

Habitat for Humanity in

JAPAN



✚ National Office and capital • Affiliate

IMAGES OF JAPAN EVOKE “bullet”trains speeding across beautiful landscapes, anime comics, serene Zen gardens, and neon-lit cities filled with colorful, hip young Japanese. All are today’s modern Japan.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Japan boasts the second-largest economy in the world. The country is also an active donor of overseas development assistance.

While Japan’s citizens enjoy very high standards of living, costs are also steep with Tokyo and Osaka regularly topping the rankings of the world’s most expensive cities.

Behind its economic, industrial and financial strength, Japan is changing. Social problems ranging from homelessness to unemployment are more acute and more visible than in the past. However, social ills are less pervasive than those found in other industrialized societies.

Habitat for Humanity International opened a support office in 2001 to accommodate the increasing numbers of Global Village volunteers

originating from Japan and to guide the numerous campus chapters that were formed.

In November 2003, Habitat’s presence was upgraded and expanded when it obtained a formal non-profit organization status.

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Today, HFH Japan is a full-scale national office with affiliates in Tokyo and Osaka. In 2006, Habitat became a member of the Japan Platform, a non-profit organization that pools government funds and private donations to provide emergency relief and reconstruction assistance for victims of natural disasters and conflicts.

HFH Japan sends up to 800 volunteers overseas via Global Village trips

each year. The top three Asian destinations are the Philippines, Thailand and India, but many volunteers are also heading to Europe, Hawaii and the US mainland.

Campus chapters involve about 800 volunteers in advocacy, fundraising, international and local projects. Campus chapters and individual students are regularly honored at Habitat volunteer awards ceremonies.

Habitat’s other key partners include non-governmental organizations such as Hope International and church groups like Japan Baptist Mission and Kobe Union Church. There are also supporters from the business world such as Cosmos Initia, a Japanese real estate company; Escubo, a furniture mail-order company; and Prudential Real Estate Investors (Japan) K.K. which sent HFH Japan’s first volunteer corporate team to build in Thailand. 🏠

COUNTRY FACTS

Population: 127.3 million (July 2008 est.)

Capital: Tokyo

Area: 377,835 sq. km.

Ethnic groups: Japanese 98.5%, Koreans 0.5%, Chinese 0.4%, others 0.7%

Languages: Japanese

Religions: Shinto and Buddhist 84%, others 16% (including Christian 0.7%)



HFH Japan Highlights

- ▶ Prudential Real Estate Investors (Japan) K.K., sent HFH Japan's first corporate volunteer team overseas, to build in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in September 2008.
- ▶ In summer 2008, travel agency STA Travel and publisher Globe-Trotter Travel Guidebook (Chikyuno-Arukikata) started a pilot project with HFH Japan to sell the Global Village experience as part of a package tour. The first "Japan Hope Builders team" travelled to Bangkok, Thailand.
- ▶ HFH Japan helped build 122 houses in 2007, with financial support from the Japan Platform, for flood victims living 50 kilometers southwest of the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka.
- ▶ Four HFH Japan Campus Chapters in Tokyo came together to hold photo exhibition entitled "Home Made Happy" in Harajuku, Tokyo in December 2007. The exhibition attracted much media attention and was featured in many Japanese newspapers.
- ▶ Habitat helped to raise funds and explored ways of playing a role in reconstruction following a March 2007 earthquake in Noto peninsula in northeastern Japan.
- ▶ In January 2007, HFH Japan launched the House Supporter Project to call for 3,000 yen (about US\$25) monthly donations from individuals or groups in the country to sponsor houses in countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines.
- ▶ In July 2006, HFH Japan partnered with HFH Pakistan to provide sawmill services to help reconstruction efforts in earthquake-affected Balakot district. The Japan Platform funded the project through HFH Japan.



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