

# Homes for the homeless

An NGO is building homes for slum dwellers in Bawana

goodwork

Vijay Krishna



Through his NGO, Robin Raina (centre) is making some poor people's dream come true.

“Earlier I used to be on the streets, with no hope or ambitions of my own. Today with a wheelchair, a new home, and my education at the RRF School, I feel that I can have a good future.”

SHAMIM,  
a Class VI student:

“I am 85 years old and suffer from multiple ailments. Not only did the RRF build my home, it also started giving me Rs 1,000 a month towards food and medicines.”

NAJMUN NISHA,  
owner of plot no 205



tious plan to build 6,000 homes here free of cost with a rider that the beneficiary must send their children to any school of their choice. So our education drive led to the housing project. Now we are committed to delivering the houses and the parents to ensuring that the children go to school,” informs Robin Raina, founder of RRF.

The year 2005 proved to be a watershed. The Foundation started the blueprint of a plan to build brick and concrete homes for these slum dwellers. Meanwhile, the Delhi Government decision to sell 10x20 ft plots to these families for Rs 7,000 took care of the cost of the land.

Throughout 2006 preparation for the project continued. Architects, builders and designers were roped in to put together a plan. Lawyers, volunteers, social workers started arriving at agreements. And in October 2007 the project was launched.

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## The Dream Home

**325** homes were built in the first phase, where people are already living

**200** homes are expected to be completed in the second phase by July this year

**Rs 1 lakh** is the cost of construction per unit

### ELIGIBILITY



Delhi government should have allotted them land in Bawana.



They should have lived in the same slum home for the last two years.



They need to ensure that their children are going to school.



They need to sign an agreement not to sell the house for the next seven years.

### What the house has

Each unit has two rooms with painted interior and exterior walls

Concrete rooftop

4 power points, two fans

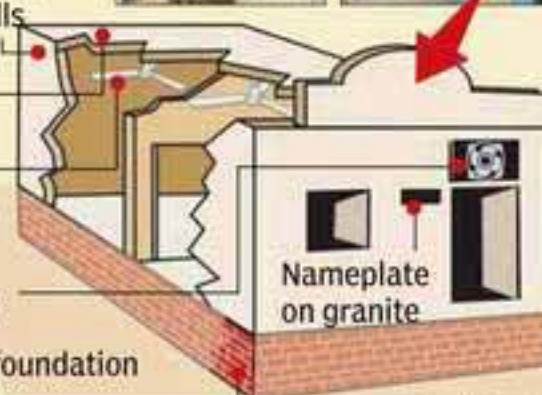
Exhaust fan

Solid brick foundation of four ft.

BEFORE



AFTER



Nameplate on granite

Graphic: VINEY

A GRANITE nameplate with a proper address outside a sturdy and aesthetically designed home is not what one expects to find in a slum. But it is a reality; people are already living in 325 such houses in the heart of Bawana Village, arguably the largest slum cluster in the city. Too good to be true. Well then picture this – work on another 200 homes is underway. In all 6,000 such houses will be built free of cost for those who till now have lived in shanties and slums.

It all started in 2004. In a bid to beautify Delhi, within weeks about 40,000 homes in Yamuna Pushta, which was till then Delhi's largest slum, were demolished and its residents banished to Bawana Village, some 40 km away. The city got rid of its blight but for the slum dwellers the struggle magnified manifold. With no civic amenities, no sanitation, no medical facility and worst of all no scope of earning a livelihood there was no future. But their story had just begun.

As they moved from Yamuna Pushta to Bawana, the Robin Raina Foundation (RRF), a charity organisation that supports education, food, shel-

ter and medical needs of children around the world, set up a school for 400 children in the slums. Soon the RRF volunteers realised that many chil-

dren dropped out of the school because they lived a nomadic life. “Our initiative in Bawana started with opening a school. But the dropout rate was high

because the students had no permanent address. And till 2006, two major fires broke out in the slums every month. So we laid out a \$15 million ambi-