



MYVOICE

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Building dreams

As more students take a proactive interest in volunteering for social activities, **Zeenia Kolah** speaks about her experience of building homes for the underprivileged communities

6 I'm currently studying in class XII in HR College. As a member of Seeds of Peace, a conflict resolution and leadership programme, I always had the impetus to volunteer and be a part of the change. It was through one of our Seeds of Peace meetings that I heard about Habitat for Humanity and their one-day Youth Build Programme. I was intrigued and extremely eager to actually be out there and be a part of the experience.

The project was simultaneously conducted in five countries across Asia, with over 400 volunteers and aimed to tackle housing issues of 500 less fortunate families in just one day. In India, we were part of a contingent of over 500 volunteers, across Noolbal in Tamil Nadu,

Geddalahalli in Karnataka, Savda and Balaswa in Delhi, NCR and the place I worked at - Karjat in Maharashtra. From painting homes, handling the brick works, climbing ladders to paint the highest walls, we did it all. We lifted mud and bricks and helped repair homes and construct new ones as well. While painting was fun, the brick work really took a lot of hard work. It was exhausting and took

satisfying experience. It was then that I realised just how much labour goes into putting up an average size house, and how much these people would truly benefit from our help. We could see just how happy and excited the people were to have us lend out a helping hand, literally. I came out at the end of it covered in mud and dirt, but knowing that I was a small part of the big change in some one's life.



Meeting and working with the home owners made it a very satisfying experience

many volunteers to put up four walls, ploughing the mud, making human trains and passing bricks on to the masons.

It was hot and took a lot of strength to lift the building material. But meeting and working with the home owners made it a very

Even though I'm young and inexperienced to build a house, there's always something for me to do. This realisation that I can, in some way, be a part of the slightest change drives me.

– As told to
Ruchi Kumar