

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

FY2024





Habitat Vietnam

Habitat Vietnam serves families and communities through new house construction, house repairs and upgrades; access to water and sanitation facilities; assistance with obtaining secure land tenure; and construction technical support. Since its inception in 2001, Habitat Vietnam has supported nearly 19,000 families (almost 78,000 people) with construction, and over 152,000 individuals through technical assistance.

Habitat Vietnam has won recognition from the Vietnamese government and its partners for helping families obtain safe, affordable and sustainable housing with the Merits for Outstanding INGOs. Habitat's project sites include Hanoi, Thai Binh, Hoa Binh, Tien Giang, Ha Tinh, Long An, Quang Nam, Ba Ria-Vung Tau city, Ho Chi Minh city, Phu Tho, Thai Nguyen, Dong Thap, Kien Giang, Lao Cai, Thua Thien Hue and Dong Nai.

Volunteer Program

Habitat Vietnam started the Volunteer Program by hosting the first international volunteer team in 2007. Through the Habitat volunteer program, volunteers are offered the opportunity to take part in “hands-on” development works that help people in need to access adequate housing water, and sanitation. As of June 2024, Habitat Vietnam has hosted over 15,000 volunteers from many countries around the world to Vietnam to support the mission making the world a better place to live.

HIGHLIGHTS

Although the plan to organize VBB 2024 was postponed, the volunteer program still achieved good results with new and local people to set the volunteer program to further depth about volunteer engagement and for program expansion to institutional engagement.



14
TEAMS



16
FAMILIES SERVED



226
VOLUNTEERS



65
PEOPLE SERVED



4,183
VOLUNTEER HOURS



\$ 89,432.86
FUNDS RAISED



GLOBAL VILLAGE

In fiscal year 2024, Habitat Vietnam hosted 09 Global Village teams with 152 volunteers from Japan, South Korea, and Australia to build new houses in Hoa Binh Province and Dong Thap Province. These Global Village teams are from many various volunteering types such as the Open Teams, Youth Teams, and Corporate Teams.

To create the opportunities for both volunteers and local people to learn and share, Habitat Vietnam worked very closely with local partners and Sending Countries to provide various appropriate cultural learning exchange activities based on the volunteering types. The Cultural Learning Exchange initiative of Habitat Vietnam formed part of an impetus for the Social Learning Exchange concept. This initiative also creates a foundation for further in-depth learning exchanges about housing-related issues in the future.



Youth Teams

Three (03) Japanese Youth Teams from helped Habitat Vietnam kick off the resumption of the Global Village program in August 2023 in Dong Thap Province. The Japanese Youth Special Build was in tune with the celebration of 50 years of the Vietnam-Japan Partnership. During this build week, the young people from volunteer teams and local people had a chance to interact, talk, and play the traditional games of both countries.

This culture exchange event aimed to remove the language barriers, allow young peers to learn about the cultures, encourage people to talk, share, and advocate about social issues, and gain further knowledge of the social issues in both countries. The exchange activity also helped the young people create inspiration and motivation for the local youth in caring for social issues in their local areas and improving their knowledge for the solutions in the future.

Open Teams

Habitat Vietnam hosted two Open Teams from Australia in FY24. Both teams had a build week of mixing mortar, making foundations, laying brick walls, and interacting with the homeowners' families and neighbors. As part of the build program, the team visited homeowner families to see firsthand the positive impacts of the housing interventions they received.

During the visits, volunteers hear about the changes in households after they received support from the Habitat project, and through that, volunteers also learn more about housing policies, housing needs, the housing market, housing rights in Vietnam as well as the housing the unique housing challenges faced by rural communities in Vietnam.



The team visited the homeowner in the previous project of Habitat Vietnam



The team took a group photo on the fourth build day.



The team visited a pagoda near the site and talked with the local people



The team visited the homeowner in the previous project of Habitat Vietnam

Photo credit: Vi Nguyen and Luc Pham

Corporate Teams

In FY24, Habitat Vietnam received two teams of corporate volunteers from Korea that are Citibank and Samsung C&T (SSC&T) Korea. The Citibank had 04 days to work at the site with work such as pouring the foundation, building bricks, and transporting materials. During the build week, they also had a cultural and artistic exchange session with the Provincial Women's Union.

Meanwhile, the SSC&T Build in Ha Tinh was a Corporate Build, a component of the SSC&T Project in Ha Tinh province. During the build week, the team had 4.5 days working with the homeowner and local mason to support the homeowner build the new house and half-day for educational activity in the Ky Tho primary school to teach the students art and science classes. The educational activity in Ky Tho primary school was organized under the safeguarding policy and child protection policy compliance.

The team divided into two groups to teach two classes which were art class and science class. To allow students to see the traditional houses of many countries throughout the world, the volunteers disguised people from many countries, introduced the traditional houses in those countries, and taught the students how to make the housing models based on the house jigsaw puzzle provided by the SSC&T team. After the class, the primary students can learn about the differences in housing between countries. In the science class, the students were taught about kinds of energy, why saving energy is important, and how to save energy. Then, the students practiced making the self-power flashlight under the instruction of volunteers. The making of self-powered flashlight is a simple and practical home-based solution that can serve great use for day-to-day needs in the households.

Through these learning exchange activities, both volunteers and local people are allowed to learn and share with each other useful knowledge and perspectives on social issues. Local partners also have the opportunity to learn from volunteers' sharing. At the same time, they also realize the importance of supporting and creating conditions for local people to exchange, learn, and discuss housing-related facts and issues, which lay the foundation for organizing Social Learning Exchange Activities in the future.



HABITAT YOUNG LEADERS BUILD 2024



LAUNCHED MINI-GAMES AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES

For volunteer teams to build houses within the time frame of the Habitat Young Leaders Build 2024 (HYLB) campaign, Habitat Vietnam organized mini-games and media challenges in addition to the house-building schedule, which is the "Home Equals" campaign and the challenge of recording a clip to share "What a house means?"

HOME EQUALS

Home Equals is a five-year global advocacy campaign developed by Habitat for Humanity International to catalyze the network, communities, and partners to act with one voice to achieve a greater impact. The Home Equals campaign has been launched in the context that more than 1 billion people are living in slums and other informal settlements worldwide, and they are not treated as equals. Their homes often don't have basic services such as clean water. To bring young people from across the country to build new houses for people in need in Hoa Binh province and deepen their understanding of the housing conditions in rural areas in Vietnam, Habitat Vietnam launched a mini-campaign called "Home Equals" during the build week that contributed to the global advocacy Home Equals campaign.

During the "Home Equals" mini-campaign, each team member was called to post on their Instagram channel a photo with the caption: "Home Equals__". They could also add up to two sentences to explain what home means to them and why decent homes are essential for everyone. The hashtag #HabitatYLB was also required. After three days, those who got more than 30 reactions (likes + comments) would win Habitat special tokens. This mini-campaign was launched on a small scale of 17 volunteer members of the JCC team.

The campaign received 14 out of 17 volunteers participated in the campaign. The team had time to not only mix mortar, and lay bricks but also talk with local people, learn about the local people's lives, and see how the local people living in the current housing conditions. They reflected on what they had seen by sharing through the Instagram post for the Home Equals mini-campaign. Leo Hirayama, a JCC volunteer, posted: "Home Equals a place to feel safe". This is the HFHI's Home Equals campaign vision that is "a more equitable world where people living in informal settlements have a safe and secure place to call home". We hope through this small campaign, the young volunteers can receive a certain understanding of the housing issues in Vietnam and influence people in their network to take action by speaking up about what they have seen.



SOME PHOTOS OF THE CAMPAIGN



WHAT HOME MEANS TO YOU?

Another challenge "What a house means?" was also launched for Japanese volunteers during their build with hope to let the volunteers reflect on what a home really means to them. The challenge was conducted in the build week. The volunteers were asked to choose a teammate they wanted to care for during the build. Besides taking care of their buddy's safety and security on the building site, Habitat Vietnam also requested them to record a short interview with the subject "What the home is to you?" that can help the volunteers understand more about their friends and practice speaking English. This challenge also allowed the volunteers to understand the importance of housing in human basic needs. There were 03 videos submitted.



LOCAL VOLUNTEERING

74 local volunteers from 04 multi-nation companies and an international school in Vietnam contributed 361 hours to support the community through the Volunteer Program of Habitat Vietnam.

Three out of five companies and school (LG Vietnam, BNP Paribas, and JTI Vietnam) mobilized their employees to be Habitat volunteers as a component of the Habitat long-term projects to support the new houses and renovated houses for the vulnerable people in the north, central, and south of Vietnam. The local volunteering builds are not only activities of corporate social responsibility but also a chance to open the volunteers' eyes to the urgent social issues, especially housing issues in the rural areas. Through this, volunteers will recognize the importance of speaking up and taking action for what they see, as a way to contribute to the mission of everyone having a decent place to live.

After its suspension during the pandemic, fiscal year 2024 enabled Habitat Vietnam to reactivate the hosting of volunteer aged 16 to 18 years old. The first minor volunteers from 16 to 18 in the UNIS Hanoi School also participated in the Habitat three-day build in Hoa Binh province in May 2024. With the participation of minor volunteers, a series of safeguarding assessment requirements for the minor volunteers were conducted completely under the advice and monitoring of the Area Office to ensure a safe working site for both minor volunteers and children at the build site. Under good collaboration with the school, all UNIS minor volunteers were oriented on Habitat Vietnam, and what Habitat is doing in the housing sector, safeguarding policy, child protection policy, and volunteer code of conduct. The volunteers were given the opportunity to observe and learn about the problem of difficult housing conditions in rural Vietnam and encouraged to share the problems with their friends after the build.



VIETNAM BIG BUILD 2024

Help build ethnic inclusive and culturally appropriate housing for the H'Mong ethnic minority group in Bat Xat commune, Lao Cai, Northern Highlands.

Following the AP area office leadership's announcement in November 2023 of holding the reopening of Big Build in Vietnam, the Habitat Vietnam team and its local partners jointly rolled up their sleeves and immediately begun conducting a series of partnership development, site assessment and planning for the Vietnam Big Build 2024 (VBB 2024).

A joint scoping visit among Habitat Vietnam and local authorities and commune representatives to Bat Xat district, Lao Cai province, the project area of VBB 2024 was organized by late November 2024. Habitat Vietnam received strong support at the national level through Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization to conduct a comprehensive survey covering many fields such as logistics, safety and security, housing conditions, and medical relating. Also on this trip, Habitat Vietnam worked with local partners from the departments at the provincial level such as the Department of Foreign Affairs, LUFO, Security Department, Department of Construction, Department of Culture and Tourism as well as the People's Committee of Bat Xat district.



Habitat Vietnam's partnership and consulting engagement meeting with various departments and branches at the provincial, district, and commune levels of Lao Cai, Province

The site and logistical assessments and further home owner visits were conducted in April 2024 with the participation of Habitat Vietnam and Area Office staff to work on more details on household selection, safety and security, logistics, and construction relating to preparing for VBB 2024.

However, unfortunately in May 2024, we received notice that VBB 2024 was postponed until next year. Although the VBB 2024 has been postponed, we hope this is an opportunity for Habitat Vietnam to have more time to work with local partners on integrating indigenous cultural elements in housing support interventions, including housing design, and volunteer work schedules. Besides, Habitat Vietnam is working closely with our local partners and Sending Countries to provide opportunities for both volunteers and local people to learn and share about social issues, besides the daily build work. Through these initiative, Habitat Vietnam can offer more opportunities for volunteers to have deeper engagement in development work to support a world to have a better place to live.

We are ready to host more teams in 2025

Habitat's team visited a potential homeowner for VBB selection



The village road connecting households.



Photo credit: Khoa Pham and Vi Nguyen

Visited the potential base site.



TESTIMONIES

"FOR ME, HOME IS LIKE A FINAL DESTINATION OF EACH DAY, A PLACE THAT ACCEPTS PEOPLE ON HAPPY AND SAD DAYS."

Sakine, a Japanese volunteer, in C-Habitat Build in Hoa Binh in Mar 2024, shared when was asked what home means to her.



Ho Linh Lan - Corporate Affairs & Communications Director, JTI Vietnam - When was asked to share about her thoughts on the homeowner, the local community in Quang Nam when she worked during the build.

"Quang Nam is a land that always suffers from natural disasters, storms and floods. As the country is gradually develops, I am unhappy because there are still many people across the country still living in a situation lacking basic living conditions. The entire JTI company was very excited to hear that JTI had the opportunity to cooperate with Habitat for this volunteer program. Through this trip, we have the opportunity to see more clearly the housing conditions and difficulties of the people here, and we are also grateful for what we can do to help the people here. "

Just do it! It will change your life and I've only done one before but my plan is to do many more. But the people who've come with me have said that it's just been a life-changing and we are taking much more than we are giving. And that might sound like a cliché, but the impact that can make on you, it's just worth it. People need to come pot. Yes, it's hard work, but it's so worth it. And it just gives you a big perspective on life, really, about how grateful we need to be.



Browyn Peyton, Australian volunteer from Lotus Build in Apr 2024 in Dong Thap province, when she was asked to share a message to anyone who may read about Habitat's Volunteer Program.

IMPACT STORY

Homeowner: Mai Xuan Bac – 32 years old

Wife: Thieu Thi Trang – 27 years old

Son: Mai Thieu Quang Duc – 8 years old

Daughter: Mai Thieu Quang Nhu – 5 years old –

Address: Tan Son village, Ky Tho commune, Ky Anh district, Ha Tinh province



Mai Xuan Bac household is a family of four living in a poor-quality house in Tan Son village of Ky Tho commune, one of the most vulnerable districts in Ha Tinh province regularly suffers from such extreme weather events. Ky Tho commune is also ranked among the poorest in the province, with low food production and continuous crop failures, so there has been a situation of hunger during crop shortages and crop failures. In many places, people left their hometowns in droves to find a livelihood. Bac and Trang, his wife, left their hometown and moved to another big city to earn. So, their two children are staying with Bac's parents.

Bac and Trang lived with Bac's parents in his parents' house. This was also Bac's room since he was born. The house was built several decades ago. It was old and leaky with a degraded tile roof. The house walls were made from bricks and decayed. Especially, the room for the couple and their two children is very cramped and dark. When it rains, it always leaks. They must use a basin to improvise rainwater from the ceiling. If they forgot to replace the basin when it was full, the room would be flooded. During the peak rainy months, their two children must always sit in the only bed, which was the only safe place in the house. The electric lighting system in the room is also old and it's not safe when it rains.

Bac and his wife are occasional workers with a total income of \$300. His son is in primary school, and his daughter is in kindergarten. Most of their income is spent on their daily lives and children's studying fees. The whole family was in urgent need of a sturdier and safer house. But the dream of having a new house seemed to be impossible for them.

When the family (Bac's parents and the grandchildren) knew that they were selected to receive support from the volunteers, they were too glad to sleep. Bac returned home to work with the volunteers to build his own house.



Bac's mother prepared for lunch for the family in the kitchen

The SSC&T volunteers came to this house to build on the rainy days of December 2023. Although the weather was inconvenient with building work, the team worked very hard and reached the build target. It was raining heavily windy, and very cold during the three days of building the house, but the team still worked very hard and strictly followed the safety instructions and assignments of the Construction Supervisor. They were observant and had a high spirit of learning. They knew how to share work, creative in even the simplest things. Everyone worked together rhythmically and scientifically.

Most of the team members received many compliments and high appreciation from the homeowner, skilled worker, and Construction Supervisor for the quantity of mortar and brick walls they made. All team members were very friendly and engaged with the family, especially the mother, Mr. Bac, and his children. Although the family was a bit shy and didn't talk much, the way the team interacted with the children and Bac's mother made the family touched and grateful.



SSC&T volunteers took photos with children of Bac and his parents at breaktime



The family was given the photos took with the team on the first day



The volunteers took photo with neighbors, who came to see the team.

Photo credit: Chinh Nguyen



Group photo with the team on the last build day.



It's the first time the whole family taking photo together. The SSC&T team took the photo and gave it to the family on the farewell ceremony.



The whole family with their new completed house



FAMILY'S DREAM FINALLY CAME TRUE

The new house, which has a stable foundation, strong concrete frame, brick wall, concrete floor, and roofing made of rectangular preformed metal sheets, makes it safer for the family to live in. Especially, when Bac starts to leave his hometown to return to work, the children stay with Bac's parents, and the new house is more sustainable and safer for the grandparents and grandchildren to live in. Bac and Trang now can focus on livelihoods to raise the children and grandparents.