

# Brick by brick, they all build homes for poor

Biz honchos participate in CEO's Build, an initiative to provide shelter to the underprivileged

Vidya Iyengar

Chief executive officers and managing directors are known for building strong organisational structures in their companies. However, on Wednesday, some of the city's corporate big-wigs were lending their helping hands to build structures for the poor at Kothur, Rammurthy Nagar.

This was part of the initiative called CEO's Build undertaken by Habitat for Humanity India, a non-profit organisation that collaborated with top companies to provide shelter for the underprivileged.

"I have set a goal of spending at least 10% of my time to further this cause. It gives me great pleasure to be a part of a team that provides good living conditions," Ajay Das, managing director of Timpken, said.

The organisation encourages its staff to participate in this activity on a daily basis.

"At least five to 10 of our members try and come here on a daily basis. Not only is it a good cause, it also teaches our members to work as a team and, most importantly, the dignity of labour," he said.

Senior vice-president of YES Bank, Anuradha Sarin, remarked that by taking part in such activities she was extending her responsibility to the society. "It is our way of giving back something to the needy," she said.

"Shelter is a basic requirement and we provide adequate means to the needy to construct their homes. We want them to have a hand-up and not a hand-out. It is a participative programme, where there is equal contribution by the providers as well as the beneficiary," Johnathan Reckford, chief executive office (CEO) of Habitat for Humanity International, said.

Reckford said that Habitat for Humanity India works towards self-help housing and uplifting the economically backward.

"We give an interest-free loan



Business leaders, helped by volunteers, building homes for the poor at the Habitat for Humanity India organised CEO's Build at Kothur, Rammurthy Nagar

—Mohan Kumar BN

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Ajay Das, managing director, Timpken

and all the resources they need to build their house. We want them to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment once their houses are built. It is our way of empowering them," he said.

The day began with the inauguration of a house built by the Habitat for Humanity India team.

Begum Taj, who works as a domestic help, expressed her gratitude for the help and support

CONGREGATION FOR A NOBLE CAUSE		
20 biz leaders are part of the project — CEO's Build — an initiative of the Habitat For Humanity India.	initiative to build houses for the underprivileged in Kothur, Rammurthy Nagar.	Thomson Reuters, Northern Trust, Birlasoft, YES Bank, Dell Services, Applied Materials and CISCO are part of the initiative.
Various companies from Bangalore join the	About 20 leaders from companies such as Timken,	

her family received towards building their home.

"I am so happy that I have a house of my own. It was only with the help of these people that I have a roof over me," explained Taj, who will have to pay Rs1,000 per month for the next five years towards her house.

The Women Build Program that provides homes for women-headed families was launched on Women's Day this year.

"We have taken on a 150-house project in different areas of rural Bangalore. As of now, about 20 houses are complete. We hope to achieve our target by next March," Joseph Mathai, director of Habitat for Humanity, said.

Corporator P Sukumar, who was present on the occasion, praised the NGO for its contribution in building homes for the homeless.