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## Greetings from Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley

Happy New Year!

In February of 2020 St. Vrain took a GV trip with Habitat Paraguay to Lesotho. Who knew that for many of us that would be the last flight of the year. Shortly after returning from Africa the entire world shut down due to a global pandemic. At times this last year my world has felt very small, so small that I haven't left the house for weeks at a time. In the smallness it is easy to lose track that this is a global issue. This edition of our international newsletter is a bit longer than most to bring you the updates from each of our partners and be reminded that we are all in this together. I applaud the innovation that each of our Tithe partners has brought to their work this last year and am amazed at what they were still able to accomplish. So please enjoy this extra special addition of the year-end international update.

Sincerely, Julie Gallegos —Director of International Development at Habitat St. Vrain Valley

# \$1 Million

Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley reached an incredible milestone this January by hitting \$1,000,000.00 in a tithe donation to our international partners since our inception in 1988. Our tithe donation is money that is sent through Habitat for Humanity's international program to help affiliates around the world. Only 56 affiliates around the country have reached this milestone and only 7 affiliates the size of St. Vrain Habitat. There are around 1,500 affiliates in the United States therefore we are in the top 3.7% of affiliates to have reached over \$1 million in Tithe.

For this honor Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley has been awarded the Mopongo Award. The Mopongo award is named after Sam Mompongo. In 1976, Millard Fuller, the founder of Habitat for Humanity, visited Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) for a dedication of several houses in the village of Ntondo. The leader of the Ntondo affiliate was Sam Mompongo. At the dedication, Sam took up a collection. He then gave half of that offering to Millard, and asked him to start a new Habitat affiliate. Millard used that gift to start a new affiliate in Guatemala. The tithe program at Habitat has its roots in that small gift. US affiliates have now collectively tithed over \$300,000,000.

Look for celebration opportunities throughout the year as we mark this momentous occasion.



# Global Village Trips 2020

## History Making Tri-National Habitat Global Village Trip

After everything that has happened this year it is hard to believe that it was the same calendar year that a team of 9 people made their way to Lesotho from Colorado and Paraguay. The binational team was a joint project between international affiliate partners of St. Vrain Valley and Habitat Paraguay years in the making. The team met up in Johannesburg, South Africa after long flights from North America and South America and drove together to Lesotho. From there the team became a tri-national team of Paraguayans, Basotho and Coloradans, speaking English, Spanish and Sesotho. The team worked diligently on a house for Mossongoa's family. In a joyous village wide celebration dedicated the house before departing back to their respective homes.



Top Middle: GV team with GV coordinator Abang Mohlakola

Top Right: New Habitat Homeowner, Mossongoa will inherit the home when she comes of age

Middle Right: Habitat Paraguay half of the team (Carmen Felitas, Katrina Lechenuk, Mary Lechenuk, Henry Dyke)

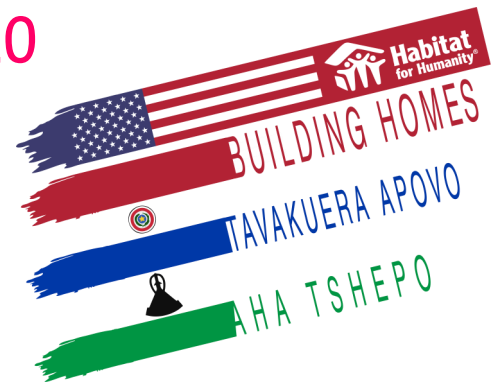
Bottom Right: Mary Lechenuk with Lebohang Mariti-Ljane (acting director of Habitat for Humanity Lesotho)

Middle Left: US team participants (Russ and Lori Linderman, Catherine and Max Romero)

A letter from Mary Lechenuk (Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Paraguay on her experience in Lesotho)

At Habitat for Humanity Paraguay, relationships are essential to build a fairer world, therefore the experience of coordinating a trip in partnership with our affiliate from St. Vrain Valley in the United States was a great challenge and a wonderful opportunity to expand hope beyond our cultural differences. It was a week where we were able to experience what our mission says, which is to call people to build houses, communities, and hope and demonstrate God's love in action. The experience of laying bricks, digging the foundation of a house, transporting materials in a human cord with several mothers in a remote community of Lesotho is an adventure that cannot be described, it must be lived !!!! It was shocking to live the moment where we all speak different languages and have different customs, where we were not different when we had to join hands so that another family can have by the end of that week a better place to live, a safe shelter. Before going to his Father, Jesus left us this mission of relevance, to bring hope to the whole world. With Habitat for Humanity, I found what I was looking for in my life: to be in contact with this melting pot where we all have something to give, and there is no better thing than to give our own life for the other. My special thanks to the affiliate of St. Vrain Valley who made possible this miracle of love between the two continents America and Africa. I wish for more trips that challenge us as human beings and make us put ourselves in the place of others to become a more united and peaceful world.

Sinceremente, Mary Lechenuk





# A Word from Habitat for Humanity Lesotho

A conversation with Bohlokoa Mokhotho, Habitat Lesotho's Advocacy and Fundraising Manager

## How is Lesotho doing overall with the pandemic?

Since January this year (2021) Lesotho has been hit hard due to the second wave of the novel coronavirus which is believed to be the most transmissible strain. New infection numbers are rising significantly with few recoveries and loss of life alarmingly getting higher daily. As of 23<sup>rd</sup> January, Lesotho recorded 332 new tested cases, of these, 101 tested positive, with 175 recovered, and 10 lost their lives. Cumulatively there has been 45,863 tests conducted, 7,656 positive cases, 2,168 recoveries and 123 deaths. Admittedly this is not a true reflection of what is on the ground as the significantly high death toll substantiates that. The devastation caused by the pandemic is very high especially on unemployment and food insecurity, among others.



## How is Habitat Lesotho doing during these difficult times?

Following the compulsory lockdown for all non-essential services declared by the Government of Lesotho in March 2020, all Habitat Lesotho operations were put on hold. May 7 the restrictions were lifted retaining compulsory use of masks in public spaces, restrictions on assemblies of not more than 50 people to name a few. The first lockdown affected our work and delivery; even though we tried our level best to catch up, we could not overcome all the challenges we were faced with.

## What services of Habitat Lesotho were effected during the lockdown?

During the first national lockdown we experienced the following;

1. A decline in our program expenses, unfunded activities such as, construction of energy savings stoves, was also cancelled as a risk mitigation measure.
2. Under our advocacy work, all awareness raising events and trainings on land, property and inheritance rights trainings were suspended. Following the easing restrictions, we gradually carried out activities although at a small scale observing the new regulations.
4. The Vulnerable Group Housing Program (VGH) program was affected as, beneficiary selection activities (which are conducted at community level through public gatherings and are highly participatory) were suspended. As a result, construction homes in Thaba-Tseka stopped. Delivery of construction material for homes in Mafeteng, Berea and Leribe stopped. Additionally, constructions ventilated pit latrines and energy saving stoves funded from the National Office were suspended indefinitely.
6. We hoped to grow our services by starting a WASH program but this program is currently on hold.

## How about your global village program?

Global Village activities remain suspended due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

## Can you describe how it has been for the staff to work during the pandemic?

Working during the pandemic has been challenging and has slowed down our staff. Trainings on open spaces are limited to 50 participants per session. Ordinarily, one training would host participants from at least 3 villages but are now confined to one village. We must travel to only one village each day slowing our progress. In addition communities are prioritizing food needs over housing needs.

Our National Director was appointed in the midst of the pandemic. International travel restrictions have impacted her ability to relocate to Lesotho from South Africa. We have had to rely on online meetings with her and the Board of Directors.

In general, it has been challenging dealing with the rising numbers of new infections and the death toll and less recoveries the second wave is wreaking havoc. Although all staff take necessary precautions, we are always on pins and needles. Despite dedicated staff that went above and beyond, and will continue to do so diligently, the second lockdown has brought uncertainty with regards to achieving set goals by end of our financial year.

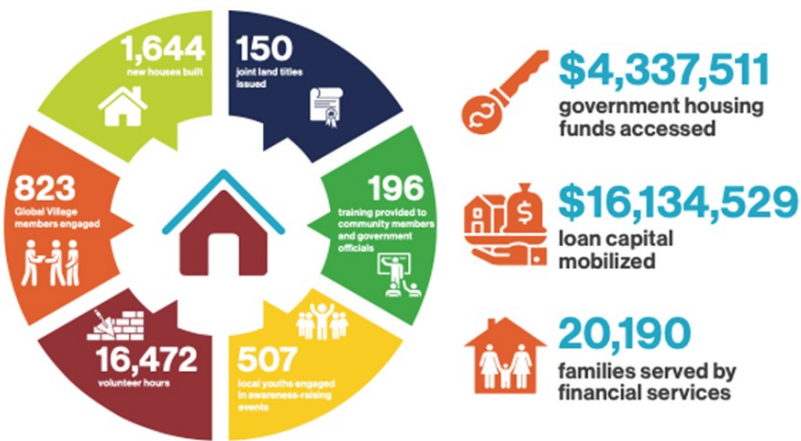
# A Word from Habitat for Humanity Nepal

## Offering relief amidst COVID 19

2020, COVID 19 engulfed the entire world. Like many other countries, the pandemic triggered a nationwide lockdown. As people sought refuge in their homes, they were unable to earn their daily wages. With no safety nets, like government subsidies or relief to the families, Dalits and marginalized families suffered the most as they lost their income.

Habitat Nepal offered some relief items to some vulnerable families. Taking advantage of people stuck at home, but also addressing the immediate need for food, Habitat Nepal initiated a 'cash for work' scheme. Habitat families in the process of construction were able to focus on completing their new homes while also receiving funds to buy food for their family's needs. Families worked only on the construction of their own homes to minimize the spread of COVID. This scheme was indeed a lifeline for these families, food in their bellies, a safe new sanctuary to live, and maintaining social-distancing to limit the spread of this deadly virus.

## Looking back on the year



## FY20 in Summary

But Covid-19 has not held us back! Not only did we meet our annual targets, but we also surpassed them. As masses of migrant workers returned to their villages, able hands were suddenly available to build their new homes. Habitat Nepal was able to continue its activities of house construction for the most vulnerable families such as *Haliyas* and *Dalit* communities. *Haliyas*, ex-bonded laborers freed in 2008 and Dalits, so-called untouchables, are among highly marginalized groups that Habitat supports. The local, province and federal government have realized the effectiveness of the partnership approach and willing to replicate the modality to other nearby areas serving more vulnerable families. Habitat Nepal continued working with its Microfinance partners to provide access to finance for their shelter construction and maintenance.



# A Word from Habitat for Humanity Paraguay

## Saving lives in informal settlements

When the pandemic started we decided to assist the most vulnerable communities. According to health experts, the vaccine to stop the spread of COVID-19 was to wash your hands regularly, maintain social distance, and wear a face mask. These recommendations were not so easy to follow in informal settlements, where families had lost their livelihoods due to government measures to stay at home and had no access to basic services.

Therefore, as part of a group of organizations, we decided to act and assist these communities. We developed two main activities. First, the installation of handwashing stations in settlements from the capital city Asuncion. We provided with the collaboration of other organizations more than 300 handwashing stations to strategic areas in these

communities, such as soup kitchens, health units, police stations, and other highly transited spots in the community. It has been 9 months since the virus arrived in Paraguay, and these handwashing stations are still very useful in the communities. Currently, we have launched another campaign to install another 135 handwashing stations that will continue to benefit settlements in Asuncion, as well as other settlements in the city of Luque.

Secondly, we have provided awareness materials to encourage people to wash their hands as frequently as possible. We know that until we have the vaccine, this is the most efficient method to avoid the spread of the virus in these vulnerable

communities. Additionally, we provided hygiene kits to help the maintenance of the handwashing stations and to the community to encourage good hygiene practices.

These initiatives have benefited more than 20,000 people in vulnerable situation. We hope to continue this work and provide safe access to water and sanitation to these communities in need.





## A Word from Habitat for Humanity Jordan

Jordan hosts over 775,000 registered refugees with UNHCR, of which 658,756 are Syrian. The delivery of humanitarian assistance remains insufficient to meet people's needs. 80% of Syrian refugees live in urban areas, more exposed to economic hardships (high cost of rent, utilities, school fees, etc.) than those living in refugee camps.

The impact of the pandemic and the government response has effected households across Jordan including a significant impact on the shelter of many households. Many respondents feel that the crisis will have a long-term impact on their livelihoods with raising the unemployment rate. Habitat Jordan is working to address the main problems in the shelter sector and barriers faced by both Syrian refugees and their host community, with special focus on the most vulnerable populations, such as women-headed households and youth, as well as people with disabilities.

COVID 19 has also an impact on Habitat Jordan operations during the full lockdown of the country, which prevented Habitat staff from serving refugees and vulnerable host communities, where participation and community engagement have been central elements in the programs of Habitat Jordan. With a partial ease of movement restriction as the number of affected cases are declining, Habitat Jordan has adapted by contacting families through a telephone conversation instead of field visits. However, technical home visits to household are still necessary to conduct constructional assessment by Habitat engineers.



Through the project "Assisting with the refugee crisis in the Middle East", Habitat Jordan designed an approach to improve the living conditions of most vulnerable refugees drawing upon best practices to encourage self-recovery of crisis-affected populations. This is done by creating safe and healthy homes for individuals living in sub-standard conditions. Habitat engineers are there to monitor the construction of the homes to ensure proper procedures.