

HFHJ News Letter



29

June 2013

Habitat for Humanity Japan Newsletter
Issue 29



 News from the Field

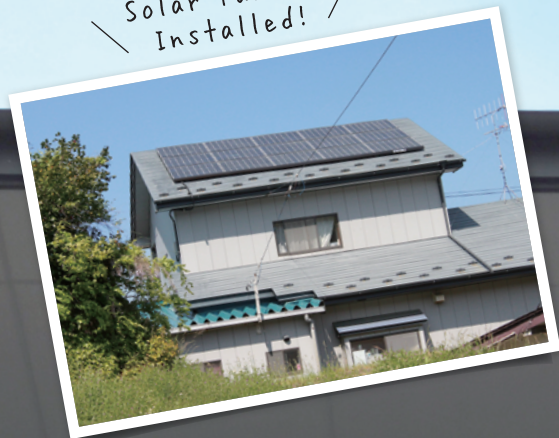
Tohoku

Solar Home Recovery Project
Japan Hope Builders in Cambodia and Thailand



Ofunato, Iwate

Solar Panels
Installed!



News 1

Sustainable Option for Rebuilding Japan; Solar Panels for Homes and Communities

First Phase

Homes

Assistance for the vulnerable families

Many affected families are faced with challenges in restarting their lives. One of the most important issues is to secure a sustainable housing solution. In the first phase of this project, Habitat for Humanity Japan installs solar panels for individual houses to help partner families save on utility costs and generate income by selling excess electricity to their regional utility provider through Japan's new feed-in tariff (FIT) rebate scheme.

Second Phase

Communities

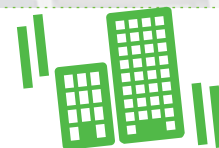
Empowering communities to reform ties and independence

In the project's second phase, solar panels will also be fitted to community centers so they have an independent power supply that can be useful in the event of future disasters. Income from selling excess electricity would be used for the maintenance and operation of the community centers, which host community revitalization activities led by the local people themselves.

※ This project is funded by Hilti Foundation and Aktion Deutschland Hilft, and with implemented support from Bloomberg L.P.



Powering Houses



Disaster Preparedness

Rebuilding
Tohoku with
Solar Panels!



First Home Fitted with Solar Panels

The first phase of the project will support an initial 13 families in Ofunato with the installation of solar panels (2-3kW per house) to their roofs. Beneficiary families have been selected on the basis of need, with a particular aim to support families with severely disabled members. On 30 May, the very first family received the panels on their roof.

Home Partner Story

Kenichi Hazawa, Ofunato

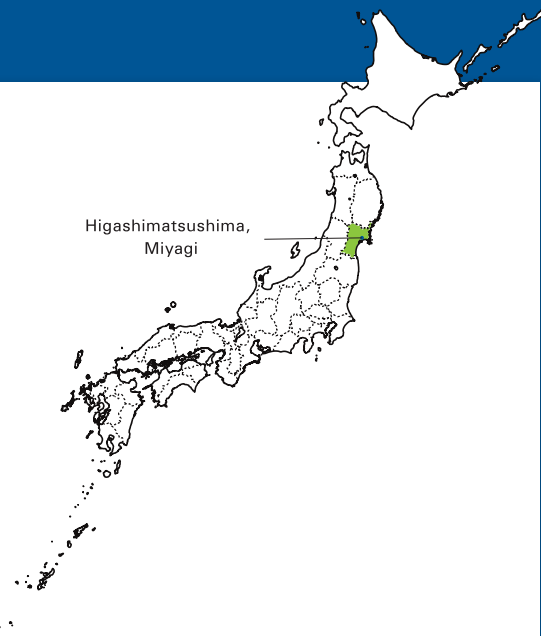
"I am just so thankful. I was interested in getting a solar power generation system for my house, but there was no way I could afford it. With this support from Habitat, it is much easier for me to envisage, and be hopeful of, a better life and future."



Now Offering House Repairs across Town

Home Partner Selection Continues

Today, people are increasingly keen to find permanent solutions for their accommodation needs as they are no longer happy living in temporary shelters or damaged homes. Local people have voiced an urgent plea for repairs to their houses and the restoration of community spaces. In 2011, Habitat for Humanity Japan started the house repair project in Ofunato, Iwate, and this year it started a same project in Higashimatsushima, Miyagi with an aim to assist families to find suitable housing solutions. *This project is funded by Japan Platform.



Before



After

In accordance with its selection criteria, Habitat Japan supports families living in houses that are fully or partially damaged. Habitat Japan also provides necessary consultations and information.

Photo: A house repaired with Habitat financial support during the pilot phase in 2012 in Higashimatsushima, Miyagi.



Completion of House Repairs for the Flood-Affected Families in Thailand

50 House Repaired

Habitat Japan started repairing houses in 2012 to help the families who were affected by the great flood in 2011. In Phitsanulok, flood occurs frequently, so concrete walls and pillars that are resistant to floods were installed to enhance safety of each home. Repaired houses were also installed with locks on the doors for improved home security and new windows for better living environment.

*This project is funded by Japan Platform.

The social security is still weak in Thailand so major expense such as repairing houses burdens low-income families. Moreover, people in Phitsanulok are faced with housing issues against annual floods. I believe that it was a great achievement to improve the living conditions of those families and I am pleased I could help them enhance their own lives.



Aoba Morita,
Habitat Japan Staff in Thailand

Voice from the Field

Phitsanulok



Before



After

A home partner, Namphung coated the outer walls with insect-proof red paint. She also expanded her kitchen by herself with leftover building materials.



Before



After

Another home partner, Jai's house was tilted due to the flood impact. She rehabilitated her house with the financial support from Habitat Japan.

Support the Flood Affected Families in Thailand at <http://www.habitatjp.org>

Disaster Response Phase

March 2011 to March 2012

Assistance in this phase included clearing of debris from homes and community spaces, and distribution of 'home starter kits' to families starting life in temporary shelters. Volunteers from all over Japan, composed of different nationalities, made the relief work possible.

Community Revitalization Phase

Since April 2012

Activities in the current phase include renovation and building of community facilities, consultation about house repair scheme and improving the living conditions at temporary shelters. Habitat Japan's plans support building communities through housing solutions, in-keeping with local culture and Japanese way of life.



Housing Consultation



Listening to the Voices of the People

Habitat for Humanity Japan continues to provide consultations on housing issues. Consultation meetings are held at temporary shelters and community centers in Ofunato, Iwate prefecture. In these meetings, Habitat staff sits down with the participants on their problems and questions about their housing problems and possible solutions. These meetings are held in the daytime and also in the evening to serve people working during the day. Frequently asked questions from the participants are, for example, whether their houses should be relocated to higher grounds, and how to qualify for public housing where special rental rates are set in favor of the disaster survivors. Habitat Japan staff provide support and guidance towards solutions in accordance with each individual case. Moreover, people who gather at these meetings started talking with one another, to discuss their problems and to share experiences.



Since Habitat for Humanity Japan first stationed in Ofunato in 2011, the staff members have been visiting many affected families to hear their voices.



Housing Loans: the Most Pressing Issue

Through these consultation sessions, we came to understand that one of the most pressing matters for the tsunami-affected families is the issues of housing loans. Many of them were paying the mortgage before the disaster. But their houses were damaged or lost and unfit for living now. In many cases, these loans can be exempt or reduced under the government scheme as long as the survivors take necessary steps and fill in the application, but not all disaster survivors are aware of this scheme nor the procedure. Habitat for Humanity Japan engages volunteer lawyers in the special consultation meetings to offer assistance on housing loans.

I was born and raised in Ofunato and survived the disaster two years ago. My family lost the house and now live in a prefectural apartment. Here, people are facing various issues: fixed-term subsidy, sales tax raise and surging land prices. I am often overwhelmed by the magnitude of these problems. However, I believe that there are also many things Habitat for Humanity can do. We started consultations through visiting people staying at municipal / prefectural apartments and houses of the affected families. I personally want to help those families as a fellow survivor who tries to be compassionate with people affected by the tsunami.



Voice from the Field

Nobuaki Itazawa
Habitat Japan Staff in Ofunato



Japan Hope Builders Spring 2013; Building Home, Community and Hope in Cambodia and Thailand

Siem Reap, Cambodia, 16-23 February 2013

Aqua Tower for Cham Bok He Elementary School

Due to lack of adequate sanitation, people in Siem Reap, particularly children, are susceptible to infectious diseases. To secure access to clean water, Habitat for Humanity and Japan Hope Builders helped installation of an 'Aqua Tower' that can supply 10,000 liters of filtered water each day. On the last day, approximately 400 people participated in the dedication ceremony to enjoy first clean water.



1. Mixing cement used to fix bricks 2. Digging a ditch cemented with bricks 3. Lunch break at the worksite. Volunteers enjoyed different local cuisines each day. 4. The locals and school children celebrating the completion of the Aqua Tower that is able to filter 10,000 liters of water per day. 5. Volunteers demonstrating how to wash hands after the dedication so that children can understand the importance of keeping their hands clean. 6. Japan Hope Builders and school children showing their clean hands.

Pathumthani, Thailand, March 11 to 18, 2013

Building Home in a suburb of Bangkok

The Jumrong family lives with eight other relatives in a current house. Poverty forced the family and their relatives to stay together in a small house that was damaged by the floods in 2011. Japan Hope Builders helped them build a new house. They worked together even though they could not speak each other's language. Their smiles were enough to build a new friendship.



Dedication of the newly built house / Japan Hope Builders and the Jumrongs /



1. The Jumrong's house before Japan Hope Builders started to work. 2. A volunteer cementing blocks and learning how to build walls from Habitat field staff. 3. Catered lunch at the work site. Volunteer workers all loved local Thai dishes. 4. Volunteers visiting a local elementary school during the break. They played a game with 80 pupils. 5. Volunteers dedicating a new house to the Jumrong family. Japanese traditional 'A thousand paper origami cranes' that the team members made was also presented to them. 6. A group photo in front of the new house.

Youth Program



Two New Campus Chapters inaugurated!

Habitat Japan's Youth Program supports the Campus Chapters that lead Habitat activities such as volunteering, fund raising and awareness raising. Two new chapters joined this lineage of Campus Chapters in Spring 2013.

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies NUFS Community Builders



After participating in several volunteer trips overseas, the group finally got the status of Japan campus chapter this spring. Nonoka Sugiyama, the representative said, "We are glad to take part in more Habitat activities and events as an official chapter. Many new members joined us this year so I expect that the chapter is getting bigger with them."

Nihon University Ala-N



The new chapter was established by efforts of a leadership of this chapter, Kyohei Yumura, who joined the Global Village last summer with his friends. The chapter's nickname comes from 'Ala' (means wings in Latin) and 'N' (from Nihon University). Kyohei said, "We will expand our activities following our chapter vision 'Smiles connecting the world as one.'"

TOPICS

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For updated information on volunteer programs and opportunities, visit us at <http://www.habitatjp.org>

Rebuilding Japan Volunteer Report

The Rebuilding Japan volunteers worked in Ofunato, Iwate from 27 to 29 April as well as in Higashimatsushima and Natori, Miyagi from 3 to 5 May during the Golden Week holidays. Thanks to those active volunteers, Habitat Japan was able to repair houses hit by tsunami, help open a temporary shopping center and support local spring festivals. Habitat Japan continues to work with volunteers and the locals to revitalize the tsunami affected communities.

Global Village Volunteer in Cambodia

Join a Global Village volunteer team and build a decent, affordable shelter in Cambodia. As a Global Village volunteer, you will work alongside with members of the host community to build or renovate homes. You will learn about poverty housing and development challenges, so please join and support the Global Village program.

2013 Work Site: Battambang, Cambodia

Dates: 17–24 August 2013

Participation Fees*: 189,000 yen (dep. from Narita Airport)

199,000 yen (dep. from Kansai, Nagoya and Fukuoka)

*Including fuel surcharge

Be Hope, Be a House Supporter

Habitat for Humanity Japan House Supporters are there to assist the work of Habitat against the world's poverty and substandard housing. Please support us with monthly donations starting at 1,000 yen to help realize a world where everyone has a decent place to live!

Your support goes far

In Sri Lanka for example, your monthly donation of 500 yen buys a window, 1,000 yen a door and 5,000 yen a roof.

For more information, contact us at membership@habitatjp.org

Vo Thi Sau (right), her husband, Nguyen Van Phu, and their youngest daughter, Kim Huyen, proudly take possession of their new Habitat house in Quang Nam province, Vietnam. Thi Sau said, "I feel secure living in my own house. I no longer have to take shelter in other people's houses when it rains."

Photo courtesy of Lê Văn Doan



Habi-Bito

Travelers with a Purpose



Hideaki Nakagawa
National Director

The majority of my career has so far been in the area of humanitarian assistance and community development. As a staff of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), I served in relief operations for refugees and internally displaced people in places such as Indochina, Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavia. I also took part in education and community development projects in Bangladesh, South Sudan and Afghanistan as an NGO worker.

I have lived in various types of dwellings in different countries thus far. The only choices I had in Hanoi in the 1980s, as a capitalist foreigner, were to live in an apartment assigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or to remain in a hotel room. When I rented an apartment in Sarajevo in the 1990s, my landlord was in Germany where he was a refugee. Kannah, a female yellow Labrador born in Sri Lanka, followed me everywhere I went. Wherever I was, I was able to maintain peace of my mind because I could come home, and feel at home, at the end of each day.

This year, Habitat for Humanity Japan celebrates its tenth anniversary. As I assume a new responsibility at this juncture, I see my philosophy about this career in a fresh light. I believe in the non-profit and non-governmental nature of NGOs and in their mission for social change. I believe we can and must work together for a better world as the social injustice and inequity are a work of man.

Volunteers and supporters continue to sustain the work of Habitat for Humanity in Japan and elsewhere. Together, we will work to realize a world where everyone has a decent place to live. HFHJ staff and I are looking forward to sharing with you the struggle and joy towards this vision.



With Habitat Japan Tokyo Office staff.

Kannah loved to swim. She swam in the Caribbean, the Adriatic and Kawaguchiko.



With Youth BUILD Japan Team. Nakagawa seeing off the team leaving for volunteer work in Tohoku.

Editor's Note

The cover picture is the first solar panels being installed under the Solar Home Recovery Project in Ofunato, Iwate. This is a new scheme with the latest technology aiming at a sustainable housing solution in Tohoku. This is also one of Habitat's answers to support families beset with various problems after the disaster. Habitat for Humanity Japan continues to be strategically best placed to assist families to find suitable housing solutions.



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Habitat for Humanity is an international NGO that aims to realize a world where everyone has a decent place to live. It works in about 80 countries and has helped more than 600,000 families worldwide.