



8th March -17th March 2010

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▲ Lighting the Lamp : Ms.Jija Harisingh, IPS Director General of Police, Commandent General Home Guard, Director Civil Defence, Fire and Emergency Service, Karnataka, on her left Mr. Dino L. Touthang, CEO Habitat for Humanity India, Shrimati Chamandi Naganoor, Secretary Karnataka State Social Welfare Board, looked on by Mr. Joseph Mathai, Director HRC Bangalore, Rev. Brother R Arockiam Peter, SHJ, General Councillor and Cordinator for Social Action Commission and Mrs. Mona Sikora, President Community Services Bangalore.



▲ Women Volunteers at Work

The Women Build

at Bangalore united volunteers and families in need of decent, affordable housing in the R K Hegdenagar slum of Bangalore, south India. During the two week build, nearly 70 volunteers, mostly women, helped to create 15 new homes in the community. Many of Habitat's partner families in HegdeNagar are women headed families comprising of single mothers, widows and women who are sole bread winners in the family. Under the Women Build campaign women with means assist women in need.

The Women Build event at Bangalore was launched on 8th of March 2010, International Women's Day. 62 volunteers travelled from five different countries to participate in the Build and worked alongside with their Indian counterparts.

From excavation to laying of foundation, passing of cement blocks to mixing of sand and cement each of these volunteers contributed their mite towards the construction of 15 houses, each of the houses sized between 250-300 sq. ft.

Local volunteers present at the build site assisted the International volunteers to overcome the language barriers and facilitated their interaction with family members.



HER Story



▲ Homepartner Natarajan and Sheela

Sheela

Sheela and her husband Natarajan have been living in Hegdenagar from the past 21 years. They have one son and a daughter aged 16 years & 18 years.

Sheela is the sole bread winner of the family as her husband Natarajan, a carpenter by profession, is a chronic asthmatic and unable to take up regular and strenuous work. Her job at the garment factory ensures a meager but regular income to meet the daily needs of the family.

The home being built under the Women Build initiative for Sheela comes as a great blessing for the family and especially for

her teenage daughter who now have a place to study and a place that provides the necessary privacy and security.

During the course of the build Sheela stated, "We are so surprised and happy to see educated people from different countries helping us to build our house. I always thought that the uneducated do the labor work and the educated enjoy the fruits of our labor. Today the volunteers helping us build our home have helped us gain greater esteem in our community in addition to providing dignity to our existence."



▲ Sheela and Natarajan with the Volunteers

She Speaks

Theressama, “I want a picture of all of you up in our house. I want it up so that our children, and our children’s children, will know who helped us build this home.”

Mrs. Pyaari Mohamed said to the volunteers, “You are my first guests and the love you have expressed will remain with us forever.”

Gunawati the mother of Mahalaxmi says, “Constructing the house is a very expensive affair, the volunteers have helped us save a lot on the labor cost. The money saved will be put aside for our grandsons’ education. We are thankful to each of the volunteers who have helped provide a permanent home for my daughter and grandson”.



Volunteers Speak

“Breaking down of cultural barriers and permitting us Women volunteers to build the houses, by the men folk has been a tremendous achievement. The overall experience has been fantastic.”

Judy Bickenbach

“It’s been very empowering working side by side with the women who live in this community and we are grateful for the opportunity provided by them”.

Nailah Timberlake

“This experience is unique in that we have been working hand in hand with the family as opposed to working for them.”

Susan Latham

“On a personal level I understand the worry that comes along with losing a home and wondering where you will live next. With this build we’ve provided safe and decent housing for a number of families. I hope that some of their worries are eased as they turn these houses into homes.”.

Melissa Chang





▲ Women Build, Bangalore 2010



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Mr. Radhkrishnan Kumar



And the initiative carries on...
For further details contact nirmalar@hfhisia.net



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