



Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn, with a served family in Sabana Perdida

AN INSPIRING SEMESTER...

Dear friends and collaborators, the period between July and December 2011 was a very active semester at Habitat Dominican Republic, thanks in large part to the media attention the organization received. It generated confidence with key actors of the Dominican society, who value our strengths to make housing rights a reality in the Dominican Republic like never before. In the midst of these advancements, housing solutions and financial education workshops for family and community leaders have crept up in price.

Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn's November visit was a platform that allowed us to reunite and reflect with members of the Dominican community.

President Carter and his wife Rosalynn visited the community of Majagual, where Habitat has a project of repairs and improvements for low income families.

During a brunch celebrating the occasion, members of the HFH International Board of Directors and Dominican entrepreneurs interacted with the former President and discussed housing policies. There was also a presentation by President Carter who talked about his experience as a volunteer for more than 25 years supporting the cause of a decent and affordable housing.

CONSTRUCTION AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

The July – December semester was very productive in creating housing solutions in alliance with micro finance institutions. We served 50 families in collaboration with microfinance institutions in the province of El Seibo and Sabana Perdida (North Santo Domingo) within the actions of a project sponsored by Citi. The project supports the development of microfinance products in the Dominican Republic, in a multiple alliance with five local MFIs.

More generally, this semester saw 301 housing solutions, nine of which were new homes in San Juan, and 292 house repairs in various communities such as Haina, El Seibo, Santiago, Los Alcarrizos and Sabana Perdida.



Local Volunteers working in Sabana Perdida on home improvement.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In this semester we also celebrated the first International Forum for Public Policies on Social Housing. After many months of inter-institutional planning with four non-gubernamental organizations, two local municipalities and the main catholic university of the country, the two day event united 200 people and was dedicated to analyzing the Dominican housing situation, and evaluating solutions.

Other actions that we made to advocate for housing were the follow-up and discussion of the Social Housing Policy for the municipality of Santiago, which is in the final stages of approval. This policy marks the first time such legislation was implemented by a local government in the Dominican Republic.

Pertaining to activities of community development, we helped strengthen the capacities of many families with informative workshops on Financial Education, Technical Assistance on Construction, and Management of Waste Water. Around 20 community leaders, representatives of the Network of Leaders, and Parents and Friends of World Vision benefitted from these workshops. Also 299 families of San Francisco de Macorís, Nagua, Haina, El Seibo, Los Alcarrizos and San Juan de la Maguana learned more about housing - technically and financially.



Hundreds of people gathered for two days to discuss the right to housing, at the First International Forum on Public Policies for Social Housing

VOLUNTEERING



Liz Crossman, IBOD Chairman, working in Sabana Perdida home improvement.



Volunteers from IBOD, together with some Habitat staffs and family members

We hosted more than 100 volunteers who participated in construction and non construction activities. These included:

- Participation of more than 40 volunteers in the construction journey with IBOD and Dominican entrepreneurs during the visit of former President Carter at the community of Sabana Perdida, which also coincided with the annual celebration of the International Board of Director's meeting in the country. This important meeting was held for the first time in the Dominican Republic.

- Participation of more than 30 local volunteers from Carol Morgan School, who worked to support two families in two house improvements in San Juan de la Maguana.



We invite you to organize
a **Global Village** trip to the
Dominican Republic

Let's build a family a home!

For more info: crokoli@habitatdominicana.org

MAXIMINA HEREDIA: *The Quiet Living Happiness*

Maximina, a woman only 33 years of age, is a resident of Sabana Perdida (The Lost Savannah), a community located in the northwest outskirts of Santo Domingo. She used to live with her husband and 5 children, between 8 and 17 years of age, in a small house of deplorable conditions, almost uninhabitable, with the constant challenge of flooding during the rain.

In these circumstances, after long time with little hope to change her reality, Maximina entered herself into a program with Habitat for Humanity in her community. Today, things have changed for the better, as she reflects in her words, *"My family and I were in a state of precariousness and our home was not fit to live in, but now we live comfortably. The water no longer floods our home, which was one of the principle problems we had."*

Maximina's family lived not only in a house with high vulnerability, but also in overcrowded conditions. Their house was expanded, and now has an additional area that provides the space and security they needed.

She affirms this new reality with a happy face, as there are now two additional bedrooms and a bathroom that the family didn't have before.

Words aren't enough to describe that happiness of this woman, who after years of struggling to live in an adequate, decent home, finally She was able to give testament to her changed life. *"The improvements that Habitat made to the home have supported the well-being of my family, because this change was what we needed. Making this change in our lives has been something completely positive,"* she said.

Maximinia received additional support from the volunteers from Habitat for Humanity International Board of Directors, who took time from their annual reunion to join in with local volunteers in the construction process in Sabana Perdida.



Maximina Heredia (left), with her five children and husband.



Maximina's husband shows the area for the home improvement.