



KOREAN brand names now span the world as South Korea continues to prove one of the great development success stories of recent decades. Poverty levels have shrunk significantly. In the 1950s, war ravaged the Korean peninsula and South Korea was one of the poorest places on earth. Most people lived in extreme poverty. Even as late as the mid-1960s, an estimated 60-70% of the population lived below the poverty level. Yet by the 1990s this figure had fallen as low as 3.4%.

Yet South Koreans wanting decent homes face major obstacles. Escalating land prices have made it difficult for lower income families to afford decent shelter. The dramatic increase in population density has compounded the housing issue, resulting in the need for creative uses of available land.

In 1993, a group of volunteers investigated whether the Habitat for Humanity concept could be effective in Korea. With land donated by a Christian communal village and funds provided by individual donors, these volunteers completed three houses in Uijeongbu-si, Gyeonggi approximately 30 kilometers north of Seoul.

Today HFH Korea is one of the most active parts of the HFH world. Both building houses at home and abroad. In 2001, HFH Korea hosted 10,000 volunteers from 31 countries for the Jimmy Carter Work Project. They built 136 units in 34 buildings.

On average, houses cover 53 sq. m. and cost some US\$25,000 to build. Land costs are borne by the national organization. Houses are made from concrete, lumber, plywood, drywall, Styrofoam, siding, and shingle. Because of Korea's harsh winters, insulation is a must. Construction time is from 4-6 months.

HFH Korea is a strong supporter of Global Village. Over the years, teams have gone to the Philippines, Mongolia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

COUNTRY FACTS

Population: 48,598, 175
Capital: Seoul
Area: 98,480 sq. km.
Ethnic groups: Korean
Literacy: 98%
Language: Korean
Religions: Non-religion 49%, Buddhist 23%, Protestant 20%, Roman Catholic 7%, other 1%.

HABITAT FACTS

Families Helped

396

Cost Of One House*

US\$53,960

As of April 2005

* international sponsorship cost

Habitat Highlights

- Habitat-SK Happy Village project aims to house 48 families.
- Korea Blitz Build 2003 with 2,000 volunteers built ten two-story units to aid flood victims.
- Global Village programs to the Philippines, Thailand, Mongolia and Indonesia
- Eight campus chapters involved in building and renovations and "Cycling for Habitat" awareness.