

Korea



Habitat for Humanity in Korea

Habitat for Humanity began operations in Korea with the construction of the first three houses in Yangju county, Gyeonggi province, in 1994. Habitat Korea became well known after the Jimmy Carter Work Project 2001 in which more than 10,000 volunteers joined former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to build 136 homes over a week at multiple work sites in Korea. The project increased awareness of Habitat Korea's work and as an international nonprofit organization, it supports projects and raises funds for disaster responses in the Asia-Pacific region. Since 1994, approximately 390,000 volunteers have been mobilized through its volunteer program. With Habitat Korea's support, a total of 5,715 new houses have been built in Korea and 57,492 decent and affordable homes have been constructed overseas.

The housing need in Korea

Over the past few decades, Korea's housing supply ratio – the number of housing units to the number of households – has increased to 103.5 percent in 2014 (15.9 million housing units, 13.4 million households). Although there are more housing units than households, homeownership is still out of the reach for many people due to high property prices. Considering the lack of affordable rental properties, the housing problem is worse for the younger people and the older people who have lower incomes. Korea currently faces an affordable housing problem, mostly in the urban areas, particularly in the capital Seoul. Slower economic growth, shrinking households, low fertility rates along with an aging population also create pressures for housing.

How Habitat addresses the need in Korea

Habitat for Humanity Korea aims to solve the housing problem by building homes and healthier communities. The support of donors, volunteers and homeowners enables Habitat Korea to move closer to its vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat implements projects to repair the homes of vulnerable groups such as older persons living alone, child-headed households and multicultural families as well as local children's centers for after-school programs. Habitat Korea also works with local governments to provide adequate shelter through low-cost housing projects.



Habitat staff taking part in the CEO Build in Cheonan city in May 2018.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Seoul
Main country facts	Asia's fourth largest economy
Population	Over 51.1 million
Urbanization	82.7 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	82.5 years
Unemployment rate	3.8 percent
Population living below poverty line	12.5 percent

Source: World Factbook

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Korea

1994

Individuals served in FY17

2,210

Volunteers engaged in FY17

12,300

Housing solutions

Disaster response and preparedness; raising awareness through special events; building homes with KOICA funding; volunteer engagement



Disaster response and preparedness

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.

Raising awareness through special events

Habitat for Humanity Korea is planning various events in 2018 to raise awareness. To target different stakeholders in the country, Habitat Korea is organizing the Korea Blitz Build in August 2018 as well as Impact Asia and DIY (Do-It-Yourself) festival on World Habitat Day and World City Day respectively. Other events in the pipeline include volunteer activity and a housing forum in line with Solid Ground, Habitat for Humanity's global advocacy campaign. The forum will focus on improving the urban environment and addressing the issue of affordable housing for the youths, among other topics.

Building homes and hope with KOICA funding

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

Engaging with volunteers

Habitat for Humanity Korea has been organizing large-scale volunteer activities in Korea and sending volunteers overseas. Volunteers with Habitat Korea either contribute their labor in construction or offer their time and talents in areas such as architecture and construction design and technology. Habitat Korea has one of the most active volunteer-sending programs with corporate and student volunteers working on builds in the Asia-Pacific region.

Meet a Habitat family

Jung-bae was among 16 families who partnered with local volunteers to build decent, affordable homes during the 2002 Korea Blitz Build. "We all worked very hard even though our feet constantly sank deep in the mud," Jung-bae, 54, said. Before moving into their Habitat home, his family of four used to rent a room in the neighboring province of Gyeonggi-do. He considered the 300,000 Korean won (US\$280) monthly rent as money down the drain. It has been more than 10 years since Jung-bae and his family moved into their Habitat home. Since then, his health has improved. "After living in this house, my asthma is almost gone now." His eldest daughter Ji-yeon, 24, is an office worker while his second daughter Ha-yeon, 22, is a university teaching assistant. "My ultimate goal in life is to see my two daughters get married to good men from decent families."



Jung-bae is thankful for his Habitat home that has improved his health.

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

In Korea*: support.habitat.or.kr/v2/default.aspx?Server=M64XGp5D4TRR%2BnPA8ZG9pw==&action=main

* Please note that the website is in Korean.

In the U.S.*: habitat.org/donate

* You can designate your donation to Habitat Korea or a specific cause by clicking the designation option.

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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