to ensure the team's health and personal safety during the program. However, you must use caution and adopt the same sense of personal responsibility that applies to any type of personal or professional engagement.

Emergency Medical Care

If someone is injured at any time during the Global Village Build, whether on the job site or elsewhere, contact your team leader immediately. They will direct a person to summon medical help, if needed, and obtain the work site first-aid kit. Make the injured person comfortable and attempt to stabilize the injury until medical help arrives. Your team leader possesses an Emergency Management Plan that outlines specific procedures to follow in cases of injury or illness. The team leader will discuss emergency procedures with you upon arrival during the team orientation.

When travelling to a different country you should be prepared to encounter some unfamiliar challenges. You must be careful of what and where you eat and drink, food preparation and water sources may not be safe. When travelling you should as take extra precaution to mitigate potential risks. *Prior to going on a build, you should visit your Family Doctor or Travel Health Clinic to discuss the potential health concerns and receive recommended vaccinations.*

Your team leader and the Habitat for Humanity staff have taken every step to ensure the team's health and safety during your build. It's very important that you follow their guidelines and act in a mature and responsible manner. This chapter provides information that will help each team member have a healthy, safe and rewarding experience.

Medication and Medical Conditions

If you use prescription medications, ensure that you carry an adequate supply for the entire build and some extra in case of loss. Carry a statement from your doctor indicating the dosage and reason for the medication and an extra prescription in its original bottle. This information will answer any questions you might encounter when passing through customs and is helpful for medical authorities in case of emergency. Be sure to discuss with your doctor the climate at your destination, as some medicines are ineffective at extreme temperatures or when the patient is exposed to excessive amounts of sunlight. If you have a medical-alert bracelet or tag, be sure to wear it. Your team leader will carry a copy of the medical information you provided on your application. Please be sure to provide all pertinent information.

If you wear glasses bring a spare pair with you. Contact lens wearers should be aware that it may not be practical to wear them on the work site.

Vaccinations

Contact a Travel Health Clinic or your doctor as soon as possible for information on the vaccinations required for your travel location and dates. Ask about the costs and how soon you need to get the shots. You can visit the Health Canada website at <http://www.travelhealth.gc.ca> for more information. You should have a current tetanus shot (good for 10 years).

First Aid

All team leaders are required to have first-aid training and will carry a comprehensive first aid kit throughout the build. The kit will not contain prescription medications. You may want to speak to your doctor about bringing:

- Broad spectrum antibiotic
- Antihistamine
- Laxative and anti-diarrheal medication
- Extra prescription medication
- Pain killers
- Muscle Relaxants
- Rehydration sachets
- Insect repellent with DEET and antimalarial medication (if applicable)
- Allergy medications (if needed)
- Sunscreen
- Hand sanitizer

Water and Food Safety

Tips to help avoid picking up “bugs” and infections from food and drinks:

- Bring a water bottle with a filter, or boil any drinking water you’re unsure about. Bottled water will be available on all build sites.
- Use bottled or boiled water to brush your teeth. Avoid drinking water in the shower by keeping your mouth closed.
- Avoid salads, unpeeled fruit, and ice in drinks, as these may have been made from or washed in impure water.
- Be cautious with raw food, especially in areas with poor hygiene and sanitation.
- Avoid ice cream, uncooked vegetables, unpasteurized milk, shellfish, soft cheeses, lukewarm food, and empty restaurants.
- Cooked food that’s been left out at room temperature can breed bacteria. Make sure it’s reheated thoroughly before eating.
- Street vendor food and drinks are risky—avoid them.
- Some fish and shellfish can contain toxins even when well-cooked. Barracuda, in particular, should be avoided.
- Practice strict hygiene: always wash your hands after using the toilet and before eating. Avoid using communal, damp towels in public facilities. Opt for disposable paper towels or hot air dryers instead.

Traveler's Diarrhea (TD)

Although it is not inevitable that you will get TD when you are away, it is one of the most common travel-related illnesses. It can be caused by stress, jet lag, new foods and a change in eating habits. Bacteria, viruses or parasites are also causes (see the section on water and food safety for how to avoid these).

- TD is usually a short, mild illness that clears up in 3 or 4 days.
- Replacing lost fluids and salts is the most important treatment.
- You don't need to take an antibiotic for mild to moderate cases.

To speed recovery:

- Rest gives your body the best chance to fight the illness.
- Drink plenty of fluids and replace salts by using an oral rehydration solution such as Gatorade or add a bit of salt and sugar to water.
- Eat a bland diet, avoiding fruit (except bananas), dairy products, spicy and greasy foods.
- If urine is dark in colour, you are dehydrated and need to drink more.
- Note any other symptoms you are suffering.
- Be scrupulous about washing your hands after you use the toilet.

Talk with your team leader and seek medical attention if:

- The diarrhea is very severe or lasts longer than 5 days.
- There is blood or mucus in the stool.
- You have a fever.
- You are unable to keep fluids down.
- You are jaundiced (your skin and the whites of your eyes are yellow).

Dehydration

During normal activity, you require between 2 and 4 litres of fluid (excluding caffeine and alcohol) a day, depending on your size and metabolism and the environment. The amount of fluid you need increases dramatically with hot weather and hard physical work; therefore, it is vital to ensure you are getting enough to drink.

- Your team leader will ensure a regular supply of clean drinking water.
- Drink a minimum 4 litres of water a day when working hard.
- Always carry a minimum of 1 litre of water when travelling or away from your base.
- Monitor your urine colour and output - the darker it is the more dehydrated you are. If you're not urinating regularly, then you're not drinking enough.

Avoiding Mosquito Bites

- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to exposed skin.
- Wear long-sleeved clothing and long pants if you are outdoors at night.
- Use a mosquito net over the bed. For additional protection, treat the mosquito net with insecticide.
- Spray a repellent on clothing, as mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing.
- Spray insecticide in your bedroom before going to sleep.

Preventing Malaria

During travel to areas in which malaria is present:

- Use Anti-Mosquito Measures: Apply insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, and use mosquito nets to reduce your risk of bites.
- Follow your physician's advice on taking antimalarial drugs to help prevent infection.
- If you experience symptoms such as fever, chills, or flu-like illness, seek medical attention.

Animal-associated Hazards

Wild animals tend to avoid human beings, but they can attack, particularly if they are with their young or unable to flee. Rabies is prevalent in many countries and contact with both domestic and wild animals should be avoided. Domestic (dogs & cats) animals are often infested with lice or flees. **Do not feed or touch any animals.** If you are bitten or scratch notify your team leader immediately and call World Travel Protection insurance, you will likely be sent back to Canada to receive rabies treatment.

Poisonous snakes are found in many parts of the world, though snakebite deaths are rare. Snakes are typically active at night and in warm weather. To stay safe, wear boots and long pants when walking outdoors in regions where poisonous snakes may be present.

Most snakebites occur when people handle or disturb snakes, which bite in self-defense. Trying to kill a snake can also lead to bites. Be aware that the venom of smaller or younger snakes can be more concentrated than that of larger snakes, so all snakes should be left alone.

Fewer than half of all snakebites actually inject venom, but medical attention is essential for any bite that breaks the skin. Apply a pressure bandage, use ice if available, and immobilize the affected limb while getting the person to a medical facility as quickly as possible.

Scorpion stings can be painful but are rarely life-threatening, except possibly in infants. To avoid bites or stings, use mosquito nets when sleeping and always shake out clothing and shoes before putting them on.

Fire

Habitat for Humanity prioritizes safe accommodations, but your personal safety is ultimately your responsibility. Before settling in unfamiliar surroundings, identify escape routes and locate fire extinguishing equipment. Be aware of heating devices that could cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Never smoke in bed. In the event of a fire, crawl low under the smoke to make your escape.

Sun Safety

It is important when travelling to recognize both the long and short-term risks associated with too much sun exposure. Ways to protect yourself include:

- Use sunscreen (with a high SPF) and re-apply every 2-3 hrs.
- Wear sunglasses and a sun hat covering the ears and neck.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic drinks to stay hydrated.

If you are on any medication, check with your doctor before you go, as some medications can make you more sensitive to the sun.

Personal Safety

Use common sense when traveling in a foreign country. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Research local customs before you travel.
- Dress conservatively and avoid wearing expensive-looking jewelry or watches, even if they're fake.
- Conceal valuables and important documents, avoiding easily accessible pockets in backpacks, purses, or suitcases.
- Keep copies of your passport and important documents separate from the originals.
- Be discreet when accessing money belts or hidden pockets.
- Lock your luggage when it's out of sight.
- Stay vigilant on the street—watch out for pickpockets and scam artists.
- Respect local customs and laws.
- Don't go out alone; always let someone know where you're going.
- Use credit cards when possible, and avoid displaying large amounts of cash.
- If confronted by an attacker, don't resist—give up your valuables.

Embassy Registration

Canadian citizens should register with the Government of Canada [Registration of Canadians Abroad](#) service. Registration of Canadians Abroad is a free service that allows the Government of Canada to notify you in case of an emergency abroad or a personal emergency at home. The service also enables you to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest. Non-Canadian citizens should contact your country's embassy or consulate in the location you will travel to.

Travel Health Insurance

Travel health insurance is compulsory for all Global Village volunteers and is arranged for you by Habitat for Humanity through Everest insurance and includes travel assistance. It covers emergency medical evacuation and medical expenses. An information sheet detailing this coverage is included with this orientation package. There is no medical questionnaire for this policy, but you will not be covered by it if you are travelling against the advice of a qualified medical practitioner. If you are travelling before or after your Global Village build, then you must arrange for additional coverage through the provider of your choice.

Consult your travel agent about build insurance to cover lost luggage and build cancellation.

Returning Home

Global Village builds are short and often immersive which may not leave space for thought and reflection of the experience. When you return home from your build it is important to take time to process and reflect on this experience, what did you learn, feel, see etc. Many volunteers have said that participating on a Global Village build has given them a new perspective. It is important to remember that everyone will respond differently, and all responses are valid.

Beyond processing and reflecting on your build experience it is a great time to share your experience with friends and family. As stated, Global Village is not just about a specific build but is about mobilizing people and resources to support our goal of everyone having a safe, affordable and decent place to call home. By sharing your photos, memories and experiences you help Habitat reach more people and eventually partner with more families. If you are planning to host an event like a lunch and learn or another activity, please let us know and we would be happy to support.

Monitor your health as there are some illnesses that may not present right away. If you are feeling unwell seek medical treatment immediately.

By joining a Global Village team, you are helping Habitat for Humanity Canada partner with families to support them as they build stability, strengthen and self-reliance through homeownership. We encourage you to [connect with your local Habitat](#) and continue supporting families in need of safe housing solutions. There are many opportunities to volunteer on build sites, local ReStores, on boards or committees. We thank you for your commitment and support of this mission.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review this orientation handbook. It contains important information to ensure your build experience is a success. If you have any questions about the topics covered, please reach out to your team leader—they'll be happy to assist you.

As you continue preparing for your build, safety and risk management will become a key focus. Habitat takes safety seriously, and emergency plans are in place should any incidents occur in the field. Each volunteer plays an active role in maintaining safety during a Global Village build, so if you have concerns, talk to your team leader or contact Habitat Canada.

In 1962, Canadian author Marshall McLuhan coined the term “global village” to describe how the world would change in the new electronic age. Little did he know how interconnected our world would become, particularly in the areas of international development and social justice. Today, people everywhere are embracing the idea of a global village, committing their time and resources to ensuring everyone has a safe, decent, and affordable place to live.

By joining a Global Village build, you are taking meaningful action—partnering with families as they work to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable shelter.

Thank you for your commitment and for joining the Global Village family!

Annex 1: Useful Websites

Habitat for Humanity	
www.habitatglobalvillage.ca	Global Village Canada
www.habitat.ca	Habitat Canada website
www.habitat.org/intl/	Habitat International
Travel Guides	
www.countryreports.com	Country Information
https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/	CIA world factbook
www.lonelyplanet.com	Lonely Planet Travel Guide
www.fodors.com	Fodor's Travel Guide
www.letsgo.com	Let's Go Travel Guide
http://travel.roughguides.com	Rough Guide
Health Information	
www.travelhealth.gc.ca	Medical info for Canadians abroad
https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/clinic	Travel Health clinics in Canada
www.cdc.gov/travel	Centre for Disease Control
www.who.ch	World Health Organization
Travel Information	
https://travel.gc.ca/travelling	Visa requirements for Canadian citizens traveling abroad
www.voyage.gc.ca	Country information
https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories	Travel advisories
https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html	Canadian Passports
https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates	Canadian embassies abroad
https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration	Register your travel dates with a Canadian Embassy abroad
Money Information	
www.xe.net/currency	Currencies, exchange rates
https://www.visa.com/locator/atm	ATM Locator: Visa (plus network)
www.mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm/	ATM Locator: MasterCard (Cirrus network)
https://wise.com/	International Debit Card