



PART IV: IMPACT STORIES

The main impact of Habitat for Humanity's post-tsunami reconstruction program was that tens of thousands of families secured new or rehabilitated or repaired physical structures. These secure dwellings allowed lives to be rebuilt. Habitat also created a variety of other impacts. For example, many families secured legal rights to their land and houses for the first time. Many had safer, better built houses for the first time. Security and safety allowed family life to flourish, whether in terms of better health or children enjoying more educational opportunities or more vibrant and integrated communities. The process of involvement in a Habitat project also had an impact through the provision of training and employment opportunities, especially for women.

In this selection of stories, individual families talk about the impact Habitat had on the lives of their families and their communities. □

Impact on one family in Thailand Part of Something Special

The family of fisherman Jood Chantima was one of the first to be helped by Habitat for Humanity in southern Thailand. When the tsunami hit, Jood was out at sea and did not see or feel the waves. Only when he returned to Thachatchai village, on the northeastern tip of Phuket Island, did he find his house was flooded. His wife and daughter had salvaged the remains of the bamboo shelter.

Like others in the community, Jood and his wife, Tiew, contributed to the construction of their Habitat house. They were involved from start to completion, carrying construction materials and assisting the carpenters in building the stilts.

"There were many people around, helping each other," said Jood. "That was good." In particular, he remembered the Thai volunteers, as well as those from the Marriott group of hotels which had a property nearby.

Jood said: "When I look at the other houses built by Habitat in the community, I feel that I am part of something special."

"Now, we have proper roads for transportation and electricity. With more light, there is less theft than before the tsunami," said Jood.



Impact on one family in India More Hygienic, Higher Aspirations



Rani remembers the American volunteers from Lexington, Kentucky who came to her village in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, to help build her new Habitat house. She kept a photo of them. These Habitat volunteers helped change her family's lives.

The family used to live in a thatched hut with mud walls on an island opposite Killai village on the mainland. The tsunami came and swept away not

just their hut, but also their five cows and 10 goats, along with their fishing boat and nets. Their losses totaled more than 500,000 rupees (about US\$10,347).

The family's Habitat house has made an enormous difference. "I am happy to live in a good house," said Rani's fisherman husband, G. Sundharamoorthy. "If Habitat had not helped, we would have been forced to live in a tent because we did not have money to build a house."

Rani added: "Our Habitat house is good for health. It is a safer place. If the waters come, I can go up to the terrace. It is more hygienic too because of the attached toilet."

On a day when Sundharamoorthy and his eldest son have a good catch, they can expect to bring home 1,200 rupees (US\$25). Rani said: "We are working hard to eat well and enjoy this life."

The two younger children have high aspirations. Arul wants to become a doctor while his sister Meena aims to be a teacher. "I want to educate all the children in the village. My passion is to give everybody a good education," said Meena.

One of the volunteers who worked on the family's house back in 2005 was Pat Smith, a member of Habitat for Humanity International's board of directors. Smith died tragically in an air crash in 2006 while on his way to join other Habitat volunteers in rebuilding the houses of families affected by Hurricane Katrina in the USA. But for Rani and her family, Smith lives on in the way he helped transform their lives.

Impact on one family in Indonesia Improved Livelihood Opportunities



Formerly a tailor, Isniar has put her skills to good use in handicraft work while tending to her coffee shop in Jabi village, Calang, on the west coast of Aceh. Her life has changed dramatically since she acquired a Habitat home.

Since training in a USAID/Oxfam project, Isniar has been making traditional wedding ornaments, hand-sewn umbrellas and turning empty instant coffee and noodle packets into handbags for sale. She also teaches the craft to children once a week in the village's elementary school.

In addition, Isniar represented her village in another USAID project to train women to turn food waste into garden compost. The result, as she knows, from her own garden is flowers "that are *bagus* (good)", she said.

She sat on the village's water-sanitation committee for a Medair project. The Swiss-headquartered non-governmental organization was constructing water points and latrines alongside completed homes of tsunami-affected families.

A mother of four children ranging in age from 10 to 23, Isniar said before she had felt old and useless. "With all the training, I can share what I had learnt with others in the village and raise awareness of the environment."

Isniar has added a room to her Habitat house after her eldest daughter Linda's marriage in December 2008. As Linda is trained as a midwife, Isniar hopes to set up a clinic, within the coffee shop, for her daughter to run.

Impact on one family in Sri Lanka New Home, New Business, New Life

Il Salfiyar's world collapsed on December 26, 2004. He had returned to Arugam Bay, Pottuvil, on Sri Lanka's east coast, after working and earning good money in Saudi Arabia. He had built a brick and cement house, set up a grocery store, married, and



had a one-year old son. The tsunami swept away all that he had worked so hard for — his family, his house and his shop.

Oprah Winfrey, the celebrated US talk show host, donated US\$330,000 through her Angel Network to build 150 houses at Arugam Bay. This project helped to change the life of Il Salfiyar and many others.

Il joined Habitat's project, working as a laborer and providing tea and snacks to the masons as they worked on a 300 sq. ft. Habitat house at a site two kilometers from the shoreline.

Il is now remarried to Shamila and the couple run a grocery shop which brings in 500 to 600 rupees (US\$4.40 to US\$5.20) a day. Il is pleased that his young daughter and adopted son are showing improvement in their studies now that the children have the privacy of a room. "Thanks to God for a new life," he said.

Impact on one family in Thailand New Businesses and Better Lives for the Children



Ismaail Kulea and his family used to live off the 7,000 baht (about US\$200) he brought home each month working as a fisherman. Now, the family income is closer to 15,000 baht a month, thanks to their new businesses.

Komiah, Ismaail's wife, sells breakfast at a small eatery set up in front of their Habitat house in Thaidindaeng village, Phang Nga province. In the afternoons, the couple travel

20 kilometers by motorcycle to sell *roti* (flat bread) at a nearby village. Since early 2009, they have been working on a new business: growing hydroponic vegetables outside their house. Once their vegetables meet official quality standards, they can be sold to hotels and restaurants. For now, Ismaail and Komiah use their products in their small restaurant or sell them to neighbors.

Life has been marked by change for Ismaail, Komiah and their two children. When the tsunami hit, Ismaail lost his fishing boat and equipment, while the mussels that he had been cultivating were washed away. Although his old wooden house was not destroyed, Ismaail said he would not have been able to manage the repairs.

He welcomed Habitat's sweat equity requirement, helping lay cement bricks and assisting neighbors in building their houses. "It was a good idea to learn how to build my own house and those of others. I was happy too when others came to help me."

He is grateful for his Habitat house, which comes with a tube-well to provide fresh water and an outdoor toilet. "The condition of our old house was poor. Now, the children have space to play and study."

Komiah budgets her household expenditure carefully and therefore manages to save 100 to 200 baht (US\$3 to US\$5.90) a month. "The children are growing up. I have to take care of their education."

Impact on one family in Thailand Setting Up Shop

"Thrift" could be Yamila Rutha's middle name. The grocery shop owner earns up to 2,000 baht a day (about US\$58) from her home-based business in Suksamaran, Ranong province, southern Thailand. She sets aside 10 to 30 baht (US\$0.30 to US\$0.90) from the shop's daily takings toward her daughter Suda's education. Since she started two years ago, Yamila has saved 2,000 baht (US\$59) for Suda. Yamila is also setting aside 100 baht daily to repay a 10,000 baht loan which she took to stock up on goods for her grocery shop.



The need to take care of her young daughter is the main reason Yamila converted part of her home into a grocery shop. She used to be a laborer on fishing boats. Her fisherman husband died in the tsunami and their boat was also destroyed.

Yamila joined Habitat's Save & Renovate housing microfinance program by taking a 4,000 baht loan to improve her kitchen, which used to be in an open, low-lying area

and was prone to flooding. Now, it has wooden walls and a roof, and is elevated off the ground. "I could not possibly have done the kitchen renovation on my own," she said.

Business has been good as more people have started to settle in Suksamran. Yamila has extended the shop front and hopes to buy a bigger refrigerator so she can stock more items.

Impact on one family in Indonesia **Habitat as a Reliable Customer**



At the height of his furniture business during the post-tsunami reconstruction period, Saiful was supplying to non-governmental organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Habitat for Humanity, Samaritan Purse and Spanish Red Cross.

He remembered well his partnership with HFH Indonesia. As a supplier of window and door frames and ventilation vents to Habitat's resource center in Meulaboh, he had to conform to Habitat's stringent quality

control requirements. He benefited from the experience. "Habitat has good management. Habitat always paid on time. It is a trustworthy partner."

When the majority of the NGOs left Meulaboh in October 2008 after reconstruction was completed, Saiful switched to running a food stall, a sundry goods shop and providing small orders of construction materials such as sand.

Before the tsunami, Saiful employed fewer than 10 staff. Now, he has 34 employees. His average monthly income is about 50 million rupiah (about US\$5,000).

Impact on one family in India **New Livelihood Skills for Women**

Mary, a slightly built, but fit-looking woman, used to be a construction laborer and was no stranger to physically demanding work. When she heard about a women's masonry training program from her self-help group, she approached local development organiza-

tion CADRE (Centre for Action, Development, Research and Education in India) and signed up.

Mary was among 25 women to attend the training at Habitat's satellite center in Kanyakumari. The course involved 15 days of theory lessons followed by three-and-a-half months of on-the-job training on Habitat repair and rehabilitation projects in Kottilpadu and Colachel villages. The women were each paid 140-190 rupees (about US\$2.90-3.90) a day for their efforts.



"The difference between my previous job and now is that before, I used to move (construction) materials and it was physically exerting. But now, as a mason, the materials are on the site and I just have to lay the bricks," said Mary. "Earlier, I was assisting the men. Now, I am on par with the men."

When the training was over, she constructed a wall at the request of some villagers from Alanchi village where she lives. In 2008, Mary built her own house with the help of her nephew and plans to build a toilet. Mary takes home about 250 rupees a day whenever she gets to work. "I am satisfied with life," she said.

Impact on one family in India **Training and Self Confidence**

For the past two decades, local NGO Kalvi Kendra had worked with local women's self-help groups in Tamil Nadu, India. After the tsunami, executive director S. Chinnappan had approached Habitat for Humanity to be a partner in rebuilding the water-logged village of Chinnakottakuppamin.

"Kalvi Kendra facilitated community development while Habitat built houses. When Habitat came in, community participation was very high. The self-help groups asked families to build their houses and village leaders motivated them," Chinnappan explained.

In April 2006, 20 women from the groups spent a week at a local center learning how



to make compressed stabilized earth blocks for building houses. After they returned to their village, their enthusiasm about the manual block production spurred young men in the village to form their own self-help groups and join the women in the village's block-making venture.

The women started by making 600 of the lighter and easier to handle interlocking blocks each day – a traditional house needs up to 10,000

blocks. They later switched to producing bigger blocks made of red soil, cement and river sand, making 350 blocks daily and supplying blocks to other villages.

The block-making training benefitted group members in several ways. "There was a

growing sense of self-confidence; hope was inculcated among the women," said Chinnappan. "Before, they were dependent on their husbands. Now, they have savings and they can mobilize money from the bank for their family, education and livelihood needs."

As well as supplying blocks for homes, the partnership has encouraged other changes in the village. The local authorities have built better roads and brought in water, electricity and street lights.

Group member Uma explained the improvements, especially for her children. Before Habitat's arrival, water used to stagnate in front of her house, leading to the problem of mosquitoes. People chose to sleep in the open instead of their waterlogged houses. With the laying of roads and a proper drainage system, "our safety and health have improved," said Uma. "Now we sleep and study safely indoors." Looking to the future, Uma added: "It is our responsibility to maintain this house."