



## Global Village Trip Comanesti, Romania, June 2012

Situated in north eastern Romania, Comanesti is located in an area originally settled by religious and political refugees fleeing Austro-Hungarian persecutions. Inhabited by around 23,000 people, Comanesti is a beautiful part of Romania, but has suffered from the closure of major industry in the area. Typical of many parts of rural Romania, living conditions in parts of Comanesti and the surrounding areas are particularly challenging, with a lack of decent, safe and affordable housing at the centre of many of the problems. To address this shelter need Habitat for Humanity intervene in a number of critical ways to alleviate the burden, including constructing new homes, working alongside marginalised communities where the housing need is particularly pronounced, disaster response and social inclusion programmes.

From 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June, 10 EC Harris volunteers were hosted by Habitat for Humanity in Comanesti, where they helped in the construction of 4 new homes for families in need of safe, decent shelter. The team consisted of 2 Englishmen (one who currently lives in Bucharest, the other living in Czech Republic), 3 Romanians, 3 Poles, and 2 Germans – lead by an Irish Team Leader – a truly continental gathering. The team had a wonderful time in what was a sun soaked Romania. With temperatures touching 37C on some days they certainly worked up a sweat – but despite the boiling temperatures they made real progress on site. As well as building, the team were introduced to the town mayor, who welcomed them to the municipality, sampled local cuisine, were treated to some folk singing, and even had time for some horse riding on one of the evenings! Here's what the team said:

For three days we worked together with our colleagues from Poland, Czech, UK, France and Romania, local staff, and programme participants on a construction site in Comanesti, four hours north of Bucharest. During these days we built the wooden frame of the first floor and got to know more about Habitat for Humanity and their work.

We also had the opportunity to work together with the families that will live in the house as well as visiting one family in their current apartment. We noticed that our support in being there and helping on site is great motivation for the local staff and families. Also, seeing the current state of the apartment where the family is living now showed us the importance of this programme. While one of the parents has to work abroad to be able to support their own family, the children are being watched by their grandparents in an apartment with only a coal oven, no running hot water, almost no insulation and winters dipping to minus 30°C.

The project had a really positive impact on us as well—not only by being able to help, but also by getting to know a great country and it's even greater people. And of course getting to know our colleagues from Europe, with whom we enjoyed local culture and customs.

Thank you very much to everyone who supported us in making this possible! We hope to share more details about Habitat for Humanity, their work, approach and projects, and ideas how we can support them more in the future!

Sandra & Johannes



Christina on site,  
helping to build  
her new home

“Perhaps the most rewarding part of the trip was the day spent working alongside Christina, a young lady who will be moving into one of the 4 homes under construction. Habitat does not just build houses, we create *homes* where families are nurtured and protected, kept safe and healthy, and from where they launch their lives. The opportunity to meet and work alongside one of the home partners – emphasising the importance of the task at hand – was inspiring.”

Habitat for Humanity Team Leader, Stefan McNally

For more information on getting involved with Habitat for Humanity, go to [www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk](http://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk)