

Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka Strengthens Habitat Youth BUILD Initiative

Actress Pooja Umashankar supports youth-led movement



Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka takes on Habitat Youth BUILD, a youth-led campaign to tackle the global challenge of substandard housing, for the first time this year. Now in its fourth iteration, Habitat Youth BUILD has grown each year, with Sri Lanka, Fiji, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam joining other Asia-Pacific countries for the first time.

Designed along the theme ‘Play a part, Act today, Share with friends,’ Habitat Youth Build engages young people to take action together to build homes and communities, advocate for decent shelter, and raise funds and awareness about the poverty housing situation in the Asia-Pacific region where one in eight live in slums, according to the United Nations. The movement expects to rally more than one million youth supporters.

From 5 December 2014 to 21 March 2015, advocacy, awareness- and fund-raising activities will take place across the Asia-Pacific region in 15 countries and one Special Administrative Region (SAR).

On the campaign’s culmination day, 21 March 2015, young people will take part in coordinated, mass-participation events, drawing attention to the challenge of 1.6 billion people without adequate shelter in the world, according to the United Nations.

“In Sri Lanka, Habitat Youth BUILD on March 21st will assist an ongoing Habitat for Humanity mega project in the Eastern province to build homes for low income families. Sign up today and join me in supporting the Habitat Youth BUILD movement and help improve lives of fellow Sri Lankans,” said Pooja Umashankar, Sri Lanka.

Habitat Sri Lanka invites groups of 10 between the ages of **15 and 30** to lend their strength to this cause by participating in the project to build shelter for those who have none.

Participants will be required to meet a nominal participation fee and will receive a HYB T-shirt, amongst other gift items and guidelines upon signing up to make a change with Habitat Sri Lanka.

“Youth are the driving force of Habitat Youth BUILD, advocating, raising funds and awareness to tackle substandard housing. Decent shelter provides a way out of poverty; it has a positive impact on health and safety, provides a place to study and promotes financial stability. The rising energy of Habitat Youth BUILD annually reflects how increasing numbers of young people want to take action and play a part in reducing housing deficit and improving lives,” said Rick Hathaway, Habitat for Humanity Vice President for Asia-Pacific.

In addition, a hammer signed by US President Jimmy Carter, a committed Habitat for Humanity volunteer, starts its tour of Asia-Pacific – supporters will use the hammer for a good deed, such as build

or repair homes, in exchange for a donation. Photos of the hammer will be posted to social media platforms, tagged #carterhammer, as it makes its way across the region before finally arriving in Nepal for the [32nd annual Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project](#).

Youth in 15 countries and one SAR in Asia-Pacific – Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam – will campaign on- and offline to garner support for the movement and raise vital funds to tackle poverty housing in the region.

In 2014, Habitat Youth BUILD brought together more than 800,000 volunteers in 11 countries across 57 sites. The campaign supported more than 1,700 low-income families.