

1 day, 5000 volunteers,

On Saturday, May 12, 5000 young Habitat for Humanity volunteers laid bricks, mixed cement and wielded hammers to help more than 500 families in India, China, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand in just one day. The simultaneous multi-country build event marks the culmination of the five-month long Habitat for Humanity Youth BUILD campaign to raise funds for, and awareness of, the dire housing situation in the Asia-Pacific region. More than 300,000 people have been reached with the campaign's message through social and digital networks.

"It is great to see young people in India concerned about the well-being of others," said Zeenia Kolah, from JB Petit High School, Mumbai. Over

500 volunteers helped in building and repairing 45 homes across four states in India. When asked why she decided to join Habitat Youth BUILD in Bangalore, Anu Nandwani, 19, from Canadian International School, said, "It's a great experience because you're helping less privileged people live in better conditions so, tomorrow, they have a place to call HOME, a place that they can live in with a smile." Several schools sent their students to participate in the blitz-build to contribute back to society. "Personally, I like this because our students are pretty privileged and this gives them a chance to see the life of the majority of Indians and the majority of the world," said Yasir Patel, Head of Secondary School, Deutsch School Bombay.

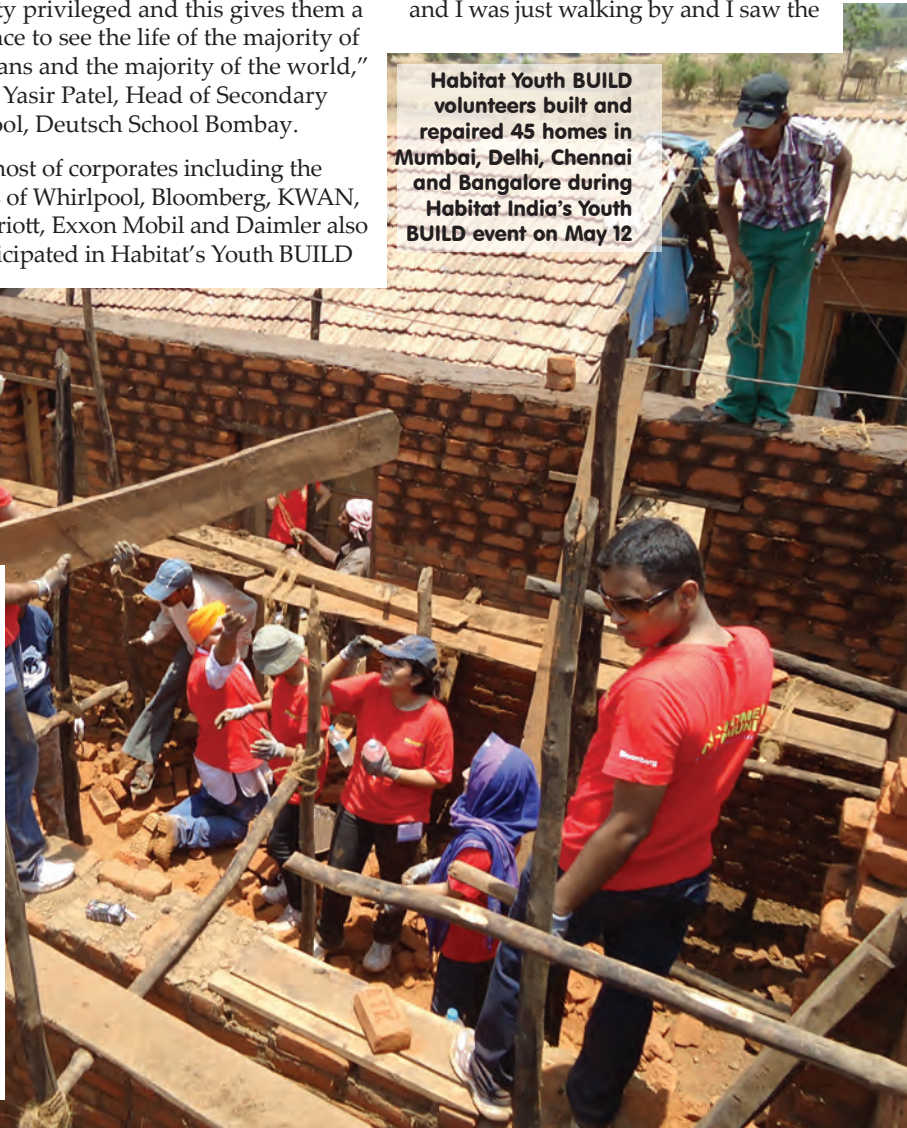
A host of corporates including the likes of Whirlpool, Bloomberg, KWAN, Marriott, Exxon Mobil and Daimler also participated in Habitat's Youth BUILD

event. Manasi Bhatnagar, HR Manager at the Marriott, quipped, "When we participate in such activities it helps us to build team spirit and enables us to get to know each other better. Today we came together as just the Marriott not different properties," she said. Paras Doshi, Analytics Manager at Bloomberg described how the build brought out latent talent within his team. "What it does for my team and the people at Bloomberg is that it brings out some of the hidden talent and the hidden leaders that we have. The last build that we did was exactly in the same village and I was just walking by and I saw the

Habitat Youth BUILD volunteers built and repaired 45 homes in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore during Habitat India's Youth BUILD event on May 12



Volunteers from DSB International paint a home during Habitat India's Youth BUILD event on May 12, 2012



500 families

house in which we did the cement work and painting — people are living there right now. It's a very satisfying feeling."

Forty-five low income families benefitted from the build. "Our current house leaks during the monsoon and floods easily. When it rains we cannot use the *chulha* to cook and have to go hungry," said Asha Pandurang Kathe, mother of four, from Nandgaon village, Karjat, Maharashtra, one of six beneficiaries who received homes on May 12 through the campaign.

Families selected for the housing programme in Nandgaon village, Karjat primarily earn a living by working as agricultural field labourers. Houses in this region have mud walls with thatched roofs that require constant upkeep and do not provide adequate security. These families are unable to address their housing needs on account of low monthly income. Habitat India has built homes for over 2300 families in Karjat alone since 2006. "Owning a decent place to live breaks the chain of poverty and enables a

family to climb the ladder of economic independence from a firm ground," said Eric Christopher, CEO, Habitat for Humanity India.

In Delhi, volunteers built houses in the resettlement colonies of Savda Ghevra and Bhalaswa which was inaugurated by Mrs Kiran Mehra Kerpelman, the Director of the UN Information Centre for India and Bhutan who supported Youth BUILD in India. The community in Bhalaswa suffers many hardships including a drastic water situation. Habitat for Humanity has been working to build and improve housing in the area with its partner Chetanalaya for a number of years. "I've thought about how it would feel to be in such a position — without a home. Building homes implies building lives," said Abigail Anubha Lal, a 22-year-old Delhi University student who built in Bhalaswa.

Savda Ghevra is a semi-rural resettlement colony, where Habitat for Humanity India is building 41 homes for disabled (differently-abled) men and women and their families. These people used to live on the streets of south Delhi, sheltering under flyovers and bridges. Their plots were allocated to them only after many years of persistent advocacy by The Madok Foundation who partner with Habitat for Humanity India.

"The sheer quantity of volunteers and supporters that came together today, united with the cause of tackling substandard housing, is remarkable. It is not too late to be a part of Habitat Youth BUILD — we need to continue raising awareness of the housing need in Asia-Pacific and to raise funds to help more low-income families. Plans are already being made for a bigger and better youth initiative next year," said Rick Hathaway, Asia-Pacific Vice President for Habitat for Humanity International.

Habitat for Humanity's vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Through its innovative shelter-based programmes, Habitat for Humanity reaches out to 82 countries worldwide.



KWAN employees with the homepartner in front of her freshly painted home



Bloomberg employees celebrate the completion of brickwork for a Karjat home during Habitat India's Youth BUILD on May 12