

Building a Better World



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Manoa, with shelter repair kit items



The homes that withstood Winston

In the midst of the devastation caused by Cyclone Winston there were also stories of hope to come out of Fiji.

We are happy to report all Habitat-built homes in Fiji survived the cyclone and only require minor repairs.

This includes Taito's home which was built by a team from Abbotsleigh school last November.

During the handover last year, Taito, who used to live in a makeshift tarpaulin house which would flood during heavy rains, told us he was grateful to have a home that would shelter his young family.

A few months later when Cyclone Winston hit, Taito and his family welcomed others in the community into their home, where they huddled together and waited out the storm.

Sadly, while other houses in the vicinity were severely damaged, Taito's home was still standing and his family and others in the community were safe.

The survival of the houses illustrates the importance of preparing communities for cyclones which is why disaster mitigation and construction training will continue to play a key role in Habitat's long term work in Fiji.

REBUILDING FIJI

As the one year anniversary of Cyclone Pam approached in Vanuatu, neighbouring Fiji was devastated by Cyclone Winston, one of the largest category-five storms to hit the region.

The cyclone made landfall on Fiji's main island, Viti Levu, two months ago on February 20, packing wind gusts of up to 325 kilometres per hour.

Cyclone Winston caused massive damage across the tiny island nation. Over 350,000 people have been affected and 24,000 families are in need of shelter assistance.

In the days after the cyclone, Habitat was on the ground assessing the damage. We also launched an emergency appeal to ask our supporters for their assistance.

The outpouring of generosity from our supporters, as well as corporate partners, the SMEC Foundation, ARUP and Bartercard Foundation has enabled us to start disaster recovery works in Fiji.

Two weeks post Cyclone Winston, we began distributing shelter repair kits to 5,000 families to assist with immediate shelter needs. The kits include tarpaulins, hardware and tools to allow families to repair their homes.

Manoa, who lives in a village in Tailevu where 95% of homes were damaged, was the recipient of a shelter repair kit.

"Our houses have been blown away and damaged but one of the key things to fix first is to build a place where the children can study," said Manoa.

Manoa plans to use the tarpaulin sheets to repair the roof of a hall which will act as a temporary classroom for the children.

"I believe in providing good education to children and giving them an enabling environment," adds Manoa.

We look forward to updating you on the progress of our work in Fiji as we move toward repairing damaged water systems and constructing permanent, disaster resilient housing.

VANUATU: ONE YEAR ON

We look back at what we've achieved one year on with your help and what lies ahead for Vanuatu post-Cyclone Pam.

The destruction of Cyclone Pam left Vanuatu in a critical situation. An estimated 15,000 houses were destroyed and 75,000 people were in need of shelter assistance.

Thanks to your goodwill, Habitat was quick to respond following the storm. After providing immediate assistance by distributing shelter repairs kits, we began working with community members to build disaster resilient shelters for the long term.

Immediate disaster response

- Distributed **195** shelter repair kits
- Distributed **17** community tool kits to **eight** communities
- Translated and printed **750** copies of construction education materials for families to use



Our work in Vanuatu is ongoing and this year we started a new Disaster Resilience project to ensure more families and communities are prepared when disaster strikes.

This project will work with communities to identify vulnerabilities they face related to disaster and their housing. Improved resilience to future cyclones, as well as the slow onset of drought, are also to be addressed.

Long term focus

- Training community members and carpenters techniques to 'build back better'
- Disaster resiliency training and simulations
- Securing water supply to improve community resiliency

"THERE IS NOW HOPE IN OUR LIVES"

When the first of the Nepal earthquakes hit in April last year, Sarmil and her family were working outside while her two year-old daughter, Sarjala was alone in their home.

When Sarmil realised what was happening, she ran inside and scooped up Sarjala. As they made their way to safety, their home crumbled to the ground behind them. They lost everything.

Almost a year on, Sarmil's family find it hard to talk about the earthquake. They have trouble sleeping at night and often worry whether another disaster will strike.

"Life is very difficult," says Sarmil, "but after receiving our shelter kit from Habitat we are starting to feel more normal – like humans again."

With your support, Sarmil and her family are now looking ahead to a more hopeful future and will be the beneficiary of a new Habitat-built home that will be completed later this year.

"We do not make much money so could not have built a home by ourselves. Thank you for everything you have done. There is now hope in our lives again."



THE REAL IMPACT OF A HOME

Access to a safe and decent home changes everything. Here's a look at how having a home has transformed the lives of one family in Cambodia through our 'Building Hope, Building Positive Lives' project.

Before

Sokhom and Savoeun have not had an easy life. Both worked long hours far from home - Sokhom as a motortaxi driver and Savoeun in a factory - and almost all their income went toward paying high rates for rent and electricity. Despite paying these expenses, living in an informal settlement meant they had no claim to the land and lived in fear of being forcibly evicted at any time. Their



Sokhom in the old family home

living conditions were extremely poor. The house would flood during the rains and there was frequent power cuts. The neighbourhood was also dangerous and Sokhom and Savoeun worried about their children's future and how they could ever give them a safe home.

"My wife and I are getting older so having a safe shelter for our kids is so important. When we die, we can hand it over to our children for the rest of their lives." - Sokhom

After

Since moving into their Habitat home, life has changed substantially for the family. Savoeun (pictured above) has used her new home to start her own business. She has converted the back of the house into a small grocery store and has also built a pen for raising chicken and ducks. This allows her not only to earn a steady income but means she is able to stay home with her children while Sokhom is working in the city. Most importantly, Savoeun tell us, is that her children feel safe in their new home.

"Now my kids can play and simply enjoy living. I have a happy life living here with my family every day." - Savoeun

A volunteer's perspective

Through our Global Village program, volunteers see first-hand the impact safe housing has on our partner families. Svetlana, who recently travelled to Cambodia reflects on her experience.

"...What I will take away from this build is a reminder that if we all put energy into trying to achieve something - it's possible. And also, to that matter, the impact doesn't have to be on a massive scale - a better future even for one family is a good enough reason to try. I'm so glad to have been part of this special experience. The Habitat build has been hard work, and it was so rewarding, and humbling to be able to use our hands, and open our hearts, and give hope to other people. We put our humanity to work, and we've been rewarded so much for it ourselves. The impact is undeniable and sustainable."



MORE THAN A ROOF...

15 years ago, Yeti fled from her home in Northern Sulawesi, Indonesia. Violent conflict had torn her beloved hometown apart and threatened the safety of her family.

Yeti sought refuge in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bitung. Up until last year she lived in the camp in substandard conditions. IDP camps are known for cramped living quarters, poor ventilation, limited access to clean water and sanitation and high cases of illness due to inadequate conditions.

Thanks to your support, last year we were able to build 106 families in the camp including Yeti's, new homes of their own. Yeti has been in her home for a year now and with support from her son has even added an extension to use as a shop.

Yeti sells food, cleaning products, gas canisters, water bottles, electricity and phone credit. Business is booming.

She is grateful for the hand-up she has received from Habitat supporters and is looking forward to many happy years in her new home.



HEALTHY HOMES IN VIETNAM

Two years ago, My's health was at its poorest and the cost of making weekly visits to the hospital consumed her family's monthly income.

My's two children made the decision to put their mother's health first, and left school so they could start contributing to the household income.

The family's living conditions were also substandard which added to My's health troubles.

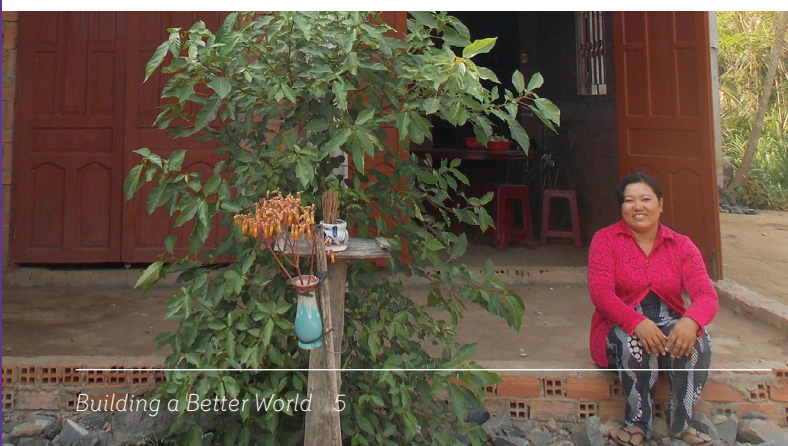
'It was very hard for us. My daughter and I slept on the only bed while my husband and son lay on the floor.'

We wanted a new house for a long time but it was not easy when I was sick,' said My.

Thanks to your commitment to our cause, we have been able to build My and her family a new, disaster-resilient home.

The home has ample space which has allowed My to start raising goats to supplement the family's income.

In addition, My has noticed improvements to her health, and now only needs to visit the hospital every three months for check ups. "I feel my health has been better recently since moving into the new home," adds My.





WATER: THE STUFF OF LIFE

The greatest concern for mother of four, Daw Than, is that her children are healthy and safe.

Unfortunately in Mon State, Myanmar lack of access to clean drinking water means children fall sick all too often.

That's why for so long Daw Than's daily routine consisted of walking to and from the nearest spring, three times a day and carrying back buckets of clean drinking water for her family.

"But when there was no water from the spring," Daw Than said, "I had no choice but to get water from the river. This water was dirty and made my family sick."

Daw Than told us there were countless times when she and her children were sick for up to a month with severe stomach aches, diarrhea and vomiting. Without the means to travel to the health clinic, she felt powerless and would watch as her children fell ill time and time again.

Today, Daw Than is one of more than 20 members on a Habitat supported Water, Sanitation and Health (WaSH) committee in her village.

"I nominated myself to be on the committee because the water project helps my community get clean water and I wanted to be part of that."

Like the rest of her community, Daw Than and her family have greatly benefitted from the WaSH project. Her family and others in the community have received at-home water filters, materials to build their own toilets and have access to a water tap system so they no longer need to spend time walking to the spring multiple times a day to collect water.

"My family and our community used to be sick at least ten times a year before when we had to drink dirty stream water. Now that we have easy access to the spring from the new water system, my family and I aren't sick anymore. It is a great relief," Daw Than adds.

WATER FOR LIFE

Did you know around the world, women and children spend 125 million hours each day collecting water?

So, as you can see from these happy faces, the installation of a new tube well in Razina's (first left) village in Bangladesh means she and her neighbours just need to step out their front door to collect water, rather than walking long distances each day.

This year, we are working in 36 villages in northern Bangladesh to improve access to safe drinking water, as well as toilets.





A HAND UP AT HOME

PINERY BUSHFIRE RECOVERY EFFORTS UNDERWAY

In South Australia, we continue to assist families who lost their homes and suffered property damage in the Pinery fire in November last year.

Through our *Brush with Kindness* program, we are working with farmers and families to assist with the often time consuming task of cleaning up and recovering fire damaged properties.

We've welcomed teams of volunteers from corporate, community and church groups, who have assisted by removing fences, salvaging scrap metal, bricks and other materials and general landscaping and clearing of burnt sites.

Their assistance means that tasks which would take the property owner several weeks or more can be completed in just a day.

To date, over 20 property owners have been assisted by Habitat South Australia since the fire recovery program commenced in late January.

Mark is from a fifth generation farming family in Stockport. After they lost sheds, livestock, fences and farm machinery in the Pinery fires, a team from South Australia Police Cadets assisted Mark's family.

"The help was fantastic and it was very humbling to get a much needed job done without any fuss," said Mark. "The help we received proved that out of tragedy some good things come. Volunteering to do large clean-ups is one of these."

Aussie Home Loans are also supporting our bushfire recovery work and will help more families repair damaged homes.

ONTO HOUSE 56

Last year, Habitat Victoria celebrated the completion and handover of six new homes to partner families, bringing the total of homes constructed to 55 in the state.

Many corporate and individual volunteers put in hundreds of hours and lots of heart and soul to complete the six homes.

Habitat Victoria is now building house number 56 and there are plans to commence two more homes later in the year.

KICKING OFF THE FIRST BRUSH WITH KINDNESS OF THE YEAR

Habitat NSW hosted it's first Brush with Kindness for the year with the help of volunteers from Procter & Gamble (P&G).

The team spent the day helping with landscaping and gardening activities at a youth refuge centre in Fairfield.

The refuge works with young homeless people and at-risk youth, and offered a truly rewarding opportunity for the volunteers to give back to the community.

The aim of the project was to improve the exterior of the refuge, and create a more homely feel and inviting environment for the youths living there.

Thank you to our P&G volunteers for their hard work and effort and for achieving a great outcome.

GET INVOLVED

Make a difference! Join a Global Village build as an individual or part of a corporate team.

Our Global Village program gives volunteers the chance to spend a week overseas building a home for a family living in poverty. But this program isn't just limited to individual volunteers. Did you know we can also arrange corporate build experiences?

A Global Village build is a great way to take employees out of the office and into the field. It's a team building experience with a difference that not only fosters organisational change, but creates life-long memories.

We can work with you to develop and structure a customised program that meets your specific corporate needs.

Contact us on 1800 88 55 99 or email global.village@habitat.org.au to find out more

Can't volunteer overseas? There are lots of other ways you can get involved.

DONATE: Make a difference in the lives of those in need.

To donate visit habitat.org.au/donate

START A FUNDRAISER: Run a race, organise a bake sale or pledge your birthday and fundraise for Habitat.

To get started visit habitat.org.au/fundraise

BUY A HABITAT GIFT: Give a meaningful gift to a loved one that will transform the lives of families in need.

To shop now habitat.org.au/habitatgifts

