

Our Work across Asia-Pacific

A world where everyone has a decent place to live

Imagine a world in which everyone who needs shelter is safely and affordably housed. This need is very real in the Asia-Pacific region where the United Nations estimates more than 500 million people live in slums, representing more than half of the world's slum dwellers.

Rapid population growth and urbanization add to the urgency. By 2025, cities and towns across Asia will be home to an estimated 2.38 billion people, according to the United Nations. A further 2.39 billion will be seeking to build better lives in difficult rural areas. The majority will be poor. But each is an individual with potential, aspirations and dreams.

Habitat for Humanity helps to turn such expectations into reality by transforming lives through the provision of safe, decent and affordable homes. A decent home opens the door to improved health, better performance in school, greater economic opportunities and increased community cohesion. For 35 years, Habitat for Humanity has been a catalyst for such transformations, often achieving great success by working with like-minded partners. The impact is not only felt by families whom Habitat helps. Entire communities are also transformed when partners support Habitat by providing power, water and sanitation facilities, schools, community facilities and employment opportunities.

Habitat for Humanity International is a global nonprofit Christian housing organization that seeks to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. Since 1976, Habitat has served more than 500,000 families, without regard to religion, race or nationality, by building and improving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions.

More than 2.5 million people live in homes they helped build and are buying through no-profit mortgages. Habitat's operations are spread over dozens of countries and territories. Last year (financial year to 30th June 2011), Habitat for Humanity helped a record 81,399 families worldwide improve their shelter conditions through construction, rehabilitation and repairs. Habitat for Humanity also helped thousands of families establish legal rights to a house or land, and provided tens of thousands of individuals with technical assistance, including legal help, financial literacy training to construction advice and training.

Every day, an estimated 223 families around world have a better home thanks to the work of Habitat for Humanity, its volunteers and partners.

Habitat for Humanity's work involves more than building new single and multi-family dwellings. Habitat "housing solutions" include rehabilitating or repairing homes, incremental construction – upgrading a floor or adding a new roof until a family can afford more. As Habitat seeks to meet housing needs around the globe, the organization has become active in rebuilding following natural and man-made disasters, housing microfinance, advocacy, weather proofing, disaster mitigation and preparedness, technical training, environmentally-sustainable and low-cost construction technologies, and water & sanitation projects.

Habitat for Humanity began working in the Asia-Pacific region in 1983 with a pilot program in India. Since then, Habitat has built or improved homes in partnership with approximately 176,000 families – serving an estimated 880,000 people – in dozens of countries and territories around the region (as of 30th June 2011). Habitat for Humanity also helped hundreds of families establish legal rights to a house or land, and provided tens of thousands of individuals with technical assistance, including legal help, financial literacy training to construction advice and training.

Habitat for Humanity helped more than 22,600 families in the Asia-Pacific region in the year to 30 June 2011. Or to put it another way: every 23 minutes an Asian or a Pacific family has a better life thanks to the work of Habitat for Humanity, its volunteers and partners.

Over the years, Habitat has been active in such places as Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste (East Timor) and Vietnam. In Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong (part of Habitat for Humanity China), Habitat is involved in fund-raising, advocacy and organizing volunteers, along with some limited local repair and home improvement activities. The principal Asia-Pacific office is in Bangkok, Thailand, with satellite offices in Singapore, Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Manila, Philippines.

How Habitat for Humanity Works

Habitat homes are sold to **partner families** at no profit. Families repay through affordable, no-profit mortgage loans. Monthly mortgage payments go into a local revolving fund to be used to build still more Habitat homes. Partner families also invest hundreds of hours of their own labor – “sweat equity” – into building their Habitat house and the houses of others. Partners may also invest “financial sweat equity”, saving a proportion of the cost of their new home before construction starts so on the day they move in they already own a proportion of the equity of their new dwelling. Prospective homeowners are selected based on their level of need, their ability to repay the loan and their willingness to work in partnership with Habitat. Costs are kept down through the use of volunteer labor, and because of donations of money and materials.

Additional “muscle” for construction comes from **volunteers** from within a country or from all over the world. Volunteers hail from business corporations, civic groups, churches, colleges and schools among other organizations. Every year, hundreds of thousands of Habitat for Humanity volunteers contribute their time, skills and support to build homes, communities and hope around the world.

Habitat for Humanity's work in the region is accomplished by its Habitat Resource Centers, affiliates and partner organizations. **Habitat Resource Centers** broaden the reach of Habitat's home-building programs in one or more of these principal services – construction-related services including introducing new materials and technologies; skills training; disaster response; and housing microfinance.

Affiliates are independent, locally-run, non-profit volunteer groups. They select families needing Habitat's support, secure building sites, and organize fund-raising and donations of materials, as well as house construction using volunteers and sometimes paid specialist construction workers. Sometimes affiliates organize mortgage services, but increasingly across the Asia-Pacific region, the management of loans for home partner families is handled by specialist partners such as microfinance institutions.

Partner organizations contribute expertise and financial resources, and often volunteer labor to strengthen the impact of Habitat's programs. Other groups, particularly non-governmental organizations and government-linked bodies, contribute services and facilities that Habitat home partner families need to live fully transformed lives in thriving and secure communities.

The work of the affiliates and resource centers and relations with partners in a country is coordinated and supported by a **national organization** or **national office**. This is usually a legally independent entity overseen by its own boards of directors or trustees and staffed by experts in construction technology, financial management, marketing and fund raising. Sometimes a national organization may be directly run as a branch of Habitat for Humanity International.

Funding Habitat's Work

Affiliates, national organizations and Habitat for Humanity International accept undesignated and designated donations in money and in-kind gifts. Undesignated donations are used where needed. Designated gifts are distributed as requested by the donor.

How to Help

Get involved! Pray for the work of Habitat for Humanity. Contribute financially to Habitat for Humanity International or to a Habitat national organization or an affiliate. Participate in Habitat fundraising events. Habitat always needs people with enthusiasm, energy and goodwill to help build, to lead and to spread the word about the work of Habitat.

Where to Find Habitat for Humanity

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