

Housing for all: The Lafarge / Habitat for Humanity partnership

Following a fruitful collaboration at local level, Lafarge and Habitat for Humanity signed a worldwide partnership agreement in 2005. The aim was to work together in 25 countries within five years.

In January 2005, Lafarge broadened its relationship with Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI). This NGO, founded in the United States, helps disadvantaged families to construct and renovate simple and decent houses. The participating families build their own houses, with the assistance of volunteers and professionals. Once the job is finished, they become owners of the house for a modest sum, corresponding to the cost price. **HFHI has already built some 150,000 houses in 87 countries. It has enabled nearly 750,000 people to become property owners.**

Lafarge Business Units promised to participate at local level in Habitat for Humanity operations by supplying building materials free of charge or at low cost. In addition, the Group offers its employees the chance to participate on a voluntary basis on construction sites in 12 countries (Australia, Canada, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Tanzania, the UK, the US and Venezuela).

Under the worldwide partnership, Lafarge has agreed to work with HFHI in 25 countries by 2010 and to apply a number of indicators (financial contributions, product donations, price reductions and number of houses). A network will be set up which will allow Business Units to share best practices, and a number of practical tools (project templates, website) will help them work together.

This worldwide strategy will also involve Group employees and give them new opportunities. Some have already taken part in the “Corporate Volunteering” program and have worked as volunteers on housing construction projects. In the future they can take part in other projects, such as “Women’s Build”, which encourages single women to build their own houses, “Youth Program”, for young adults to make a personal investment in construction and training, and “Habitat University”, which promotes the sharing of knowledge, experience and solutions to housing problems.