



PATRICK BONZ

## Discovering motivational elements for volunteers

Since June 2005, Habitat for Humanity has been carrying out a study in five countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to research which organizational elements motivate and discourage volunteers. The research has been possible through the sponsorship of the Center for Social Development of Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

### The study poses three questions:

1. What are the organizational factors that promote sustained volunteerism in Habitat for Humanity programs in Latin America and the Caribbean?
2. What aspects of the volunteer experience have the most effect on the volunteer and on his/her motivation to continue volunteering?
3. What volunteer development activities (incentives, acknowledgements, volunteer promotion, recruitment techniques) positively influence people to become motivated, committed and continuous volunteers?

The methodology chosen to carry out the study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It begins with the training for the research team to create focus groups in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Guyana.

The qualitative analysis from interviews is being processed, and, once the emerging patterns have been discovered, surveys will be developed and directed at the larger community of Habitat for Humanity personnel and volunteers in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

## Study's Impact

The importance of the study is bound to the discovery of methods used by Habitat to create transformative volunteerism to be incorporated in the local community. The volunteers are creating a transformation by creating local change. In addition, each individual who has been a Habitat volunteer has a unique experience that allows him or her to see the partner families in a different manner. In essence, the volunteer is the primary actor to create impact on families who need to improved their living conditions.

A few discoveries already uncovered include the observation that some volunteers express as much satisfaction from their volunteer experience as the families whom they support. For many, it opened their minds to a new reality. For others, it has represented an opportunity to add one brick to the construction of a better society. For still others, they have become more conscious of themselves through the solidarity and social justice of the Habitat experience.

Given that the research is still in progress, the goal of the preliminary review is to obtain emerging patterns from the interviews, compare them among countries and present the findings to a larger group within Habitat and the development communities.



STEFFAN HACKER

## Contact

[comunicacionesLAC@habitat.org](mailto:comunicacionesLAC@habitat.org)



INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: 121 Habitat St. Americus, GA 31709-3498 USA  
+1 (229) 924-6935 +1 (800) HABITAT fax +1 (229) 928-8811 [publicinfo@habitat.org](mailto:publicinfo@habitat.org) [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)