

Singapore



Habitat for Humanity in Singapore

Habitat for Humanity Singapore began operations in response to the urgent reconstruction needs following the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. Since its inception, Habitat Singapore has continually mobilized volunteers under the Global Village program for building projects and disaster response efforts in countries such as Indonesia, China and India. In Singapore, the Project HomeWorks program seeks to improve the living conditions of a growing number of vulnerable elderly people across the island. To date, more than 21,000 volunteers have worked on over 1,100 builds in the Asia-Pacific region and more than 1,600 local home improvement projects. Habitat Singapore is also involved in fundraising and advocacy initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region and other parts of the world.

The housing need in Singapore

Before the Singapore government established the Housing & Development Board as the country's public housing authority in 1960, only 9 percent of the population was living in low-cost public housing. Today, more than 80 percent of Singapore's population lives in high quality HDB flats and approximately 90 percent of these residents own their flats. In 2012, the Singapore government announced that there were over 35,000 vulnerable elderly living alone. This number is likely to increase to 61,000 by 2020 and 83,000 by 2030. Living conditions for these elderly people, who typically reside in one-room flats, are poor as many are unable to care for themselves.

How Habitat addresses the need in Singapore

The Project HomeWorks program was conceived to improve the living conditions of the elderly, the sick and the disabled living in one-room flats all over the island. Volunteers are mobilized to clean up homes, make minor repairs and ensure facilities meet safety standards. Since 2006, more than 8,600 volunteers have participated in over 1,600 home improvement sessions. In addition, Habitat Singapore raises awareness of the need to eliminate substandard housing through high-profile events such as Home Sweep Home, Cycle Out Poverty and Bare Your Sole.

Habitat Singapore has partnered with several corporations, charitable foundations and non-governmental organizations. Singapore-based celebrities such as Paul Foster, Eunice Olsen, Corrinne May and Anita Kapoor lend their support as Habitat Singapore's ambassadors. Members of campus chapters, a few of which have been established in local tertiary institutions, also volunteer, raise funds and advocate for Habitat.



Supporters at Bare Your Sole 2015.

COUNTRY FACTS*

Capital	Singapore
Main country facts	Gained independence in 1965
Population	Over 5.7 million
Urbanization	100 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	85 years
Unemployment rate	2.1 percent
Population living below poverty line	NA

*Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Singapore
2004

Individuals served in FY16
1,660

Volunteers engaged in FY16
2,297

Housing solutions
Global Village volunteer builds; Project HomeWorks; Bare Your Sole; disaster response



International volunteer builds

Teams of volunteers from Singapore are regularly sent on Habitat's Global Village trips to build homes in the Asia-Pacific region and other parts of the world. To date, Habitat Singapore has mobilized more than 12,000 volunteers who took part in more than 1,100 building projects. Popular destinations include Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam. Due to its close proximity, Habitat Singapore has embarked on sustained developmental projects in Indonesia's Batam island.

Project HomeWorks

The Project HomeWorks program was launched in 2006 in order to improve the living conditions of elderly people residing in one-room flats across the island. Volunteers dedicate their weekends to cleaning, refurbishing and making minor repairs to these homes as well as to befriending the elderly. Since 2006, over 1,600 HomeWorks sessions have been conducted.

Meet a Habitat family

Kok used to be active in his younger days working as a housekeeper aboard ships that sailed the way. Now 84, the unmarried man living on his own has diabetes which makes it difficult for him to maintain his small apartment.

Of the volunteers who helped Kok under Habitat Singapore's Project HomeWorks, one in particular bonded with the elderly man. Communication was mostly non-verbal but Tim Nichols, originally from Canada, was able to convince Kok to discard stagnant water to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes.

Tim said: "I certainly have a soft spot for Uncle Kok. He always lights up when the volunteer crew shows up. A part of what tugs at my heart is that many of these elderly folks almost seem to have accepted their station in life – at times, almost like they've lost the will to fight. This is something that has truly touched me, and inspired me try to change his outlook."

Grateful for the help he has received, Kok hoped that the volunteers will continue to visit him.



Tim Nichols (left) bonded with Kok whose home he helped to clean up, along with others during a Project HomeWorks session.

Bare Your Sole

Bare Your Sole is an annual barefoot charity walk to raise awareness about the plight of impoverished communities in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the event was launched with 300 participants in 2009, it has gained visibility and momentum over the years. The eighth edition of the barefoot walk took place in September 2016 and saw about 5,000 participants. Collectively, the event has raised a total of S\$1.5 million (over US\$1 million) to support Habitat Singapore's work domestically.

Disaster response

The first teams of Habitat volunteers from Singapore were sent to worst-hit Aceh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Funding support from Singapore Red Cross enabled Habitat Singapore to rebuild homes in Aceh as well as in Sichuan, China, and West Sumatra, Indonesia, following the 2008 and 2009 earthquakes respectively. Habitat Singapore has raised a total of S\$30 million (US\$22 million) for post-disaster reconstruction efforts around the world and supported the construction of 2,500 houses and 20 water projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

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

habitat.org.sg/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.org.sg

To learn more about Habitat projects in Singapore, please contact us.

CONTACT

Habitat for Humanity Singapore

56 Lorong 23 Geylang
#05-00 Century Technology Building
Singapore 388381

Tel: +65 6744 7326

Email: info@habitat.org.sg

habitat.org.sg/

[facebook.com/HabitatSG](https://www.facebook.com/HabitatSG)