

Habitat Japan Newsletter

Vol. **42**
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From July - Sep 19
Sent to

8 countries 39 teams 709 volunteers

The Global Village program (GV) of Habitat for Humanity sends volunteers overseas to build houses alongside the families who need a safe and decent place they can call home. This past summer from July to September 2019, 39 teams with over 700 volunteers composed mostly of college students joined the GV and traveled to eight different countries in the Asia-Pacific region. One of those teams was Step to Peace (STP) formed by individual youth volunteers. STP team was led by campus chapter members, student-led organizations who partner with Habitat Japan to fulfill its mission. After a discussion with campus chapters on how to commit to their role and get more youth involved in Habitat work at the chapter gathering in 2011, the chapter members brought up the idea of GV as a first step to achieve a better world through more youth involvement. They organized the first GV trip under STP team in 2012. Since then, every year, campus chapters formed STP teams inviting more youth who do not belong to chapters to join the build.

Step to Peace is a GV team open to all college students, formed by campus chapters each year. This summer, 70 students joined the GV in Cambodia to help six families build their houses. GV is normally geared for groups of 12 to 20 volunteers. It was a great accomplishment to gather this many people from all over the country, as well as form those mutual strangers into a team. This summer, 15 representatives from nationwide campus chapters collaborated in planning STP. That they could assemble 55 student volunteers shows the vitality of the campus chapters. Using its nationwide network, STP spends six months distributing information online; while representatives from each region promote the special build. Last year, they organized around 15 such gatherings in the regions of Hokkaido, Kanto, Kansai, and Kyushu.

STP Values: Shouji-san, this summer's General Representative, talked about the importance of making “places to be.” He says that he tried to make the gatherings a place to put STP's words into practice, to listen to members' voices, and for each one to express honestly what they have seen and felt through GV. “I had not been able to break out of my shell before, but by participating in STP, I was able to change myself,” said one of the participants this summer.

Strong Support: After STP, those who want to establish their

own chapter can count on support from chapters at other colleges. Through these intercollegiate links, they get support and learn the benefits of having a campus chapter on their college campus. In this way, Habitat's activities are spreading throughout the nation, as more and more members are starting up campus chapters at their own colleges, reflecting the aspirations held when they were still planning for STP.

Continuing Growth: STP is also a growth opportunity for the chapter members who serve as representatives. The experience of organizing participants from different backgrounds into a team gives them confidence, and many go on to lead their local chapters after STP.

One more step: The organizational ability and personal growth demonstrated by the Japanese youths who participated in GV shows their strength. After heading an STP team, many campus chapter members take a position of leading their own campus chapters.

Habitat Japan is currently the second largest contributor of international volunteers, after the USA. The participation of Japanese youths in GV has become central in the effort to provide housing to those in need. If you are interested to join an STP team, please contact Habitat Japan office.





HABITAT Youth Programme offers various opportunities for student organizations and campus chapters, which is a student branch of HABILITAT. Members participate in various activities taking place both inside and outside of Japan. We also provide training sessions and workshops for youth with our corporate partners. Every year, a volunteer group from one of our long-time partner Goldman Sachs, named Community Team Works (CTW), hosts a training session for youth members of a campus chapter. Since 2015, CTW has been supporting two-day training sessions held by Habitat Japan for campus chapter members from all over the country.



**Held in June and July:
Youth Training session with CTW Volunteers**



On June 2nd and July 6th, 118 students gathered from all over Japan to attend the Youth Leader Training session held at the Goldman Sachs Office. Twenty-eight CTW volunteers took on facilitation roles as the students discussed what they can do as a campus chapter. Students learned how to organize their ideas and how to pitch these to the public.

VOICE

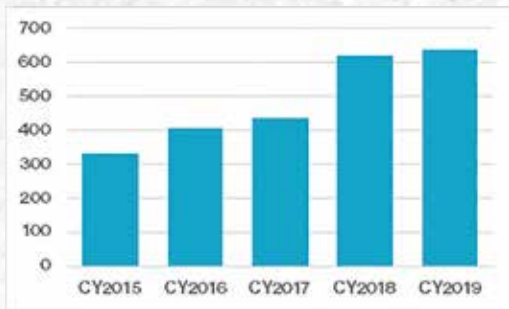
Kumiko Masaki
Corporate Engagment
Goldman Sachs

"I think it is a very meaningful opportunity where we can see how youth training sessions leveraging the skills of our employees are able to contribute in developing and strengthening the organizational foundation of a campus chapter, and also in increasing more volunteers."

2433 youth
from campus chapters joined training session supported by Goldman Sachs (after CY2015)

15 campus chapters
were newly formed (after FY2015)

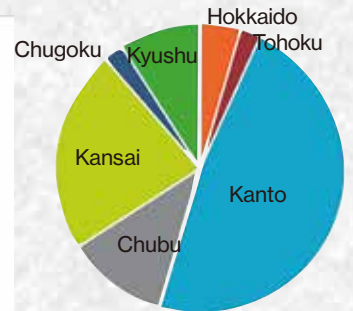
19 pref.
where campus chapters are active across the nation



Growth of you training receipts



Growth of campus chapters



Campus chapter area map





Expand housing support to single parent households

Project HomeWorks is Habitat Japan's domestic program, which mobilizes and empowers volunteers to improve the living conditions of vulnerable households through cleaning and minor repair of homes in Tokyo. Recently

Habitat has been working with single parent support centers to support single-parent households, in addition to consultations from the senior assistant centers and the local health care centers.

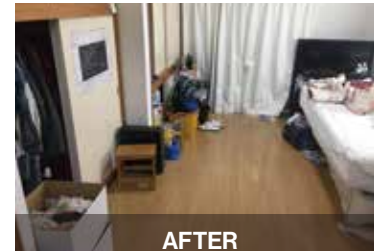
Ms. Sato (Pseudonym) is a single parent who partnered with Habitat under the cooperation of Bloomberg's employee volunteers. As Ms. Sato said that she is not good at tidying up, her house was cluttered with many toys, papers, and clothes that cannot be stored in their storage cabinets. She said she was worried that her children might grow up not having a good habit of tidying up, but she couldn't talk to anyone about her anxiety.

Although the support systems for single-parent families are being developed, few people would imagine that there can be problems at home if parents are working outside and their children are doing well. Moreover, it is difficult to see from outside what is happening within the household unless the person with the problem sends out a signal.

Although many things were cluttered in Ms. Sato's house, the garbage was properly thrown

away and there was no unsanitary feeling at all. However, if the situation was left as it was, the environment in the house would gradually deteriorate, and there is a possibility that the sanitary condition and safety would also decline.

Habitat Japan will expand its activities in cooperation with relevant organizations so that single-parent families like Ms. Sato and other vulnerable groups, such as the younger generation, with housing problems will know that there is a place where they can consult with and seek official assistance from for related issues.



Bloomberg



Helped upgrade an orphanage with a corporate volunteer team

As part of domestic housing initiatives, Habitat Japan works to upgrade temporary shelters and children's homes of partners organizations.

On October 5, Habitat conducted minor repair assistance at Bott Memorial Home (Bott Home) with the support of Bank of America Merrill Lynch. Bott Home is an orphanage located in Tokyo for children aged 2 to 18 years old who had difficulties living with their family because of issues like parents' divorce or illness, abuse, or inadequate education. For these children, they consider this place their "home", and Habitat supports these facilities that become their "home."

This is the fourth year that Bank of America Merrill Lynch supported Bott Home, both through financial support and volunteer work. Bott home was built in 1957 and it has been well preserved and cleaned by the staff. However with deterioration, necessary repairs were done along the way. With 14 employees, all the walls of the dining room where children gather to eat were repainted. Aside from it being a dining area, this is also where they sing while playing musical instruments and for recreational play, making it an essential part of their daily life.

There were volunteers who have participated for 2 or 3 years in a row, who are now painting with a practiced hand. Another team helped set up a new lawn in the back yard for children to play. While the volunteers were working, the children gathered and asked the volunteers "What are you guys doing? Can I do it?" For a chance to work alongside the children, the volunteers asked them if they can help water the grass. There are children who cannot live with their own family for various reasons. In order for these children to live safely and soundly, it is one of Habitat's important work to improve and support their living environments. Habitat is truly grateful for the support received from Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

BANK OF AMERICA 



Charity gala 'Homecoming' for low-income Indian families held last November 1

Habitat Japan's annual charity gala called 'Homecoming' was held at a hotel in Tokyo on Friday, November 1. The theme of this year's gala was inspired by the Indian Hindu celebration 'Diwali', a festival of lights. The gala called for supporting India, where more than 73 million families still lack access to decent shelter. In attendance were Habitat for Humanity Regional Head of Asia Pacific, Secretary-General of India, as well as Sanjay Kumar Verma, Ambassador of India in Japan, who shared some thoughts on the housing policy of the Indian government.

Nearly 130 people, including corporate partners, attended the event. They participated in a charity auction and raffle, and were treated to traditional Indian dancing and musical instrument performances. Habitat Japan is grateful for the generosity of our guests who donated during our charity auction and raffle. Special thanks to Aditya Birla Group who sponsored the event. We were able to raise funds to build decent and quality houses and toilets, provide safe water for families in India, as well as to support our domestic 'Project HomeWorks' program.



Charity Auction



Priyanka Yoshikawa, former Miss Universe Japan, presented the certificate of gratitude to corporate partners

"Food for the Soul" campaign provides housing support for Kerala flood victims



In close collaboration with five Indian-owned restaurants belonging to the Kerala community in Japan, Habitat Japan launched the "Food for the Soul" campaign to support the victims of the flood that hit Kerala, India, in 2018. For the campaign, the partner restaurants prepared special menus, with a portion of the proceeds going to the cause. The initiative raised a total of 293,000 yen. This amount will be further matched by corporate partners in Japan who also belong to the Kerala community in the country. The money raised will go to repairing the houses of two families. Thank you to every one who helped out with the campaign!

Cambodia: Homeowner Story



With the fund raised through Habitat Japan's 2018 gala to celebrate its 15th anniversary, we are pleased to inform you that two Cambodian families who have partnered with Habitat for Humanity have finally moved into their own houses.

The Yoeun family, one of the partner homeowners, is a family of four living in a village outside of Siem Reap town. Despite the hard work of both husband and wife, their monthly income is only about USD120, barely enough for their daily living and two children's education expenses. The family could not afford to fix the fragile structure of their old house, riddled with holes on the walls and ceiling. They also did not have a proper toilet. Whenever there is a strong wind or rain, Ms. Yoeun would not be able to sleep as she feared for her family's safety.

As Habitat home partner, the two families were able to build their own homes with a proper toilet, as well as undergo a livelihood skills training. The two families now have a foundation to live a better life for themselves, their kids, and succeeding generations.

"We will be able to live in a better situation like other families", said Ms. Yoeun, smiling and full of hope.



Habitat Staff

Domestic Housing Program 'Project HomeWorks' Nao Kasae, Coordinator

Nao joined Habitat last April as a coordinator of Habitat Japan's domestic housing program 'Project HomeWorks (PHW)'. Since then, she has taken various initiatives and supported many homepartners through home cleanings and looking for suitable apartments for a better living condition in Japan. Nao has various responsibilities. She has put her efforts in building relationships with local housing social welfare offices and other nonprofit organizations. The networks she has established made it more efficient to provide housing support. Nao visits homepartners before Habitat mobilizes volunteers for cleaning. It is also her role to monitor homepartners so that they can keep their homes safe and decent. She helps look for new apartments for those who have difficulties in finding new units by themselves, particularly for the aged or disabled. Before Nao joined Habitat, she was a nursery school teacher and experienced working in Cameroon as a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer. Nao shares below her aspirations for Project Homeworks.

"Thinking about the meaning of "a decent place to live" constantly reminds me of the importance of social connection. Through PHW, I have met people with cluttered homes, those who cannot clean by themselves, and even people who were homeless. Since I worked mainly with children in the past, these people were unfamiliar to me. However, coming across mementos while cleaning their homes helped me get a glimpse of their lives and I felt closer to them. These challenging situations can happen to anyone, including myself or someone close to me. I have also noticed that many of them tend to bear the problems by themselves without seeking help.

I believe PHW's value is to help people with housing challenges that may not be apparent. When I see home partners interact with volunteers and ease up, I recognize the power of care and support. The interactions also allow volunteers to get to know the home partners. My goal is to embed PHW activities within the community where we can engage and collaborate with various people to offer "a decent place to live'."



► Support Habitat as a Monthly Supporter



Every gift helps a family build a foundation for a better life. Your regular gift helps more families build strength, stability and independence by building a safe and secure place. As a monthly supporter, you can donate your designed donation (minimum 1,000 yen per month) to Habitat without any monthly procedures required. Please register as a Habitat monthly supporter to help us sustain our mission and vision.

► Open Volunteer Day Lend your hand as a volunteer



Habitat Japan's domestic housing program 'Project HomeWorks' is supported by Habitat volunteers. To carry out the program's mission of improving one's living conditions, Habitat partners with many corporations, campus chapters, and individual volunteers. In response to the increasing need for cleaning support, Habitat set up open volunteer days every month. We form one to two teams of individual volunteers.

It is a chance to learn about social issues related to housing. To join our work as an individual, please check the volunteer date from Habitat Japan's website : www.habitatjp.org/en/

* Volunteer slots have already been fully booked in January and February. We may open additional slots depending on incoming requests. To get the latest information, please check our website.



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