

# Building a Better World



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# HABITAT ROCKS THE HOUSE

*From the 22nd to 29th October 2016, 130 volunteers from across Australia embarked upon a journey to Yogyakarta, Indonesia to build 12 safe and decent homes for families in need.*

Known as *Rock the House*, the event brought together volunteers of from all walks of life, united by Habitat for Humanity's vision of a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live.

We were also joined by Suze DeMarchi, lead singer of iconic Aussie band, Baby Animals during the week spent in the community of Selopamioro. Here, we worked with families living in substandard conditions - their windowless homes mostly made of old bamboo and thatch with dirt packed floors.

The families did not have access to water, toilets or electricity and most earned an unsteady income of roughly \$5AUD a day. In most cases, this was barely enough to go toward the essentials such as food, water and schooling. There was not enough to repair their family homes, which in some cases were 70 years old, let alone build a safe, secure place to live.

Over the week, volunteers worked alongside the families and local construction workers to build 12 new homes, and a rock solid future for generations to come.

Each new home has a cement floor, locking door, a toilet and a sturdy roof to provide protection from the elements.

Along with building homes, *Rock the House* also feeds into Habitat's wider work in the community

which addresses water supply and sanitation issues and provides health and educational services including livelihood training and facilitates community savings groups.

## Meet Ngalimin

Ngalimin is one of our *Rock the House* home partners.

When asked how having a safe and decent home feels, Ngalimin excitedly pointed to his arm. "See?" he said. "Goosebumps! It doesn't feel real. It gives me so much hope for my family."

"My children are so happy and so am I. I just want the best for them, so they don't have to experience the struggles I did."

Ngalimin, his wife, Yulianti and their two children were previously living in the same home he grew up in. "It was so small with a dirt floor, bamboo walls, leaky roof and no toilet," Ngalimin said.



Ngalimin's former home.



Yulianti and volunteers to



130 volunteers. 12 homes. one week.

"During the rainy season water would come inside the home. The children would be so scared. Sometimes they fell sick because it was so wet." Having experienced the same conditions himself as a child, Ngalmimin was determined to one day give his children a safer place to live.

Rock the House has enabled Ngalmimin and his family to build a new, secure home, and they now no longer fear the rainy season.

Ngalmimin feels blessed to have received a hand up and has started making ambitious plans for the future to help others in need.

*"I am planning to be an entrepreneur. I want to have my own barbershop," Ngalmimin said. "I can hire many people from my village to work in my barbershop and support the unemployed."*



Ngalmimin worked with Habitat to build their new home.



Ngalmimin's and his family in their new home.

## ROCK the HOUSE in numbers



130  
VOLUNTEERS



4,000  
SPONSORS



12  
HOMES



960 VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



231 TONNES  
OF CEMENT



13,200 BRICKS  
Laid

Join us for Rock the House 2!

Habitat are heading back to Yogyakarta from the 30th September - 7th October to build another 12 homes and we need your help! Visit [rockthehouse.org.au](http://rockthehouse.org.au) to sign up.



# Rebuilding after Roanu

*In May last year, Cyclone Roanu battered Bangladesh destroying 83,978 homes.*

Your support has helped build safe, transitional shelters for families like Delowara's who lost everything in the cyclone.

The homes are made of materials including corrugated galvanised iron sheeting, concrete flooring with a raised hearth and strong wooden beams and bracing to protect against future disasters.

The shelters also have windows (along the entire back and side of the home) and despite the appearance of the sheeting, are well ventilated.

As the homes are transitional, they are designed for families to expand upon, upgrade or use the materials to build a permanent shelter.

Delowara's family also participated in training to learn how to safeguard their home and better prepare for disasters in the future.



*"Thank you. I could not even dream of having a house like this until now."*

*- Delowara.*

# Empowering women in Nepal

*Meet Sarada - the first female mason in her community!*

Thanks to your generosity, we are not just building homes together, but enabling women like Sarada to attend mason training and learn new, valuable skills.

After participating in training, Sarada first built a toilet for her family and then started working in her community as a mason.

Livelihood training is a key part of Habitat's work. Such training empowers women and enables them to learn a trade and vital knowledge they can use to generate a steady income for their family.

In many developing communities, poor families often find work as unskilled labourers or in seasonal agriculture. This work is often unsteady and low paying.

However, your support is changing the story. With increased income earning capacity, families can save for the future and invest in building a safe house, start a home business or send their children to school - things that were previously out of reach.





# How swimming lessons save lives

*The vast majority of families in the Dong Thap and Tien Giang provinces of Southern Vietnam live at or below the poverty line in poorly built and unsafe homes. To make matters worse, these areas are some of the most disaster-prone in the region.*

The provinces sit within the Mekong Delta, and are at risk of seasonal floods, mudslides and typhoons that damage essential infrastructure, destroy livelihoods and cause loss of life and injury.

Although natural hazards such as these are inevitable, they don't have to become disasters. Helping communities better prepare and manage natural hazards ahead of time reduces the social, emotional and economic impacts, and avoids a situation turning into a full scale disaster.

Your donation has made this possible by helping not only build disaster-proof homes, but providing communities with access to training including emergency evacuation simulations and a swimming program.

The swimming lessons have been conducted for school students to help save lives during the flood season and reduce instances of drownings.

*Your donation has also transformed lives in Vietnam by:*



Building or repairing  
**48 homes.**



Constructing **15 water and sanitation** facilities.



Training **48 households** on microfinance.



Teaching **1,439 school children** disaster preparation skills.

The lessons take place in two locations. One is in a swimming pool in Tien Giang and the other, in a river in Dong Thap which uses a specially designed netted cage to provide a safe and enclosed space for the lessons to take place.

Megan Krolik, Habitat Australia's Regional Program Manager recently visited the locations and spoke to the students about the swimming lessons.

They excitedly told her they feel much safer now that they know how to swim and are confident and happy in the water. Many even come early to class and swim for fun in the river after school, but only when an adult is there to supervise.

Thanks to your support, the swimming lessons have surpassed our target of 150 and impacted 170 students!

The students also took part in training to become more aware of the hazards in their community and how to stay safe during a disaster.

Ngoe, 9 said of the disaster awareness training, "I learned when the water is fast and flowing, we don't go near the river as we may get washed away." Linh, 8 added, "When it rains we have to stop the water coming inside. We use a bucket to get the water out of the house."



## Bringing families back together

*After the passing of her husband, Morn struggled to pay the \$25 a month rent to stay in the Cambodian slum where she raised her daughter, Sona.*

In the hopes of providing a better future for her family, Morn found a job in the city.

*"With this job, I had to move to live in Phnom Penh at the recycling shop with seven other families who also worked as waste pickers," explained Morn. "What concerned me the most was that I had to leave my young daughter at our rented house. I could not bring her with me because she had to study and I did not want her to end up like me. My neighbours were taking care of her, however I still felt uneasy and worried about her safety. I tried my best to check on her but if I missed work, I did not earn anything for my family."*

While working and living in the recycling shop, Morn had nothing but a torn curtain that divided her tiny

living space from the other workers. It was a very difficult time. Morn missed her daughter terribly and constantly worried about her, but she continued to work long and hard in the hope of giving Sona something she never had as a child - a future free from poverty.

Your support has made an enormous difference in Morn's life. With your help, she has been able to build a safe, new home. No longer needing to pay expensive rent, she has been able to return to her community to live with her daughter.

"I feel very happy. My daughter and I are very safe here," she said. "Our new home will lead to better things in life."

Morn added that she feels a great relief knowing Sona is safe while she is at work. Morn also hopes to start her own business at home, so she can spend more time with her daughter. From Morn's family to yours, thank you for making this possible.

## Strength, stability and independence

*One year after Cyclone Winston tore through Fiji, your support is helping building strong and resilient communities for the long term. Here's what we've achieved together:*

- Distributed emergency shelter kits to over 7,000 vulnerable families.
- Impacted 100 communities through reconstruction and supply of water and sanitation services.
- Built 106 new homes with another 200 planned.
- Trained 600 community members (right) on safe construction training in 70 communities.





# New homes for a new year

## Relief for rough sleepers

*Late last year, a joint initiative from Habitat for Humanity, NSW Family and Community Services and the City of Sydney saw us refurnish 10 social housing units for rough sleepers.*

Habitat for Humanity volunteers worked over a fortnight to furnish the apartments in the Sydney metropolitan area, assembling and installing brand-new furniture.

The units have allowed people like Fiona, who was sleeping rough on the streets of Sydney last year to have a safe and comfortable home of her own.

*"I can sleep at night now," said Fiona of her new home. "I've got so much support out here. I've got something to look forward to. I've got my life back and I love it."*

## A home for the holidays

*In South Australia and Victoria, Habitat handed over two homes to partner families just in time for Christmas.*

In Victoria, Michael and his daughter celebrated moving in their Habitat home after a tough few years.

Six years ago, Michael was married, working full-time and paying off his mortgage. But an injury cost him his business, house and marriage. The 55-year-old went back into the rental market as he juggled part time jobs with raising his 12-year-old daughter on his own.

Michael dreamed of building a new home, but could simply not afford to.

In Australia, Habitat works with low income families in "housing stress" to provide a hand up into home ownership. Working with Michael, Habitat Victoria helped him and his daughter build a safe home to call their own.

"It's a beautiful home," said Michael, who also volunteered his time in the construction phases of the home as part of Habitat's sweat equity model. "It's a really good model because it gets people involved," he said. "You really feel worthwhile."

In South Australia, home partner Christine also moved in to her new house just in time for the holidays.

Christine, a widow, has some significant health issues and needed to move from the country to the suburbs to be nearer to her family and medical facilities. However, her very low income and limited equity meant entering the open housing market was not possible.

With Habitat South Australia's help she has been able to relocate from the country and now has a new home, that is easier for her to maintain. She is also closer to the support of family and the on-going medical treatment she requires.

In New South Wales, Tanya also moved into her new home in February with the help of our Illawara chapter. After losing her husband to cancer, and her home in a bush fire, Tanya was unsure how she could get back on her feet.

Thankfully, having a new home has given her renewed hope and she is looking optimistically to the future.

*"This has given me so much hope. Just to have a permanent roof over our heads so we don't have to struggle anymore is wonderful," said Tanya.*

# Saving for the future

*Meet Myint, a member of a finance and savings group created with your support in Myanmar.*

For years Myint had long dreamed of expanding her laundry business. However, like many others in developing communities, she was unbanked – meaning she did not have access to formal financial institutions and was without credit.

Previously Myint, and others like her who wished to start a business or repair their homes, had no other options but to seek the assistance of money lenders who charge high interest, which families simply cannot afford to pay back.

Your donation is improving living conditions in Myint's community by upgrading housing, enabling access to water and sanitation and providing access to essential services.

As part of this, your support has enabled the creation of female-led community groups with functioning savings and loan schemes.

These groups play a critical role in organising the community, and ensuring women are well represented. Members contribute to the savings group and can access loans with low interest to invest in their livelihoods or repair their home. This reduces dependency on outside money lenders and helps families save for a brighter future. Thank you for being part of the change!



## Celebrating 30 years of Habitat

*In March, Habitat celebrated 30 years of building homes, communities and hope at our Gala Dinner.*

Over the years, the generosity of supporters like you has allowed us take great steps towards our vision of a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live.

On Gala night we were joined by 240 amazing guests including corporate supporters, former volunteers and other partners to celebrate 30 years of these achievements.

Thanks to our guests, on the night we also “sold” a total of 26 houses – meaning we have just four to go before reaching our target of building 30 homes for 30 years.

As you may know, it costs roughly \$2,500 to build a house in the Asia Pacific region – and the funds raised

on the night will play a key role in impacting more families and making home a reality for those in need.

Thank you again to all our guests, sponsors and all of our supporters over the years who have helped give families in need the strength, stability and independence to build better lives.

*Together over 30 years we have:*



Worked in  
**16 countries.**



Built or  
repaired  
over **5,800**  
homes.



Assisted over  
**50,000 people**  
access water,  
sanitation and  
hygiene facilities  
and training.



Sent **4,000+**  
volunteers  
overseas.