



 **Habitat for Humanity**<sup>®</sup>  
Poland

# Newsletter

Spring 2017

## CONSTRUCTIONS AND RENOVATIONS

The 2017 construction season is in full swing, which means that we have new construction and renovation projects both in Central and Southern Poland. We are implementing them in partnership with families in housing need as well as NGOs providing shelter to people at risk of social exclusion.

The following projects are just a sample of our activities – to learn about others, visit [www.habitat.pl](http://www.habitat.pl)

### PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

#### House extension in partnership with the family of Agata and Mirosław (Central Poland)

Agata and Mirosław live with their 6 children (aged 2 to 13) in half of a house in a village near Mińsk Mazowiecki (Central Poland). Their current living space consists of just one midsize room, which serves as a dining room, bedroom, living room and study room for the children. There is no bathroom or real kitchen (just a sink and oven in the cold hall). Agata explains that the current conditions are especially difficult for the children:

*The children are growing up and they need more space. Right now it is difficult for them to do their homework – when one tries to read, another wants to play, etc.*

We help Agata and Mirosław in a project which involves extension of the house and creation of additional bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. In April, we poured foundations for the addition together with Global Village volunteers from Switzerland. We hope to keep developing the project with the help of our volunteers and business partners so the building shell is finished by the end of this year.



GV volunteers from Switzerland



The family of Agata and Mirosław



GV volunteers from Switzerland

## House renovation with the family of Małgorzata and Piotr (Southern Poland)

We help Małgorzata and Piotr to renovate an old house in Piekary Śląskie (Southern Poland), which they inherited from Małgorzata's grandparents. They look forward to moving there because their current apartment is greatly overcrowded – they share it with 5 little children and Małgorzata's mother.

We support the family by organizing volunteering events and acquiring donations of building materials. In April a team of Global Village volunteers from the US helped to clean the exterior walls, paint the interior walls, install flooring and insulation. Because Piotr does a lot of renovation work on his own, the project is close to being finished. It is likely that the family will move to the house in the second half of the year.



The family of Małgorzata and Piotr



House before the first renovation works with Habitat Poland (July 2016)



GV volunteers from the US in the house which is soon to be ready (April 2017)



**PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NGOS PROVIDING SHELTER TO PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

**Construction of a hostel for young people recovering from substance misuse (Central Poland)**

We support the construction of the Youth Center for the Artistic and Spiritual Development in Legionowo (Central Poland). The center is being built by the “Passion of Life” Foundation, which specializes in substance misuse prevention and treatment. It is to include a hostel for young people who have finished treatment and now need a place where they can prepare for independent living.

The project is being implemented with the help of volunteers. In March a team of Global Village volunteers from Japan helped in finishing works, such as sanding and painting. Megumi, the team leader, comments on the experience in Poland as follows:

*I have already been to Habitat projects in Cambodia and the Philippines. The work in Poland is fun because it is much more technical than in Asia, where you build from scratch. I have learned some new construction skills here, e.g. how to sand walls.*



Sister Jolanta Glapka, the head of the “The Passion of Life” Foundation, and Sebastian, one of the future residents of the center



GV volunteers from Japan



Youth Center for the Artistic and Spiritual Development



## Renovation of a shelter for homeless men in Wrocław (Southern Poland)

We help to improve living conditions of about 120 men who live in a homeless shelter in Wrocław (Southern Poland). The center is operated by St. Brother Albert's Aid Society, a nonprofit which helps homeless people all around Poland.

We renovate the shelter with the support of corporate volunteers. In March we painted the interiors with 16 corporate volunteers from the Wrocław office of Credit Suisse.



St. Brother Albert's shelter



Credit Suisse volunteers



Effects of the works done with Credit Suisse volunteers

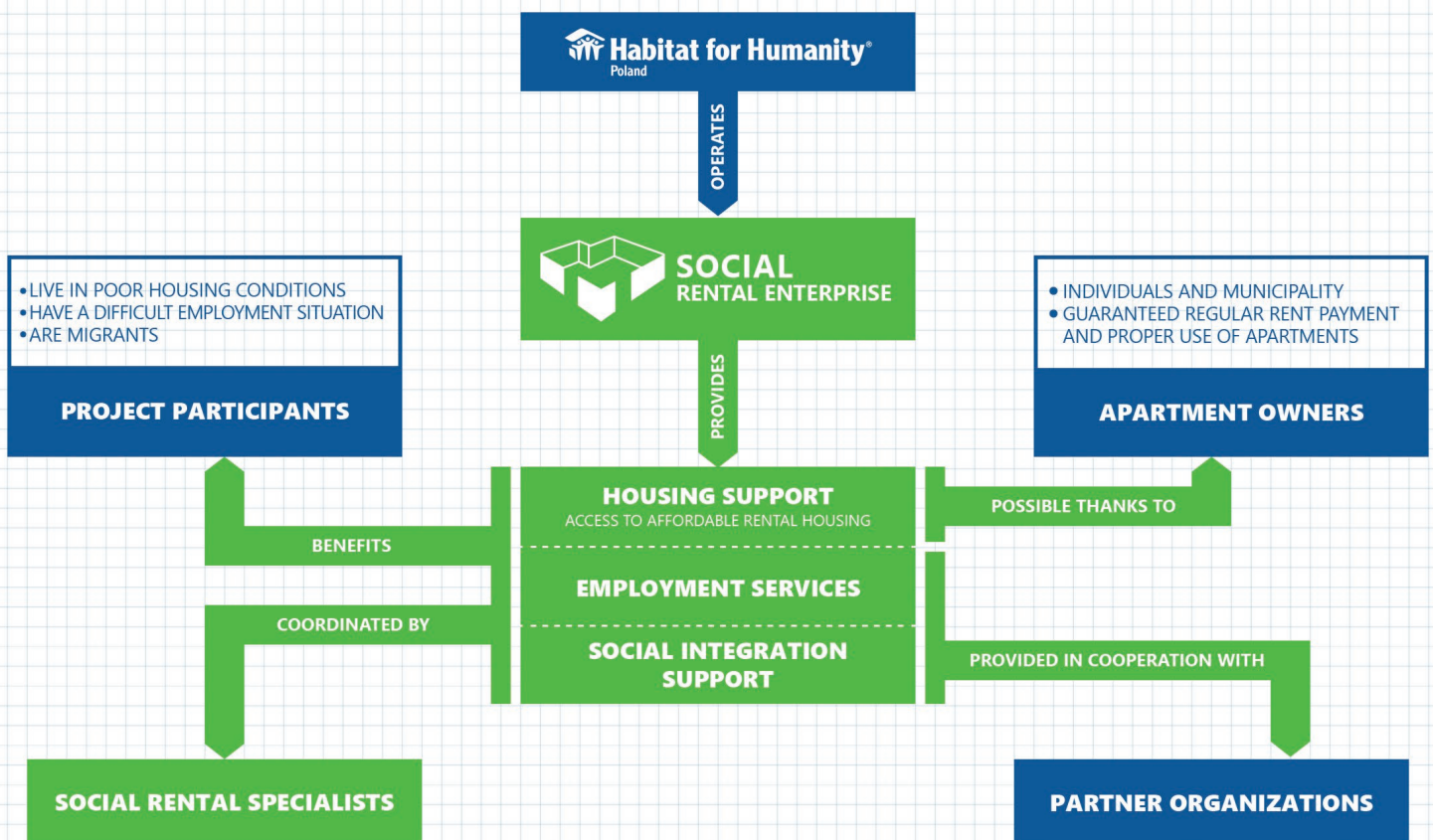
## ADVOCACY

Lack of affordable homes is one of the main causes of the housing crisis in Poland. Property prices are too high in relation to average income and supply of rented houses is too low.

At the moment, the rental market in Poland is underdeveloped, making up just 16 percent of the entire housing market. More than half of it is social housing available only to the very low-income earners. In other EU countries, rental market is around 40-60% of the market. This is why we advocate for innovative solutions which are supposed to make rental housing more affordable.

We are planning to present those solutions at the **Housing Forum**, our annual conference which gathers key stakeholders concerned with housing policy, including representatives of relevant Polish ministries. The Forum is scheduled for 26th April 2017 and involves the premiere of **our new report on good practices in the housing sector**.

We are also about to launch the first **Social Rental Enterprise** in Poland. It will operate in Warsaw, as part of an international project called HomeLab.



## SOCIAL RENTAL ENTERPRISE (PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOMELAB PROJECT)

The HomeLab project combines rental housing support, employment services and social integration support within a single institutional framework called a **Social Rental Enterprise**. It addresses the issues of housing shortages/poverty and unequal work opportunities, testing the hypothesis that these issues are linked. The project is international and takes place in four Central European countries thanks to a grant from the EU Program for Employment and Social Innovation.

In Poland, it is Habitat Poland that will create the first Social Rental Enterprise. It will be set up in Warsaw and serve 40 households from vulnerable groups. Each participant will receive support related to housing, employment and social integration – delivered by the Social Rental Enterprise and its employees ('social rental specialists') in partnership with community organizations.

The Social Rental Enterprise in Warsaw will manage 40 affordable apartments for rent, which will be obtained from the local municipality and the private rental sector. Housing support provided by the Social Rental Enterprise will be based on the social rental agency model.

## SOCIAL RENTAL AGENCIES

At the end of January, we organized a conference at the Polish Ministry of Development which concluded our key advocacy and research project: "Social Rental Agency as an instrument of housing policy in Poland." The project took over one year and involved a partnership with two leading Polish universities: University of Warsaw and University of Silesia. Its outcomes included, among others, a series of studies indicating that Social Rental Agencies should be introduced in Poland as a cost-effective way to increase access to affordable rental housing.

## What is a Social Rental Agency?

The Social Rental Agency model involves private renters as providers of affordable housing units. A Social Rental Agency is a not-for-profit intermediary that negotiates between property owners and households in need of housing. To the owners, it guarantees regular rent payments and proper use of the housing unit in exchange for a discounted rent. For tenants, it offers long-term and affordable leases, up to 10 years, and apartments in good conditions.



Conference about Social Rental Agencies at the Ministry of Development in Warsaw



One of publications on Social Rental Agencies

## CONTACT US AND HELP US BUILD!

**Habitat for Humanity Poland** is a nonprofit housing organization which responds to poverty housing through various projects, including: construction of new houses, rehabilitation of apartments and residential facilities for vulnerable youth and adults, microloans, energy efficiency trainings, housing research and advocacy. It was founded in Gliwice in 1992 as the first Habitat for Humanity office in Europe and so far has helped more than 1300 families. It is part of Habitat for Humanity, a global network of nonprofit housing organizations working in approximately 70 countries. Habitat's vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

### HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

#### Donate

**In USD:** at [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org), select: Designate your donation

– To a specific local Habitat organization – Poland

**In EUR:** online transfer to Bank BGŻ BNP Paribas  
Acc# **86 2030 0045 3110 0000 0032 6230**

**In PLN:** online transfer to Bank BGŻ BNP Paribas  
Acc# **07 2030 0045 1110 0000 0399 9580**

SWIFT: PPABPLPK

Reference for the payment: “Darowizna na cele statutowe Fundacji” – “Donation for the statutory goals of the Foundation”

#### Volunteer

If you are interested in becoming a Global Village volunteer in Poland, contact us at [wolontariat@habitat.pl](mailto:wolontariat@habitat.pl) for more information.

### GET IN TOUCH

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