



HFHJ Newsletter

Habitat for Humanity Japan

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From the World

For Optimized Housing Support

On October 31st, 2010, it was reported that the global population had officially topped 7 billion. From 2.5 billion in 1950, the figure has almost tripled in half a century. Roughly 12% of the total, or 827.6 million people are living in conditions of extreme hardship, without a decent home. As a result of the slums due to urbanization, natural disasters and civil war, this figure continues to rise, and is predicted to exceed 900 million by the year 2020. This means that Habitat's mission to provide a decent place to live is more important than ever.

Lessons Learned in 2004

Habitat for Humanity produced its first zero-interest house building operation as part of an effort to combat racial discrimination in Americus, Georgia, USA. This experience led to the development of provision of affordable housing to those in need, and its first international operations began in the Republic of Congo (formerly known as Zaire) (Picture Right). In 1976, Habitat officially launched as a NGO, and in 2004 it had grown to be active in over

100 countries worldwide. With the total number of families aided exceeding 500,000 in 2011, Habitat has been playing a significant role in eliminating poverty housing around the world.

However, the Indian ocean tsunami in December, 2004, showed us that not only housing solutions, but also disaster response should be the part of its initiative. Since then having facing population growth, climate change and disasters, Habitat has provided both speedy response and long term support in Pakistan, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Chile, Haiti, the USA and other countries.

To Meet New Challenges

On March 11th, 2011, Japan was added to this list. A magnitude 9.0 earthquake hit the coast that triggered a massive tsunami, resulting in catastrophic loss of life. Habitat Japan began disaster response as quickly as possible, applying its knowledge and experience gained from previous disasters. In the fast moving global society of today,



*Habitat's first ever international project in the Democratic Republic of Congo
Photo (right): Habitat founder Millard Fuller*

numerous complex social problems result from a combination of different effects. Habitat Japan is adapting to meet these challenges, whether they are the resettlement of people displaced in Sri Lanka, support for the Japanese people to rebuild their lives, or continuing overseas volunteer programs. Our key focus always remains the same; not to simply give but to help people help themselves.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the founding of Habitat Japan. For the next ten years, we will continue serve as one of the leading global NGOs by helping people to build their homes, lives and futures. (Statistical data is taken from the 2010 address to the United Nations Human Settlements Program regarding slum populations)



Ofunato city, Iwate prefecture in May - While continuing the rehabilitation of damaged houses, Habitat Japan built storage cabinets for those living in temporary houses. During the Golden Week holiday, around 40 volunteers joined to work with the local residents. Thanks to their efforts, ten cabinets were completed to provide more living space. Habitat Japan is planning to provide similar assistance at other temporary housing complexes of the city in the near future.

News From Tohoku

Signs of Recovery Found Amongst the Hopeful Words of Survivors

Returning Home

Since February, Habitat Japan has been operating a rehabilitation program in Ofunato city, Iwate. The program is to assist people in returning back to their restorable houses by funding a portion of the cost of repairs. Forty households have already benefited and are in the process of moving back to their original but repaired houses. In June, a thank you letter from one of the beneficiaries, Mr. Moto Sasaki, was delivered to Habitat Japan's office.

"Thank you so much for your assistance. Because of your help, we were able to move out from the temporary housing. Things are not yet like they used to be, but at least we feel that peace is returning to our lives. More than the financial aspect, your kindness helped us. I'd like to thank you from the bottom of my heart, and invite you to visit us at our home whenever you are in town; The azaleas in our garden will be in bloom soon."

Before the disaster, Mr. Sasaki worked in the marine product processing industry, but the tsunami hit both his house and the factory. He had to close the business and the ground floor of his house was completely wrecked. The rehabilitation started in March 2012 and completed in April. He has been living in his house since May.

Working alongside Japan Platform, Habitat Japan aims to complete reconstruction of 120 homes by October 2012.

Community Restoration

Nobiru of Higashimatsushima city, Miyagi, was heavily affected by the tsunami, but more and more locals are starting to move back to their repaired houses. Habitat Japan has been rehabilitating the Kameoka community center to secure a safe place to gather and plan to restore the community in their neighborhood.

The project began in April. First, the damaged walls and floors were ripped off to

clean and sanitize the whole structure completely, then electrical works, plumbing and window installations followed. After these basic repairs were done, the main construction began in May. New floorboards and walls were installed and interior walls were painted. Brand new wooden decking just outside of its big window welcomes people to gather at the best spot in the building.

Mr. Izumi, the mayor of the East

Kameoka district says "moving forward, I feel the most important thing for the people of Kameoka is to communicate with one another. This will definitely help make that happen." The center is soon to be open and to play a key role in restoring the community.

Team J-Habi of Sophia University Launched

Over 1,500 students participate in Habitat Japan's Campus Chapters (CC) at 18 university campuses across Japan. Supporting Habitat to eliminate poverty housing, they continue to do their parts in and out of Japan making a difference. This summer, we are welcoming a new CC launched at Sophia University.

School Days with Habitat

"When I was in high school, I got to know about Habitat through the school's Habitat club. Because I was interested in international aid work, a chance to volunteer



abroad attracted me. My first Habitat trip was when I was a junior, to Darkhan, Mongolia. I was so impressed by the vast plain extending to the horizon and the local Habitat staff's hospitality, I promised myself to go on another trip. When I was admitted to Sophia university, there was no existing Habitat club so I decided to start one myself. I called it Team J-Habi and started gathering members. Just because I wanted to experience the excitement again, I worked

hard and finally realized my goal and lead a trip to Malaysia this spring." (Takuya Kawamoto, founder of Team J-Habi)

Making Great Friends

Because I spent my childhood overseas, I had very few friends around when I entered Sophia University a year ago. As I heard



Takuya was looking for a member to join Team J-Habi, I was in because I liked people there; being different and communicating in English was welcomed. Then a year later, we traveled to Kota Kinabalu in Malaysia. We grew to be a good team even during the preparation stage and had a great time at the work site. I'll never forget Kota Kinabalu's beautiful nature and time with the local children. Now that I am the leader of this group, I hope to join as many trips as possible in my college days. (Elleese Aoki, current president of Team J-Habi)

Habitat Japan's Youth Program will be supporting Team J-Habi's initiatives.

International Cooperation Workshop for Middle and High School Students

Habitat Japan will teach a class on poverty housing issues.

Book us today!



At Yokohama

Commercial High School, two sessions met for a class of 40 students of international studies. As part of the school curriculum, the world's poverty housing issue was introduced through a movie, photos and lecture. This made it easy to understand how Habitat is working in response to these issues. Talking with guest speakers (volunteers from Habitat's CCs) seemed to inspire the students to ask questions about how they can make difference. Some commented "I learnt that anyone can chip in by volunteering. All it takes is to have that passion to make a first move," and "I want to find a way to make a use of what I'm good at to better the world," showing that the participants learnt an important lesson to survive today's world - a exposure to global perspectives.

Sri Lanka Progress Report

100 houses built to support people's hopes and community

Since April, 2011, Habitat Japan has been building houses for repatriates in partnership with Japan Platform. 15 new houses were completed as a third stage of this project, and its total achieved a milestone of 100 houses. This time it especially focuses on those who lost their family members were disabled in the civil war. Some still suffer from trauma, and we supported them by providing peace through a place to live.

Many repatriates are still forced to live in poverty. The shelters are worn out by heavy rain and storms, and do not even prevent rain and wind.

Mr. and Mrs. Suburamaniyam (one of the homepartners) say, "Civil war went on for years and also because of the poverty we had never lived in a decent house. Habitat's Core House is very durable and unlike shelters and barracks. We do not need to live in the half broken shelters with a lot of patches anymore. I am very happy that we can live toward a future with our own sweet home". (Picture: Home owner who built extension of the house to open a small shop.)

This project is beginning a new phase and will support repatriates through watering and sanitation. Well digging and toilet building will be its first step.

Habi-Bito

Habitat Japan's House Supporters, Kiyokazu Nakagawa and his wife Jitu Merga run a stone masonry business in Tanba City, Hyogo. Five years ago, their daughter volunteered with Habitat, and that inspired them. They gradually learned about the poverty housing issues, and eventually registered as supporters.

"I can see how Habitat is truly benefiting those who need help. I wanted to be a part of that," said Jitu. She is originally from Ethiopia, and came to Japan with her husband nearly 30 years ago. Though now living in a developed country, she never forgot those living in poverty and

Kiyokazu Nakagawa & Jitu Merga House Supporters

wanted to make some difference.

On the other hand, Kiyokazu values Habitat's focus on housing. With his business background, he understands how difficult it is for an NGO to build a house in Japan, even if it is a part of disaster reconstruction. That motivated him to support Habitat all the more. "I want Habitat to support Japan through what others can't - providing housing solutions. That is what Habitat does best." After the twin disasters in 2011, the couple placed a donation box in front of their store hoping to contribute more than what they already give annually. Many visiting the store would chip in

especially after hearing about Habitat from the two.

"I wish I could volunteer myself. But I just can't make time so that I decided to help in a way I can," says Jitu. Being fans of Habitat, their ways and the ripples they create are reaching far more than they may know themselves.



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.



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

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

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 reach us at the contacts below!

Habitat on "The Guardian"

The Guardian, a British newspaper, recently ran two articles online by Habitat for Humanity supporters, and now the articles are getting world-wide attention. Rick Hathaway, Habitat for Humanity's Asia-Pacific vice-president, argued that "solving poverty housing is not a simple case of building more homes." Tenants need land security and access to low cost financial products for the poverty housing issue to be solved. The article was concluded "solutions for poverty housing have to be bespoke - tailored to each country. Change is happening; more is needed."

Read more on www.guardian.co.uk

Volunteers 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 again 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.



Editor's Note

During the Golden Week holiday in May, many volunteered in Iwate and Miyagi. Comparing to the last year, the numbers of volunteers have been declining. Some reports show the numbers are down to 10% of what they are last year, nationally. We see that there is much work to be done in the affected areas but not enough people are doing their part. That only delays how we can respond to the persisting needs in the field. Presence of the volunteers themselves, sometimes more important than how efficiently their time in Tohoku is used, plays a vital role in the recovery process. Spreading this message from Tohoku is our task. (Habitat Japan)



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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.