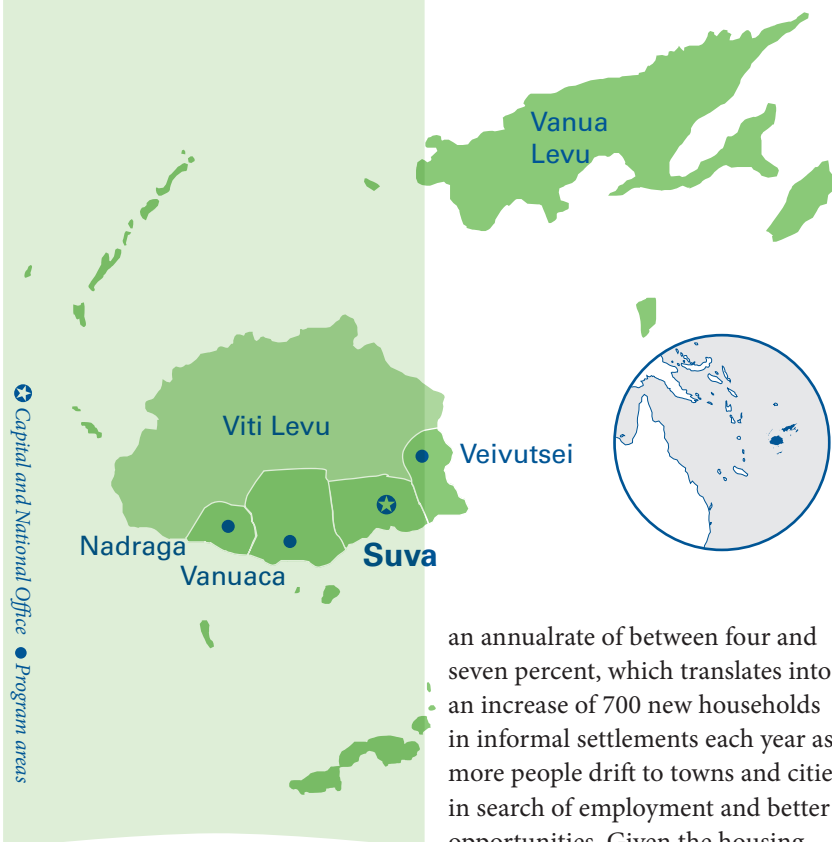


Habitat for Humanity in

FIJI



FIJI IS ONE OF THE FIRST nations to see the morning sun each day. The South Pacific country, situated about two-thirds of the way between Hawaii and New Zealand, comprises over 300 islands of which about one-third are inhabited.

Endowed with rich forest, mineral and fish resources, Fiji is one of the most developed Pacific island economies and serves as a hub for many small island nations. However, a chronic lack of investment, under-employment and concerns over government finances continue to pose obstacles to sustainable and equitable economic growth.

Housing needs are great. According to a study conducted by New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency (NZ Aid) in 2007, at least 140,000 people in Fiji live in informal or squatter settlements. This number is set to grow at

an annual rate of between four and seven percent, which translates into an increase of 700 new households in informal settlements each year as more people drift to towns and cities in search of employment and better opportunities. Given the housing situation, it is estimated that Fiji will need an additional 30,000 houses over the next 15 years.

The NZ Aid data indicate that public and private sector efforts to address the nation's housing needs are not keeping pace with the increase in demand. It does not help that the

Every major storm is followed by the need for repairs and rebuilding

people who need housing assistance generally earn only about 120-140 Fiji dollars (US\$67-78) per week. Between one-third and half of the country's population are estimated to rely on such low wages.

While incomes may be low, indigenous Fijian families in rural areas benefit from have access to community-owned land on which they can build homes. In the urban

and suburban areas, it can be difficult and costly for Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians to find secure land. A regular urban home can cost 40,000 to 50,000 Fiji dollars (US\$22,300 to US\$27,880) or more, including the cost of land and financing through conventional sources such as commercial banks.

Habitat for Humanity Fiji was registered in 1991, and launched its programs two years later. Today the national office is in the capital Suva. To meet the housing needs in Fiji, Habitat helps families to build simple two-bedroom homes which cost about US\$10,000 each. The cost of renovating or upgrading is about US\$3,000 per home.

Habitat's collaboration with the local banks enables home partners to have access to conventional financing at an affordable rate to build houses at a lower cost. Through its community revolving credit program, HFH Fiji works with communities to build and finance their own homes in a cooperative village effort. This program also lowers construction costs by assisting these communities

Habitat FACTS

Houses built to date

664

Cost of one house*

US\$10,440

* International sponsorship cost

Families served**

17

**new houses, rehabilitations, repairs, technical, finance and other services in the financial year to June 30, 2009

— As of December 2008 —

COUNTRY FACTS

Population: 831,741 (est. July 2008)

Capital: Suva (Viti Levu)

Area: 18,270 sq. km.

Ethnic groups: Fijian 51% (predominantly Melanesian with Polynesian mix), Indian 44%, European, other Pacific Islanders, overseas Chinese, and other 5% (1998 est.)

Languages: English (official), Fijian, Hindustani

Religions: Christian 52% (Methodist 37%, Roman Catholic 9%), Hindu 38%, Muslim 8%, other 2%



to utilize their own local building materials and resources in a sustainable manner.

As most of its low-income home partners cannot afford air-conditioning, HFH Fiji offers a special design suitable for tropical climate which delivers comfort and cost economy as well as security. Special features include a ventilated roof and rooms that allow natural cross ventilation, a covered veranda, a bathroom unit that is separate from the main house, and hurricane proofing. These homes are typically built with a combination of locally supplied timber, concrete, and metal roofing.

HFH Fiji aims to assist at least 200 families each year with their housing needs over the next three years. This

will be accomplished by mobilizing resources and developing partnerships with the Fiji government, international development organizations, civil society, and the private sector.

HFH Fiji also plans to be involved in holistic community development projects by working with other partners to address improvements in family livelihoods, access to education, water and sanitation, and the empowerment of vulnerable groups like women and children.

Each year, Habitat hosts about 25 Global Village teams who provide essential volunteer labor and financial assistance, helping to fulfill the dreams of families in need to have their own decent, safe and affordable homes. 🏠



HFH FIJI Highlights

- ▶ HFH Fiji is partnering with the government to build 30 new homes and renovate 25 existing houses for 55 families.
- ▶ HFH Fiji continues to work with NZAID in a squatter resettlement project that will provide decent housing and secure land tenure to approximately 20 families on the west side of Fiji's main island of Viti Levu.
- ▶ HFH Fiji is assisting the Fiji National Disaster Management Office to install fire and earthquake safety retrofits in the country's schools.



P.O. Box 16154, Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: +679 331-2012 Fax: +679 330-0836
E-Mail: rcounts@habitat.org