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Building with bamboo in Nepal

From cultivation to low-cost construction technology, HFH Nepal and its volunteers help families to build affordable homes

KATHMANDU (February 7, 2014) — The use of bamboo is prominent in Habitat for Humanity Nepal's program, particularly in the eastern part of the landlocked country. With the support of Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), 28 families have learned new livelihood skills as well as affordable, environmentally friendly construction technology using bamboo.

Last quarter, from October to December 2013, about 20 women and 10 masons had on-the-job training in building with bamboo. Having learned about the low-cost technology, the participants went on to build two such houses for low-income families in Chimdi and Babiyabirta in Sunsari and Morang districts respectively.

One of the participants, Durgawati Khawas, from Dadarbairiya village in Morang, was commended for her hard work and keenness to learn about construction technology. She said: "I had never used a drilling machine and never knew bamboo can be drilled. Now that I have been trained, I look forward to building a beautiful bamboo house."

HFH Netherlands has also been supporting HFH Nepal's 100,000 Housing Campaign by funding public awareness materials and the cultivation of bamboo for cost-effective and sustainable housing. The three-year project, which began in March 2013, trains families in bamboo cultivation and construction techniques. Through training of trainers programs, HFH Nepal's local partner organizations are equipped to promote bamboo cultivation.

Under the Dutch-funded project, there are plans to set up 100 bamboo nurseries and to build 50 bamboo houses for marginalized families.

Other than low-income families, Habitat volunteers also have exposure to building with bamboo. Over the last quarter, 14 Global Village teams built 19 homes and two community buildings in Sunsari, Pokhara, Jhapa, Kavre, Dhangadi and Morang. From November 15 to 22, bamboo will also feature in 100 homes to be constructed in Everest Build 2014 in Chitwan district.

An Australian volunteer, Richard Riddell, was part of a team who helped to build a community building made of bamboo in Dhangadi. He said: "I really enjoyed learning about each material and the process of making them, but also how effective on eco-friendly and cost basis." He had an amazing experience with the friendly and good-natured local community members and dedication day was memorable. "I'll never forget dancing and laughing continuously throughout the day."

Habitat for Humanity began working in Nepal in 1997. It has helped more than 40,000 families to build homes and hope through partnerships with local microfinance institutions, non-government organizations and village savings groups. To connect with HFH Nepal, visit its [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

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(Top) Working with the local community was an amazing experience for Australian volunteer Richard Riddell. (Bottom) Nepali women cutting bamboo into strips for weaving into wall panels. Photos: HFH Nepal; Mikel Flamm/Habitat for Humanity.

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