

Habitat Terms

Like any organization, Habitat for Humanity has developed its own terminology. Many terms, although part of everyday life within Habitat, can be confusing to those just learning about the organization. It is important, particularly in written communication, to explain these terms. Following are several of these words and phrases and guidelines for consistent usage:

Affiliate (n.)--*Affiliates* are independent, nonprofit organizations that are responsible for directing Habitat house-building work in their communities. All Habitat affiliates are required to raise as much funding locally as possible. As part of the relationship affiliates enter into with HFHI, they are expected to **tithe** to Habitat's work in other countries. *In usage, do not capitalize unless part of a specific title.*

appropriate technology--*In usage, do not capitalize it or enclose the term in quotation marks.* For Habitat for Humanity, application of *appropriate technology* means utilizing as fully as possible both human and natural resources that are available in an affiliate's area.

Biblical economics (n.)--*In the context of a sentence do not enclose this term in quotation marks nor capitalize it.* This term is defined in Millard Fuller's book, *Love in the Mortar Joints*. *Biblical economics* is summarized in that book as follows: "In our dealings with "poor" people, we are to charge no interest and seek no profit." The scripture reference is *Exodus 22:25* from the Bible.

Blitz build (n.)--Beginning with a prepared foundation, *a blitz build* (n.) is the complete construction of a Habitat for Humanity house or houses within a very short and concentrated period of time--usually one or two weeks--by volunteers or a partner group such as a church or business. The term also can apply to the **renovation** of a house from the point where the structure is gutted to completion of basic **restoration** work.

Christian partnership--We describe Christian partnership as being **twofold**. One, we say that Habitat for Humanity is in partnership with God and with others. Two, we say that Habitat is a people-to-people partnership that joins people together regardless of race, nationality, religion or socioeconomic status.

"Economics of Jesus" (n.)--*Within a sentence, this term should not be capitalized, but should be enclosed in quotation marks for at least the first use in a document.* While sometimes used interchangeably with *biblical economics*, the term "economics of Jesus" encompasses a broader perspective and refers to several spiritual principles in Habitat for Humanity's work. Millard Fuller's book, *Love in the Mortar Joints*, dedicates a chapter to the term and explains that it embraces five principles:

1. When we move out in faith and good will our small supplies are **miraculously** multiplied to fill the need.
2. We do not place value on profit or interest, but emphasize meeting human need.

3. Immediately put the resources we receive into meeting human needs, and not **hoard** or **stash** them **away**.
4. *Every human life, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is priceless.*
5. We acknowledge that the needs of people are **paramount** and the response to those needs is not connected in any way with people's usefulness or productivity. "Grace and love abound for all," as stated in *Love in the Mortar Joints*.

Fund for Humanity (n.)--*Always capitalize this term.* A local, revolving *Fund for Humanity* exists at each project, with the fund's money coming from Habitat house payments, contributions from individuals and organizations, **no-interest loans**, and income from fund-raising projects. The **monies** in the Fund for Humanity are used to build more Habitat houses.

Habitation (n.) (v., to inhabit, to live in)--*This term is capitalized* and almost always refers to a celebration, a joyous meeting to celebrate the completion of a Habitat for Humanity house, blitz build or other significant building event.

Habitat for Humanity International (n.)--When writing or speaking, use *Habitat for Humanity International*, *HFH International*, or *Habitat for Humanity*. Never use "Habitat International." Habitat for Humanity International is the proper usage when referring to the international headquarters and organization. Habitat for Humanity is used when referring to the ministry and its work in broader terms. *When referring to our organization for the first time in a sentence or paragraph, write it out completely*, as Habitat for Humanity International or Habitat for Humanity. After that, it's acceptable occasionally to use just "Habitat." But Habitat for Humanity is always preferred. When using initials, we recommend HFHI or HFH after fully spelling out the name. Never write HfH or HI.

Millard Fuller (n., person's name)--When referring to Mr. Fuller in print, the first reference should include the title: president of Habitat for Humanity International; or if appropriate: founder and president of Habitat for Humanity International. Subsequent references within the same document should be by last name only. Photo captions may omit the title, if it is used within the accompanying text.

Linda Fuller (n., person's name)--Co-founder of Habitat for Humanity International.

Nondiscrimination (n.) (v., not to discriminate [against somebody/thing])--When we use this term we are saying that Habitat believes that God's love extends to the whole world. We carry this belief forward by seeking to make decent housing available to all people in a *nondiscriminatory (adj.)* manner. The selection criteria used by each affiliate do not discriminate based on **race**, **creed**, or **ethnic background**.

*We also point out that while Habitat for Humanity is unashamedly a Christian organization, **we invite and welcome people of other faiths who are actively committed to Habitat's mission, method of operation and principles.**

RV Care-A-Vanners (n.)--Previously known with Habitat for Humanity as the "RV Gypsies."

Simple, decent houses (adj. cl.)--Since Habitat for Humanity was founded, the most common usage to describe the kinds of houses we build is to say they are *simple, decent* and *affordable*. That means Habitat builds houses that are basic in design and construction and without frills. The houses are built to last and withstand the **battering** of climate. This description of the philosophy of construction, however, does not always translate easily or adequately into other languages nor tell the entire story. Affiliates in developing nations, therefore, have used other terms. For example, it is common to describe a Habitat house at such a site as adequate and durable.

Sweat equity (n.)--*Within a sentence, this term should not be capitalized. It is two words when used as a noun, hyphenated when used as an adjective. We define sweat equity as the unpaid labor invested by homeowner partners in the Habitat for Humanity ministry. **These hours are a requirement of Habitat home ownership.** Sweat equity reduces the monetary cost of the house and increases the personal stake of each family member in their home. Sweat equity fosters partnership with Habitat volunteers and staff. *Sweat equity is a key principle of Habitat* and is important in building partnerships across economic, racial and national divisions. The number of sweat-equity hours required of homeowners varies widely among affiliates and countries, but is usually between 200 and 500 hours. It is safest to say that hundreds of sweat-equity hours are required of homeowners.*

"Theology of the hammer"--*Within a sentence, this term should not be capitalized, but should be enclosed in quotation marks for at least the first use in a document.* In subsequent usage of the term in the same document, quotation marks may be omitted. Millard Fuller explains the term in his book *No More Shacks!* :

"This simply means that as Christians we will agree on the use of the hammer as an instrument to manifest God's love. We may disagree on all sorts of other things--baptism, communion, what night to have a prayer meeting, and how the preacher should dress--but we can agree on the imperative of the gospel to serve others in the name of the Lord." (*No More Shacks!*, p. 127.)

Common Words and Usage

On the next two pages you will find a list of some of Habitat's commonly used words, with additional space to allow for you to add your own definitions. You may also have noticed certain words have been made **bold** throughout the text; you may want to discuss these words with your teacher or friends, or look them up in a dictionary to better understand the principles of Habitat for Humanity.

Common Words and Usage

The compiled list of common words used by Habitat in its communications. This list is provided as a quick reference for anyone involved in communication on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. Please refer to it often. It will make your job easier and our communications with you more consistent and professional.

Affiliates: (n.)

Antidiscrimination: one word; no hyphen

audiovisual(s) : one word; no hyphen

blitz build: (n.) two words

board of directors: (n.) lower case; takes a singular verb

bookkeeping: (v.) one word

bylaws: (n.) one word

chairperson: (n.) one word

database: (n.) one word

follow up: 2 words when verb; hyphenated when noun or adjective, i.e., a follow-up plan

full time: two words when used as an adverb, i.e., to work full time

full-time: hyphenated when used as an adjective, i.e., a full-time job

fund-raiser: (n.), always hyphenated

fund-raising: hyphenated when an adj. Or v.; fund raising, (n.) two words when noun.

Global Village: always capitalized

grass roots: two words when used as a noun, hyphenated when used as an adjective

groundbreaking: (adj., n., v) one word (see also “breaking ground”)

hands-on: (adj., adv.) always hyphenated

headquarters: (n.) lower case, i.e., Habitat for Humanity International headquarters

homeowner: (n.) one word

homeownership: (n.) one word

house-raising: hyphenated when used as an adjective

job site: (n.) two words

multifamily: (adj.) one word

no-interest: hyphenated when used as an adjective (i.e., no-interest loans)

nonprofit: (adj.) one word

on-site: (adj.) hyphenated when used as an adjective

record keeping: (v.) two words

renovation: (n.) (v., to renovate)

restoration: (n.) (v., to restore)

sweat equity: (n.)

tithe: (v.)

worldwide: one word

workday: (n.) one word

work site: (n.) two words