

Korea



Habitat for Humanity in Korea

Habitat for Humanity began working in Korea with the construction of the first three houses in Yangju county, Gyeonggi province, in 1994. The program really took off after the 2001 Carter Work Project saw over 10,000 volunteers joining former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to build 136 homes over a week at multiple sites. Habitat Korea supports projects and raises funds for disaster responses in the Asia-Pacific region. In the financial year ended June 30, 2016, more than 2,800 individuals have built strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter with Habitat in Korea and other parts of the world.

The housing need in Korea

In contrast to its poverty two generations ago, Korea and its people have created a unique prosperity. However, housing is not always affordable, particularly in the metropolitan area of the capital Seoul which houses half of the country's population. Except for the wealthy, urban dwellers often live in cramped spaces. The rapidly ageing population also faces the prospects of living on their own in housing without adequate ventilation or insulation.

How Habitat addresses the need in Korea

Typically, Habitat Korea constructs multi-story residential buildings which promote mutual help among families living in close proximity as well as community cohesiveness. Such a design demonstrates an efficient use of construction materials and is suitable for volunteer builder participation. Habitat Korea also repairs the houses of vulnerable groups of people such as the elderly, disabled, and multi-cultural families.



Supporters for the Habitat Young Leaders Build campaign turned up for a cookie-baking session in Seoul in March.

COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Seoul
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1945
Population	Over 50.9 million
Urbanization	82.5 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	82.4 years
Unemployment rate	4 percent
Population living below poverty line	14.6 percent

*Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Korea
1994

Individuals served in FY16
2,830*

**Includes construction and market development*

Volunteers engaged in FY16
17,574

Housing solutions

Improving living conditions; supporting disaster response efforts; building homes and hope through KOICA funding; volunteer engagement



Improving living conditions

Habitat for Humanity Korea typically constructs multi-story residential buildings which lend themselves to the efficient use of construction materials and are suitable for volunteer builder participation. Habitat Korea also repairs the homes of vulnerable groups of people such as the elderly, disabled, young people who head households and multi-cultural families. Repairs include fixing leaks in the roof, or replacing a sink, a door or windows, or a bathroom. Other works may involve the changing of wallpaper or linoleum flooring.

Volunteer engagement

Not only does Habitat Korea send volunteer teams to build sites in the region, it also involves local supporters through programs such as campus chapters and youth program, the KidsBuilder program and the annual fundraising fashion show and bazaar.

Building homes and hope with KOICA funding

With funding from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Habitat Korea is able to support the construction of new homes, community buildings, sanitation facilities and raise hygiene standards in countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Madagascar and Mozambique. The KOICA partnership also enables Habitat Korea to assist with disaster response and disaster risk reduction programs in several affected Asia-Pacific countries.

Supporting disaster response efforts

Situated in one of the world's most disaster-affected regions, Habitat Korea raises funds to aid the recovery of people affected by disasters such as floods, typhoons and earthquakes. In the aftermath of a disaster, Habitat may provide emergency shelters to survivors followed by shelter repair kits to help families clear debris and make immediate repairs. In the long term, Habitat aims to provide affected families with decent homes as a pathway to permanence.

Meet a Habitat family

Youngsoo Lee, 44, used to rent public housing for about US\$350 a month in Hwasung, near Suwon city. After the birth of his daughter three years ago, Lee and his family moved to live with his mother. Each move to a new place meant more adjustments for Lee's Vietnam-born wife Chuntizung, 30, and daughter Sumi.

When Lee and his family moved into their Habitat house in April 2014, the change was for the better. Proud of his home, he would say to his friends: "This is my own house."

Contributing his own labor, or sweat equity, to build his house and that of others also helped Lee and his family to bond with their neighbors. "The 'sweat equity' activities have made my neighbors and I close, like loving brothers and sisters."

What you can do

You can help families around the world improve their living conditions by taking one or more of the following actions:

DONATE

test.habitat.or.kr/en/involved/how_donate/

VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to one of the Habitat projects around the world or lead your own. For more information, contact: gv@habitat.or.kr

To learn more about Habitat projects in Korea or in other parts of the region, please contact us.

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Youngsoo Lee (right) with his wife and daughter at a ceremony in Suwon to choose their house.