



# Citywide upgrading is POSSIBLE

**The Asian Coalition for Community Action Program (ACCA) is now finishing it's fifth year. 230 Asian cities in 19 countries are now showing that citywide slum upgrading works, when PEOPLE do it.**

## ACCA Budget :

Total budget approved for the ACCA Program (2009 - 2014) :

- Original budget approved in November 2008 :  
**US\$ 7 Million**  
(for Nov. 2008 - Oct. 2011)
- Additional budget approved in November 2009 :  
**US\$ 4 million**  
(for Nov. 2009 - Oct. 2011)
- Additional budget approved in December 2012 :  
**US\$ 3.5 million**  
(for Dec. 2012 - Dec. 2014)
- Total ACCA Program Budget :  
**US\$ 14.5 million**

## Just \$58,000 per city :

- \$15,000 for at least five small upgrading projects, in at least five communities in each city.
- \$40,000 for one big housing project in each city.
- \$3,000 per city for city process support, to cover a variety of joint development processes within the city, such as surveying and mapping, network-building, support for savings activities, local meetings and exchanges.
- \$20,000 per country per year for national coordination and capacity-building activities.

**Asian  
Coalition  
for Housing  
Rights**

The Asian Coalition for Community Action Program (ACCA) is a five-year program of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) which is supporting a process of citywide and community-driven slum upgrading in Asian cities. Community people are the primary doers in planning and implementing projects which tackle problems of land, infrastructure and housing at scale in their cities, in partnership with their local governments and other stakeholders.

After five years, the progress and breakthroughs in this region-wide experiment in 230 cities has proved that urban poor communities and their development partners in all these cities are ready to address citywide problems and citywide development together. The ACCA program has demonstrated a new kind of development intervention, for the more open, democratic world we now live in, in which the poor have the freedom to decide things and manage their own development.

**1 COMMUNITIES AS THE PRIME SOLUTION-MAKERS :** By opening up a big space for people to make change in their lives, communities and cities, ACCA is bringing this largest-of-all development armies to the task of resolving our urban land and housing problems.

**2 EMPHASIS ON CONCRETE ACTION :** ACCA works on the premise that the best capacity building and the real change happens when communities take direct action to tackle the problems they face.

**3 REAL NEEDS AS THE DRIVING FORCE :** The ACCA Program gives people in poor communities the tools to do something they need - *right away* - and the urgency of their needs is the program's driving force.

**4 CITYWIDE THINKING, CITYWIDE ACTION :** To make community upgrading a proactive part of a city politics, it must happen at citywide scale - the scale that's necessary to bring about changes in the deeper political and structural problems which cause poverty and slums in cities.

**5 USING THE RESOURCES STRATEGICALLY :** The small resources ACCA offers can make a big impact on the city if they are used strategically to create new structural platforms which can allow poor communities to work as equals with others and mainstream community-driven development and large-scale change by urban poor communities.

**6 IT TAKES PARTNERSHIP TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS :** Instead of perceiving the poor as a problem, the ACCA Program is helping cities to see this community-driven model as a viable way of solving the serious problems of housing, land and poverty in their constituencies, which they haven't been able to solve alone.

**7 THE PRINCIPAL OF SPREADING OUT :** The ACCA Program has been designed to spread out the opportunities to as many community groups in as many cities as possible, to generate more possibilities, more learning, more partnerships and unlock more local resources.

**8 THE GOAL IS STRUCTURAL CHANGE :** By working at scale, and by focusing not on nice little projects which resolve poverty only in small pockets, but on building robust, citywide solution-making systems, the ACCA Program is using its modest resources to challenge those deeper structural problems and transform those inequitable systems.

## ACCA Progress :

230 cities in 5 years (2009-2014), with these elements :

- 1,635 small upgrading projects (@ about \$3,000 each)
- 150 big housing projects (@ max \$40,000 each)
- 98 city-based community development funds set up and running
- 400,000 community savers with US\$ 30 million in savings
- citywide surveys and information in about 200 cities
- citywide upgrading action plans
- community networks in all cities
- collaborative partnerships with local governments in 190 cities
- 26 "Understanding Asian cities" projects in 26 countries
- 35 community-led disaster rehabilitation projects in 11 countries



## 1 Citywide surveys and mapping in 200 cities

It is important for the citywide upgrading to begin with some kind of comprehensive, citywide understanding of the scale of problems, so in most of the cities in the ACCA Program, some kind of citywide survey has been carried out. Mapping works like a catalyzing process in new communities. When we talk about mapping, it means not only marking the existing houses and settlement boundaries, but getting all the people to come together, to participate and to start talking about what they need to fix in their communities.

## 2 Citywide community networks in 230 cities

The city is the basic working unit in the ACCA program: not only one project, not only one community and not only one sector. And in each city, the program's first and most crucial intervention is to help to build a citywide urban poor network. As a platform for large scale development which involves a synergy of learning, experience-sharing, morale-boosting and mutual inspiration, community networks have given Asia's poor people's movement enormous confidence and created a development mechanism which belongs entirely to them. Community networks have emerged and grown strong at many levels and in many forms around Asia now.

## 3 Citywide partnerships in 190 cities

When people begin showing their local governments that community-led change is possible and that it works, then little by little, they begin winning over their city governments, and unlocking public resources and bringing them into an active development process. This is the people-led politics of change, and it doesn't come from talk but from doing actual projects in partnership. In the first phase of ACCA, local governments contributed \$2.6 million to the small upgrading projects and \$73 million to the big housing projects (in the form of land, infrastructure, cash and materials)

## 4 Citywide savings in 200 cities and 98 city development funds

One of the most important objectives of the ACCA Program is to develop new financial systems for poor people that are friendly to the realities of their lives and that they manage themselves. The most basic building block of a people's financial system is the community savings group, in which they build, use and manage their own financial resources. Community savings is being practiced in 200 of the 230 ACCA cities. The program is helping strengthen and expand these savings groups, as the essential, communal organizing mechanism within poor communities, and the basic strategy for building people's capacity to manage finance collectively, effectively and equitably.

## 5 1,635 Small upgrading projects in 220 cities

These small projects to build roads, water supply systems, drains, toilets, community centers and other common infrastructure services are all being planned and carried out by community people themselves, with a large number of both direct and indirect beneficiaries. Besides solving urgent common problems, these projects get community people into an active, collective process, in which they are changing from being the ones who wait for someone else to bring them development, to the ones who do things and determine their own needs and resolve them right away. The small projects also act as a chess pieces in a community's game of negotiation with their cities, and many use the small projects as an opportunity to open a dialogue with their local governments.

## 6 150 Big housing projects

In Asian cities today, decent people by the millions are being made illegal by the absence of housing they can afford. Decent housing is the thing which most sharply separates the poor from everyone else in their cities, and the thing which most powerfully ensures a person's security, dignity, legitimacy and citizenship. That's why the big housing projects are such an important part of the ACCA Program. In different ways, these projects are demonstrating new, comprehensive and people-driven housing alternatives, and poor people are the key actors in every stage of their planning and implementation. They are also showing that public land for housing the poor is possible: the government provided free or subsidized land in 64 out of the first 111 big projects, providing secure tenure to 16,616 families.

## 7 35 Community-driven disaster rehabilitation projects

Of all the poor in Asian cities, those hit by disasters are often the poorest and most vulnerable of all. Besides losing family members, houses and belongings, many also lose their livelihoods and support systems and find themselves facing eviction from their land. As the frequency and severity of storms, floods, fires, land-slides and earthquakes increases, so too does the number of poor communities facing these disasters. Community networks in several countries are using ACCA support to try to turn these calamities into development opportunities, in which the affected communities become the main actors in planning, managing and implementing their own relief and rehabilitation.

## 8 36 Community architect groups active in 18 countries

When we talk about doing citywide slum upgrading in the whole Asia region, we need lots of architects, para-architects and experienced community-based builders to work with people in hundreds of communities and to help them develop and implement their upgrading plans, in a big way. We have been trying in different ways to link with groups of young architects and professionals in various countries and to help them work with communities - on both the ACCA-supported upgrading and housing projects and on other community initiatives. The movement has become quite active now, and a lot of things have been happening over the past few years, as more and more countries open up this process. Of the 19 Asian countries involved in the ACCA Program so far, 18 of them have active groups of community architects now, and 36 of these groups are now linked together into the Community Architects Network (CAN) in Asia. CAN has become very active in helping to build new groups of local architects to work with people and organizing hands-on training seminars that are embedded in actual upgrading projects.

