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ACHR E-NEWS

Jan-June 2016

1. NEPAL CAN WORKSHOP

Rebuilding Settlements with Communities

Thecho and Machhegaun, Kathmandu Valley, April 25th – May 1st, 2016

It had been a year since Nepal was rocked by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 25th of April, 2015. The earthquake and its aftershocks left 9000 dead and rendered severe damages to almost a million houses.

During the initial relief efforts ACHR was able to mobilize support through our network in Asia . The donation raised by ACHR and CAN for very quick support to Nepal earthquake totalled close to 50,000 USD. The fund raising did not only come from our ACHR network but from larger public contributions in Thailand and friends abroad. The money from this fund raising was amongst the very first assisting budget to the needy for emergency assistance for community needs, temporary housing arrangement, food, clothing, and planning on how to work together. ACHR's coordination in Nepal helped link Misereor with Lumanti, which led to Misereor's support for the rehabilitation project of Lumanti in the old town of Kathmandu. The rehabilitation efforts in Nepal overall have involved many organizations in the region and around the world, however the national process has been slow to start due to various reasons. In face of this, ACHR, CAN, together with Misereor and Lumanti decided to organize a workshop to search for an alternative solution that allows communities to pro-actively start their own rehabilitation as a group, as a collective body, while trying to restore some of the old characters of their communities pre-earthquake.



The workshop on “Rebuilding Settlements with Communities” was a weeklong program (25th April 2016- 1st May 2016) scheduled to begin at the mark of anniversary of the earthquake. It was supported by Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) based in Bangkok and MISEREOR with technical support from its international Community Architect’s Network (CAN). The event brought together international experts-experienced in rebuilding post disaster in their respective countries together with a team of national volunteer architects and technical team of LUMANTI (totally 26 professionals) in exercising a participative community led settlement planning process. The workshop was based in two areas- Thecho, Bajrabarahi Municipality and Machhegaun, Chandragiri Municipality. Thecho and Machhegaun are two of the seventh century ancient settlements in Kathmandu valley with historical and cultural significance. Both areas suffered great damage of buildings during the earthquake of 2015.

Objectives of the workshop:

- Prepare a model of community driven process in rebuilding settlements
- To provide training and exposure to community representatives on community driven reconstruction process
- Share ideas with various organizations participating in rebuilding settlements with communities

After the 7-day workshop, communities in these two areas formulated plans to quicken the reconstruction process and to coordinate with various stakeholders for financial support, materials sourcing as well as conservation plans for heritage areas.

Video of the workshop: Thanks Thanawin Wijitporn for this video and music. And thanks to all CAN and our Nepali friends & communities. You Tube Direct at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MStxu_SLA0&feature=youtu.be

2. DPU and CAN activities



City-wide
Upgrading
Workshop in
Phnom Penh,
Cambodia. April
29th - May 13th,
2016

**DPU and ACHR
friends continue
the collaboration
with workshops,
practicums in
Cambodia and
Internships in
Thailand and the
Philippines**

For the third year in a row, a group of masters students from the Development Planning Unit (DPU) and the Bartlett School of University College London (UCL) came to Cambodia to carry out field work for their course, over a two week period (April – May 2016). Their program in Cambodia was hosted by Cambodian Development Foundation (formerly UPDF), CAM CAN - the Cambodian Community Architects Networks, ACHR and with support and participation from UN-HABITAT, many local universities and government departments.

The group from DPU composed around 24 students from around 10 different countries. In field work and discussions they were joined by local CDF and CAN Cam staff and volunteers as well as students from local universities.

Over the first 2-3 days site visits to urban poor communities were arranged as well as presentations on Cambodian history, development and housing etc. Students were also introduced to the roles of the local CDF, CAN CAM, ACHR and ACCA and the Asia wide Community Architects Network.

For practical work and understanding of local urban poor communities 3 sites were selected each in Phnom Penh: 1. Pong ror senchey community, Porsenchey District, Phnom Penh city 2. Smorsan Community, Chbar Ampov District, 3. Steng Kambot Community, Prek Phnov District. There were opportunities at these sites to discuss and propose solutions to problems of land tenure, strengthening savings groups, improve community solidarity, upgrading of roads and housing, negotiation with other actors and local authorities and environmental management (plus!). Each group spent a week with the community members in discussions, mapping, planning and with presentations for feedback from various actors in urban development in Phnom Penh. The focus was on participatory planning and improvements. DPU students also all presented how elements of each of the problems and solutions in the communities could be put into a context of CITY-WIDE Upgrading.

Main objective of the workshop:

- Involve international and local student and young professionals to get first-hand experience of community work in 3 communities, in order to shape the next generation of planners and designers on city-wide, people driven development processes.
- Work together with communities and local authorities to produce concrete proposals for upgrading at community level and district or citywide strategies for future development.
- Get visibility attention and recognition for communities, the Community Development Foundation and the community-driven development approach at institutional level-both in the government and the academia, pushing forward policy change and curriculum reform.



DPU Internships In Asia: On May 21/22 discussions were held in Bangkok on the ACHR second collaboration with DPU on the placement of students in 6 months internships with countries in Asia.. This collaborative event was participated by Somsook Boonyabancha, General Secretary of ACHR, Maurice Leonhardt also from

ACHR, Supawut Boonmahathanakorn, CAN co-coordinator, Emelyn Bermundo from Philippine Alliance, Ploy Yamtree from Openspace, Catalina Ortiz, from DPU and the four new interns: - Cindy Huang, Nausica Castanas, Luisa Miranda, and David Hoffman,

This year 2 students will work with the Philippine Alliance (PACSII, HPFPI, TAMPEI, LinkBUild and CoreACS) in Manila and Cebu, Philippines. and 2 will be placed in Bangkok to work with Open Space community architects.

You may read more about the Internships at the Bartlett /DPU website:

<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu>

3. THAILAND: Preparatory workshop for 4th Regional CAN workshop in Chumsang (July 2016)

This year CAN will organizes the Regional Workshop to be a platform of mutual learning and working together in selected city. This is the 4th CAN Regional Workshop at Chumsang City, Thailand under the concept of **"CAN CO-CREATION"**

"CAN CO-CREATION" is the process of co-creating and design between man and natural world with profound understanding and respectful. It is a key stones for sustainable development that reflecting on community and city planning in practice concerning participation, regenerative and rehabilitate of the abundance of nature.

The 4th CAN Regional Workshop will be help at Chumsang City, a small city of Nakornsawan Province located on fertile basin of Choa Phra Ya River. Chumsang City can be the representative of any small cities in Asia that facing development issues like insecure housing, unplanned city, losing heritage, pressure of urbanization over the agriculture land, and flooding from the climate change. This workshop will be participated by community architect and professionals from 15 Asian countries together with community people and network in Chumsang, in total there are around 100 participants.

This workshop co-hosted by Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), Community Organization Development Institute (CODI), The Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA), Community Acts Netowork (CAN-Thailand), Phranakhon Rajabhat University, and Chumsang Municipality.

4. SOMSOOK'S VISIT TO THE USA

For a little over a week at the end of March and early April 2016, Somsook traveled to America to visit several organizations in Washington DC and New York City, where she gave presentations on the

citywide and people-driven slum upgrading work that has been done in Asia (under CODI and ACCA) and discussed possibilities for future collaboration. Somsook invited Tom Kerr, who is now living in Portland, Oregon, to join the visit and help keep notes on the discussions.

World Resources Institute, Washington DC

WRI (www.wri.org) is a global research organization and "think tank" whose work spans 50 countries, with offices in Brazil, China, Europe, India, Indonesia, Mexico and the USA. WRI has some 500 experts and staff who work with governments, development agencies, academic institutions and civil society organizations to bring big ideas into action on six urgent global challenges: cities, climate, food, forests and water. WRI team is now preparing a series of working papers on cities' most urgent priorities, including land use, housing, transport and access to water and energy. WRI examines whether meeting the needs of the urban poor can achieve more economically prosperous, environmentally sustainable and socially equitable cities for all. Somsook was here to talk about the experience of people-driven and citywide slum upgrading in Asia. On March 29, WRI filmed a five-minute and an hour-long interview in which Somsook was asked about how ACHR has evolved as an organization and what challenges she sees in providing secure and affordable shelter in cities in the coming decades. On the next day, Somsook gave an hour-long presentation about the citywide and people-driven upgrading process supported in Thailand by CODI, and in the Asia region by ACHR's ACCA Program. Both ACHR and WRI agreed on a possibility of a research collaboration.

Ashoka Foundation, Washington DC

Bill Drayton is the founder and chair of the Ashoka Foundation (www.ashoka.org), which since the 1970s has been dedicated to finding and fostering social entrepreneurs and "change makers" worldwide. Somsook, who was made an Ashoka fellow at the time ACHR was first getting started, is one of some 3,000 social entrepreneurs in the Ashoka global network, and she has been actively involved in the foundation's work at various points over the past few decades. Somsook and Tom were invited to lunch at the Ashoka's headquarters across the Potomac River, in Arlington, Virginia, where they discussed many things with Bill Drayton: the pros and cons of the group loan system for housing loans to the poor, the failure of the formal finance sector to reach the poor and the lack of "cognitive empathy" which is perhaps part of why that isn't happening.

World Bank, Washington DC

Somsook was invited by Yan Zhang, an urban economist who worked for several years in the WB's Philippines office and now back at WB headquarters in DC, to speak about the crucial role of finance in citywide and community-driven housing and poverty alleviation in Asia, and about CODI and ACCA. Somsook's presentation on March 31, and the lively question-and-answer session with WB staff that followed, was video-recorded and broadcast live to WB offices around the world, over the internet. In this meeting, Somsook and Yan also talked about a WB project on housing subsidies in South Africa to which ACHR could contribute technical supports.

Ford Foundation, New York

On April 4th, Somsook and Tom had a meeting at Ford Foundation with Don Chen, who heads the foundation's Equitable Development team, to discuss a possible partnership between ACHR and Ford. The Ford Foundation is undergoing a transition under its new director Darren Walker, and will be focusing its funding more on projects around the world which directly address inequality in

different ways. There are 4 thematic areas that ACHR could consider to propose for funding support:

- **Ford's Just Cities Initiative** (so far only in focus countries of Indonesia, India and China), addressing issues of land security, infrastructure equity, slum upgrading, urban governance and decision-making. But Ford wants to expand the foundation's "footprint" to more countries in Asia.
- **Regional projects in Asia:** The foundation might be able to support regional networking and exchange projects (and others?), and these kinds of region-wide projects will be managed directly by the New York headquarters, not by the regional offices in Jakarta, Delhi or Beijing.
- **Impact Investment Loans:** Ford will soon start giving low-interest loans at 1%, to capitalize alternative finance systems which finance affordable housing and healthy communities. These loans will probably come with some capacity-building grants, and could be used for loan guarantees, credit enhancement or to "buttress" CDFs. This is still in the planning phase.
- **Social Safety Net Program:** which helps fund projects which create "ladders out of poverty". Somsook describes Thailand's social welfare funds, and Don says that kind of thing might be possible for Ford support in other countries.

Resilient Cities Housing Initiative at MIT

The Resilient Cities Housing Initiative (RCHI) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) supports scholarship, curriculum development, action research, policy change and media projects which explore how low-income shelter and settlements can be designed or redeveloped to respond better to 21st century environmental and security challenges in an urbanizing world. The RCHI program looks not just at physical design, but at all the forces which affect poor communities (governance, land-use, finance, urban infrastructure and planning) and seeks to understand what processes lead to more equitable cities and better living conditions for everyone in cities. The RCHI Program, which involves some 20 MIT faculty members and researchers, has so far supported 8 pilot community housing projects in 6 countries (including 4 projects in Asia, in India, Indonesia and Singapore). Somsook and Tom met with Laura Wainer, an MIT Ph.D. candidate, who is currently involved in RCHI, to talk about how ACHR might become a resource for the program and help expand it to include more pilot cases in more Asian countries.

New School, New York City

The New School is a university in New York City that was founded a century ago (1919) by progressive educators. The New School's International Affairs Program has linked with ACHR for several years, through the program's current director Michael Cohen and former faculty member Bob Buckley (who later worked with Rockefeller and the World Bank). Michael Cohen invited Somsook to come speak to a group of New School students, some staff from the Ford Foundation and some old friends in New York, including Bob Buckley, Sherry Bartlett (who edits the IIED Journal Environment & Urbanization with David Satterthwaite and is now based in New York) and Makrand Bhoot (one of the pioneering community architects who worked with SPARC on some of the early Mahila Milan housing and toilet projects in Bombay). Here, Somsook gave a presentation describing the people-driven and citywide upgrading initiatives in Thailand and Asia, being supported by CODI and ACCA respectively. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session with the New School students.

Discussion about World Bank's ACCA Report with Bob Buckley

In 2013, Bob Buckley was hired to come do an assessment of the ACCA Program for the World Bank. As part of this assessment, Bob joined one of the ACHR regional meetings in Bangkok, and then made field visits to ACCA projects in Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines. After some delay within the World Bank, his 60-page report was published in 2014. It was a glowing tribute to the ACCA Program's strategies, and translated those strategies and outcomes into language the economists within the World Bank would be able to understand. The report went a long way towards legitimizing the ACCA approach to the upper layer of the formal development sector. But in New York, Bob tells us he fears his assessment of the ACCA Program was not conclusive, and that some argue he visited only carefully-chosen projects that were more successful and based too much of the report on ACHR figures. Bob recommends the commission of a new, more rigorous audit of the ACCA program, to give more empirical evidence that it works.

5. ACHR-SELAVIP Housing project 2015 – 2016

Moving from individual beneficiaries to a community-wide project approach: During the 2011 – 2014 with the SELAVIP's support the Decent Poor Program has been implemented alongside ACHR's Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) Program. The program has provided small grants which have allowed poor community networks in 150 cities in 12 Asian countries, to construct or upgrade the housing of their own poorest and most vulnerable community members, and insure they are not left out of the larger citywide housing upgrading process. Besides bringing direct, physical benefit and improved housing to about 600 of the most vulnerable urban poor households, the Decent Poor Fund program has helped change attitudes of the local authorities, community networks and other stakeholders in those cities and shown them how to ensure this vulnerable group is not left out of the citywide housing development process.

The ACHR-SELAVIP Housing Project 2015-2016: The ACCA Program has come to an end at the end of 2014, therefore, ACHR has submitted the new 2 -year proposal to SELAVIP in the early 2015 –this new proposal has been modified and enlarged. The ACHR-SELAVIP Housing project will support both the continuation of the housing development and upgrading activities by poor people and the Regional Decent Poor Fund program, using the community networks which already exist at city and national levels in each country to solve land and housing problems of the poorest communities, and to make sure that the poorest and



most vulnerable families in those communities are included in the process. It is to keep housing development and community upgrading of the poor people and the poorest still working in active regional momentum and link together into a learning network

In the January 2015, the regional meeting was held in Bangkok to launch the project in 2015. The ceiling amounts of the 3 activities and of each country have been settled. By which, the maximum support per country is 40,500 US\$ including 30,000 US\$ for big housing project, 5,500 \$US for small upgrading projects and 5,000 \$US for decent housing for the poorest.

In the April 2015, the 2nd regional meeting was taken place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The participants of 12 countries have presented, discussed and made approval together the first year project. Total 8 countries participating: Pakistan, Mongolia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam and Nepal. There are 42 cities/districts involved. The 6 Big Housing Projects in 5 countries. In which, 3 projects support the communities to find ways to deal with eviction; the 2 projects support the poorest communities and the one post- disaster project. 24 small upgrading projects were implemented; and 8 Country-based Decent Poor Housing project.

In the October 2015, back-to- back with the Asia Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-6), the 3rd regional meeting was taken place in Jakarta. The participants of 9 countries and about 40 community leaders and community architects from the 10 cities in Indonesia have updated the recent achievements towards city-wide upgrading in 8 participating countries

The second phase, ACHR-SELAVIP Housing project 2016 has been launched at this meeting.

The on-going project 2016 includes: Total 9 countries and 41 cities participated. The total 1700 poor families will be directly benefited and participated in the 3 activities as following:

- A. **Big Housing Project:** 6 countries and 7 cities (Indonesia has 2 housing projects in 2 cities) -
- B. **Small Upgrading project:** 7 countries and 8 cities-
- C. **Decent Poor Housing:** 7 countries and 27 cities and provinces

By the early of June, ACHR has signed the Funding Agreement with the 8 countries. The 7 countries have received the 1st batch of budget.

The new ACHR-SELAVIP Housing Project 2017: Over the last month, the May 2016, our regional network has been prepared for the new set of country proposals 2017. In the last June 16, Somsook Boonyabancha has presented our ACHR newtwork's initial proposals at the anual meeting of SELAVIP Board in Brussels, Belgium. After this meeting SELAVIP Board is still discussing about the ceiling amount of support budget. A general agreement is that the amount will be increased a bit compared to the last 2 years. Roughly, about 350,000 \$US. So we will update soon.

An overview of new PROPOSAL 2017

- ♣ **12 Countries:** Pakistan, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, India (Tibet Heritage Fund); Indonesia, Lao PDR, Afghanistan, and Philippines.
- ♣ 66 Cities/Districts/Towns
- ♣ 17 NGOs, technical support, coordination
- ♣ **11,459 HHs** indirectly benefiting

♣ 8,654 HHs directly benefited/participated

Accordingly, PROPOSED BUDGET is as follows

Total amount requested:	550,000
• Big Housing projects:	320,000
• Small Upgrading projects:	59,000
• Decent Poor Housing:	45,000
• Community-based Waste Management:	48,000
• Regional Coordination	63,000
• Advocacy housing policy	15,000

6. German Habitat Forum

During 1-2 June 2016, Somsook was invited to be a speaker at and host a joint workshop with Cities Alliance as part of the German Habitat Forum. Other friends in the region were also invited including friends from Uganda and Brazil. Below is a brief overview of the workshop

Inclusive Cities: Poverty, Inequality and Social Mobility

Workshop Convener: ACHR, Cities Alliance

Panel:

- Somsook Boonyabancha, ACHR
- Saidul Karim Mintu, Mayor of Jhenaidah Municipality, Bangladesh
- Mahmuda Alam, Community Leader, Bangladesh
- Junia Santa Rosa, former Housing Secretary, Ministry of Cities, Brazil
- Muhammed Lutwama, ACTogether and Slum Federation, Uganda
- Frederic Vallier, CEMR

Moderator: William Cobbett, Cities Alliance

In many cities in Latin America, Asia and Africa, where *informal and illegal* settlements can accommodate between 30 and 80 per cent of the urban populations, the future of the city will be significantly determined by the effectiveness of social inclusion. Yet, even though the residents of these informal settlements and slums make a significant contribution to urban economic growth, they are often deprived of even the most basic urban services, such as water supply, drainage or sewerage systems, personal and tenure security.

The workshop discussed issues such as what makes cities inclusive, the definition of the city itself, the provision of access to public spaces and public services, the rights of women and the promotion of

gender equality, all of which are essential in ensuring that everybody has access to all parts of the city. The workshop participants raised questions on the main obstacles to inclusivity for cities, and why the inclusivity gap is increasing. They acknowledged that the challenge we still face is balancing the trade-off between social and environmental agendas and determining how housing programmes and inclusivity programmes could foster low carbon development. The burden of these challenges is often falling on the unhoused.

The workshop put forward the following main messages to the participants and the public:

- Give people the opportunity to act: enabling is key. Providing seed funding and the legal framework is necessary for them to drive change in our cities.
- Inclusive development can only happen if all citizens are part of it, regardless of their legal and economic status. Therefore, citizens can become actors, rather than only users
- Who will finance inclusion? Are we promoting competing approaches, such as low carbon cities versus smart and innovative cities versus inclusive cities? We need to confront urban challenges in an integrated way.

7. Recent Interviews, Presentation, Videos -

New Video on Community Upgrading in Bangladesh



Greetings from Bangladesh! Here is the link of the story of community upgrading at Jhenaidah:

<https://vimeo.com/168220287>

From the SDI site

Scaling Up Informal Settlement Upgrading: The CODI Model Thailand



By Yolande Hendler (on behalf of CORC) While the value of in-situ informal settlement upgrading is increasingly recognised by national and global actors

SASDIALLIANCE.ORG.ZA

<http://sasdialliance.org.za/scaling-up-informal-settlement.../>

Kirtee Shah Interview- Humanitarian Architects

Must read Kirtee Shah Interview- Humanitarian Architects KIRTEESHAH.WORDPRESS.COM

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