

ACHR E-NEWS

ASIAN COALITION FOR HOUSING RIGHTS JAN - JUNE 2015

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ACHR, CAN, Lumanti: Nepal Earthquake Recovery Efforts

ACHR through the Community Architects Network made a visit to Nepal to help support local group Lumanti Support Group for Shelter in their rehabilitation efforts after the earthquake. Below is a slightly edited version of Chawanad Luansang - Nad's report on the visit. 31.05 - 10.06.2015



Our CAN team, Mahavir (from Hunnarshala has extensive experience in rehabilitation after the Gujarat earthquake in India), Nad with rehabilitating tsunami affected villages in southern Thailand) and Net met with Lumanti to explore ways for long term recovery after the earthquake. We got support funding for assessment trip and emergency relief from MISEREOR.

The Lumanti team had already been working with 10 old towns around the Kathmandu valley to set up relief programs with communities in all of the 10 old towns which had already started women saving cooperative 5-10 years before earthquake, and the women's cooperatives as played an important role in managing funds and donations to support the affected members. Lumanti helps to facilitate and channel funds and relief materials and also support temporary shelter through the women cooperative to make sure that community are managed well and ensure benefits to all the member in need and prioritise poorest.

From the survey of Lumanti and community the demand for temporary shelter in 10 old town are around 800 units and Lumanti and PTAG helped community to set up temporary shelter that people could build by themselves, fit with their life style and maximise use of the old materials. Lumanti was able to help channel funds to build 300 temporary shelters.

From the information from government the earthquake effected 14 districts and more than 500,000 houses had collapsed.

We visited 4 areas, 3 old towns[Mechchagaon, Thecho, Siddhipur] and 1 rural area in Dhading in Jeevanpur village.

After field visited we discussed and shared ideas from what we had observed of the damage in old towns and then we proceeded with **3 initiatives**.

1. for planning the old town in Tauchel, Mechchagaon where 70% of their houses had collapsed. We spent 3 days working with the community to survey existing maps and make plans to reorganise the community to enable better infrastructure and maintain the community's cultural heritage.

2. we visited old houses and analyse the structures and tried to find solutions for what should be the low-cost housing that could use local materials, local artisans and enrich the heritage of the settlement. We found that old Newar houses could be rebuilt and retrofitted and some changes could be made to improve ventilation and bring more natural light into the houses. We continue to carry on with the design and study more.

3 We have found many old houses in the old town are able to retrofit but most of the owner of old house lost confidence in their old house and want to knock down their house and want to rebuild new concrete house. We and Lumanti organise meeting and workshop focus on encourage people to do retrofit their old house which are strong enough and they can save a lot of money and can preserve and maintain living heritage.

For now the Lumanti team plan to build more temporary shelters and together, with the people, carry out mapping and surveys in 8 old towns to bring people together to plan for recovery and explore the ideas on finance models and mechanisms for community recovery. Our CAN team with Hunnarshala will carry on to support the recovery process in Nepal.

Report above from Nad Chawanad Luansang in collaboration with Lumanti

Watch the documentary film about our field visit to Nepal - about 10 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDVw43ZeBLM>

ACHR is posting regular updates from friends in Nepal and reporting them [HERE](#) on our website, but more comprehensive local and regular coverage you can follow local efforts by Lumanti on their Face Book page of Lumanti Support Group for Shelter <https://www.facebook.com/lumanti.shelter>

ACHR calls for Donations

PLEASE DONATE! ACHR is calling on you to help us raise funds to support some of Nepal's poorest communities, so that they can play a central role in managing their own relief and planning the rebuilding of their lives and houses after the earthquake of April 25 devastated their towns and settlements. The earthquake and its aftershocks have left at least 6,000 people dead and millions without homes, and many of the poorest communities in the Kathmandu Valley and other quake-hit areas have not yet been reached by aid groups or government assistance, which are already overwhelmed by the scale of the calamity.

HOW TO DONATE: Please send your donations directly to ACHR's account in Bangkok, as follows: Read more about how your donation will help [HERE \(down the page\)](#)

Account Name: Asian Coalition for Housing Rights **Bank Name:** Bangkok Bank

Account Number: 192-419085-1

Bank Branch Address: Suan Sayam 99/1 Moo 3 Serithai Rd, Kannayao, Bangkok 10230, Thailand

Swift Code: BKKBTHBK

And please let us know by e-mail the details of your wire transfer: achr@achr.net

Or Donate direct to Lumanti NGO in Kathmandu

Account name: Lumanti (Samjhana) **A/c number:** 01-0382876-22 **Swift Code:** SCBLNPKA

From the ACHR donations request we have raised over 25,000US\$ from people and communities across Asia. This is our first attempt at raising donations with a request to the public. Most donations have been small amounts (compared to the large international donors who have greater access and resources) and come from 57 individuals from Australia, Netherlands, Singapore and Thailand. There were 18 "group" donors (14 from Thailand, 2 from Indonesia, 1 from Japan and Afghanistan). We also wish to thank MISEREOR (Germany) for accepting and supporting ACHR CAN and Lumanti activities on a larger scale from separate requests and proposals from ACHR - 67,000 Euros.



To commemorate and continue Perween's spirit, ACHR/CAN has been organising the program called the "Perween Rahman Fellowship" which came to the second year. This year we allocated 15 awards for proposals from across the region that have a clear focus on community development with hands-on skills of architectural, planning, and community building/artisan contributions directly to communities both rural and urban contexts.

By receiving 35 proposals from 10 countries!, It appear to us that across the region there are many architects/planners/engineers/community builders who are working to change our society be more equal, lively, and maintain a sense of beauty. The result of final list was officially announced at the link below on the CAN website

http://www.communityarchitectsnetwork.info/upload/jobs/file_03062015144626.pdf

The new Fellowship awardees include : 3 from Bangladesh; 2 from Indonesia; 2 from Pakistan; 2 from Philippines; 2 from Cambodia; 1 each from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam and Thailand
(From Tee - CAN Coordinator)

CAN NEWSLETTER APRIL 2015

Craftsmanship in Architecture

We have come to the third issue of the CAN newsletter. Without intentionally creating a theme, unexpectedly a large number of stories arrived sharing on the role of craftsmanship in architecture at the scale of the household, and also the city. A week-long heritage conservation workshop hosted by friends in Kathmandu, and a heritage tour launched by friends in Yogyakarta, both place the artisans themselves as the main actors in the upgrading process producing a form of "living heritage". Young professional supported by the Perween Rahman Fellowship in Vietnam experiment with using compressed soil bricks as a low-cost alternative to concrete, while our friends from Hunnarshala, India share on their recent progress with rammed earth construction, and a new housing project for the homeless in Bangkok gives the space for residents to be the artisans of their own unit. The Siamese Association of architects has also decided to dedicate a public seminar to artisan-architects working, designing, and building with bamboo, rammed earth, and wood.

Hope you enjoy reading this collection of inspiring stories, please share with others, and please share other stories with us.

Ariel and Francesco - Editors

[DOWNLOAD FROM HERE on the CAN Site](#) Size: 8370 MB



The 3rd CAN Regional Workshop

Together we CAN! People Planning for future inclusive cities

16-23 June 2015:

The Third Regional Community Architects Network Workshop and Meeting was held this month (June) in Metro Manila, hosted by the Philippine Alliance organisations of HPFPI (Homeless People's Federation Philippines Inc.), TAMPEI (Technical Assistance Movement for People and the Environment Inc.) and PACSII (Philippine Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives, Inc.)

This year's theme was: **Together we CAN!** People planning for inclusive future cities. The workshop had **over 100 participants from different countries**, including CAN members, people's organisations, representatives of local and international institutions such as public authorities, academics and students, CBOs, NGOs, etc. The workshop **involved several activities**, such as the presentation of the Philippine context; the sharing of various country's experiences and updates on their processes and approaches for community architecture; reflection sessions; exhibits; etc. Additionally, the event included **community fieldwork in two locations in Metro Manila: Intramuros and Muntinlupa City**, with the aim of putting into practice the participatory tools and methodologies followed by community architects in working with communities to support and enable people-driven solutions.



Intramuros is a heritage site with pockets of informal settlements and is interested in exploring sustainable and participatory options for these settlements in the context of their revitalisation plan. **Muntinlupa is an area with several informal settlements located in high-risk zones** (e.g. along creeks and lake) and characterised by widespread **insecurity of tenure**, where the City-wide Development Approach (CDA) is currently being undertaken in order to identify comprehensive and holistic solutions to the area's challenges.

The results of the fieldwork was presented by the communities and discussed with all participants and stakeholders during **Public Forums** for each area. These offered an effective platform to advance in terms of planning, elaborating solutions and building partnerships for the future, in order to support real change.

(From Tee Supawut Boomahathanakorn CAN Coordinator)



3. Exchange: Teams from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Indonesia visit the Women's Coop Savings Program in Sri Lanka

Two community leader who visited the Women's Bank share their experience with community back in Bangladesh (left). Teams from the 3 countries with the Sri Lankan teams.(right)



During the 25th Anniversary of the The women's Development Services Cooperative Society, Women's Coop, (Sri Lankan Women's Coop) offered to extent learning to groups in Asia who wished to strengthen their savings groups. Teams of 5 from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Indonesia came to Colombo from 29 March to 4 April.

The program focussed on an understand of savings/ finance systems and procedures at Group level, Bank Branch level and the Auditing system at all levels. Over the 4 days the groups undertook: Orientation and briefing of Women's Coop activities; Study small group activities in the field; Study the Bank Branch level activities; and Internal and external auditing in different levels of the program. The 3 teams were allocated to three bank branches which allowed them to study from the grassroots perspectives. On the final evening senior Woman's Coop leaders lead discussions and clarifications sessions. Translations were provided by CLAFNet .

The three teams acknowledged the long -term results of the program on poor people's lives; that flexible finance and capital can not only change individuals and families, but also groups and communities. The Women's coop acknowledged the confidence improvement at having to organise a successful regional exchange and the boost it gave to the Coop's local groups. Finally the message given by the program was that "Community can organise exchange visits beyond country boundaries by themselves without many resources". This can be replicated in future.

Summary provided by Ranjith Samarasinghe from SEVANATHA, Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Women's Coop.

4. Two Important Studies by the Urban Poor in Asia

Poverty Line study expanded. IIED-ACHR study project on Poverty Assessment Policy-phase 2

In 2014 ACHR completed a Poverty Line study by urban poor groups in Asia with grassroots participation from 6 countries. The published Newsletter summarising the process and results was widely praised by international aid agencies which could see weakness in the the World Bank's 1.25 \$ poverty line bench mark.

An extended study commenced in May to be completed 30 October 2015. The objectives of the study are to refine the poverty line figures set by communities in each country to be under the same criteria/standard as well as to compare and share the study figures with government

agencies in each country to explore common measure of poverty and what makes sense in each country's context, and how our study will influence government methods and process in setting poverty lines based on the actual poverty context that includes all poor people in the society. Five countries, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand have expressed interests to join in the 2nd phase of the study while Vietnam will learn as an observer.

Each participating country will review who are the poor and classify the poor into at least two groups; very poor and ordinary poor, each country will have at least two sets of poverty line figures in accordance with the definition; each will refine former poverty line figures under the same criteria/standard to make it comparable among countries.

It was agreed that based line information to be used in defining poverty line come from household minimum standard expenses set for common items as agreed during Khon Kaen meeting not from income!

There will be a national meeting/workshop to share the different view among the poor and government agencies, academics, researchers etc. and to explore common measure of poverty in each country.

ACHR UPCA IIED plan to organise regional workshop to exchange the figures/findings and plan the study and documentation to produce the report. The regional workshop was scheduled to be around August or September to comply with deadlines.

Summarised from PovertyLine Group coordinators. The research is supported by IIED UK. 20,000 Pounds

READ MORE

Download the earlier Poverty Line newsletter. [HERE](#)

http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file_16102014142111.pdf



Community Development Funds Study.

Community savings has been a basic building block for ACHR urban poor groups across Asia for the past 20 years or so. We have learnt through experience that Savings Mechanisms in poor communities draws people together; develops strengths of collective decision making; allows communities to devise financial systems to suit their circumstance; provides the poor with their own resource base; enables discussion / learning of how to solve difficult issues and strengthens the role of women in the community.

ACHR and friends are now preparing a new study on Community Finance in Asia. Teams from 5 countries - Cambodia, the Philippines, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand will investigate the role and benefits of Community Finance including new mechanisms of City Development Funds instigated under the ACCA program and operating in 136 cities with close to 400,000 active savers.. The study is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and starts this month (June) with support of 89,000 US\$. The elements in the process adopted in each country. The budget is to allow studies for all countries, to analyse structures, mechanisms, correlate statistics, and analyse the regional process. Working teams in each country are now being set-up.

Such study would help identify and frame strategic opportunities in order to achieve sustainable development for large scale community driven finance. The core team the study comprises: Nutta Ratanachaichan, Johanna Brugman, Natvipa Chalitanon, Le Thi Huyen and Somsook Boonyabancha

You can [READ MORE](#) about the Urban Poor Coalition Asia - UPCA at the ACHR website [HERE](#)

and A Special ACHR Newsletter on Community Funds (2007) Downloadable from [HERE](#)

5. ACHR Meeting on SELAVIP Proposals Plus HELD in Cambodia: Housing, Small Projects and Decent Poor

From the 22nd to 25th April, ACHR members met in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to consider proposals for the second round of projects supported by SELAVIP (see below) as well as discuss other ACHR activities such as the completion of the ACCA program.. The meeting gathered about 30 international participants from 11 countries (in particular those involved with SELAVIP proposals) : Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Vietnam, Philippines, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, together with local authorities and the community network in Cambodia.

SELAVIP continues to give support to coalition groups for the poorest of the poor and for new housing projects similar to the ACCA big housing projects.

At the ACHR Regional meeting in Cambodia in April, 8 countries (Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia and Vietnam) presented their proposals for housing projects. All participants discussed and analysed the proposals. Proposals for 5 projects were accepted: Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia. 8 countries will receive support for small upgrading projects and “Decent Poor” housing. The latter being small grants of loans to those identified by communities as being the poorest in the community.

Summary of ACHR - SELAVIP Proposals submitted Feb 2015 (US\$)

	Housing Project	Small Upgrading	Decent Poor
Pakistan	30,000	5,500	5,000
Cambodia	30,000	5,500	5,000
Nepal	30,000	5,500	
Mongolia		5,500	5,000
Indonesia	30,000	4,000	5,000
Sri Lanka	30,000	2,500	5,000
Vietnam		5,500	5,000
Laos		5,500	5,000

Total 247,500. 769 families involved in the Housing projects; 23 community, 12 cities and 1,800 families participating in the small upgrading projects; and 95 families in the Decent Poor projects
Notes by Tran Minh Chau. ACHR Sec.

6. UPCA's Regional Fund for the Poor

One important activity of the UPCA is the creation of a regional fund with starting contributions from ACCA communities to run the regional network and provide loans to more communities. The UPCA Fund serves as a financial mechanism wherein more community fund networks are set up and City Development Funds are strengthened to get more support from other sources. The Regional Revolving Fund was established as an experiment to access alternative financial resources for the urban poor communities. Since the first loan in 2011, up to now there are 13 loans of total 362,000USD. We are still working on getting repayment on time, and finding the more efficient method of payment for borrowers. Most are repaying in cash directly to ACHR. Up to the present the fund has been accessed by our coalition friends in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Mongolia and Nepal. Repayments total \$US168,683 from a loan fund totalling US\$ 362,000

From LeThi Huyen ACHR Sec.

7. ACHR, CAN and Cambodia's CAN-CAM host International students from DPU BUDD UK

TRANSFORMATION IN A TIME OF TRANSITION: ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE-DRIVEN UPGRADING STRATEGIES IN CAMBODIA

Edited note from DPU on the 2 week visit.

Cambodia experiments a turning point for its urbanisation processes and urban policy-making. In this context, the long-term alliance among The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) and the Community Architects Network (CAN) built a platform for engagement to rethink citywide upgrading processes. As part of the annual field trip project, for 20 days, DPU students from the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD), in collaboration with members of the ACHR and the Community Development Foundation (CDF), of CAN and CAN-Cam (Community Architects Network Cambodia), local students from different Universities in Phnom Penh, members of the General Department of Housing (GDH) of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC), actively engage in workshops to craft specific strategies of people driven upgrading on the basis of a full immersion in three informal communities in Phnom Penh and Kampong Thom.

The Cambodian capital city and provinces offer variegated spatial patterns of vulnerable population locations (i.e. along canals, on swamps, relocation sites, etc). Seasonal flooding worsens the already precarious conditions weakening the relationship with the environment. The workshop participants were divided across three sites (Boeng Veng Rik Chamroeun in Kampong Thom Province, Boeung Chhouk Meanchey Thmey and Anlong Kngan in Phnom Penh), sharing similar challenges - including lack of land tenure and basic services (water, sanitation, waste management) and features - related to the uncertain institutional and legal framework for the urban poor's access to land in the new course of the National Housing Policy implementation. Even when present, laws and regulations on land and housing are rarely fulfilled. But local people's knowledge and technologies, their inexhaustible inventiveness and resilience, their ability in organising and building, proves to be strong enough to resist unjust urban dynamics, reclaim the right to shape, build and inhabit the city.

The collaboration between international students, CAN and representatives of the recently established GDH, has been an attempt to expand the room to manoeuvre with the local authority and catalyse attention to people-driven processes in the production of the city and to highlight the imperative to forefront people's technologies as a way to feed a socially responsible urban public policy. Community members and students jointly developed proposals that were presented by community members to local officials and afterwards to the vice Governor in Phnom Penh, to facilitate further institutional recognition. Proposals included on-site upgrading (domestic space, shared spaces and infrastructures), incremental occupation and densification (sensitive re-blocking) and were developed in a collective endeavour through participatory activities such as dream house exercises and design workshops. From The MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD)



8. Completion of ACCA (Asian Coalition for Community Action) Program

ACCA program was founded on the ACHR network of 25 year-experience in community development. We are proud to have carried out a program that is implemented by people, based on concrete actions, driven by real needs, city-wide in its scale, strategic in its planning, done in partnership and oriented towards structural change. Starting from 2009 and ending in 2014, ACCA program has achieved:

- **Projects in 215 cities across 19 countries**
- **146 housing projects benefitting directly more than 10,000 families, indirectly more than 50,000 families**
- **2,139 small projects in 207 cities in 18 countries.**
- **136 revolving City Development Funds**
- **11,339 savings groups organised with 400,000 active savers about 34 million \$**

ACCA through its activities across Asia has drawn the focus in development to the community people themselves as the key factor in solving community issues. It has created platforms for experience sharing, from local scale to international scale. The activities have helped to better the collaboration between communities and local authorities, professionals and academia. ACCA has brought together communities across Asia. They have become more aware of their powers when connect together, when knowledge and experience is shared. They are the key factor of change.

ACCA has ended but it also opens and identifies for us different directions to go forward through activities in the community architects network, and in community development funds where the movement of urban poor communities can be further strengthened.

From Le Thi Huyen ACHR Sec.

