Habitat for Humanity®
Vietnam

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

# ANNUAL REPORT

## FY25

Vietnam | July 2025



# year of impact

In FY25, Habitat Vietnam's Volunteer Program advanced its impact through two key streams: the Global Village Program and the Local Volunteering Program. The Global Village Program engaged 10 international teams with the successful rollout of the Social Learning Exchange Activity (SLEA), deepening cultural exchange and learning on key housing-related topics. Locally, volunteer engagement expanded through domestic builds, youth and skill-based volunteering, and education-focused events such as the WASH campaign. Despite challenges, strong youth interest and technical contributions from partners like The BIM Factory reinforced the program's growing diversity, relevance, and community impact.

**14**
**TEAMS**

**17**
**FAMILIES SERVED**

**257**
**VOLUNTEERS**

**672**
**LOCAL PEOPLE RAISED AWARENESS**

**5,359**
**VOLUNTEER HOURS**

**$ 71,686**
**FUNDS RAISED**



# highlights

## GLOBAL VILLAGE PROGRAM

In FY25, Habitat Vietnam successfully hosted 10 Global Village (GV) teams in Dong Thap, Thai Binh, and Quang Nam provinces. These included a mix of open, corporate, and youth teams, demonstrating strong and diverse interest from individuals across generations and sectors in Vietnam's housing challenges.

A key innovation introduced this year was the Social Learning Exchange Activity (SLEA), which replaced previous culture-based voluntourism elements. SLEA was designed to promote deeper, two-way cultural and experiential learning between international volunteers and local community members. It created a space for reflection, dialogue, and practical knowledge exchange around topics directly related to housing, community development, and resilience.

All 10 GV teams and local partners actively participated in SLEA, which covered three core topics:



## 1. NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE - RESILIENT HOUSING:

Volunteers and locals shared experiences of common natural hazards and community-based disaster response strategies. In Vietnam, people from the Mekong Delta spoke about coping with saltwater intrusion and drought, while those in the Central and Northern regions discussed frequent flooding and storms. Volunteers learned practical, low-cost solutions such as reinforcing roofs with sandbags and the importance of emergency preparedness (e.g., food, water, medicine kits). Local participants also gained insights from global practices, such as integrating disaster education into school curricula, as done in countries like Japan. These discussions reinforced the idea that a safe house equals protection and resilience in times of crisis. After the discussion, we brought all participants to next session that is culturally-informed Housing Design and Local Solutions.

Participants worked together to create housing models suited to their countries' unique environmental and cultural contexts. This hands-on collaboration fostered a deeper understanding of how design must adapt to climate, culture, and social needs.

*Photo credit: An Tran*







**TTI Hong Kong volunteer team and local participants in SLEA**

## 2. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY – THEN AND NOW:

To commemorate International Women's Day, this topic explored the changing role of women in the family in both Vietnam and countries like Australia. Volunteers and locals exchanged perspectives on how gender roles have evolved and the importance of women's voices in household decision-making. Habitat Vietnam also highlighted the empowerment of vulnerable women beneficiaries who, after receiving housing support, were able to participate in decisions—especially regarding their house design. This session aimed to raise awareness about the specific housing needs of women, and how safe, secure housing can transform their confidence, role, and influence within the family and community.











The International Women Day Team and local community members participated the SLEA about women's role.

*Photo credit: Nam Nguyen*

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND CLIMATE ACTION :

The Samsung C&T (SSCT) corporate team conducted a special educational SLEA session at Vinh Thanh 2 Primary School, engaging 185 students and teachers. The session focused on carbon emissions and climate change, explaining what carbon is, how it contributes to the greenhouse effect, and what students can do to reduce their environmental impact. The activity was interactive and well-received, with teachers praising its usefulness in equipping students with essential knowledge and habits to protect the environment and contribute to climate resilience from a young age.



Students make a cross with their hands as the screen shows vehicles emitting CO2 into the environment.



Students choose pictures on the table with environmental protection actions.

Importantly, SLEA received overwhelmingly positive feedback from local partners, community members, and volunteers alike. Many described it as a useful and meaningful activity that added depth to the GV experience. This strong foundation has opened the door for new SLEA topics in FY26, such as water and sanitation and housing design. These future sessions will further enrich the learning experience for both international and local participants by expanding the dialogue to cover more aspects of housing and community well-being across countries.

The integration of SLEA into the GV itinerary marked a strategic shift toward deeper, values-based engagement. It transformed the volunteer experience from a one-way service activity into a shared learning journey—one that respects and uplifts local knowledge, fosters empathy, and supports sustainable development rooted in mutual understanding. Through SLEA, Habitat Vietnam is inspiring volunteers and community members to deepen their understanding of housing issues, take action, and potentially contribute as skill-based or community volunteers in future Habitat projects.

# LOCAL VOLUNTEERING

In FY25, Habitat Vietnam's local volunteering program continued to play a vital role in supporting the organization's mission, with activities becoming increasingly diversified and purpose-driven. The program encompassed domestic builds, youth volunteering, skill-based volunteering, and community education events, offering a broader range of opportunities for local individuals and institutions to contribute meaningfully.

A key highlight was the **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) campaign education event**, in which local volunteers from P&G Company engaged with students to teach proper handwashing techniques and promote clean sanitation practices at home and in schools. These sessions helped instill essential hygiene habits among children while encouraging volunteers to serve as active health and safety advocates within their communities.



P&G volunteers and a teacher instruct the students how to wash the hands properly




HFH Club members in CIS fundraised through selling food in the Spring Affair 2024

In terms of youth volunteering, although the Habitat Young Leaders Build (HYLB) initiative was paused and placed under restructuring during FY25—combined with the ongoing challenges in local fundraising—youth engagement remained an area of growth and potential. Most youth activities this year were in the planning and development phase, but Habitat Vietnam still received strong interest from youth organizations and educational institutions.

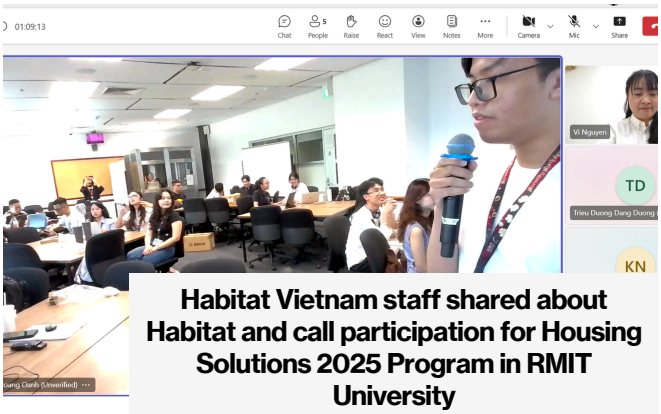
A standout example was the **Habitat Club at the Canada International School (HFH CIS)**, which demonstrated creativity and dedication through small-scale fundraising efforts. Students organized activities such as selling handmade items and food, successfully raising and donating USD 120 to Habitat Vietnam. While modest in amount, this contribution reflected the passion, initiative, and commitment of young people to Habitat's mission of building strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter.

In FY25, Habitat Vietnam also intensified its efforts to engage young people in housing advocacy and innovation by promoting the **Habitat Youth Solutions** initiative—part of Habitat for Humanity's regional youth engagement strategy. The program offers up to **USD 4,000** in seed funding for youth-led solutions that address housing challenges.

Despite past limitations in university partnerships due to a previous focus on junior and high school programs, Habitat Vietnam actively worked to expand outreach by organizing **sharing sessions** at partner universities, including **RMIT University** and **Ton Duc Thang University**, and through social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

As a result, **three proposals** were submitted from Vietnam, with one selected to receive a **USD 4,000 grant** and participate in the Youth Assembly in the Philippines. The winning initiative, titled **"Floating House"**, focuses on building climate-resilient floating homes for vulnerable communities in **Xóm Phao**, a disadvantaged settlement along Hanoi's Red River. The project combines affordable local materials with training for residents on maintenance and resilience, and the grant will support building a new safer home for a family of six living in severely deteriorated conditions.

This achievement reflects the **growing interest and potential of Vietnamese youth** in housing solutions and urban resilience. It also reinforces Habitat Vietnam's commitment to **increasing youth-led innovation and urban housing initiatives** as a strategic priority in the coming years.




Habitat Vietnam staff shared about Habitat and call participation for Housing Solutions 2025 Program in RMIT University



Habitat Vietnam staff shared about Habitat and call participation for Housing Solutions 2025 Program in Ton Duc Thang University




Ngoc Anh (on the left) with her drawing presenting about Floating House project




Youth Assembly 2025 in Cebu, Philippines with Vietnamese candidates

In the area of **skill-based volunteering**, FY25 saw meaningful collaboration with **The BIM Factory (TBF)**—a leading digital design and engineering consultancy based in Ho Chi Minh City. TBF contributed their expertise to a **DFAT-funded project**, designing a **new modular, pre-engineered steel housing model**. This innovative approach aims to **optimize construction time, streamline on-site processes, and significantly reduce costs**—a critical response to the rising expenses that many Habitat Vietnam beneficiaries face. The new designs are expected not only to support current projects but also to inform and enhance future Habitat housing initiatives across multiple provinces.

These collective efforts have helped position the local volunteering program as a **dynamic and evolving platform** for community engagement, technical innovation, and youth empowerment. FY25 laid strong groundwork for scaling up local volunteer engagement, with greater integration of **education, advocacy, and specialized skills** in support of affordable housing solutions in Vietnam.





A group of TBF staff are measuring at a household
in the DFAT project in Kien Giang Province

# impact story

## A Safe Place to Call Home: Ms. Gai's Story

Householder: Nguyen Thi Gai – 70 years old
Address: Tay Luong commune, Tien Hai district, Thai Binh province

At 70 years old, Ms. Gai has spent a lifetime caring for others—her parents, her seven siblings, and even their children. Yet despite her quiet sacrifices, she has lived most of her life with little of her own. In a small, crumbling house tucked away in an alley of a poor district in Thai Binh province, she endured decades of hardship, holding onto one simple dream: a small, sturdy home where she could feel safe—especially when the stormy season arrives.



Photo credit: Vi Nguyen

Ms. Gai's journey has not been easy. Once a kindergarten teacher, she was forced to stop teaching after a powerful typhoon in northern Vietnam blew off the roof of her home, destroying all her documents. Without formal qualifications, she couldn't continue working at the school. She later worked as a mat maker and a carpet weaver until the factory closed. Since then, she returned to farming small fields—her only source of income, though it's unstable and far from enough to support her basic needs.

Despite her own struggles, Ms. Gai never hesitated to care for her family. When her parents fell ill, she stayed by their side until they passed—her father from cancer nearly a decade ago, and her mother just last year. Her siblings now live far away with their own families, and she remains the only one who never married, having quietly given up on that dream in exchange for the responsibilities life handed her.

Her current home, built temporarily by her younger brothers, is severely deteriorated. The roof was torn off by Typhoon Yagi last year and had to be patched with corrugated iron. The cracked walls still leak heavily every time it rains, and the cold and damp of winter worsen her age-related health issues. “I just want a decent roof to shelter from the rain and sun,” she said. “A place where I can sleep in peace, and maybe one day welcome my family to visit.”





In March 2025, that long-held dream finally began to come true. With financial support from Habitat Vietnam and labor from young Japanese volunteers, Ms. Gai's new home was built during a one-week project timed to honor International Women's Day.

On that special day, we witnessed joyful celebrations in every family around the neighborhood—grandmothers, mothers, young women, and girls being gifted flowers and love. Even the young women in our volunteer team were presented with flowers by our local partners. But for elderly women like Ms. Gai, it seemed as though she stood quietly outside of the celebration, unseen and unrecognized.

This moment served as a powerful reminder of why International Women's Day is not only a time to celebrate the achievements of women across generations, but also to honor those who have given silently and selflessly, like Ms. Gai. Through our inclusive housing program, Habitat Vietnam is working to ensure that no one is left behind—regardless of age, gender, or circumstance—because everyone deserves a safe, decent place to live.




Ms. Gai, who's wearing the purple coat and standing in the center taking group photos with Japanese volunteers (Kindai team) and local authorities



The Kindai volunteers laid bricks and prepared steel rebars that are the first steps to build the new house for Ms. Gai



When asked how she felt about being able to have a new house after so many years of living in an old, makeshift house, Ms. Gai said that she was not very happy, she could not believe that at this age she could still have a clean and tidy house to live in.

For Ms. Gai, this new house is more than just a shelter. It brings security, dignity, and independence. It gives her a space where she can finally rest without fear of the next storm, and where she can welcome the family she helped raise. It is a testament to the mission of Habitat for Humanity: that safe housing is not a privilege—it is a right for all.

# testimonies



**ADAM MAITLAND – a New Zealand volunteer**
“I think both teams showed that they could demonstrate with their models, you know, useful information for the other side, that the flood protection for one side and the earthquake protection for the other. I was pleased and surprised and very happy with the outcome.”



**KINGSLEY from TTI Hong Kong -**
“So for me, if I become a professional one day, I'm definitely going to spread this value, which is to become a change-maker, to make more people happier, make a decent place for people to live, especially when I see how the home partners are grateful for our work, like they cherish the moment with us.

Like, for example, the wife, a housewife, except just looking at us working, she did take the tools to work with us. And I think that moment is very precious, and we will make it a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and we'll not forget it in our lives. And I wish every one of you had the same kind of feeling as well.”




**A volunteer from TTI Hong Kong -**
“There are three words I would use to describe my experience in this program: perspective-changing, empathy, and ownership. This program is not just about giving; it’s about empowering. The home partners gain ownership and pride because they work hard to contribute to building their own homes. It’s not something given to them freely—it’s something they’ve earned. I’ve never encountered this kind of approach in any other program I’ve joined over the past five years. This is what makes Habitat for Humanity so impactful to me. It has truly touched my heart, and I no longer view housing issues as “other people’s” problems. I’ve learned to take them personally, knowing that everyone deserves a better place to live.”

# every hand
## makes a difference

Habitat for Humanity® Vietnam