



## News Around the World

### From Classroom to the Society

Ritsumeikan Moriyama high school of Shiga prefecture sent it's 26 seniors to Thailand this summer. On August 17th, the team arrived at the capital city of Bangkok to participate in the Global Village program (GV) in Pathumthani for 10 days of building houses with local families in need.

The school operates various initiatives to educate its students on being global citizens, and this exposure trip for the whole senior class is one of them. This year, Habitat was selected to be the partner, making it the first Japanese high school team apart from international schools.

#### Lessons from the Field

“Putting lessons from the classroom to the real world” was the aim for the initiative. The students researched about Thailand’s social issues, history and culture to prepare for the trip.

However in actuality, there were

several occasions where students had to overcome cultural differences. Communicating with the local people was a big one; not only the language but also the contents were all new to them, so the students had to adjust quickly. Yet through physical labor, everyone started to smile and communicate. This allowed for all to see the significance of working together towards one common goal, and later grow into one team. After each day’s work, the students and the teachers held meetings to share stories and discuss about the program’s purpose.

#### Building a Future

On the first day at the work site, there were only pillars and the roof over the house’s foundation. With road bumps like boiling heat with occasional heavy showers standing in the way, the students questioned if they could really complete the house or not. Working alongside the home partner, motivation didn’t seem to run out, simply wanting to help make



a dream come true for their newly met friend in need.

Some shared “working together in a team does lighten the work load for the home partner. But it also makes everyone smile and share the fulfillment. I will never forget the feeling I had at the dedication of the completed house.” Others said “I am grateful to have met all the people involved in this project, and glad that I had this opportunity to be here at this moment of my life.”

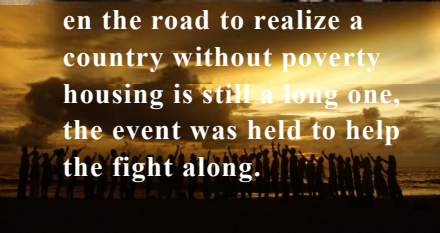
The team completed one house to help one family start their lives far away from the volunteers’ own daily lives in Japan. Yet at the same time, the experience opened up a whole new starting point for the volunteers themselves.

“Rebuild Sri Lanka” was held for 7 days from August 5th to 11th in a city of Negombo.

Total of 150 volunteers from 6 countries like America, Australia and New Zealand gathered to build 24 houses for those affected by the Pacific Ocean tsunami in 2004.

42 of these volunteers were from Japan; 36 university students and 6 adults, and they have completed 12 houses.

Since 1996’s launch, Habitat Sri Lanka had assisted more than 17,000 families. Yet given the road to realize a country without poverty housing is still a long one, the event was held to help the fight along.



## News around the World (2)

Walking along the Families Restarting Their Lives

### Rebuilding for the Flood Victims in Northern Thailand

Last year’s flooding in Central and Northern Thailand brought great damage. While many houses in Phitsanulok were underwater over 6 months, the government’s response was not prompt and international attention hardly reached outside Bangkok. In result, many families, who are of vulnerable groups often times, are still living without basic functions in their houses. These families are living in poverty, headed by single mothers, includes elders, sick, disabled, babies and many children in their households. After the flooding, many

returned home from evacuation, their damaged houses lacked walls, functioning toilets, sound foundation, exposing people to serious safety and health issues.

Habitat Japan launched house repair project in October. With funding from Japan Platform and in partnership with Habitat Thailand, the project is aiming to spend 6 months to rehabilitate more than 50 houses in and around Bang Rakam district of Phitsanulok, in hopes to better the living conditions for the flood victims with ur-

gent needs.



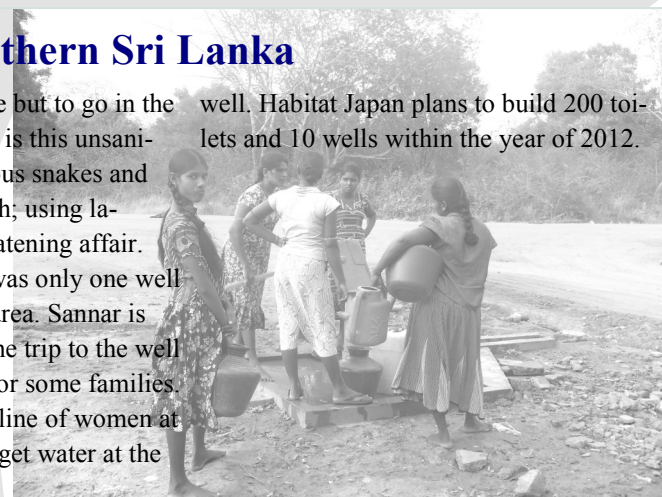
### For a Better Water and Sanitation in Northern Sri Lanka

July, Habitat Japan began a new initiative in the district of Manar with support from Japan Platform, we started building latrines and wells so that those returning to their homes after the Civil War could have access to clean water and better sanitation.

The new work site is called Sannar in the district of Manar, where over 200 people have resettled in this village, but there were no usable toilets in place even after two years since the war ended. This means

that people have no choice but to go in the woods for toilet. Not only is this unsanitary, but there are poisonous snakes and insects lurking in the brush; using latrines there was a life-threatening affair. On the other hand, there was only one well for drinking water in the area. Sannar is quite a large village and the trip to the well and back was over 5 km for some families. Often, there appears long line of women at the well that had come to get water at the

well. Habitat Japan plans to build 200 toilets and 10 wells within the year of 2012.



## A Summer Filled with Compassion for Tohoku

Student-run organizations at various schools across Japan called Campus Chapters (CC) are there to support Habitat Japan's work. The members volunteer to build houses overseas via the Global Village program and to help recovery of disaster-hit Tohoku. Besides their involvement in the field, they often organize fundraising events to financially contribute to the cause.

This summer, Kwansai Gakuin University's Sanda chapter organized an event called "SHIFT 12." It was named as such that their initiative would help 'shift' the disaster recovery efforts to accelerate in better way.

July, 41 students participated in Tohoku volunteer trips to a temporary housing complex in Ofunato, Iwate. Visiting the home partners helped them see the reality of persisting hardships that the disaster victims live with, today.

In August, the team took advantage of all op-



portunities around to promote Tohoku via selling local food, and fundraise in city corners resulting in donation of 750,000 yen in one month. The team's hard work resulted as making this the largest scaled student led initiatives in history of Habitat Japan's youth program.



Hanako Chiba, the leader of SHIFT 12 told us "Distance between Tohoku and Kansai is large but caring people in unity can make it seem small," looking back her summer dedicated for those still suffering from the disaster's impact. In September, the fund was utilized to better living condition at a temporary shelter complex in Ofunato.

Other chapters also raised funds across Japan, involving 150 young volunteers from Kyushu to Tokyo. "It's really not about how much we raise, but the important thing is to tell the story to as many people as we can," says Mitsuru Sato. Many were inspired by these leaders's work, the planning for the next fundraising initiative in winter has already started.

## Youth Camp 2012

September 29th to 30th, the annual youth camp was held in Gotemba, Shizuoka. Gathering more than 100 students, largest number in history, from CCs across Japan. The camp was themed "Exchanging and Understanding" to encourage discussions to learn about Habitat's work. Also, it was one of a few opportunities for many student members to meet with fellow volunteers in different parts of the country and Habitat Japan's staff all at once.

At the workshop, project competition was held. Many teams were proposing creative ways to spread words on Habitat around Japan through the network of students.



In collaboration with a popular travel book "Chikyu-no Arukikata World Trotters", organized another Japan Hope Builders team to Thailand this summer. A team of 15 students and 3 adults built a house in flood-damaged Pathumthani, outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand.

The house was for the Panida family who had been sharing a house with 8 other relatives including their parents, but the couple needed private space to raise a newborn daughter. After 2 years of searching and working hard, the couple became a Habitat homeowner.



## Our Week of Building Hope

Japan Hope Builders in Thailand



The trip taught me how powerful the love of mankind can be. I tend to keep distance from others but now I can see letting people in to your life can be so wonderful. For that, and to have met Panida and others, I am truly thankful.

- Yuki Kishi, A Senior Student as a University

# Habi-Bito

What comes after leaning was an answer Noriko Tanabe had been eager to find. Teaching social studies at Ritsumeikan Moriyama High School, she always wondered how her senior students can make a positive impact outside of the classroom. Then a chance came her way; the school put her in charge of a newly established service learning course.

She gladly accepted the challenge and started to search for an opportunity. Not too long after, she realizes Habitat's GV program offers what she was looking for; global exposure friendly to teenagers, plenty of relevant learning points for

## Noriko Tanabe Teacher, Ritsumeikan Moriyama High School

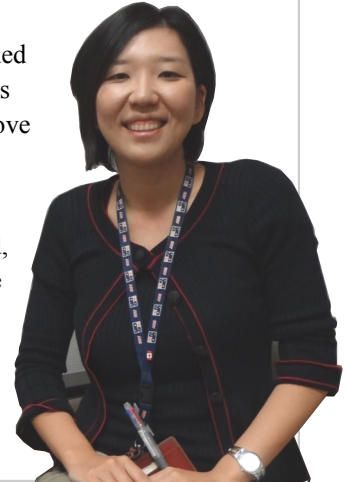
class, and tangible results and experience. To show the school that the program is good and safe enough for her students, not only for the adults and university students. She joined in a trip herself before presenting to the school. She was moved, enough to move the school to take action.

That was then another question came to her mind; why now? Her students were soon to be in colleges where they can easily organize a trip like this one on their own will. "Do I really need to lead this trip for them right now?"

"Yes, this is it!" Things became clear

shortly after the work started. Having witnessed her students trouble shooting as they build a house, she was convinced that this is just what was needed for her students before they move on to the next stage in life.

And in the end, this is how she made a positive impact outside of the classroom herself.



### Be a House Supporter!

Habitat Japan's House Supporters are there to assist Habitat fight against the world's poverty housing issues. Contributions of 1,000 yen per month will help sustain this initiative to realize a world where everyone has a decent place to live.



In Japan, the donation will help Habitat Japan assist disaster survivors returning to their homes and restart their lives.

For example in Sri Lanka,  
1,000 yen can buy 20 bricks  
3,000 yen can build a wall  
5,000 yen can buy a door

Annual reports and newsletter will be sent to House Supporters showing how their contributions made a difference as well.

Stay tuned for the renewed web page for the members or contact us anytime!

### Volunteer in Tohoku!

Habitat Japan continues the Rebuilding Japan Program to support affected people in Tohoku. In order to meet the wide range of needs, we are recruiting volunteers. Come and join us today!

Location: Ishinomaki and Higashi Matsushima City, Miyagi

Work: Cleaning houses (removing/untangling debris), repairing community spaces, providing common spaces in temporary housing units, mingling with residents, etc.

Date: Please check our web site for more details.



### Habitat in Publication



Habitat Japan's newly launched Solar Home Recovery Project was mentioned

in the Businessweek's issued on October 22nd, 2012. Advertorial titled 'Energizing Lives' reads that the project "demonstrates how solar technology can be used to power disaster recovery efforts" and to create sustainable future for the affected families in financial need in Ofunato.

Detailed information and progress report will be included in the next issue.

### Editor's Note

During my trip to northern Sri Lanka, where Habitat Japan will conduct a project, one local gentleman started to spoke to me on a bus. "Are you Japanese? Where are you going?" As I come across sudden solicitations in this way quite often, I was dreadful wondering what this guy wants from me this time. But he went on to tell me how he is working on road laying project funded by Japanese ODA and enjoys company of his co-workers from Japan. "I also appreciate your country's help during the 2004 tsunami, I just want to do my part in some way I can." Such a brief conversation reminded me how 'paying it forward' ripples on in unexpected ways.



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Established in 1976, Habitat for Humanity, as an International NGO is aiming to build homeowner's dignity and independence through building communities, has helped over 500,000 families, without regard to race, religion or personal background. Now, Habitat has activities about 100 countries and regions, and is building a house every 21 minutes in the world.