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## Global Village Notes

The snow is falling outside our office windows and in a few weeks we will be welcoming in a new year, full of hope, promise and commitment, even in these troubled economic times. It's hope for a family in Tajikistan. It's the promise of a new home in Kenya. It's a commitment to keep sending teams and building houses even as we are experiencing hardships in our own affluent country. It's about recognizing that we are members of a global village.

This newsletter is the first of what will become a bi-monthly update on the world of Global Village. Each issue will focus on a different region of the world, bringing you both



Global Village participant  
in Thailand

Photo courtesy Mikel Flamm, HFHI

stories from the region and ways that you can get involved.

In this first issue we are taking you to Europe and Central Asia, with news of exciting projects in Macedonia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Romania. In future issues we will take you to Latin America, Af-

rica and the Middle East Asia Pacific and what is happening here on the ground in North America.

By the end of 2008, almost 3,000 volunteers will have participated on Global Village trips since the Canadian program started in 2005. 2008 was a banner year with nearly 1,400 participants from Canada and over 11,000 volunteers internationally, travelling around the world bringing hope and homes where it's needed most.

So, thank you to all our participants, team leaders and donors for your continued support. Without you none of this is possible.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year from everyone at Global Village Canada.

## Dreams to Reality in Macedonia

Macedonia's unemployment rate is among the highest in Europe, reaching 36 percent in 2004. The number of people living below the national poverty level has exceeded 25 percent. About 80,000 households lack long-term housing solutions in Macedonia, and about 70,000 units, or 12 percent of the stock,

are substandard and need to be replaced or rebuilt. Living conditions for rural poor are especially bad and are related to a higher incidence of communicable disease, including tuberculosis and water-borne diseases. Access to potable water and sewerage is scarce in rural areas and in many urban slums.



Veles New Builds Project

These conditions are particularly grave for Roma households.

# Dreams to Reality (cont'd from pg. 1)



Substandard housing in Macedonia  
Photo courtesy Steffan Hacker, HFHI

The New Build project in Veles (NBV), is a three-year traditional Habitat program that targets low-income families that live in poverty housing. The settlement will include 90 apartments in 11 separate buildings, to be completed over three years, by the end of 2011.

HFH Macedonia's first new builds program was officially launched during FY09. It is a settlement in the town of Veles, located in central Macedonia, 50 km south of the capital Skopje.

The town of Veles has been selected after being identified by HFH Macedonia as a community in need, with the municipality administration and local residents fully supporting the initiative for new Habitat homes.

Certain preparations (land plot acquisition, urban planning and building permission procedures, etc.) have already been completed and the groundbreaking of the first phase for the first 4 buildings with 24

apartments took place in October 2008.

The general goal of the program is to serve a niche of impoverished population/families in Macedonia that are not able to have a simple, descent and affordable place to live. The program's target is young families with small children.

Keep an eye on the website for trips going to Macedonia that you can join [www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca)

## Team Leader Conference

Our first annual Global Village Team Leaders conference took place in Bolton, Ontario, on Oct. 31—Nov. 2. Over 80 volunteer Team Leaders from Canada and the USA, and staff from both Habitat for Humanity Canada and Habitat for Humanity International were involved. Conference attendees had the opportunity to attend workshops on a variety of useful topics such as

Team Building Principles, Facilitating Team Meetings, Conflict Resolution, Gift Giving, Dealing with Emergencies, Team Leader Best Practices, and Advocacy.

The conference provided a great opportunity for team leaders to get together and share their experiences and discuss the many different countries that had been visited through Global Village

trips .

With the great success of the first conference, we are hoping that this will become a regular event to provide Team Leaders with the opportunity to get together and share their experiences.

We would like to thank Genworth Financial Canada for their generous donations which made the conference possible.

## Featured GV Trips

There are still opportunities available to get involved in trips departing in the spring and summer of 2009.

### Zambia

Mar. 15—31, 2009

### Bangladesh

Mar. 16 — 30, 2009

### Brazil

Apr. 12—26, 2009

### Tajikistan

Apr. 25 — May 8, 2009

### Poland

May 2 — 15, 2009

### Romania

May 10 — 21, 2009

### Hungary

July 25 — Aug. 8, 2009

For more information about any of these trips, please visit our website at [www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca)

# Building Relationships & Perspective

After having participated in four builds (El Salvador 2005, Hungary 2006 & 2008, and Louisiana 2007), I have some comments. Before ever going on a build I wondered whether or not I shouldn't be just sending money, rather than spending large sums of money on my travel and accommodation.

After my first build, I realized that the face to face human contact with people across cultures was a very important part of the experience. Being on site provides a perspective and an opportunity to learn that just giving money could never provide.

My next misconception was thinking, that more than anything else, it was important to get the job done. I realized pretty quickly that sometimes to do this meant letting unskilled people sit around remaining unskilled. On occasion I saw some men, in par-

ticular, who were frustrated by the novices on the job. I at times experienced this same frustration but managed to keep it to myself. Fortunately, by my second build, I began to see that part of the task was to work together. To do that meant two things. First, it meant reaching out and mentoring others who needed to learn a new skill and second, it meant being willing to be mentored by someone who knew more than I did.

In retrospect, some of the most rewarding experiences I have had, have been those that involved working with someone else and watching them move from a clumsy to a proficient stage in things like operating a compound mitre saw, painting or laying flooring. Needless to say, I watched myself move through those same stages when it came to some things like putting up vinyl siding.

So when I think about HFH builds, I

think about them as being far more than an opportunity to build something for someone else. It is that. However, it is also an opportunity to learn and be shaped by different perspectives. It is an opportunity to work within an intentional short term community to build a cohesive working team. Part of the task is for team members to mentor others and to be mentored.

For me, at the end of the building period I am expecting, from the point of view of everyone involved, that structures, skills, life perspectives, relationships, and the desire for further involvement have all been advanced.

I want to thank you all at HFH for making such rich experiences possible.

*Contributed by Martin B. Spray*

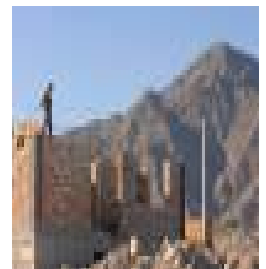
## CIDA Grant for HFH Tajikistan

HFH Canada has just received a grant of \$499,697 from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for Habitat Resource Centre's in Tajikistan. The objective of this project is to support social and economic development and improve housing conditions in Tajikistan, the poorest coun-

try in Central Asia, through the provision of vocational training courses that will enhance employment opportunities for low-income, unemployed and unskilled women and men. Through housing loans, construction training and appropriate, affordable building materials, there will be improved

access to decent, affordable and earthquake-resistant housing. The project will last three years.

This is Habitat for Humanity Canada's fourth grant from CIDA (following Lesotho, Nepal and Pakistan) and brings the to-date total raised from CIDA to approximately \$2.2 million.



**New Habitat home being built in Tajikistan**  
Photo courtesy  
Steffan Hacker, HFHI

# Building Together for a Brighter Future in Romania

Romania has long faced an acute lack of housing—a legacy of the socialist industrialization that forced many people from the countryside into the new towns and infamous Soviet-style apartment blocks. It is not uncommon for three generations of a family to live cramped in one or two rooms as young families cannot afford a place of their own. The rents are high and for families with two average salaries, bank credits are out of reach. Many live in substandard housing with broken windows, leaking pipes and often no access to available drinking water. Thousands of children in Romania left orphaned because of the policies of the communist regime add to those in dire need of decent shelter.

Habitat for Humanity Romania started in 1996, with

Romania became Habitat for Humanity's 50th country worldwide. Since then, HFH Romania has helped more than 1,000 families in need move into simple, decent shelter, building new homes, renovating apartments and engaging in disaster recovery.



Substandard housing in Romania

Photo courtesy Tanya McMurdo, HFHC

HFH Romania oversees seven affiliates: HFH Beius, Cluj, Craiova, Comanesti, Pitesti, Radauti and Cumpana. The affiliates are spread across

the three historic provinces of the country, with the national offices in Beius and Bucharest.

In addition to its building programs, HFH Romania acts as a catalyst for improving housing conditions by offering Habitat's support, expertise and experience to other groups and partners, among them USAID, CHF, UNICEF, Soros Foundation and ASCO Oradea. Also, the organization has taken leadership in tackling repairs, renovations and rehabilitation of old communist-era block apartments, disaster-response projects and testing of innovative construction techniques.

For more information on how to help Habitat for Humanity Romania, please contact Tanya McMurdo at [tmcmurdo@habitat.ca](mailto:tmcmurdo@habitat.ca)

*Courtesy of Habitat for Humanity, Europe & Central Asia*

# Brazil Welcomes GV Canada



City of Valença

Photo courtesy Antônio Prais, HFH Brazil

HFH Canada is thrilled to be sending its first GV team to Brazil. From April 12-26, 2009, the team will help bring decent, affordable housing to residents of the colonial coastal city of Valença in Northeastern Brazil, South America. Brazil is known for its Amazon rainforest, beaches on the Atlantic coast, and large population of Portuguese

speakers. Did you know that the national housing deficit affects 7.9 million people? To help meet the need, Habitat Brazil officially started in 1989 and has built over 3,100 houses in 8 different states. The team will build in the city of Valença, population 82,000. Where the team is building is heavily marked by the presence of informal

settlements and substandard housing conditions. Houses over time have clustered at the margins of swamps and rivers without access to basic sanitation and infrastructure. HFHC's first Brazil team is led by experienced GV trippers Vasie Papadopoulos and Keith Kacsuta of Toronto. If interested in this trip, apply online or learn more at: [www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca)

# Kyrgyzstan: Cane Reed Solutions

## *Sustainable Building—Cane Reed: 19th Century idea, 21st Century solution*

Kyrgyzstan is a country of breathtaking natural beauty. It is home to the world's 3rd highest mountain range and has a vast and untouched natural wilderness. It is also a country of extreme poverty: more than half of the population of 5 million live on less than \$2 per day, less than 17% of the population have access to running water and the infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world.

Habitat Kyrgyzstan began building with cane reed in 2004. Cane reed is an ancient technology which has been used for centuries in Kyrgyzstan, we have added a modern under floor heating system to adapt this technology for modern use. Cane reeds are used to build new homes in Kyrgyzstan.

Cane reeds are locally harvested, environmentally friendly and inexpensive. Coupled with wood beam framing and clay plaster, this construction is as strong and earth-



Cane Reed in Kyrgyzstan  
Photo courtesy Steffan Hacker, HFHI

quake proof as brick and steel. This construction also provides a high level of insulation and the clay provides protection from fire and insects.

The key benefits of this design are:

- Construction material costs are 40% cheaper than brick and steel.

- Families save 75% on heating costs due to the under floor heating system; this system also provides the hot water for washing and showering.
- The construction exceeds building standards and is earthquake resistant.
- Cane reed and clay insulate better than brick and steel, keeping homes cool in summer and warm in winter.
- No need to use imported solid fuel—reducing pollution and deforestation.

Habitat Kyrgyzstan's innovative Cane Reed project won the World Bank Award at the prestigious World Bank Development Marketplace competition that took place in Washington DC in May 2006. The "Cane Reed: 19th Century Idea, 21st Century Solution" was one of 30 winners chosen from 2,500 applicants.

*Courtesy of Habitat for Humanity, Europe & Central Asia*

## Did you know...

To find out about our latest volunteer opportunities, please visit our Trip Schedule at [www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca).

Trips are posted 4 to 6 months before departure, so if you'd like to participate in a GV trip in the fall of 2010, start checking our trip schedule for volunteer opportunities in March 2010.

You may be wondering why we don't

have a trip to Peru on our trip schedule, or when our next trip to Ghana will be. Organizing a GV trip depends on many factors. While Habitat for Humanity may be operating in several countries around the world, only a portion of these countries have the capacity to host international teams. Also, our hosting partners may only be able to receive a few teams a year, and do not have room in their schedule for one of our

teams. Further, we depend on our volunteer team leaders to step up each year and plan these build experiences. Many of our team leaders have a preference of which country they would like to bring a GV team to.

We aim to have a variety of build experiences available on our trip schedule throughout the year, so please keep checking our trip schedule for new postings.



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Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national non-profit, faith-based organization made up of 70 affiliates and over 30,000 volunteers who are mobilizing communities, to build safe, decent and affordable housing in partnership with those in need.

The organization was founded in 1985 and is a member of Habitat for Humanity International, which spans 100 countries, has built over 200,000 homes, and is now building a new home every 24 minutes.

We are on the web:  
[www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca)

## Tajikistan—A Forgotten Country?

Are you the type of individual who believes that living and learning in another culture brings richness to life far beyond that experienced by the average tourist? Do you enjoy the challenge of being outside your “comfort zone”, knowing that the rewards are great? Do you have a heart for service to others? Would you like to work side by side with sweet, gentle local people, be invited to eat in their simple village homes and visit their relatives as part of your mission trip? Are you ready to be stretched physically, culturally, emotionally and spiritually? Are you ready to travel with 10–12 other people with the same “heart” as you? Then this may be the trip for you! There will be a place on our team for men and women of all experience and ages. No previous construction skill or experience is required.



Photo courtesy Steffan Hacker, HFHI

Tajikistan is a small republic in Central Asia, bordering Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China and Afghanistan. The Tajiks, whose language is nearly identical with Persian, were part of the ancient Persian Empire that was ruled by Darius I and later conquered by Alexander the Great. Since the end of the civil war in 1997, Tajikistan has struggled with poverty. More than 80% of the peo-

ple live below the poverty line and survive by subsistence farming. There are unfinished homes scattered across the country. Many families live in houses made of raw brick or clay, with dirt floors. Their homes are decaying and unsanitary and not built to withstand earthquakes in a region that is prone to earthquakes. Global Village teams are based out of Nurek, a rural city of about 40,000 people, located in the spectacular mountains southeast of the capital, Dushanbe. Nurek is also the site of the world's highest hydro-electric dam.

For more information about this trip to Tajikistan, April 25–May 8, 2009, please contact Tanya McMurdo at [tmcmurdo@habitat.ca](mailto:tmcmurdo@habitat.ca). You can also view details for this trip on the Global Village Canada website at [www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca)