

Build a Better World

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A Message from our CEO

Nicole Stanmore

In just my second week as Chief Executive of Habitat for Humanity Australia, I have already been astounded by the passion and optimism of our staff and supporters.

While there are challenges with starting any new role, to know that together we can all contribute to making the world a better place is inspiring. This may be through providing a strong roof, new toilet or sturdy walls to a family in need. Or it could be through training others in financial literacy or disaster preparedness, strengthening their independence and livelihoods.

There are so many exciting initiatives on the horizon. The Impact Build is one which I am especially proud as it involves working to remove the stigma and injustices of being a widowed or divorced woman in the Banke district of Nepal. I have seen first-hand the impact that empowering women can have, not only on the woman and her family, but also on the community as a whole.

Finally, I wanted to express my thanks for your continued support. Without you, these projects would not happen. I pledge to keep you updated, to be transparent, bold and ensure your experience helping families and communities, through us, is a positive and impactful one.

Habitat for Humanity's Disaster Ready Project

Pacific Shelter Catalog

"I really appreciate Habitat for taking the time to discuss something so important with us, because of our disability, we are often left behind," said Tasweek from the Fiji Association of the Deaf.

Habitat for Humanity is currently developing a guidebook of best-practice housing solutions that will be used by Habitat for Humanity and its partners in future disaster responses in the Pacific. The Pacific Shelter Catalogue and Guidelines, has been developed for the use in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

As part of the development of the first guidebook in Fiji, Habitat for Humanity Australia's partner, Habitat for Humanity Fiji (HFHF) held a four day workshop to find out what people with disabilities need from emergency housing during and following a disaster.



Tasweek Ali, from the Fiji Association of the Deaf, said he welcomed the opportunity to speak directly to HFH about disability and shelter related issues.

"I really appreciate Habitat for taking the time to discuss something so important with us, because of our disability, we are often left behind," he said.

The workshop was made possible through the support of the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) and HFHA's AHP partners Oxfam Australia and World Vision Australia. Information gathered at the workshop will play an important role in the development of the three guidebooks. The workshop has helped HFHF staff to better understand the challenges experienced by people with disabilities during different phases of a disaster.



Impact Build

Unite. Rebuild Lives. Empower Women.

“But the house was built poorly in a secluded area, so I felt unsafe being there alone with my young daughters” said Urmila.

The marital status of a woman in much of South Asia plays a very important role on her social standing in society. Women who are divorced, separated, widowed or abandoned, may face discrimination from humiliating rituals of breaking bangles, a symbol of marriage in Nepal. These women are labelled as “bokshi” (witch in English) because in their culture they are considered symbols of ill-omen and the cause of the death of their husbands or any other illness or misfortune that befalls their relatives. Violence towards these women is not uncommon, often resulting in severe beatings or even death. Some women are no longer welcome in their former husband’s family home and are forced into poverty along with their children.

The Impact Build will be dedicated to rebuilding this community of women’s lives from housing to water sanitation and hygiene, and sustainability. Our mission is to reintroduce them into the community. We wanted to share one of the women’s stories.

Urmila’s husband suddenly disappeared one day in 2003. The Maoist war was still raging in the country and disappearances were quite common during those days. “I was just one month pregnant with my younger child when it happened,” she said, tears welling up in her eyes. Her older daughter was only three years old at the time.

Soon after, her in-laws began mistreating her, ultimately forcing her out of the house. She and her daughter took refuge in her maternal home for eight years before moving into a house built for her by one of her relatives. “But the house was built poorly in a secluded area, so I felt unsafe being there alone with my young daughters” she added, “People knocked on the door at all hours during day and night. We were easy prey for stalkers as there was nobody who can stand up for us.”

The hut has bamboo and straw walls with mud plaster on both sides. The walls are falling apart and the roof, made of thin tin sheets, leaks when it rains. “The walls were damaged by the floods in 2017. I feel just one kick can bring the whole house down, so we find it very unsafe to live in that house,” she said.

Urmila struggled to support her daughters’ education and thought it better to marry her elder one off as soon as she reached the legal age for marriage. She and her younger daughter currently live with the same relative who built the house for her along with his six other family members. “The house is crammed with people and belongings and it offers neither privacy nor a peaceful environment for her daughter to study,” she said.

Although she would love to have a strong house and live separately, it is a dream she thinks will never materialise. For more information please visit www.habitat.org/impact



Water for Women

Clean Water means a Brighter Future

Habitat for Humanity's Water for Women project, strengthens community resilience and inclusion. through

Community members are involved in the design of the project, which aims to increase fair access to WASH for 50 communities. Over 4.5 years, this project will address the WASH needs of those most marginalised in Fijian communities, most vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change. Through this project, women and girls, people with disabilities, and people from the LGBTIQ+ community will be the drivers of WASH in their communities, becoming actively engaged in WASH technical roles, WASH governance structures and management and behaviour change.

Habitat works on a range of projects throughout Fiji including disaster response and recovery through repairs and temporary housing when needed, construction or improvement of water and sanitation systems in rural and remote areas, and disabled access housing projects. In the financial year ended June 30, 2017, Habitat for Humanity Fiji has helped more than 4,500 families through disaster response and over 2,000 families in more than 55 communities through water and sanitation improvements and built over 1,350 new houses to date.

Most communities and schools in Fiji are facing water problem all year round which leads to the poor sanitation and more diseases epidemic breakout in the region. With the help of Habitat for Humanity Australia as an implementing agency, the Water for Women project will be implemented in the period of four and half years in the province of Ba and the province of Ra on the western side of Fiji. "The project is expected to have a positive impact on the quality of life of rural citizens, but especially women, children and the most vulnerable, and to bring about a major reduction in people affected by water-borne diseases in rural areas." - Masi Latianara, National Director Habitat for Humanity Fiji.





Update

Indonesian Earthquake

A man amid the devastation in Indonesia's Banten Province.

The year 2018 was known as Indonesia's deadliest year since 2007, according to its national disaster mitigation agency. At least 4,231 people died or were declared missing. The figure includes fatalities in the earthquake and tsunami that hit Central Sulawesi and the earthquake that affected Lombok Island. Habitat for Humanity Indonesia's responses are as follows:



Lombok:

40 families will benefit from toilets that have been constructed. They also received training to promote hygiene along with the distribution of hygiene kits. A water reservoir that will serve the needs of over 1,000 families in Sajang village is currently being built.



Central Sulawesi:

over 830 families have been helped through the distribution of kits for rubble removal, emergency shelter and hygiene as well as emergency communal toilets and water filtration systems. In Wisolo village, three transitional shelters as well as two model homes featuring different designs have been built.



Sunda Strait:

Habitat Indonesia distributed 202 hygiene kits and 45 emergency shelter kits to families affected by the tsunami.





Meet Maria

Paving the Way for Women in Her Community

Maria, 34, comes from Namosi koro (village in Fijian) in Namosi province on the main island of Viti Levu. In a community where indigenous traditions are strong, the responsibility of building shelter lies squarely with the men. Her interest in carpentry in a male-dominated field was ignited because of a disaster.

Following 2016’s Cyclone Winston, Habitat for Humanity Fiji hosted international volunteers who arrived to help in the rebuilding efforts. A year prior to the disaster, Maria had joined Habitat Fiji as a community development officer and while out in the field, she noticed that most of the volunteers who helped to build homes were women who did not have any carpentry training.

Questions raced through her mind as she struggled to quell her interest in becoming a carpenter.



“It would not have been acceptable to my family, let alone the community,” says Maria. Her conversation with a young female volunteer from overseas cemented her desire. “She told me, ‘we do have qualified and active (female) carpenters back home’,” Maria adds. Hearing the volunteer’s response, Maria took the first step toward becoming the first female carpenter in her village. It was not easy, however, to gain acceptance. Maria was discouraged by men in the same field from continuing in her carpentry job. “As an iTaukei (indigenous) young woman, I was told I should observe cultural norms.”

Refusing to give up, Maria pressed on. “Anything is possible if you have faith in what you believe,” she says. All this time her family did not know what she actually did for a living except that she was working for Habitat for Humanity Fiji. Her secret was finally revealed when a Canadian volunteer team invited Maria’s parents to a build where they saw her working. They took the news surprisingly well. **“My parents saw it as an opportunity for change and prosperity in our community,” she says.**

The opportunity came in July 2018 when Habitat Fiji launched the “Green Jobs for Women” program. The 18-week course prepared women to work in the construction field and included hands-on training in building homes.

Maria enrolled in an accreditation course for the Certificate II in Carpentry conducted by the Australia-Pacific Technical College under the ADB-funded program. Her batch included 20 women from diverse backgrounds, including wives and single mothers, who built 20 cyclone-resistant homes in various villages.

Maria was the first to blaze the trail in her village with many more young women set to follow in her footsteps. As Dr. Koroivueta (Fiji’s Permanent Secretary for Women and Poverty Alleviation) put it, such progress by the women is encouraging. “It’s good for the economy, and it’s good for families, it’s good for individuals and it can be a career, it can be a good income, a good wage, it just gets everything going.”

Bequests

An act of kindness that
will last generations

*A little thought and a little kindness
are often worth more than a great
deal of money.” ~ John Ruskin*



Joan* had been a wonderful supporter over the years. When she passed away recently, she left a small gift to Habitat in her Will - a lasting act of kindness which will help families in some of the world's most vulnerable communities to break the cycle of poverty, forever.

It was a surprise to us...we had no idea that she had kindly remembered us in her Will. We missed the opportunity to talk to her about her wishes, and most importantly, we did not get the chance to say “thank you.”

Gifts in Wills are the fastest growing source of philanthropic support in the world today. As people live longer and their children also become independently wealthy, more and more people are choosing to support the causes close to their heart in this way.

Many people mistakenly believe they need to be wealthy to leave a gift in their Will. Philanthropy Manager Annie Pietersz says that's not the case. “Any gift, no matter the size, will help ensure that in years to come we can continue to help families and communities in need break the cycle of poverty.

We encourage people to remember their loved ones first, but we do hope that they may also consider leaving a gift to Habitat when writing or updating their Will.”

We understand your Will is deeply personal. However, if you are inspired by Joan's act of kindness and would like to have a friendly, confidential chat about remembering Habitat with a gift in your Will, or you have already done so, please call Annie on **(02) 9919 7024** or email **APietersz@habitat.org.au**. Annie would be delighted to hear from you and convey our heartfelt thanks on behalf of those whose lives you will help transform for generations to come

**Name of our generous supporter has been changed to protect her privacy.*

Pandan Cake

Thanks to our Interntional Volunteer Coordinator Laura we were able to enjoy a delicious Pandan Cake for morning tea!

"In the Christmas Appeal we included some fun Indonesian Christmas themed recipe cards for you to try. One was for a twist on an old favourite – plum sauce and the other was for Pandan Cake, a traditional cake eaten in many South Asian countries and a national favourite in Indonesia!

Well here at Habitat HQ we love a challenge, so we thought we'd give the recipes a go ourselves! Laura baked the Pandan Cake (on the right). We all got to try this delicious and aromatic cake!"

Little known fact - The traditional Pandan cake gets its amazing green colour from the Pandan leaf, specifically the chlorophyll in its leaves!



Thank You

Thank you for the messages of hope you sent us at Christmas for families in Indonesia. We've passed these on and hope you enjoy a few of our favourite's below.

