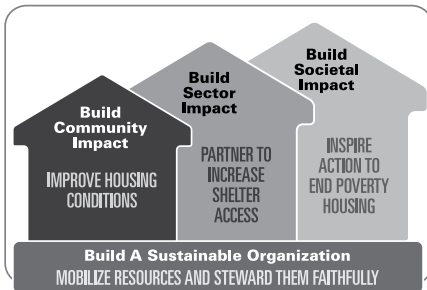


Touring Habitat's three-house strategy, courtesy of Nepal

By Jonathan Reckford

Habitat for Humanity simply can't build enough structures to materially impact the enormous housing need around the world. In the internal language of our new strategic plan, we can't operate only in House 1. The goals of each of the three houses — building community impact, building sector impact and building societal impact — overlap and influence one another to enable us to help more individuals acquire adequate and affordable housing.

We are pretty knowledgeable about how to reach our goals and effectively measure our impact in House 1. In



House 3, we have a long history of effective and inspiring communications and successful mobilization of volunteers.

Indeed, spreading the word and engaging volunteers are two of the bedrocks on which Habitat for Humanity was founded. And yet, we can do even more. In House 2, our entry into both advocacy and market engagement is relatively recent. And in all aspects, we have much to learn about how to measure our successes.

I hope this issue of The Forum will help you more fully understand the overall direction in which we are headed and the objectives that will enable us to serve the shelter needs of 4 million individuals annually by the end of 2018, leveraging the support of partners and the dedication of 2 million volunteers who have been inspired to join our mission through awareness and advocacy.

I recognized clearly how the strategies in the three houses work together after a recent conversation with Aruna Paul Simittrarachchi, country representative of Habitat for Humanity Nepal.

Habitat began working in Nepal in 1997, and within eight years, we had helped 830 families build decent housing. At that point, the strategic decision was made to increase the impact of Habitat Nepal's efforts by reaching out to lower-income families and communities. The credibility Habitat Nepal had earned as a house builder enabled it to change its tactics drastically. In fact, it no longer serves as a house-building operation.

Rather, it has created successful partnerships with the government and other organizations to help families access funding and materials and to provide technical advice for the construction of durable, quality housing.

Between 2005 and 2009, the landlocked nation reduced poverty by six percentage points to 25.4 percent,

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The Forum

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Executive adviser:
Chloe Pearse

Content editor:
Jennifer Lindsey

Copy editor:
Adam R. Smith

Graphic designer:
Debbie Nessamar

Spanish translations:
Translations.com

Distribution manager:
Chloe Pearse cpearse@habitat.org

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For more information, please email
TheForum@habitat.org.

Mission statement
The Forum exists to connect the
worldwide partners of Habitat for
Humanity International as well as
provide a link to other organizations
and individuals concerned with the
effects of poverty by providing a
means to:

- Explore issues related to housing and poverty.
- Describe the work that Habitat for Humanity is doing around the world to address housing and poverty issues.
- Present success factors and in-depth analysis of innovative and signature Habitat programs.



121 Habitat St.
Americus, GA 31709-3498
USA

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Touring Habitat's three-house strategy, courtesy of Nepal

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and in June 2011, Habitat Nepal celebrated the 10,000th family it had served. During the next month, the "100,000 Housing Campaign" was launched to encourage other non-governmental organizations and community-based groups to work with Habitat Nepal to add housing-related components to the services and activities they offer.

Habitat Nepal will continue to focus on market development with the long-term goal of influencing systemic change by demonstrating success and attracting new entities to enter the affordable housing sector. Already, Habitat's microfinance institution and village lending and savings group partners are beginning to expand their financial products and services to clients beyond their work with Habitat.

Another key to success is the ability to attract volunteers. The weeklong Everest Build in 2010 and Everest Build II last year brought into Nepal nearly 1,000 people who helped build 75 homes. The success of the program also enabled Habitat Nepal to attract more volunteers from around the world.

During the Asia-Pacific region's recent Youth BUILD, Habitat Nepal's initial target was to engage 10,000 volunteers. However, with the support of 34 local partners, including churches, schools and civic organizations, it mobilized close to 88,000 people to build, rehabilitate and advocate. You can read about Nepal's Youth BUILD in the online edition of The Forum at my.habitat.org/the-forum.

Notice the movement through the objectives of the three houses: By building houses, Nepal was able to influence the housing sector, create

partnerships and serve as a catalyst to involve other organizations in affordable housing endeavors. In fact, its greatest impact will be through House 2: sector impact. Together, Habitat and new groups attracted to the sector can serve exponentially more people than Habitat Nepal could ever dream of on its own.

Nepal takes that vision seriously. Aruna Paul said the national office wants to raise the 100,000 goal to 500,000 by 2020. If it succeeds, it will have assisted 16.5 percent of the people in Nepal who lack adequate and affordable housing. Imagine that!

Throughout Habitat, we want to create more partnerships and engage the support of those who are able to share their resources so we can bring about additional involvement and influence change in the affordable housing sector, so that we can move closer to a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Because of our past, we can do more. Because of our vision, we must do more. 🏠

Jonathan T.M. Reckford is CEO of Habitat for Humanity International.

Questions and answers:

Understanding our strategic objectives

To better understand the objectives within the strategic plan goals to build sector and societal impact, The Forum asked some of Habitat for Humanity International's subject matter experts some of the most frequently asked questions about the objectives. These conversations are provided on the following pages, along with case studies from the field and partner organizations.



Making markets work for the poor

By Patrick Kelley

Rosa Zorrilla is a housekeeper and an entrepreneur from Peru. She has a small business selling meals cooked in the kitchen of the modest home she shares with her husband and children.

Zorrilla wanted to improve her home and her family's life by creating partitions for bedrooms and improving her kitchen. A Habitat program in Peru helped her invest in affordable home improvements.

The Zorrillas now experience more privacy with the bedroom partitions, which allow the children to have their own separate room. And Rosa Zorrilla has been able to increase her income and expand her business by cooking from her larger kitchen. The improvements to the Zorrillas' home demonstrate the transformative power of improved shelter conditions and the impact they have on a family.

What makes Habitat's Peru program and Zorrilla's story special is that the materials, financing and professional services for her project came from private-sector providers.

Market approaches at Habitat

The Peru program exemplifies Objective 2.1 of Habitat's strategic plan: **"Support market approaches that increase products, services and financing for affordable housing."** Similar Habitat programs exist in Egypt, Tajikistan, Malawi, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ghana and Cambodia. These programs acknowledge that most low-income families already can and do use available market options to put a roof over their heads, no matter how frail or insecure that roof may be. And the amount of housing solutions purchased by low-income people through the market — be they ever so humble: a few bricks, a strip of tin, a few hours of a mason's time — far outstrip philanthropic efforts to improve shelter. Therefore, to leverage this existing market activity, Habitat works with local firms and entrepreneurs to expand access to innovative products, services and financing so that low-income households can improve their shelter more effectively. This is a shift from providing subsidized services to facilitating a sustainable, market-based response by indigenous market actors.

For example, Habitat's Peru program brought together EDYFICAR, the second-largest financial institution in

Peru; HATUN, a network of hardware stores; DINO, a cement manufacturer; and SENCICO, a program of the Ministry of Housing, Sanitation and Construction. The program now serves more than 7,000 families a month with a combination of housing microfinance and housing support services for the improvement of their homes. Better yet, because the capacity was built into existing indigenous, local-market actors, the program can continue without an ongoing need for subsidies for the next round of services.

The market-based approach

The market approaches laid out in Objective 2.1 of Habitat for Humanity's strategic plan respond to an important trend within the international development sector, away from the traditional approach of having a set number of beneficiaries (of toilets, health care, houses, etc.) over a set period. Instead, a market-based approach seeks to foster a system as the primary end goal, which can then expand and continue services without an ongoing need for charitable subsidy. The ultimate sustainability of the program is seen when the nonprofit's program can cease because market actors are now

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Making markets work for the poor

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providing the services once lacking.

Many bilateral and multilateral donor agencies are beginning to focus on this approach: The United Kingdom Department for International Development's M4P initiative was one of the first and most influential. M4P, or "Making Markets Work for the Poor," has since become a popular term for the approach to reducing poverty that centers on changing market systems to work more effectively. But many other large, donor-sponsored programs follow the same approach under different names, such as the United Nations Development Programme's Growing Inclusive Markets, the InterAmerican Development Bank's Opportunities for the Majority, and the International Finance Corporation's Next Four Billion.

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation also have become active donors to programs seeking to facilitate more effective market-based services for the poor. The central premise of the M4P approach, according to the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development, is that "the poor are dependent on market systems for their livelihoods. Therefore, changing those market systems to work more effectively and sustainably for the poor will improve their livelihoods and consequently reduce poverty. More accessible and competitive markets enable poor people to find their own way out of poverty by providing more real choices and opportunities. Markets that function well have wider economic benefits too."¹

¹ enterprise-development.org/page/m4p

Habitat for Humanity® MicroBuild Fund

HFHI's MicroBuild and the Center for Innovation in Shelter and Finance


To support and accelerate market approaches taken by country programs around the world, Habitat for Humanity International is focusing on two key initiatives: MicroBuild and the Center for Innovation in Shelter and Finance.

The MicroBuild Fund is the first social investment fund for housing microfinance with the goal of mobilizing more than \$100 million for affordable housing. It represents part of HFHI's goal to move the microfinance market's investment in housing from 2 percent to 10 percent – a shift that would enable 15 million households to improve their shelter conditions with \$4 billion of capital. Because HFHI contributes only \$5 million, it represents a significant opportunity to leverage our limited resources to mobilize a much larger market response to provide affordable shelter.

MicroBuild works by investing in local financial institutions that work alongside Habitat, providing savings and credit products that are paired with construction technical assistance to help families repair or build homes incrementally. National offices partner with MicroBuild to mobilize capital and influence the market expansion of incremental housing for low-income people in their countries. Habitat Tajikistan, for example, worked with MicroBuild to mobilize \$4 million for two of its key local partners. As a result, they are poised to serve more than 8,000 households in fiscal year 2014. See article on page 6 for more information on this initiative.

While MicroBuild mobilizes capital, the Center for Innovation in Shelter and Finance engages market actors to build capacity and expand good practices for serving low-income families with affordable housing. The center's goal is to facilitate collaboration among public-, private- and third-sector actors in the market to develop sustainable and innovative housing solutions. This can mean working with cement suppliers, hardware stores, microfinance institutions, small-scale technician service companies, or any sort of player in the market that can bring a solution to a gap in the housing value chain.

This two-pronged approach of capital and technical assistance is an emerging practice used by agencies seeking to have an impact on the way markets work.

With these two key initiatives, Habitat is changing local systems and making a difference in the lives of families around the world according to their needs, preferences and capacities. 

Patrick Kelley is Habitat for Humanity International's director of international housing finance.

How is market development different from housing microfinance?

Microfinance might be market development's biggest success story, but the two aren't one and the same. The microfinance movement changed the way the financial service sector thought about how low-income people could access savings, credit, insurance and other financial services sustainably. Now the same approach is being taken in various sectors — health care, private education, sanitation, energy — to bring goods and services further down the market.

It was natural for Habitat to start its market development work in the financial service sector. And, indeed, we've seen that specialized financial service providers can and do provide services to families more efficiently and at a scale vastly beyond what we could do directly. But, as Habitat seeks to serve exponentially more families, it is time for us to seek market actors in other parts of the housing value chain. Habitat will therefore need to target large firms that manufacture roof tiles and eco-friendly toilets or cement, and small-scale social entrepreneurs who provide services or skilled masonry laborers.

Are other international development organizations similar to Habitat doing any work like this?

CARE International has an active market engagement program, one of the highlights being a program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to increase incomes and nutrition in Bangladesh.

[youtube.com/watch?v=7WKmOn3UNEO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WKmOn3UNEO)

WaterSHED, an organization working on water and sanitation issues, proudly talks about its “Hands Off” approach to sanitation. This counterintuitive catchphrase attempts to capture the importance of letting local market actors do what needs doing, and to avoid crowding their activities out through activities driven by foreign aid. watershedasia.org

Mercy Corps has a program related to the expansion of the market for safe and efficient cooking stoves in Africa. mercycorps.org/research-resources/market-analysis-fuel-efficient-cook-stoves-acholi-sub-region-uganda


Does Habitat look for market actors who embrace our mission?

Yes and no. In the past, it was common for Habitat to look for partners who shared our values and vision very closely. However, that approach often misses out on the strengths that even very different organizations can bring to the table. For example, in Ghana, Habitat is exploring a partnership with a for-profit enterprise that has developed a \$75 “land folio,” a package of evidence that advances a household's security of tenure. In Peru, SENCICO (a section of the Ministry of Housing, Sanitation and Construction) is partnering with Habitat's Center for Innovation in Shelter and Finance to offer construction technical training to masons and certify them. Neither organization shares Habitat's nonprofit or mission ethos, but both can provide unique and efficient services to households in ways Habitat cannot.

What are some important principles in these types of approaches?

According to the M4P website, this approach is guided by four underlying principles²:

- 1) Systemic action:** M4P focuses on systemic action, understanding where market systems are failing to serve the needs of the poor, and acting to correct those failings.
- 2) Sustainable change:** M4P seeks sustainable change from the outset, delivering sustainable outcomes by better aligning key market functions and players with the incentives and capacity to work more effectively for the needs of the poor.
- 3) Large-scale impact:** M4P pursues large-scale impact, targeting interventions that benefit large numbers of poor people.
- 4) Facilitative role:** M4P adopts a facilitative role, determining a catalytic purpose for the development agent that stimulates, but does not displace, market functions or players.

To see how CARE developed its market development program, please visit The Forum online at my.habitat.org/the-forum to watch a short talk by Christian Pennotti, CARE's senior technical adviser for learning and impact. 

² m4phub.org/what-is-m4p/introduction.aspx

Developing partnerships to bring affordable housing finance to Tajikistan

By Katerina Bezgachina

The housing need in Tajikistan is staggering. More than 70 percent of Tajik families live in substandard conditions, and many live on limited, unstable incomes. In these circumstances, access to traditional mortgages is not possible. In addition, families often do not need a new home. They simply need to improve their current living environment step by step.

Since Habitat for Humanity Tajikistan began operating in 1999, its work has ranged from new house construction to completion of half-finished buildings, renovation of apartment blocks, and provision of water



An IMON loan officer visits a family as part of the Habitat Tajikistan and IMON Tajikistan home improvement loan project.

and sanitation to remote rural communities. Realizing that more could be done by offering small loans for essential home repairs, Habitat Tajikistan made a strategic choice four years ago to develop housing microfinance and engage with a wide professional network to deliver innovative and affordable methods for helping families make incremental repairs. But Habitat lacked internal knowledge of financial services and processes and knew it needed a partner to develop this model.

Around that time, the microcredit organization IMON entered the housing finance market in Tajikistan.

Established in 1999 as a project of Mercy Corps International and the National Association of Business Women in Tajikistan, the IMON family comprised both a commercial financial institution and a foundation. The primary goals of the foundation are to establish sustainable, long-term development; to diversify the sources of funding with new investors; and to grow the client base.

After a marketing analysis of consumer loans, IMON's management discovered that 40 percent of the loans were used for housing improvements. Seeing the opportunity to deliver a unique product and support its strategy of long-term social development, it decided to launch its own home-building credit line. One village was selected as the pilot. However, IMON soon found out that external factors, mainly problems with the local government, limited its ability to roll out the loans. Moreover, the organization did not fully understand the complexity of various housing problems.

IMON started looking for a partner with housing expertise and came across Habitat for Humanity. In 2011, a mutually beneficial partnership was formed. IMON Tajikistan and Habitat Tajikistan rolled out the Bajoriston product, a loan for low-income families who want to make small repairs and renovations to their homes. What set it aside from traditional microfinance loans was its focus on home renovations and construction technical assistance.

The construction technical assistance component was a free service offered to clients who carried out the repairs themselves. It was mainly provided by construction specialists. At first, those were staff members of Habitat for Humanity Tajikistan. As the product expanded, Habitat helped to hire, train and orient construction specialists for IMON branches. Those who expressed interest could get expert advice from a construction specialist, who assessed what construction work was essential and explained how to put together a budget, where to buy materials and how to check the quality of performed tasks. At the time, all IMON clients who took

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY/TAJIKISTAN



Families often use loans from the partnership to install new windows and doors in their homes.

out this loan got a building manual, which included general information about building technology and repairs.

The construction technical assistance element made the loan popular among the IMON clients. “I am not sure whether it’s a question of Tajik culture, or whether it was because the majority of the clients were women. Not only were the clients satisfied with the advice; they really welcomed it,” said Elena Milanovska, program development manager at Habitat for Humanity Europe, Middle East and Africa.

In Tajikistan, many men have to work outside of the country, primarily in Russia, and women are often left in charge of the household.

The type of assistance offered varies depending on the loan amount. For simple loans up to US\$1,000, construction specialists assist with the budget and help fill out technical surveys to identify which jobs are urgent. For loans above US\$1,000, construction specialists perform on-site monitoring at various periods and

Continued on page 8

Why a market development program?

Systemic action

The partnership with IMON demonstrates a systemic and ongoing initiative to serve people’s housing needs. As the local partner becomes more equipped to provide services and technical assistance, Habitat’s support and subsidy can be reduced or eliminated, allowing Habitat to move on to another pressing need in Tajikistan’s housing situation.

Sustainable change

IMON is a for-profit organization. The program offers a set of services that get paid for by households and that do not require ongoing philanthropic support to continue after a break-even point is reached.

Large-scale impact

The number of families served by Habitat Tajikistan through this program far outweighs the number it could serve through a traditional approach.

Facilitative role

Perhaps the most important feature of this program is that Habitat Tajikistan remains humble in deference to the prominence of an indigenous market actor in the program. Consistent with market development principles, Habitat stimulated, rather than displaced, market functions or players.

Developing partnerships to bring affordable housing finance to Tajikistan

Continued from page 7

recommend suppliers and contractors. Even though a few banks and microfinance institutions offer mortgage and consumer loans in Tajikistan, there is no direct competition for the Bahoriston loan product. This is largely because of its construction technical assistance component, which was mainly provided by construction specialists. At first, those were staff members of Habitat for Humanity Tajikistan. As the product expanded, Habitat helped to hire, train and orient construction specialists for IMON branches.

Nearly 6,000 Bahoriston loans have been disbursed to date. In the pilot phase, IMON contributed its own funding to the project. In September 2012, IMON received a loan from Habitat's MicroBuild in the amount of US\$2 million. As of February 2013, the partners had used the whole amount, and now they are ready to apply for an additional \$2 million from MicroBuild.

The partners are interested in growing and expanding the product. According to IMON's estimates, more than 60 percent of the clients use loans to complete their half-finished homes. The partners would like to introduce a separate, bigger loan that can enable families to finish their construction. Another loan could target those who would like to equip their homes with solar panels, since there is interest in making homes energy-efficient and less dependent on the state electricity grid.

From the outset, this project involved clear and agreed-upon roles and responsibilities for the partners. Each organization drew on its own internal strength to achieve project aims. Habitat provided advice and guidance on product design, trained loan officers, developed a construction manual, and undertook technical monitoring and evaluation. IMON contributed its knowledge of the market and ability to roll out and execute required financial services. 🏠

Katerina Bezgachina is PR and media manager for Habitat for Humanity International's Europe, Middle East and Africa area office.



OBJECTIVE 2.2: POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

Promote policies and systems to increase access to affordable housing

An interview with Chris Vincent, HFHI's director of congressional relations and international affairs

How does advocacy relate to promoting policies and systems?

"Advocacy" is the most common, globally recognized term to describe a holistic strategy of influencing policies and systems.

What is Habitat for Humanity's definition of advocacy?

In 2005, a cross-divisional task force of staff and partners from throughout the Habitat family created the following definition of advocacy for Habitat based on its strategic focus of providing safe, adequate shelter:

Advocacy is changing systems, policies and attitudes to achieve decent housing for all.

Habitat for Humanity uses advocacy to influence public opinion and to encourage decision-makers to adopt policies and practices and transform systems that lead to the creation and preservation of housing for all, toward the goal of ending poverty worldwide.

Is measuring advocacy success possible?

Yes. Changing policies and systems may be difficult, and even take years, but it is possible to measure both progress and success. Moreover, a policy change might not result in immediate impact; true change will depend on policy implementation,

including monitoring, compliance and administration. The most effective way to measure the impact of advocacy focuses primarily on measuring the intended effect on people's lives. Understanding the projected result of a particular policy or system change allows you to measure the potential effects of that change in terms of people affected or amount of money mobilized.

What are the two key outcome indicators for the “promoting policies and systems” objective?

One is the number of people potentially affected by a policy and system change. The other is dollars accessed for adequate housing by a policy or system change.

Is there an example of a successful advocacy program that has achieved these outcomes?

Yes, there are many examples of national offices tracking results of advocacy based on these indicators. One example is from Mexico, where Habitat for Humanity worked with the Social Producers of Housing Network to advocate for the Mexican government to change the operating rules of a housing program called “This Is Your House,” which provides government subsidies to low-income families. The rules severely limited the numbers of families that could access the program. Because of the successful advocacy efforts, nearly 9,000 additional families benefited from the modification of the rules, with an additional investment of US\$18.4 million in government subsidies in the years 2010-11. During this period, Habitat Mexico was able to take advantage of these changes and used US\$11 million of the subsidy with its

own program, helping 5,185 families access new homes.

The advocacy outcome indicators from this example are:

- 45,000 people: The number of people potentially affected by the policy and systems change (9,000 families x five people per family).
- US\$18.4 million: The dollars accessed for adequate housing through the policy and systems change.

Do the people affected or dollars accessed need to be affected or accessed by Habitat for Humanity?

No. If you are influencing a policy or system that allows partners to access funding or benefit families, those numbers are still counted as an indicator of your advocacy work.

What are we trying to accomplish with these advocacy outcome indicators?

Habitat for Humanity has long been involved in advocacy. However, for the first time, we are looking to measure the results of this work. By measuring this work, we will give value to the activities, time, effort and resources it takes to organize and run an advocacy effort. Additionally, we want to document and celebrate our successes and learn from efforts that weren't successful. While we recognize that achieving advocacy success can be difficult and take time, there is a great need to ensure globally that we have a common vision, understanding and language to capture advocacy successes.

Most importantly, we want to measure the ways in which Habitat organizations are impacting lives and improving housing conditions through policy and system changes. These outcome indicators help Habitat

measure advocacy efforts in a way that has not been done previously with consistency, transparency and coordination.

Is this objective the only area where we should be measuring our advocacy impact?

Advocacy cuts across all three houses of the strategic plan. Successful advocacy efforts will help build community impact, and through awareness-raising and the mobilization of volunteers, we can enhance and expand our advocacy efforts. 🏠

Global Advocacy Manual

Habitat has developed a how-to guide to support efforts related to this objective. This tool is primarily designed to support Habitat national organizations, area offices, and their volunteers and supporters. It provides an introduction to advocacy and a road map to help novices and experienced advocates increase their impact on adequate housing. The global advocacy manual can be found at habitat.org/sites/default/files/globaladvocacyguide.pdf, along with additional advocacy resources. You can also download a copy from My.Habitat that includes additional access to related resources to enhance the guide. Go to my.habitat.org/kc/download-detail/3ee28/.

Learning about advocacy from Save the Children

An interview with Nora O'Connell, associate vice president, public policy and advocacy, Save the Children

Save the Children has moved more into advocacy in the past few years. Can you tell us what prompted that?

It starts with our mission and our theory of change. Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ADVOCACY, WE REALLY MEAN, "HOW DO WE CHANGE THE POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT OR OTHER LARGE ACTORS."

This is not about helping individual children. It's about achieving change at scale. We are trying to change how the world treats children.

Our theory of change is to develop innovations, to be the voice for children and to advocate, and then to look at what are the challenges of taking things to scale and to address those challenges through partnership.

So there's been an explicit recognition that we want to achieve change at scale. And you can't do that without advocacy.

How do you define advocacy?

When we talk about advocacy, we really mean, "How do we change the policies of government or other large actors?" It could be corporations in their programs, in their policies on behalf of children.

Do you distinguish between advocacy and campaigning?

Yes. Campaigning is really a range of activities that includes direct lobbying, the use of media and popular mobilization to achieve these advocacy outcomes.

Sometimes you do advocacy in a very public way, as with campaigning, and sometimes it's more of a direct conversation with those policymakers you're trying to influence.

It's about putting these issues on the agenda. ... Changing the public perception as well as changing policy so that not only are we creating the policy change, but we're changing the norms that go around these issues and public accountability. So these things can't be rolled back, essentially.

How do you measure advocacy success?

We have a global tool called the Advocacy Measurement Tool that over the past two years has been picked up globally across Save the Children.

It's mostly a qualitative tool. There's more that we could do to deepen our ability to measure advocacy and the impact of our activities, but it helps us understand what we're advocating on, where we're advocating, and the kinds of things we're doing and achieving. It has helped us gain a better picture of what we're doing and where we're making impact.

How do you communicate your success to supporters and funders?

We have more room to grow in how we do that. Many people know about Save the Children programming. But our advocacy can actually have a much bigger impact in terms of children's lives.

That's one of the challenges of advocacy. Sometimes it doesn't feel as immediate to our various audiences as building a house or putting a kid in school. Yet that's when we're really talking about changing the world. (Advocacy) can have a much bigger impact. 🏠

To read the full interview with Nora O'Connell, access this edition of The Forum on my.habitat.org/the-forum.



OBJECTIVE 3.1: RAISING AWARENESS

Serve as a leading voice in growing awareness of housing as a critical foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty

An interview with Jennifer Lindsey, HFHI's senior director of international communications.

What are we trying to accomplish with this objective?

Habitat for Humanity is well known in the United States and has varying degrees of recognition and awareness outside the U.S. Yet even in countries where the name Habitat for Humanity is well known, what we are known for often differs from country to country. In some respects, this is understandable and appropriate. We should be recognized and valued for the activities we undertake locally. But as a global organization, all activities are tied to the global vision and mission, and our vision and mission are both based on the belief that housing is a critical foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Through this objective, we hope to increase consistency in conveying the overall Habitat for Humanity mission and the belief that an adequate, safe and decent house can help stabilize a family's life and afford them the opportunity to better provide for their current and future needs, thus helping to break the cycle of poverty.

We want to create a compelling case and tool set for affiliates, national organizations and area offices to use in building their local campaigns, to reinforce the importance of housing in poverty alleviation, to illustrate Habitat's role as a leader in affordable housing issues, and to encourage and inspire others to join us in this work.

How is this different from what we already do?

Today, Habitat-branded entities around the world largely develop their own messaging, focused on the needs of their specific regions and communities. This local contextualization is important. Yet with 1,500 affiliates in the U.S. alone and more than 70 national organizations bearing the Habitat name, we have the opportunity and the obligation to use the full strength of our network to

drive awareness and understanding of critical shelter issues in our communities and the world. In the coming years, we will work to bring those messages together and speak with one voice to share our collective expertise and serve as a leading voice to call for action.

Does success in this objective have any dependencies, or does it support any other strategic plan objectives or initiatives?

The success of each of the goals and objectives in the strategic plan — and indeed in the mission of the organization — depend on Habitat's ability to present an engaging case for global change; to demonstrate through compelling stories how we are making a difference; and to inspire people to give of their time, talent and treasure to join us in our mission. A strong global brand enables us to do this.

How are we measuring this objective, and how were those metrics chosen?

We are measuring our outputs through traditional and emerging marketing and outreach metrics:

- Web traffic.
- Media impressions.
- Social media fans and followers.
- Event participants and visitors.
- Newsletter subscribers.

These metrics were arrived at with extensive input from the area communications teams, based on what we believe national organizations already do to measure their communications activities or can easily take on if they choose to align with this objective.

Continued on page 12

Serve as a leading voice in growing awareness of housing

Continued from page 11

How do the metrics for this objective show that we are achieving it? Are we assuming that the number of people who potentially see our websites, social media posts, events and news articles will automatically understand the connection between housing and breaking the cycle of poverty?

Nothing will happen automatically. If we limit what we communicate to all but the most relevant messages and use them often and consistently, we will make the connection with an ever-growing number of people.

Although the metrics themselves might not measure awareness, we can track the number of people who see or have access to these messages. Over time, the outcomes of those activities will be seen in other objectives — notably funds raised, volunteers mobilized and people who joined us as advocates for the cause of affordable housing.

What do we mean by “serve as a leading voice”? Is it important that Habitat be seen as the authority on this topic, or do we just want to raise awareness of this issue?

Positioning Habitat as a leading and competent voice should go hand in hand with showing evidence of our effectiveness. If we believe in our model, we should also believe that it provides one of the best possible solutions.

As with other brand awareness and reputational goals, measuring whether we are a “leading voice” can be difficult. However, we already have a growing collection of anecdotal evidence that our voice is strong and respected in many parts of the world:

- Habitat for Humanity is routinely called upon by top-tier media in the United States and in other parts of the world as a resource on affordable housing issues.
- We continue to rank high in external surveys in the United States on trusted and valued nongovernmental organizations.
- Our leadership in the Housing Forums around the world illustrates our focus and expertise to peer international NGOs, to government organizations, and to bilateral and multilateral entities.

As our reputation as a proven leader continues to strengthen, we will leverage our visibility and support to bring about broader, more systemic change and raise the profile of shelter issues in local, regional and global poverty-related initiatives and forums. 🏠

To illustrate how some Habitat for Humanity entities have already been linking housing to poverty alleviation, we asked Habitat for Humanity Great Britain to share a bit about its HOME = LIFE campaign.

RAISE AWARENESS CASE STUDY

**Campaign theme:
HOME=LIFE.**

**Fight poverty:
Build a home.**

The strategy behind the campaign:

HOME=LIFE sums up perfectly how having a decent home is the key to living a life that is free from poverty, fear or neglect.

The campaign illustrates that having a home is vital to helping families escape poverty forever. It gives families a stable foundation with a sense of dignity and pride. It leads to improved health, safety and security and helps them to improve their education and employment opportunities.

As part of our drive to increase unrestricted giving, we had to simplify our message and make it more focused on people and development outcomes than on building houses. We wanted to connect with the real people who, every day, face life in poverty because of the conditions in which they live.

We also wanted to achieve real understanding about the importance of the home in human development. Everybody understands education, water and health care, but housing doesn't have the same currency here in Great Britain.

With HOME=LIFE, we wanted to allow people to engage with the need for decent housing without having to get into the specifics of particular projects, particular types of homes, etc. We wanted to show our donors and prospective donors just what impact a home has on human development. We needed to connect with the real lives behind our work and put a very human face at the front.



What has the campaign achieved?

It has made our message more readily understandable by the U.K. population, has given unity to our internal and external messaging, and made it much easier to know what we should be saying and when. The message is always the same: "Home equals life."


Advice for other national organizations that want to launch a similar campaign:

Consider two things:

- 1) What do you need to achieve?
- 2) What do you need to be able to achieve this?

What drove the need to create HOME=LIFE was the fact that we needed to increase unrestricted giving and to make the importance of housing more understandable.

At the heart of our new strategy is the brand tool kit, which covers everything about HOME=LIFE. Everyone has access to this, and it governs how we ask people to support Habitat for Humanity, what we say, the images we use and how we write.

For more information on the campaign, visit habitatforhumanity.org.uk/home_life. 



OBJECTIVE 3.2: MOBILIZE VOLUNTEERS

Mobilize volunteers as hearts, hands and voices for the cause of adequate, affordable housing

An interview with Mark Andrews, vice president of volunteers and institutional engagement for Habitat for Humanity International.

How do we move someone who has volunteered with Habitat on a Global Village trip to Kenya for 10 days to become someone who wants to continue to support the Habitat Kenya program for 10 years? This is the heart of what we are trying to do with Objective 3.2.

Volunteers have been the cornerstone of Habitat from its first days. In many ways, they are already the heart of the ministry. Many of our leaders began as Habitat volunteers. For the most part, however, the current volunteer experience is very transactional. We have this work that needs to be done (building), and the volunteers get the work done. The volunteer will have a great experience during that build and will feel, quite rightly, that he or she has helped a family get one step closer to living in a safe and decent home.

Yet, as an organization, we have often failed to help that volunteer see how he or she can help many more families long after the build day is done. We have not had the conversation with the volunteers about why this family lacked access to simple, decent housing, nor have we

armed them with the information and tools to tell others about the problem and show how Habitat is a solution. And we haven't opened the door to the many other ways they can engage with us.

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Mobilize volunteers as hearts, hands and voices for the cause of adequate, affordable housing

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Deeper understanding leads to deeper engagement

The methodology for deeper engagement will need to be contextualized in each country. If we look at one of our best-known volunteer programs, Global Village, we can see that a trip could include a visit to an informal settlement in the project area. This would show the volunteers the wider housing context. Another option is a visit to the local government to meet officials and discuss issues of land tenure or access to services. This additional exposure builds a more complete picture of the environment and enables volunteers to place the house and the family's experience in the socioeconomic context of their location.

Trips may become less about the building of the house and more about understanding why the house needs to be built. This is not to minimize the importance of building or of having the transformational experience of going on GV trips to build with families. It is about creating in volunteers a deeper understanding of the local culture and shelter issues, so that they know how they can be part of the solution beyond the 10 days or two weeks that they are working on the ground.

Beyond the build

Through this objective, we also want to provide opportunities for people to offer skills and expertise to Habitat beyond what they can give through construction. There are people with skills around the world who want to help; they love our brand and believe in our mission. In the past, we have encouraged them to go to the job site. Many don't have the skills or desire to do that, but they do have other skills that would be valuable to us.

The volunteer impact

Goals 1 and 2, building community impact and building sector impact, can be achieved only if we are successful in Goal 3. If society does not gain a deeper under-



Volunteer Edna Camelo, from Colombia, works with Build Louder volunteers in Latin America and the Caribbean to conduct a housing survey in Soacha before the first Regional Forum on Adequate Housing in Bogota. Such activities bring Habitat volunteers closer to understanding the causes and effects of poverty housing.

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standing of the issues of affordable housing and community development, we cannot make the impact we want to make. Indeed, we feel that Goal 3 is the overarching mobilizing goal — the pipeline to be able to achieve scale in the other areas.

Within our division, we talk a lot about mobilizing human capital and building organizational capacity. One of the exciting aspects of this initiative is the recognition that although financial capital might be a limiting factor in some areas, human capital, through volunteerism, is nearly limitless. If we can mobilize millions of volunteers in a wide range of activities, we can have a huge impact on our organizational capacity.

Many of us have looked at the aspiration of eliminating substandard housing as something that was impossible, at least in our lifetime. If we succeed in mobilizing volunteers and spreading the word in ways we have never done in the past, engaging with people in ways we have never done in the past, I truly believe we can eliminate substandard housing.

To do this, all of us need to be more intentional in how we engage with volunteers, from providing a wider, deeper, more holistic volunteer experience to the very simple task of thanking volunteers for their service. These things will help determine whether a person ends his or her association with Habitat after a 10-day GV trip or stays engaged with us in numerous ways for a lifetime. 🏠

Habitat Youth BUILD in Cambodia

By Hiew Peng Wong

When the Habitat for Humanity Cambodia team saw how excited young people were to be volunteering and doing community work during the 2012 World Habitat Day celebrations in Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap, they had no problem signing on to host the Habitat Youth BUILD. They also felt good about setting a 500-volunteer target for the event, since they had maintained contact with the more than 600 volunteers who had taken part in World Habitat Day activities.

Habitat Cambodia launched two months of activities for the Youth BUILD on Feb. 27, 2013, with announcements on its website, Facebook page and Twitter account. A media release was sent to 11 newspapers, six TV stations, five radio stations and four magazines. In addition, two members from Habitat Cambodia's team drummed up support for the event during a local prime-time game show called "Freshy Winners."

The build itself was held in Smile Village on the outskirts of the capital, Phnom Penh. The Smile Village project aims to provide families from urban low-income communities with access to affordable rental housing.

On April 27, Habitat Cambodia worked with its NGO partner Pour un Sourire d'Enfant, or PSE, to mobilize 636 volunteers to build a sewerage system and to fill and compress soil to make the main road for the Smile Village project. The volunteers also planted 160 young fruit trees, each measuring 1.5 meters (4.9 feet), to provide shade to families who will be moving there.

In the village, a "commitment wall" made of billboard vinyl material and measuring 13 meters long by 6.5

meters tall (42.6 feet by 21.3 feet) was also set up. Volunteers wrote down their names, their dreams and hopes for their country, and how they could help build a bright future.

Using partnerships

Because of Habitat Cambodia's strong connection with Hang Meas Productions, a talent agency, singers Aok Sokun Kanha and Chhorn Sovannareach agreed to promote Habitat Youth BUILD.

Sovannareach is not new to Habitat; he previously volunteered in Oudong during the 2009 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project. Both artists are well



Popular Cambodian singer Aok Sokun Kanha recorded a video appeal in support of Habitat Youth BUILD. The "hands over head" gesture, which forms the shape of the roof of a house, symbolizes coming together to support those in need of a safe place to live.

COURTESY OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CAMBODIA

recognized in Cambodia for their positive images and influence on young people. Between them, they have more than 250,000 followers on Facebook. In a video appeal posted on Habitat Cambodia's Facebook page, Sokun Kanha called for people to join the Youth BUILD.

Other Habitat partners also pulled their weight. PSE

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Habitat Youth BUILD in Cambodia

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not only paid for the excavation and main construction materials for building the sewerage and the road but also took care of stage and tent setups and other logistical arrangements. Government permission was obtained with the help of Habitat Cambodia's NGO partner People for Care and Learning, which connected Habitat with the governor of Phnom Penh. ANZ Royal Bank came on board as the main corporate sponsor with a donation of US\$5,000 to build the first housing unit in Smile Village.

The project is also the site of Mekong Big Builds, which will see international volunteers building 30 housing units in November.

Sixty percent of the volunteers who took part April 27 were students. The remaining volunteers were members of self-help groups, NGO partner organizations, corporations, churches, Habitat partner families and staff members.

Social networking

After the build, a fundraising challenge was launched to encourage volunteers to continue supporting Habitat Cambodia with their own creative initiatives. Volunteers set up individual Web pages to raise money for parts of or an entire house in Smile Village. Lyme Sun, an 18-year-old Cambodian student who won the Habitat Youth BUILD T-shirt design competition, joined the fundraising challenge with her friends.

Habitat Cambodia also used social media to share information and receive feedback from volunteers. After the Youth BUILD launch in February, Habitat Cambodia put up weekly posts on its Facebook page, varying the topic or theme to maximize the buildup. The posts ranged from a "call to action" video by Sokun Kanha to the design of Smile Village to a thank-you to corporate supporters. The Facebook posts not only recognized the support received but also encouraged supporters to share their posts.

To remind their supporters that they were part of a larger regional movement, Habitat Cambodia also shared posts from the Habitat Youth BUILD page on Facebook. From early February to mid-May, Facebook postings increased to twice a day, once in the morning and once at night.

Rough spots and lessons

As with most maiden forays, it was not smooth sailing throughout the two-month campaign. About four days

before the event's peak on April 27, a youth group that committed to mobilize 250 volunteers withdrew. This was a mixed blessing, because the group had political ties and elections were impending.

In addition, the Cambodian New Year holidays in mid-April meant that Habitat Cambodia had less time to recruit volunteers, but other partner organizations stepped up their efforts. In the end, Habitat Cambodia exceeded its 500-volunteer target.

Habitat Cambodia also had to reduce the volunteer registration fee by about half to encourage more young volunteers to sign up. At the same time, the project team



A monk studying at Phnom Penh's Pannasastra University, one of Habitat Cambodia's partner universities, works with volunteers wearing the official Habitat Youth BUILD T-shirt. The shirt's design was created by a Cambodian student and selected by regional online voting.

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was firm that the US\$5,000 donation from ANZ Royal Bank would be used only for the test build of one house at Smile Village on April 27.

Overall, Habitat Cambodia's first Habitat Youth BUILD offered many positive lessons. "Networking and creativity are key to engaging people and turning them into supporters," said Regino-Borja, Habitat Cambodia's resource development and communications manager. "Continued engagement is important. The launch of the fundraising challenge will help sustain the momentum from Habitat Youth BUILD."

Habitat Cambodia has stayed true to its word by sending thank-you letters along with certificates of appreciation to all the volunteers after the April 27 event. Team photos were sent via email, and volunteers received Habitat Cambodia's monthly newsletter to maintain contact. 🏠

Hiew Peng Wong is a writer/editor in Habitat for Humanity International's Asia/Pacific area office.