



**News Release  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Build Change and Simpson Strong-Tie Announce the 2018-2019 Fellow Selection**  
*Juan Carlos Restrepo Is Recipient of 2018-2019 Excellence in Engineering Fellowship*

**DENVER, Colorado (November 8, 2018)** — Build Change and Simpson Strong-Tie have named Juan Carlos Restrepo as the 2018-2019 Fellow for Engineering Excellence, advancing our mission to greatly reduce deaths, injuries and economic losses caused by housing and school collapses due to earthquakes and typhoons in emerging nations.

This is the second year of the fellowship, a successful partnership between Build Change, a Denver-based international nonprofit social enterprise, and Simpson Strong-Tie, a global leader in innovative structural solutions.

“The Fellowship for Engineering Excellence provides a unique opportunity to reduce risk from natural disasters by helping to identify and implement innovative solutions for building safer, more resilient structures in emerging countries throughout the world,” said Simpson Strong-Tie CEO Karen Colonias.

This year’s fellow, Juan Carlos Restrepo, is taking leave as Director of the Technical Department at Advanced Engineering Solutions SAS in Bogota, Colombia to join Build Change. Earthquakes and their dangers, in fact, have been a big part of his life. Restrepo grew up in Armenia, Colombia, site of a large 1999 earthquake that devastated his native region. From an early age, Restrepo chose to dedicate his life to structural engineering and earthquake engineering.

Today, Restrepo has over 15 years of experience in structural and earthquake engineering. During his professional career, Restrepo was a pioneer in implementing Building Information Mapping (BIM) technology as well as high-strength concrete in Colombia. In 2011, Restrepo founded Advanced Engineering Solutions (SAS). During his time as CEO of SAS, Restrepo was responsible for the seismic design of over 125,000 square meters of school space, including significant retrofitting projects.

“We are grateful to have Juan Carlos join our team for the Fellowship,” said Lizzie Blaisdell Collins, Build Change Director of Engineering. “His expertise will not only provide key support to our housing mitigation projects in making access to disaster-resistant housing scalable in the vulnerable areas of urban Colombia and the Philippines but will also help our engineering teams grow and develop additional professional experience.”

Restrepo earned a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from University of Quindio, a professional Diploma in Structures from University of Valle and a master’s degree in Earthquake Engineering from the MEEES Program at the Rose School in Pavia, Italy, a leading institution for seismic studies. Restrepo will be primarily supporting our prevention programs in Colombia and the Philippines.

Restrepo is the second professional to hold the Build Change – Simpson Strong-Tie fellowship. June 2018 marked the completion of the tenure of our inaugural fellow, Prof. James Mwangi, Ph.D., P.E., S.E. Over



the course of 2017-2018, Dr. Mwangi traveled to three different countries and supported four different programs.

#### **About Build Change**

Build Change saves lives in earthquakes and windstorms by working with people in emerging nations to build homes and schools that will protect their families and children. Build Change works to strengthen buildings before and after disasters strike in Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines by improving local construction practice and building long-term resilience. More than 25,000 people have been trained in disaster-resistant design and construction techniques and have built over 48,000 safer homes, impacting more than 250,000 people. Visit [www.buildchange.org](http://www.buildchange.org) and follow us on Twitter [@BuildChange](https://twitter.com/BuildChange), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/buildchange), [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/buildchange) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/buildchange).

#### **About Simpson-Strong Tie**

For more than 60 years, Simpson Strong-Tie has dedicated itself to creating structural products that help people build safer, stronger homes and buildings. Considered an industry leader in structural systems research, testing and innovation, Simpson Strong-Tie works closely with construction professionals to provide code-listed, field-tested products and value-engineered solutions. Our engineered structural products and systems are recognized for helping structures resist high winds, hurricanes and seismic forces. They include structural connectors, fasteners, fastening systems, lateral-force resisting systems, anchors and product solutions for repairing, protecting and strengthening concrete. From product development and testing to training and engineering and field support, Simpson Strong-Tie is committed to helping customers succeed. For more information, visit [strongtie.com](http://strongtie.com) and follow on Twitter [@strongtie](https://twitter.com/strongtie), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/strongtie), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/strongtie) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/strongtie).