

Build a Better World



Hand in Hand

The women of Nepal - 10 years on

Water is Life

Rising above the challenges of COVID

Caring Community

Amazing volunteers giving back

every one deserves a decent home



Habitat for Humanity views access to safe, decent and affordable housing as the cornerstone of strong, thriving communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare just how critical home is. Even before the pandemic, more than 1.6 billion people around the world lacked adequate shelter, which is why we remain committed to those we serve, both here at home and overseas.

This month marks 10 years since 100 Australian women, travelled to build 'hand-in-hand' with the community in Itahari, Nepal. We reflect on the incredible difference they helped make in the lives of the women in the community and celebrate the strength and resilience of these women, and all women in the communities we serve, who have thrived with a safe and decent place to call home.

I thank you for holding onto our shared vision for a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live as this is what allows us to continue making an impact. With your support, we create a better world — because we build it together.

Thank you

A decent home:

Globally, our work helps families build or improve a decent, affordable place that they can call home. While this might look a little different in each of the 70 countries where we operate, the elements that make a home “decent” are universal.



Affordable

By working to increase housing affordability, together we help families secure a foundation from which to grow and thrive.



Safeguards a Family's Health

By helping more families build or improve the places they call home, together we can build healthier, equitable and resilient communities for generations to come.



Secure

With your help, we can guide and empower individuals in the legal process to secure permanent land tenure, resulting in long-lasting stability and freedom.



Accessible

Together we can build or repair and adapt homes so that those who live in it can do so safely and independently.



Safe

With your ongoing support, we work with families to help them repair and improve their existing homes and to prepare for and recover from life's unexpected storms.

every drop makes a difference

A holistic approach to housing, including safe and reliable access to water and sanitation, is critical to addressing the many challenges faced by the families and communities we work alongside. With many of our usual activities affected by the spread of COVID-19 last year, the communities we serve found ways to adapt, and we have been inspired by their ingenuity, strength and resilience.

Myanmar

In Dala, Yangon, the village committee, together with volunteers and the local project team led the planning, implementation and monitoring of pond improvement, that will pipe water to a water reservoir, benefiting 194 households.

“I am a nurse. Most of our patients lost their jobs. Their lives and families are very bad financially. We are very thankful to Habitat for their support.”
– Daw Su Myat Tin



Instead of the usual face-to-face campaign to celebrate Global Handwashing Day, an online handwashing contest was launched that reached almost 40,000 individuals.



Fiji

Mere is a health worker in the Malevu Village in Fiji. Like many front-line workers Mere has been protecting her community in their fight against COVID-19. The realities of living through a pandemic can be a worrying and traumatic experience for many people, especially those living in rural and remote locations where access to affordable and quality healthcare is limited. Since Habitat for Humanity Fiji's staff held a training in Malevu not only has Mere taught her family about handwashing she has led awareness sessions with children and adults throughout the community.

Mere has noticed a huge change in handwashing practice from children and adults alike: “Over here everyone didn't really wash our hands [before] ... I now notice adults and even children washing their hands after toilet and eating.”



Worldwide
663 MILLION PEOPLE
lack access to safe drinking water.
2.5 BILLION
lack adequate sanitation

every hand builds hope

Hand in Hand Build, Itahari, Nepal - 2011

Anyone who has watched children grow up, or who celebrate a wedding anniversary, know that 10-years can fly by! But for a community of women in Itahari, in south eastern Nepal, so much has changed that the last 10 years feels like a lifetime ago!

The Hand in Hand journey started at a community meeting in this village with a lady called Puneeta Maya and then CEO of Habitat for Humanity Australia Jo Brennan. Her story was one of courage and determination and it was her story, that inspired us to take action to improve the lives of vulnerable women and children in Itahari.

In 2011, 100 amazing Australian volunteers lent their hands and their hearts to build homes for 10 female-single-headed households, alongside those who would be moving in.

Fast forward 10 years and we are so happy to know that several families have built new and more durable houses, which points to their ability to improve their income since being a Habitat home recipient.

Krishna and her son Ahlok built a shed on the right side of the house for raising a cow. They sell milk and some vegetables from the farm as their livelihood.

In a letter of congratulations to Habitat and the 100 women build team in 2011 our then Prime Minister Julia Gillard said to the volunteers, "Adequate housing provides more than just a place to sleep: it gives people a secure foundation on which to build a better future. By helping local women build their own homes you are opening up a new world of opportunity for them, their families and their communities."

Learning from the build

As much as our colleagues from Habitat Nepal enjoyed reuniting with the families, they also learned a lot.

Some families mentioned that the mud plaster used back in 2011 would crumble, meaning walls would need to be re-plastered each year. Habitat Nepal has since improved the mud plasters ability to bond on the wove bamboo walls with chicken wire. All new homes are also now built on a plinth so they're above the monsoon flood levels.



Tara (then 36) standing in front of her forever home being built

Tara now, happy and healthy

By helping more families build or improve the places they call home, we also can build healthier, equitable and resilient communities for generations to come. This is true for Janaki's children who were of primary school age back in 2011, but are now young adults. Thanks to their home they have a secure, dry, well-lit place to continue their studies.

"We are so happy and grateful for the volunteers who joined their hands to build our house."
- Janaki

We hope you are also so proud of the new world of opportunities you create for families and communities around the world through your support!



Another woman, Manikala proudly shows us a photo of the team who helped her change her life.

Krishna and her son Ahlok in front of their house



Then

... and now

every home

provides a solid foundation

With thanks to your generous support, we are helping those affected by the devastating bush-fires last year into temporary homes, meaning they can rebuild their lives.

Elizabeth wasn't at home on December 19th when the wave of fire fronts raged through destroying ten homes in Balmoral, NSW. "I had evacuated," she said. "I knew my place was a high risk and would probably burn down, watching the way the fire fronts were traveling... and the temperatures were up in the 40s and the wind was absolutely horrendous and erratic."

Two days later, right before Christmas, Elizabeth's home was razed, along with most outbuildings when the fires again swept through. Her six acres of bushland, once teeming with wildlife, was left looking like a war zone; the earth scorched black, the charred shapes of giant trees, littering the ground and the skyline. No sign of life.

Soon after, "home" became the tin shed Elizabeth had built ten years before. There was no proper toilet or shower facilities.

With thanks to our wonderful community of supporters, donors and incredible volunteers, we have been able to provide several transitional houses to those whose lives were shattered when their homes were destroyed.

These demountable homes can be lived in for up to three years, so the property owner can live comfortably and with dignity, rather than relying on friends or sleeping in a tent or shed.

Delivered on the back of a truck, Elizabeth's home (for now) arrived freshly painted and then made ready by several teams of volunteers on the Habitat for Humanity Australia Bushfire Recovery program. Although intended to be only temporary, until she can rebuild her house, it is light and airy, with a large, comfortable bed, a well-equipped kitchen as well as a shower and a proper toilet.



"To be honest, the feeling of relief that I have at least a decent bathroom on-site, that's probably the biggest thing of all - to just be able to go to the loo and have a shower, use a sink inside to do the washing up in..... Anyone who has not been through it cannot realise how having decent basics for living, make such an incredible difference."

With resilience and tenacity, Elizabeth now has a safe and secure base from which she can help her land recover and lobby on behalf of bushfire prone areas in general.

Credit: This story was adapted from one of our volunteers, Anne Fussell, who has been volunteering with us for over 5 years and worked on Elizabeth's home.



every person

can build a brighter future

Passionate and committed supporters like Lucy (17), help make our work possible, and we are very grateful. At just 15, Lucy joined us in Cambodia and got her hands dirty, helping build a home for a family in need of a safe and decent place to call live. Lucy has since become a passionate advocate.



1. What did you take away from the Cambodia build in 2019?

It was a life changing experience. I met the most incredible people, worked harder than I ever have before in the toughest conditions I've ever experienced, and made an impact which changed a family's life forever. Bonding with the family over the course of the build week and seeing the delight on the children's faces when we taught them how to play catch are memories that I will forever cherish. I came away with a sense of the deepest gratitude for all that I have and the opportunities that life presents to me.

2. What would you say to someone your age thinking of volunteering?

The experience will shape you as a person, and the memories and emotions will stay with you for the rest of your life. I personally feel that this opportunity would benefit anyone, but I think that it was an incredibly important experience to have early in my life, as the way that it has changed my perception of the world and outlook on life is immense.

Also, it is so much fun, and in addition to the hard yet rewarding work, Habitat ensures that you experience culture, food, people and local adventures - when I went to Cambodia the entire team spent an afternoon on the bamboo trains!

3. Anything other thoughts?

Whilst it is disappointing that overseas travel won't be on the agenda for a while, it is so great to know that Habitat Australia is continuing with local projects. I am so excited to have the opportunity to organise a school trip providing relief to bushfire affected families whilst at the same time having fun and working alongside my friends. Even before the trip itself, the thrill of fundraising for such a worthwhile cause is a valuable and rewarding experience.

If you are inspired by Lucy's love of volunteering, come join us on our newest adventure to **Cradle Mountain**.

Hike for Habitat

Where: Cradle Mountain, TAS

Starting: 18 January 2022

Duration: 5 days

For more information, email volunteer@habitat.org.au

Thank you for helping build homes, communities and hope.



To donate:



1800 885 599



[habitat.org.au/autumn21](https://www.habitat.org.au/autumn21)



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