



Volunteer Program Annual Report

Vietnam | 2023



overview



Fiscal year 23 witnessed a significant development in line with Vietnam's strategy of opening up and economy recovering which was the reopening for international tourism in Mar 2022 after two years with the dropping of testing and suspended medical declarations for all arrivals from Apr 2022. These easing policies brought us good opportunities for in-person volunteering activities for international and domestic volunteer programs.

Firstly, the Global Village program was restarted after three years of postponement due to the pandemic. From 2023, each Habitat area office in Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Europe and the Middle East; and Latin America and the Caribbean is resuming Global Village programs within regional borders to limit the opportunity to spread the COVID-19 virus and acknowledge the inequities in vaccine coverage globally. Vietnam was one of the first pilot countries selected to host international teams in Asia Pacific countries.

To meet the GV hosting standard criteria, Habitat Vietnam conducted a series of assessments and preparation at both country and regional levels, making the country accredited for Regional Builds 2023.

Regional level: A regional workshop for GV Asia-Pacific resumption CY2023 was organized for all Habitat hosting and sending countries in Bangkok on Nov 2022 to provide all pieces of knowledge of the Global Village program, refresh on GV minimum standards, and gave other training on Security and Safety, Community-Based Feedback Mechanism (CBFM), Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line (H.E.A.L), Finance Policy, Risk Management, and Volunteering for Development. The workshop helps re-systemize the GV program for both long-tenured employees and newbies and creates an opportunity for sending countries and hosting countries to make a fellowship and understand each other's program.

Country level: A series of preparatory surveys, assessments, information gatherings, and employee capacity-building activities were carried out within the challenge of time and human resource constraints. The accreditation process was conducted at each project site. The requirements for the accreditation process are more demanding, focusing more on security at the local and national levels and requiring the cooperation of many departments within the organization as well as at the local partner level, such as safety and security assessment for fields and build sites in multi aspects that are political conditions, security issues, travel logistics, culture factors, site and perimeter, vehicular movement, occupational safety, and health concerns. Especially for hotels, a hotel checklist, including an assessment of security systems and equipment, fire security, lighting, guarding, health life and safety, security and safety training, emergency planning, emergency response, etc, was required for each selected hotel. Hosting staff were trained on first aid and refreshed and oriented about the hosting process, especially safeguarding policy.

Domestic Builds

For domestic builds, the hosting process has also been improved in line with the organization's strategy and the post-covid new normal. More specifically, a blanket approval process for all in-person domestic volunteer activities in 4 project sites (Thai Nguyen Province, Hoa Binh Province, Dong Thap Province, Tien Giang Province) in CY2023 was successfully submitted and approved by AP. This helps Habitat Vietnam no longer have to spend time and resources submitting separate packages for approval for each build. This will free up time and resources that can be used for other tasks, such as planning and executing volunteer activities. Simultaneously, with the orientation of raising awareness about housing issues for both domestic volunteers, orientation packages for domestic volunteers were initiated and piloted for some corporate teams with the hope that they can have a basic understanding on housing issues in Vietnam and what Habitat does in Vietnam and what they can do to contribute to our mission.



year in review



16
TEAMS



288
VOLUNTEERS



4,324
HOURS



69,159
FUNDRAISED



21
FAMILY SERVED



15
PROJECTS



highlights

01.

Domestic volunteers participated in solving multi-issues relating to housing in Mekong Delta



The Mekong Delta region is an area sensitive to environmental changes and faces great challenges from climate change, such as drought and saltwater intrusion that led vulnerable people in Mekong Delta to water shortage and insanitation.

In order to respond to the need, P&G Vietnam cooperated with Habitat Vietnam to implement a project in Go Cong Town, Tien Giang Province, to support vulnerable households, especially women and girls, by 1) Improving the living conditions of vulnerable families through better access to adequate and smart houses that can support better water storage to respond to the issue of drought and salt intrusion; 2) Improving environmental sanitary conditions sustainably through awareness-raising and application of WASH practice. One-day volunteering build event is a component of the project that raised awareness for P&G Vietnam employees on climate change issues in Tien Giang province and the social responsibility of individuals and companies to contribute to solving societal issues.

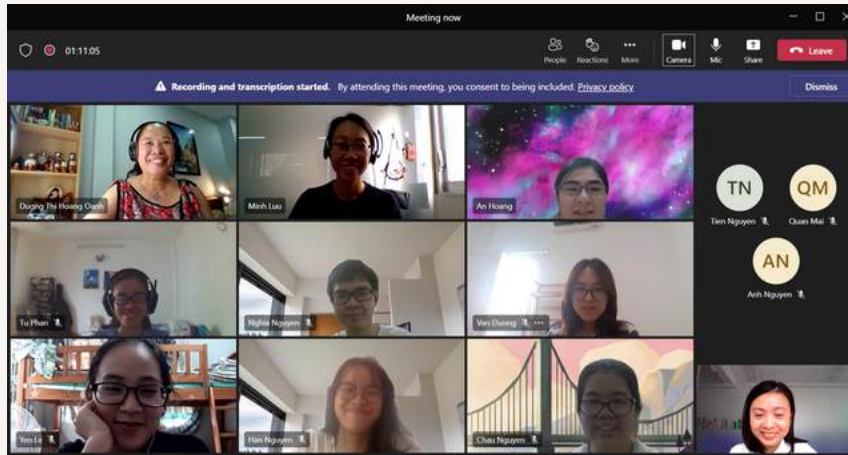
Meanwhile, the project of Techtronic Industries (TTI), which is part of a global strategy of global TTI to address water and sanitation issues in Asia, supports vulnerable households in Kien Giang province, especially women and girls. The project is the corporation of Habitat Vietnam and TTI to improve access to water storage and clean water, encourage the use of proper latrines that integrate safe spaces for women and girls, and improve environmental sanitary conditions sustainably through awareness raising and promotion of proper WASH practices. As a component of the project, a one-day volunteer event was organized to raise awareness of social responsibility and housing issues among staff. The event highlighted the company's global work on these issues and provided an opportunity for staff to learn more about the challenges faced by vulnerable households in Kien Giang province.

Understanding the fact that climate change and natural disasters pose a threat to the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing and displace millions every year, BNP Paribas wished to go beyond a normal volunteer build event and be able to create a stronger impact on the society partnered with Habitat Vietnam to implement a project called “Improve resilience to climate change for affordable housing for low-income families in Kien Giang”. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the communities to build a culture of responsive disaster risk reduction and community resilience to climate shocks through the PASSA approach.



02.

Skill-based volunteering



Under the partnership with the Vietnamese branch of the Australian research university, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), five (05) students majoring in Languages, Interpretation, and translation were mobilized in Translation Project in which three (03) documents of Child Protection policy and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse policy were translated from English to Vietnamese. The translation done by qualified and certified students that ultimately result in a more professional-looking copy increases the information's ability to resonate with our target audience and propel them into action to build strength, stability, and self-reliance. We hope the project can inspire young experts in their area to scale up their involvement to fulfill Habitat's mission.

One sharing from the old volunteer of this project - Ngoc Han, a volunteer of RMIT Translation Project wrote to us after she graduated and found job in a company that has a foundation for sustainable development projects -

“Last July, 2022, I had the opportunity to meet and connect with Ms. Minh and Ms. Vi through the Language & Culture Capstone Project class, majoring in Translation and Interpretation. Habitat for Humanity Vietnam has supported the translation of documents, helping the group to have interesting topics to analyze and complete the course. During the 3 months of translating documents, I learned a lot of information about your organization and its activities. I am very impressed with the value that Habitat brings to remote people, women, and children. Habitat really creates a great motivation for me as a few months ago, I had the desire to work in a company that cares about the community and social responsibility, spreading love and sharing to people who encountered many difficulties.



03.

Global Village programs

Successfully hosted 08 Japan teams

The year 2023 marks the reopening of the Global Village program regionally after 3 years of postponement. The preparation for Regional Builds CY2023 was run from early as the beginning of FY23. However, the process was completed on Q2 of FY23, and Habitat Vietnam started to host the first teams on Feb 2023 (Q3 of FY23). 137 young volunteers from the campus chapter of Japan to build 13 houses in Cao Lanh district and Thap Muoi district, Dong Thap province.

Build time

The international volunteer program was restarted after a long time, so the homeowners, local masons, and local partners are very excited to host volunteers. The teams had a good time building and interacting with the homeowners. Most of the team members were really immersed in the volunteering experience when they learned so fast the skills to mix mortar and lay the bricks and quickly showed their talents in building beautiful walls. Most of the volunteers participating in the teaching during this period were also going abroad for the first time. However, they showed their eagerness to learn and the ability to adapt to the situation very well, despite many language barriers.



Initiative on culture exchange

An initiative on culture exchange event between local youth and volunteers was given to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan. Besides the 5-day build, the volunteers also have a half-day culture exchange event.

Through the cultural exchange events, young people from both countries were given the opportunities to improve their English, make new friends, learn new things, understand the country, people, and culture of Japan and Vietnam, acknowledge the cultural diversity and also social issues, and learn how to respect the difference, step out of their comfort zone to do new things. This exchange activity is a stepping-stone in breaking the distances so that the Japanese volunteers can come closer to see and learn not only about culture but also other behind the scenes, such as the lives of families of the local youth they interacted with and the homeowner they supported as well.



02 corporate teams from South Korea and Australia

In addition, Habitat Vietnam hosted two corporate teams from South Korea and Australia in Dong Thap in late Q3 and early Q4 of FY23. The Korean team was the 1st corporate team hosted in CY2023. Their team had 8 volunteers and joined in renovating a house in Thap Muoi district, Dong Thap province.

Although all were office workers and had never tried the bricklayer job, the whole crew worked very hard and were eager to learn. Some even received many compliments from householders and masons when mixing the mortar well and building bricks with the correct technique. The team also showed interest in local housing issues and the housing market in Vietnam, they even had comparative conversations about the housing market in Vietnam and Korea. In particular, this Korean team had lunch in the same place as the Japanese teams, so they shared that they felt very happy to be able to interact with the Japanese teams. This may bring up an idea for Habitat Vietnam to consider organizing a similar exchange event for other teams in the future.

Australian volunteer team are employees of HPE company. Many volunteers shared that this is their company's annual activity when some staff raise funds by themselves and form groups to participate in the GV trip. There were many applications received, but finally, the team was formed under the rule of "first come, first served". Most of the volunteers in this team were people who had participated in building houses in another province in Vietnam in 2019. The team worked very hard to complete the plan given by our CS. Despite the hot and sunny weather, the group still learned to adapt very well, they interacted with family, local partners, and even neighbors, with their smiles and friendliness, even with the neighborhood children when they walked past the house. The team also always learned about Vietnamese culture and showed great respect for the local culture, they were always grateful to everyone who supported them during the construction of the house. We hope the experiences through this build in Vietnam will continue to keep the volunteer's interest in volunteering works, especially Global Village, in the future.



testimonials



Nene Terauchi, Japanese volunteer

"GV experience is very valuable in terms of having many first experiences. Especially, looking at life of local people is a good opportunity to discover the difference in recognition so far."

Honami, Eco-Habitat team

What's the GV?

If I'm asked that, I'll answer living.

それは、このGVの10日間は私にとって「生きる」ことを見つめ続け、考え続け、全身で浴び続けた期間であったから。

Because it was one of the most alive moments in my life. And because these days will be definitely the energy for my future life.



Haruka, Japanese volunteer

"We have spent the previous days learning for ourselves how amazing and precious it is, "Building a Home" and we students are involved in one of the biggest events in our lives. As I actually met my home partner and went to work, it was hard to communicate, and at first, I was very worried about how we were doing. However, as the days went by, the expression on the home partner became much richer, and her daughter started to play with her, and I couldn't help but see the visible changes. I worried a lot that they would complain about our construction skills. However, through their expression, I know that I'm so glad to come this far."