

# H F H J

# News

# Letter



# 35

2015 August

Habitat for Humanity Japan Newsletter  
Issue 35



 News from the Field

## 6 Months On - Nepal Earthquake

Hiroshima Land Slide





# 6 Months On - Nepal Earthquake



Six months have passed since a 7.8 earthquake struck Nepal on 25 April 2015, with the epicenter about 80 kilometers northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. This was followed by another magnitude-7.4 earthquake to the northeast near Mount Everest on 12 May. According to the government of Nepal, more than 8,800 people were killed. The effect on housing was devastating, as the government reports more than 602,000 homes destroyed and 285,000 homes damaged. The Nepal government declared a state of emergency and requested international aid. Many international agencies responded, including Habitat for Humanity.

In the subsequent months since the earthquakes, the recovery process in Nepal has moved on from the emergency phase, and recovery and reconstruction has begun. While conditions prevent full implementation of projects, Habitat is pursuing additional measures in Nepal, including reworking project delivery schedules, seeking local organizations to help support technical assistance and core house programs, and supporting local communities holistic services.



## INTERVIEW

### Voice from the Field

I was in Kathmandu, Nepal, when the earthquake hit. Being in the field, I feel that rebuilding - or building an even better country - will take a long time.

There is a saying that I hold close to my heart: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Humanitarian work requires patience at times, and one may feel frustrated seeing people in need of assistance.

However, in order to "go far," we must all work together and rebuild this beautiful country.

**Yoshiko Tokuchi**  
Project Coordinator





# Progress Report

## ► Safety Assessment Project

Habitat for Humanity Japan conducted a Safety Assessment Project in three districts after the earthquake. Surveyors conducted safety assessments for 16,244 damaged houses, to help families determine if their homes are still safe for habitation, to facilitate demolition of unsafe homes, and to provide technical support to those able to repair or retrofit their homes.

Municipalities will be provided with data collected from the surveyed houses. The data is to be used by government officials in order to rebuild and improve their communities.



Picture from Pakistan's safety assessment



## ► Temporary Shelter Kits Distribution

Habitat for Humanity distributed temporary shelter kits to affected families. Habitat for Humanity's temporary shelter kits contain materials such as corrugated galvanized iron roofing, steel tubing, re-enforcing rods, fixings and tools that can be reused for permanent house construction at a later stage.

## ✎ Shelter Kits in Numbers

Number of temporary shelter kits distributed: 5,065

Number of families supported: 5,065

Number of volunteers involved: 142

Number of demonstration temporary shelters built: 21

(As of 4 September 2015)

## ► Water Backpacks

Habitat for Humanity distributed water backpacks to displaced families, used to facilitate transport of drinking water from wells and other sources.

20,000 backpacks have been distributed.



## ► Rubble Removal

Shortly after the earthquake, Habitat for Humanity removed rubble together with about 100 volunteers. The total rubble removed amounts to 650 tons.



## 📍 Family Stories

### 📍 Ranuki's Family Story

Ranuki Danuwar's biggest fear after experiencing the magnitude-7.8 earthquake on 25 April was that more earthquakes will hit Nepal. "My husband was able to return to work a week after the earthquake. I could not farm for a month—I was too worried that more earthquakes would happen. I only returned to farming because my husband said, 'Earthquakes will happen, but life has to go on.'"

Ranuki considers it a blessing that Habitat for Humanity provided all 93 families in her village with temporary shelter kits on 26 May.

On 8 July, Ranuki, 45, and her husband Kansa, 47, broke ground for the construction of their new home, the first of 100 permanent houses that Habitat will directly build as part of the earthquake response. About 30 people, including Habitat staff, volunteers, and some community members who would be receiving permanent houses, witnessed the milestone.

"I'm very happy that we have shelter using materials from the temporary shelter kit that Habitat provided," she said. "I'm even happier now, knowing that permanent houses will be built for families in my community."



### 📍 Savitri's Family Story

Savitri, 35, has been raising her four children alone since her husband passed away 10 months ago. When the magnitude-7.8 earthquake hit Nepal on 25 April, she and her children were in a house in Kathmandu. Her first concern was how to save her kids—ranging from three to 17 years old.

Savitri and her children all ran out into an open space in the city, then had to spend the next two nights without shelter. They continued to stay in the open until she approached a neighbor to ask if Savitri's family could share a tent with his family. He generously agreed.

When another earthquake hit Nepal on 12th May, all that Savitri could think of was, "This is it. This is the end. I thought my kids and I are all going to die here and now." Fortunately, the family remained safe and she is thankful, even though she still faces many challenges.



On 4th June, Habitat for Humanity Nepal distributed temporary shelter kits in Savitri's community in Bhetwalthok, Paanchkhaal municipality of the Kavre district. Habitat staff and volunteers, along with local community members, helped build a temporary shelter for her. Now, Savitri has one less worry off her mind; her children will not have to stay in a damaged house, and she is hopeful that she can get back to work. "Although I'm a single mother with who has to feed five mouths by myself, I know that this disaster has hit others hard, too. They might have a partner or a friend to go through this disaster with them, unlike me, but the situation is no less difficult for them as it is for me." She hopes that other families will find the help that they badly need in the aftermath of the earthquake.



## Together with Hiroshima Tasuke-tai, Repairing houses in Hiroshima

Over a year has passed since the mudslide in Hiroshima that took 74 people's lives. Visitors in Hiroshima may get an impression that the city has regained its peaceful charm. There are, however, those still in need.

Hiroshima Tasuke-tai is our local partner organization. Together, we completed home repair projects, mainly focusing on removing mud that accumulated under flooring.

Needs in Hiroshima vary from household to household, but mud under flooring of houses that were submerged in water is an especially serious issue. During Japan's rainy season, dry mud may become wet and create unsanitary environment, affecting inhabitants' health. It may also damage the structure of the house itself.

Physical structure isn't the only thing that requires care and attention. Needless to say, the loss those who lost family and friends suffer is immense. It also affected the community life. A resident in the affected area speaks of the hole left in her community: "My house was completely unharmed, but my next door neighbor's house got completely destroyed. Before the mudslide, I used to go out the backdoor and pop by their house to share leftovers. Old habits die hard - I still go out the back, only to find there is nothing beyond the door. I feel guilty for surviving. Especially on rainy days, my heart aches."

Mr. Komiya from Hiroshima Tasuke-tai has a wish: "I would like to stay with the community for three more years, or at least until there is a sand dam so residents can truly feel safe to be living here." Habitat Japan completed the project in Hiroshima but hopes to keep supporting the Tasuke-tai through calling for volunteers and Campus Chapter activities.

### 01

Scene from Hiroshima right after the mudslide. Mud is accumulated under flooring.



⇓ Hiroshima Tasuke-tai

### 02

Volunteers remove mud and sanitize the ground.



⇓

### 03

Clean structure after the mud removal and sanitization.



what is "Hiroshima Tasuke Tai"?

#### Hiroshima Tasuke-tai

We are a local non-profit organization that started after the mudslide in order to support those affected by the disaster. Our activities range from removing mud from houses and

infrastructure to moving support. We will continue our work in Hiroshima together with our resilient community. We are always looking for volunteers, so please join us!

Mr. Komiya





## Call for Volunteers

Habitat Japan believes that everyone has something to contribute. Around the world, volunteers participate in construction and other activities along with community members and home partners. Volunteers play a crucial role in Habitat's effort in creating "a world where everyone has a decent place to live."

► For more information, visit [www.habitatjp.org](http://www.habitatjp.org) or contact us at [info@habitatjp.org](mailto:info@habitatjp.org)



"Former President Jimmy Carter participates in a building activity"

Global Village program (GV) is Habitat's overseas volunteer program where teams of 10-25 volunteers spend 7-10 days building houses abroad. This spring, please join us in building decent houses in Asia-Pacific region.

2011



2012



2013



2014



## Habi-Bito

Enthusiasts in Habitat



### Moe Nakazato

Bunkyo University  
Habitat Bunkyo Karon President




Students from Habitat Bunkyo Karon, a Habitat for Humanity Japan Campus Chapter, gave a lecture at Kawasaki High School in April. Karon received positive feedback from the students.

The opportunity to give a talk at the high school came just when I was thinking how essential it is for high school students to learn about international cooperation and humanitarian work. There were two main points that we hoped to make. First - opportunities to participate in international cooperation is all around us! Second - poverty housing affects millions people around the world, and we should not turn our backs to it. We, then, of course told them about Habitat for Humanity's work and its system.

Before the lecture, many of the students said they were not interested in volunteering or humanitarian aid; however, by the end, they felt that the world was a little bit "closer" to them. We were touched and pleased to hear the feedback, and are looking forward to spreading the message further.

### Messages from High School Students

-  It was such a great opportunity for me to learn about volunteering and international cooperation. I used to think that people in need simply lived in struggle, but now I realize that we are all people.
-  "Volunteering abroad" sounded scary in the beginning, but as we learnt more about it, it started to sound fun and meaningful. I am going to see what kind of volunteer activities there are for high school students!
-  I really enjoyed hearing stories from people with different perspectives. Thank you so much for the great stories, Habitat Bunkyo Karon! 😊

### Editor's Note

Over six months have passed since the earthquake in Nepal, and we see less and less coverage on the situation in Nepal. This, however, does not mean the needs have been fulfilled; in fact, it is quite the opposite. Political and social instability have added even more onto Nepal's plate that had already been full. Habitat for Humanity will continue its work in Nepal - and we are thankful for your generous support which allows us to do so.