

PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO WHAT'S ALREADY THERE . . .

The poor are the designers and implementors of Asia's most far-reaching systems of housing and service delivery. These systems reach economic rock bottom and cover more lives and more ground than any government programme or development intervention can ever do. Poor settlements grow and flourish around a well-established quantum of applied understanding of *how to survive*: how to get a house, a tap, a loan in an emergency, you name it.

These systems are not ideal, largely "illegal", often inequitable and sub-standard in many ways. But they represent a reasonable and ordered response to urgent necessity, where no alternatives exist. In this evidence of human creativity in ragged clothes, there is a remarkable independence, a self-generating vitality which is one of the great, unchanneled sources of energy in Asia. It makes nuclear fission look like wet matches by comparison.

Governments tend to view all this energy as misbehavior on a colossal scale and seek to control or punish it, while development interventions often end up hijacking it, in the name of somebody else's idea of what the poor need.

But imagine what would happen if this potential were channeled in such a way as allowed communities of the poor to experiment, to conduct their own "R and D"? What if their efforts were legitimized and assisted, the way scientists are given laboratories and research budgets? And what if development interventions could nurture this process with a light touch, grounded in a fundamental respect for the poor and for their systems?

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**Asian
Coalition
for Housing
Rights**

HOUSING

by People

IN ASIA

Newsletter of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights

Number 11, April 1998

ADDING OPTIONS

The irrepressible people in Bangkok's Klong Toey Slum have used years of eviction resistance to legitimise their tenure rights and to carve out several viable land-sharing options for people in the area's many communities, but the battle with the Port isn't over.

PHOTO
1 - A

PHOTO
1 - B

BUILDING BETTER

In the *katchi abadis* of Pakistan's large cities, the majority of urbanites survive through intricate informal systems for supplying land, housing and basic services. The OPP-RTI and URC have used judicious and technical interventions to upgrade these informal systems and to help formalise them in the process.

PHOTO
1 - C

STAYING PUT

In Seoul, millions of poor and low-income families in long-established neighborhoods are being swept aside, by Korea's *slash and burn* techniques of urban renewal, to make way for "Redevelopment Zones." But many of them are saying no, and struggling for the right to stay where they have always lived and worked.

PHOTO
1 - D

GETTING SUBSIDIES

After years of struggle, preparation and negotiation, the South African Homeless People's Federation and People's Dialogue have re-written the housing subsidy rules. Now it is poor people themselves, and not contractors, who decide how to use their housing capitol subsidies, and how to build their own houses.

ACHR UPDATE :

ACHR Meeting and 10th anniversary :

The ACHR regional meeting in Bangkok this April will be the largest since the *Asian People's Dialogue*, organised in the middle of serious evictions in Korea in 1989. The meeting will also mark the beginning of ACHR's second decade. One of its purposes will be to find ways of building a stronger, clearer relationship between what is happening on the ground *locally*, and what we can all do together *regionally*, to create change for the urban poor.

The meeting comes after two months of in-country meetings around Asia, in which local groups have come together to talk over issues, set up their own coordinating mechanism and select representatives to send to the regional meeting.

The attempt this time has been to spread out the discussion process to individual countries and cities, to draw in more groups and to decentralise the preparations for the meeting and selection of participants by pushing a local process. Many groups approached the secretariat here in Bangkok directly, asking for invitations. But we have presided firmly over phone and fax machine, and told one would-be participant after another, *your country process will decide who comes, not the ACHR secretariat*.

This was not always an easy or practical position to maintain - it arose not from stubbornness but from a belief that the roots of a strong regional process are in *local* actions and *local* communities. The question is how to make such a regional process, so that it arises from local actions, rather than forcing local actions to adjust themselves to fit regional programmes, the way most international agencies do things.

The regional meeting provides an opportunity to work to build regional actions together - a new phase of regional actions which relates closely to on-the-ground realities and leads to equally grounded changes in cities around Asia.

To do this, we can't let ourselves get bogged down in the forms and structure of ACHR itself, but must focus on working together to make change and pooling the accumulated wisdom of all the extraordinary and diverse work being done around Asia. That will give a clearer form of what ACHR is and can be.

PHOTO 2 - A

The acronym SDI was carefully chosen to be convertible, according to regional terminology - in Africa, it's "Shack Dwellers International" while in Asia it's "Slum Dwellers International." But no matter what you call them, poor settlements around the world are a bottomless resource of energy and ideas which SDI is setting out to tap.

Slum Dwellers International Takes Off ...

The idea *Slum Dwellers International (SDI)* first came up in South Africa in 1996, when grassroots groups from Asia, Africa and South America came together to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the *South African Homeless Peoples Federation*. All the groups there had in common a belief that strong communities and strong savings and credit processes are fundamental tools in the world-wide struggle for decent, secure shelter, and that poor people are their own best teachers. This past year, the SDI network has come alive . . .

- A team from **SAHPF** and **People's Dialogue** traveled to India and met their Minister of Housing from Gauteng Province, who was on an official South African Government delegation to visit the NSDF/MM/SPARC Alliance. This kind of "integrated exchange" visit, involving leaders from community, government and NGO, gives everybody a chance to understand each other's perspective, well removed from conventions and pressures of home, within a vibrant poor people's process.
- A team of leaders from the sprawling Payatas slum in Manila traveled to South Africa with Father Norberto and his **Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation (VMSDFI)**. They came to learn from direct exposure how to strengthen their savings and credit systems and link saving to planning for house building. While they were in Durban, they took part in the pegging out of plots on new land acquired by a SAHPF Housing Savings Scheme. They also met with communities from Namibia who are at a similar stage in their community development process.
- The **Payatas Scavengers Federation** will hold its first model housing exhibition in Manila later this year. The idea was sparked by another exchange, to the Mahila

Other items on the recent and upcoming SDI calendar :

- Support for the emerging Urban Poor Community Federation in Zimbabwe
- A team from South Africa went on an exposure to urban poor communities in Peru and Brazil.
- A South African team, experienced with managing the *uTshani Housing Fund*, will go to Cambodia to support the new *Urban Poor Fund* in Phnom Penh.
- Newly organised communities in Zimbabwe will go to India on exposures to Mahila Milan savings and credit.
- More African exchanges involving Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Namibia.

Children and Eviction :

The under-examined casualties of violence and uncertainty . . .

The alarming impacts of evictions have been widely publicised, but their effect on the most vulnerable of all evictees - children - has been the subject of surprisingly little study. From September 1996 to May 1997, a collaborative study of children and eviction was undertaken by ESCAP and ACHR's Eviction Watch Programme. Children who had been through evictions talked about their experiences in special workshops held in three Asian cities - Phnom Penh, Mumbai and Manila, with help from local groups (USG in Phnom Penh, YUVA in Mumbai and UPA in Manila). Here are a few excerpts from the report written by Tanya Ramatullah :

A critical milestone in the movement for children's rights was the *United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child*, ratified by 187 countries in November 1989, to help secure a full and healthy life for all children. Hundreds of thousands of poor families in Asian cities are evicted every year and forced to exist in a state of daily uncertainty. Besides the loss of homes, evictions destroy the complex support structures which provide a safety net against crises, illness, loss of jobs. Children are the innocent victims of this drama, traumatized by the destruction of their homes and neighborhood.

Childhood is the most uncertain stage of a person's life, and the basis for all future development. Emotional impacts, whether positive or harmful, can effect children considerably in the years ahead. One of the earliest concepts children develop is the one of *home*.

Homes and neighborhoods are a children's primary environment during that critical early period of their lives, when they then are developing most rapidly. Stability is necessary for children.

E victions - the uncertainty before, the violence during and the dislocation afterwards - cause shock, deprivation, loss and trauma, all of which can severely limit a child's social and emotional development, and the child's ability to learn. Also evictions, or the threat of evictions, can keep children from getting an education or advancing their families economic situation by working. In many cases, children are unable to go to school because they have to guard their homes against demolition.

During the event of a demolition, children are often exposed to violence and abuse. Homes are destroyed, neighbors and family members injured or killed, people are shouting and crying - all increase children's anxiety. As a consequence, some children develop a range of phobias and fearful reactions - some grow up to be violent themselves.

CONTACT : Jorge Carrillo, ESCAP Rural and Urban Development Division
United Nations Building, Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200 THAILAND
Tel (662) 288-1613 Fax (662) 288-1097 E-Mail: carrillo.unescap@un.org

What kind of things figure in the children's pictures of their ideal houses?

Nothing too fancy, just a little house with a door, flowers, a tree for shade, birds, a cupboard to keep clothes, a fan, a water tap, a bird on the roof.

**PHOTO
3 - A**

What the kids say . . .

- Afterwards : Many of the children in the study, in all three cities, were living at relocation sites or squatting near their old settlements, constantly worried about being evicted again, missing school, having no secure place to stay. Some spoke about cooking out in the rain, living underneath parked trucks, having no toilet.

- Kid's Dreams: The children were asked to draw or talk about their ideal houses. A girl in Phnom Penh liked her old settlement because it had good roads, flower pots, coconut trees, and it was near the market. She didn't like the garbage dump that was in front of her new home.

- During evictions, kids often helped gather belongings or look after younger siblings while parents tried to negotiate with the police or authorities. Em Phalla in Phnom Penh was cooking rice when the eviction began. The police kicked over her rice pot, but she quickly gathered family's belongings, and had the wherewithal to steal the gasoline the police brought to burn the houses. Children in Manila had to guard their belongings piled in the street, so they couldn't sleep or play. In Mumbai, they missed school and were ashamed of losing their school uniforms.

- Scared : Many were understandably terrified of police, scared they were going to be sent away in a truck. In Phnom Penh, a policeman held a gun to a boy's head and threatened to shoot. Another girl saw her pregnant mother beaten. In Manila, children were sick from tear-gas and chased by men with truncheons. Children in Mumbai, felt *angry* during evictions, and anger made them want to fight, to fling stones, to remove the air from the police-van tires.

- Under-nourished: Most of the children were small for their age, testimony to scarce food and inconsistent nourishment. During the workshop, many would only nibble their snacks and put the rest in their pockets, to carry back to brothers and sisters at home.

- Quarreling and beatings: Children in Manila described parents quarreling more often after the eviction, elder siblings coming home drunk, and getting beaten more often, even when they hadn't done anything wrong. Many of their parents could not work afterwards, so there was less food and they ran out of cooking fuel.

Eviction Watch Report :

The ACHR Eviction Watch Programme's second report, *Forced Evictions and Housing Rights Abuses in Asia, 1996-97* is now being printed. For a copy, contact ACHR in Bangkok, or the URC in Karachi.

SURVEY NOTES :

Enumeration Lesson No. 1 : Information is not a point, it's a line ...

Statistical numbers can tell very different stories about cities and about the poor, depending on whose numbers you're reading. When municipal governments survey poor settlements, it is often with a view to *containment* - once their surveys are done, they become final, and state resources are subsequently based on those numbers. But that's a risky way to dole out pieces of the development pie, because it ignores the dynamics of how cities grow and function. When those kinds of numbers talk, they limit, they oversimplify, they exclude.

But when poor communities are the surveyors, their numbers can have a very different effect. Community surveys can establish the basis for interaction with cities, with NGOs, and with other communities, through data, which is an acceptable and common language. Communities can use numbers and statistics to state facts, and the facts speak for themselves. Numbers can change the tenor of community's presentation because the quantification of people and their problems are facts, not value judgments.

And, when poor communities are the surveyors, their numbers can elucidate, can reveal, can open up worlds which have been unknown and misunderstood. Federations of poor communities around Asia are increasingly using the tool of city-wide slum surveys and household enumeration to strengthen their process in different ways. Here are three examples of community survey processes which do much more than just collect information.

In all these enumeration processes, we begin to see the difference between surveys which produce numbers that remain stagnant, and surveys which are part of a process, which help build stronger communities and stronger federations of communities.

PHOTO
4 - A

*From nothing to
a network, in
two years:*

Now meetings are being held in Chiang Mai with representatives of community network offshoots in 3 nearby cities - Chiang Rai, Lamphoon and Mae Hong Son. All these have conducted similar community surveys, with Chiang Mai acting as a guide to these newer processes.

PHOTO
4 - B

Enumeration as Network-Builder : Sharper numbers and stronger communities go hand in hand ...

The same thing happens everywhere: official information about slums is often inaccurate, poor people get under-counted, their problems remain invisible when it's time to form policies. In Thailand, community networks in Bangkok and provincial cities have used enumeration as a potent federation-building tool. Community surveys do many things: they dig up facts about slums which nobody else has, provide first contact into communities, build contacts between communities, help broaden the network and spread around information and give communities a powerful tool for negotiating with municipalities.

You don't need a Ph.D. in statistics to do a good survey. For people in the community networks, surveying isn't difficult or mysterious, as professionals and officials would have us believe. It's just a simple, natural process of counting, talking, asking questions and looking around. Even if it isn't perfect at first, people can easily make corrections and keep updating survey information. *Here's are some brief notes at the evolving survey process in the Thai city of Chiang Mai:*

- **Before 1996** : Municipality officially recognises only **21 slum settlements** in the city. UCDO savings and credit groups form, spark off a loose community network.
- **June 1996** : Community leaders, NGOs, government officials and academics form committee, conduct the first survey of the city's slums, with help from *People's Organisation for Participation* and UCDO. Survey collects data on land ownership, tenure, settlement age, number of houses, population, problems, basic services. The survey counts **65 settlements**, makes many new contacts, gets people talking.
- **October 1996** : Seminar held to discuss survey results with community people, municipal officials, NGOs, academics and UN officials. Five groups organised to focus on key problems: housing, environment and basic services, community rights, health and access to credit for income. UCDO publishes Chiang Mai survey report. Municipality still doesn't officially accept survey's numbers, but *does* accept the Community Network, which starts attending city meetings. Official slum count stands at 21, but city sends health workers to the 65 slums as well.
- **March 1997** : Network contacts Chiang Mai University for aerial photos to help process. Professor has aerial photo on which he counts *100 slums*. University students do physical survey of all 60 slums, using baseline data from the community's survey, publishes report with maps.
- **August 1997** : Network gets stronger, bigger. Joint committee meets once a month now (including community leaders, municipal officials, NGOs and academics). Relationship with city gets more institutionalised. Network becomes visible, and a player in other urban development activities.
- **December 1998** : Network begins another city-wide slum survey, using university maps and help from a team of young architects from *Community Architects for Shelter and Environment*, to further sharpen understanding about poor settlements, and to get more communities involved in the network.

Enumeration as Universe Definer : Second Survey of Pavement Dwellers in Bombay ...

Fourteen years ago, after the Supreme Court upheld the city's right to evict pavement dwellers, the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres helped the newly-formed Mahila Milan conduct a landmark survey of pavement dwellers, one of the poorest and least-understood of Bombay's poor groups. Last year, an older and more confident Mahila Milan conducted another survey. The following notes come from SPARC's report on the survey, called "**We the Invisible Revisited.**"

To say enumeration mobilises everyone who participates would be overstating the case. But enumeration **begins to define a universe**. The dialogue between communities, households and organisations, which is part of an enumeration process, helps make each aware of the other's existence. There is no need to conjecture any more about the nature of the constituency.

The first pavement survey described a widely-misunderstood universe in language everyone could understand, showed that pavement dwellers weren't thieves and parasites, as the myth held, but working families, whose cheap labour the city needed, but whose human needs it ignored. Unlike slum dwellers, pavement dwellers were not a recognised "category", were bypassed by most entitlements and interventions - so no ration cards, basic services, loans or rehabilitation schemes. The survey also showed that the city's strategy of demolishing pavement dwellings didn't solve the problem, only further impoverished those without other options, and forced them to move to other pavements.

Mahila Milan's second pavement enumeration is now complete. Much has happened in the intervening years. Bombay is realising that formal and informal parts of the city have to interact to solve the city's problems. The state's new *Slum Rehabilitation*

Policy, which makes pavement dwellers eligible for rehabilitation, is evidence that the old equations are changing.

The demolitions haven't stopped, but MM is using this second survey to enlarge membership and equip pavement communities to push the state to deliver it's part of the SRA policy. The women have found survey data makes a good point of dialogue and use the survey process to find mutually-beneficial ways of working with their traditional adversaries in the city.

PHOTO 5 - A

A Few "People's Process" Survey Tricks :

TAKING AN AVERAGE : When you ask about problems and numbers in slums, people all have different answers. The Chiang Mai Network gets answers from as many people as possible, then gathers the whole team to fill out the form together, afterwards, taking an "average" of all the responses.

SPLITTING UP : When SUPF surveys, their teams split up into separate tasks - question-askers, house-counters, boundary-measurers.

GETTING LOST : Counting and mapping houses in big slums can get you lost in the maze of small lanes. When Sadak Chaap kids are helping survey, they work in teams - somebody plants himself at a central place while others go off in different directions and circle back to home-base.

STEPS AND SAREES : Instead of using a tape measurer, which not everybody understands, Mahila Milan uses the width and length of a saree and Cambodian's use pacing to measure lanes and houses they're surveying.

STOPPING FOR SNACKS: Paa Sarieem, from SUPF in Phnom Penh, likes to make frequent pit stops when surveying, and conversations with the street-side fried-banana lady or the roasted-peanut man often lead the team to new settlements they wouldn't have found otherwise.

PHOTO 5 - B

Enumeration as Credential : Using people's facts to build working relationships in Cambodia ...

Since 1993, SUPF has been involved in several enumerations of "squatter settlements". Earlier surveys brought up many issues and helped SUPF direct its work to communities most vulnerable to eviction. They also helped forge partnerships with supporters in the Cambodia development scene - municipal officials, NGOs, bilateral agencies, architecture students and other community groups in Phnom Penh.

But still missing from these "squatter settlement" surveys was a more comprehensive picture of all poor settlements in Phnom Penh, and the problems they face - lack of basic services, poor housing, eviction, flooding, fires. In December 1996, SUPF conducted their most extensive survey yet, covering all poor settlements in the city and collecting information about amenities, settlement history, problems, and employment.

The survey results aren't perfect, and keep being added to, but they are the city's most comprehensive data-bank on Phnom Penh's poor settlements and the problems they face. The survey was a breakthrough in understanding for SUPF and for the city as a whole. It has been an important ingredient in the federation's increasingly productive working relationship with municipal officials. For SUPF, enumeration is another accomplishment, another source of confidence and another tool in their process of negotiating with municipal authorities and other organisations for resettlement and basic services.

With each survey, the numbers get larger, the questions being asked get more specific. Skills in the communities get sharper, knowledge is upgraded, accuracy increases. Each time, the survey process gets more in communities' control. Now, SUPF is using special sanitation surveys to plan toilet-building projects and conducting household enumerations as part of preparations for specific relocation projects.

CAMBODIA :

When Poor Communities and Cities work Together, things happen . . .

An extraordinary series of events in the past year have opened new possibilities for the urban poor in Phnom Penh. It is as though somebody turned up the current, and the lights suddenly got brighter. In the next few pages, you'll read about several initiatives that are bringing the poor into the city's development as *partners*.

The *Squatter and Urban Poor Federation* has long been preparing for this - running savings and credit groups, surveying and mapping their settlements, designing affordable house models, searching for alternative land, carrying out settlement improvement projects and joining in local and regional exposure visits. All these activities have helped the federation grow, and begun to carve out realistic alternatives to eviction. SUPF has won increasing support for its initiatives from other development organisations in the city such as UNCHS, URC, and all levels of the Municipal Government.

These kinds of developments only happen when people from government, NGOs and communities are committed to change. In the past year, bonds between SUPF and municipal officials have strengthened when they traveled together on several ACHR-TAP sponsored exposure visits to Thailand and India.

"Squatters" no more : When Phnom Penh's Municipal Cabinet Chief, Man Choeurn, returned from India, he invited NSDF President Jockin and SUPF members to a meeting of the city's Khan chiefs, where he described how the exposure visits had given them all a greater understanding of potential solutions to problems of the city's poor settlements and announced that "squatters" (which in *Khmer* has connotations of lawlessness) would henceforth be "urban poor, who are a legitimate part of the city, and need to be integrated into the city's development."

SUPF followed up with their own name change to the *Solidarity for Urban Poor Federation* (but the initials SUPF remain).

There are many groups involved in supporting the Cambodia:

ACHR, UNCHS CDP-Asia, MISEREOR, Slum Dwellers International, Selavip, UNCHS / DFID-UK Cambodia, the Municipality of Phnom Penh, URC, Solidarity for Urban Poor Federation.

Partners in improving the life of the whole city : The integrated exchange visits involving city officials and poor federation members went a long way in helping municipal officials to recognize the "win-win" potential of a working relationship with SUPF.

PHOTO
6 - A

Roadside Settlement gets land :

The Toul Svay Prey roadside settlement is located in Chamkar Mon District, whose chief, Lor Ry, was anxious to find solutions to the problem of squatters in his district. He traveled to India and Thailand on the first *integrated* exposure trip, along with SUPF leaders. When he got home, he brought Chea Sophara, the First Vice Governor of the Phnom Penh Municipality, out to visit the roadside community, and secured his help negotiating for alternative land.

Men Chamnan, a SUPF leader and now village head of Toul Svay Prey, went around with Lor Ry "shopping for land." They identified a one-hectare piece of open land at Boeng Krapaer, just two kilometres from the settlement and close to a developing industrial site. Community members visited the land, and because it was close to markets, jobs and schools, gave it the thumbs up. On November 5th, 1997, Chea Sophara officially allotted the land to 129 households of the Toul Svay Prey roadside settlement - 54 square metres per family. This is the first case of the Cambodian Government giving land to poor families living in a roadside squatter settlement.

The land was purchased by the Municipality at US\$3 per square metre, and allotment papers have already been issued to the families. Community members will build and pay for their own houses together, using loans from the new *Urban Poor Fund* (see next page). Four plots will be used for a community school, one for an office and one for a dispensary and well. Housing savings in Toul Svay Prey (which was already one of the best savers in the federation) have really shot up, with 30 new members joining in.

Development by "Community Contract" - The UNCHS Project will help develop the site, which includes raising the ground above flood level and providing basic water, drainage and sanitation infrastructure, before the house-building begins and people move in. The plan is to do this by means of a "community contract" where the people themselves, rather than a contractor, will prepare their own plans for drainage, roads, sewage and water supply, and carry out the work themselves. That way, the community can design and build its own drainage, toilets and roads, so the project will become the training ground for other communities down the redevelopment pipeline.

Pit Latrines versus Underground Sewers . . .

There's an old assumption in development that the poor get pit latrines and open drains, while the rich get underground sewers. The *Orangi Pilot Project* in Pakistan has shown that this infrastructural caste-system doesn't make any sense, that with a little technical assistance and an open mind, poor communities can build effective, inexpensive underground sewers that cost as much or less than open drains and individual pit latrines. With help from OPP's Arif Hasan, the Toul Svay Prey community is looking into the possibility of an underground sewage system, which will drain into small septic tanks modeled on the *Haudis* they have developed in the lanes of Karachi's *katchi abadis*.

Urban Poor Development Fund :

First \$5,000 contribution to the fund comes from the people ...

*The land was given, the houses and infrastructure were being planned, everybody was saving like mad. The only thing missing was finance, which so far in Cambodia is not available to the poor in any way. That's when the idea emerged of creating a revolving loan fund to help poor communities build new houses. The municipality was behind it from the start and agreed to contribute to the fund. In March, 1998, the **Urban Poor Development Fund** was signed into reality by SUPF, ACHR and the Municipality of Phnom Penh. Here is how it will work:*

1 What will the fund do ?

Phnom Penh's poor have no access to credit from formal financial institutions. The fund will provide them affordable credit for housing and settlement improvement, through their savings groups and community federations. The fund will strengthen the capacity of communities to manage their own development process and support the partnership between municipal government, community groups and NGOs.

2 Who can borrow from the fund ?

The fund will eventually be available to settlements actively involved in a community savings process, *not to individuals*. Community organisations and federations can become members of the fund. At first, yearly membership will be one dollar per household, which will be the urban poor's contribution to the fund.

3 Who will decide how the fund is used ?

The fund will operate independently, but under the umbrella of the Phnom Penh Municipality, and will be managed with as little bureaucracy and as much flexibility as possible. The fund's Governing Body will include two representatives from the municipality, two from SUPF, one from ACHR, two from other community organisations, one from an NGO, one "co-opted" member and one fund manager. The Governing Body will appoint a chairperson, treasurer and full time manager, and will develop the rules, review the fund's operation, make policies for its use, set loan terms and interest rates, raise funds to augment the fund and determine the annual contribution from communities.

4 How much money will be available in the fund ?

The plan is to eventually raise the fund to as much as US\$ one million, but the fund will start with an initial capital of US\$ 75,000, which comprises :

- \$ 5,000 - from the Solidarity and Urban Poor Federation (SUPF)
- \$ 10,000 - from Slum Dwellers International (SDI)
- \$ 35,000 - from Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (with Selavip's help)
- \$ 25,000 - from Municipality of Phnom Penh

5 Who pays for managing the fund ?

For the first year, costs of managing the fund will not come out of the fund itself. The Municipality will provide one staff member and a room for the fund office, and ACHR and UNCHS will jointly raise funds for office equipment, running costs and the expenses of three volunteers.

PHOTO
7 - A

*Communities like this one, along the Basaac River in Phnom Penh, are running active savings and credit groups. Through the **Urban Poor Development Fund**, they will eventually have access to affordable credit for housing and infrastructure improvements.*

PHOTO
7 - B

The area around the immaculate new toilet, which gets good light and cross-breezes, has become a place of congregation. Women wash their clothes at the tap and sit chatting on bamboo platforms while they cut vegetables or feed their babies with spoonfuls of rice porridge.

Block Tan Paa Toilet : Sanitation micro-surgery at Phnom Penh's highest settlement ...

Over 10,000 people live in settlements built on the rooftops of Phnom Penh's buildings. Block Tan Paa is the largest, and one of the most organised, with a strong savings scheme. Tan Paa's diminutive leader, Kei Phean, has been struggling for years to build a new toilet, to supplement the community's single latrine, *which is shared by 235 families*. The problem was always getting access to the sewer 4 stories below. People down in the crowded courtyard (themselves squatters) claimed one more sewage stack would back up the already overloaded system and wouldn't allow it.

Then the idea came up of building next to the old toilet, which would allow them to tap into the existing sewage stack and bypass the non-cooperating neighbors. Money was collected, SUPF helped prepare estimates, the Sangkat Chief came to give moral support.

The new toilet was built for 330,000 Riels (US\$95). A third of this came from community contributions, the rest as a materials grant from the **UNCHS Project**. The simple pour-flush latrine is built on a reinforced concrete base, with walls of timber and corrugated, which can later be upgraded to brick. All the construction was done by members of the Tan Paa community, with women chipping in to provide lunch and cigarettes to the team, Cambodian style.

The toilet is run on a pay-and-use basis and kept immaculately clean by a woman who's paid a little to watch over the toilet and keep the water jars filled. Plans are on to build another toilet at the other end of the settlement, but there again, pipes will be troublesome. *But they're working on it.*

CAMBODIA :



1 First map by the community - it's drawn right on site and is everybody's first try at getting all the lanes and everybody's houses onto the map. The scale and spatial clarity of these first maps is almost always astonishingly accurate.



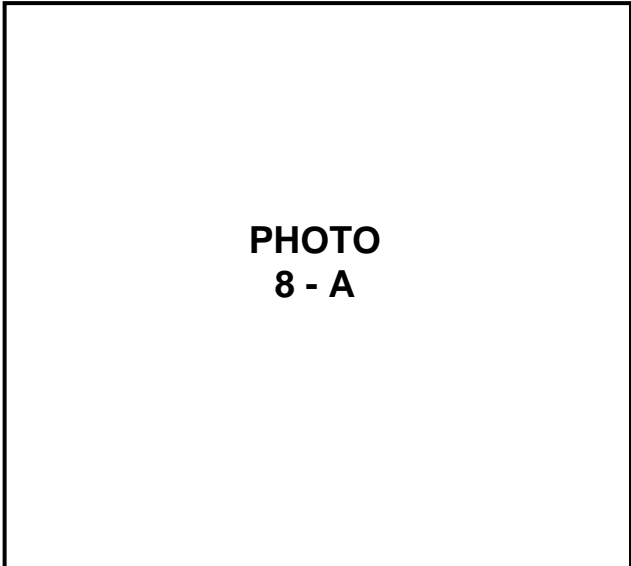
2 There are several more rounds of checking and measuring, and each time, the map gets better, more detailed. When the community's map is ready and everybody is happy with it, they give it to Nay, Visal and Keke, to check and re-draft at a smaller scale.



3 the team prepares this accurately-scaled version, using city survey maps for the out-lines. On this, the community will mark house names, toilets, trees, bridges and light poles.

The maps go back and forth between the community and the team of architects in a lively process of refining, correcting and discussing. Throughout this process, which is deliberately un-rushed, there's a lot of discussion and argument. Many things happen. Not only is a very useful and accurate map being generated, but people's understanding about their own settlement is being sharpened.

PHOTO
8 - A



Community Mapping at Basaac : *Better understanding and better information in our hands..*

Basaac is one Phnom Penh's largest and most troubled informal settlements. Most of its 2,300 families live in shacks without water supply, toilets or electricity, on land that is flooded half the year and fire-prone the other half. And because everybody's eyes are on the 16 hectares of valuable river-frontage underneath, there have been many evictions.

But Basaac is also headquarters for SUPF and has strong leaders and savings groups. Last year, SUPF counted houses, surveyed sanitation and held their model house exhibition in Basaac. Basaac communities recently worked with UNCHS to build wooden bridges in flooded areas. All this has led to increasing negotiations with municipal officials, and a move away from eviction and towards explorations of development possibilities which work for Basaac's poor and for the city.

The latest step is mapping. Government surveyors have been trying for years to make maps of Basaac, but most of them never get beyond the main road. As Basaac leader Noon Sum says, "When they get inside and see all the houses crowded every which way in the water, they get dizzy and give up! But we know each and every house. The government cannot draw a map like this."

The community's map-making has been assisted by an enthusiastic team of young architects from the newly-formed *Urban Resource Centre*. Basaac is divided into 13 communities. Each produced its own map, and final drafts of these maps will eventually be joined together into one grand map. "With this map," says Noon Sum, "we can explain to government clearly when we negotiate about land - how much area, how many families, what services, what areas flooded, all those things we can show."

Vong Nov, SUPF leader in Basaac 1-A, and undisputed map-wizard, helped map several of the communities. Here's how she explains the process: "We start with large white paper and markers, laid out somewhere in the settlement. We call people together and talk about why we're doing the map. First we draw one house in the middle of the paper, working outwards from there, along the lanes, because people understand who lives next to who. Afterwards, we take the map around to correct what we've drawn. Usually, we have to tear up the first few and start over."

"But in my head I'm counting..."

Measuring a big community like Basaac with tapes takes long and tends to frighten people who associate measurements with eviction plans. So the team measures with *pacing* instead. Vong Nov, for example, has a *natural step* which is exactly 60 centimetres. Knowing this allows very long distances to be measured with great accuracy. Plus, "Nobody knows we're measuring. They think I'm just wandering and looking around. **But in my head, I'm counting!**"

Kraol Kor Community In Phnom Penh :

Sometimes the hardest part is getting started...

The war in Cambodia left thousands of women with children widowed and homeless, afraid to voice their ideas, afraid to tackle even problems they had the capacity to solve. Here is the story of women in one small community, working together to lighten this burden. It was written by Hin Ralin, who has been working with Nora Fernandes in Kraol Kor and Toek Thlar communities.

The tiny **Kraol Kor** community has 20 houses of wood and thatch, built up on stilts along an embankment on the northern edge of Phnom Penh, a little ways from the Tonle Sap River and National Road 5. Some women support their families selling fish or vegetables in nearby markets, and many make the clay piggy banks which are always to be seen lying in cheerful ranks throughout the settlement, drying in the sun. The problems these women face repeat themselves across the city's poor settlements - lack of toilets, lack of credit, lack of income. Without houses of their own, some rent shacks or stay with relatives. Jobs are hard to come by, money is scarce - money to start small businesses, to send kids to school, to buy water and medicine.

But the women in Kraol Kor wanted to make things better, *if only they knew where to begin*. One could build a toilet, *if only she had the materials*. Another could grow vegetables, *if only she had the land*. There was always an "if". We suggested they put together their ideas and resources and start by tackling *one modest problem*. They decided to improve the 60-metre road alongside their houses, which was deeply-rutted and flooded during the rains, making it hard for people (and cartloads of those piggy banks) to get in and out of the settlement.

They began by filling potholes with broken bricks, a known system for quick road repairs during the rainy season. After pumping out the stagnant water, the women gathered contributions from all the families. But the 30,000 Riels they were able to collect was only enough to buy a few trolley-loads of brick rubble, barely enough to fill the biggest of the pot-holes. Their efforts were flooded by the next rains. It was clear that the level of the road would have to be raised considerably, and for this they needed help.

With support from the Sangat Chief, they applied to the *UNCHS Project* for assistance. Architects May and Chunthy came out, surveyed the road and prepared estimates for raising the road, using a combination of compressed earth and laterite. While waiting for that process to move ahead, we started a savings group. At first, saving was slow - many women weren't convinced putting aside 100 riels a day would make any difference to their lives. But when some of the women began taking small loans for emergencies or to buy materials, savings picked up.

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"At first we did not know how to solve the problems we face. But now, we have strong hope because we understand the way to go." Churn Chantha, Kraol Kor community member. Now, women in another community, Toek Thlar, have taken a cue from Kraol Kor and are exploring ways to tackle their drainage problems.

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9 - C

A bit about the technology of piggy banks...

When Churn Chantha and You Sambatt make a piggy bank, they pummel clay until it's smooth, roll out a thin slab, and wrap it around a wooden form. After adding snout and tail, they slice it in half, remove the form, glue the two halves back together with slurry and cut a money slot on top.

Finished banks in the shape of pigs, cows and hens are sun-dried, painted with bright red and ochre glazes and taken to market, where they fetch about 200 Riels apiece. A \$13 truckload of clay makes 1,500 piggy banks, which means a profit of about 170 Riels per bank.

When Raleen took these craftswomen to visit another piggy bank-making community, the women swapped trade secrets over tea. In Toek Thlar, by cutting the clay slabs with a wire instead of laboriously rolling them out, the women can up their production to 50 piggy banks a day, compared to 10 in Kraol Kor. That means an increase in daily earnings from 1,500 Riels, which isn't much, to 8,000 Riels, which is pretty decent.

The exchange of such technical subtleties, which only piggy-bank makers would understand, have made for increased income and closer friendships between the two communities.

CAMBODIA :

News from USG :

The Urban Sector Group (USG) is an NGO which has been working with the urban poor in Phnom Penh since 1994. USG has helped organise savings and credit programmes, settlement improvement projects and pre-schools in several settlements. Communities in the USG network have collaborated on enumerations, house design workshops, regional exposure visits and eviction colloquia with SUPF, UNCHS, the Faculty of Architecture, ACHR and CO-Train. The 4th Issue of USG's bilingual Khmer-English newsletter, **Stories of the Poor**, came out last June and included these items:

● **Eviction Notice to 800 Railway Families :**

In February 1997 a letter from the Ministry of Public Works ordered families living along the railway line stretching across 3 districts to move their houses 30 metres away from each side of the track. Phnom Penh's railways have not been used since the war, and 1,800 families live in informal settlements on the dikes and high-land along their tracks. Railway settlements in Toul Kork are negotiating with the city to reduce the move to only 10 metres back from the tracks.

● **Saving for the Dream House :** Many families from USG communities visited the SUPF Model House Exhibition last May. This story describes their reactions to those design ideas, and their increased housing savings afterwards.

● **Waste Picking Story :** The garbage dump at Stoeng Meanchey is home and workplace for many scavengers, who earn their living by collecting, sorting and selling recyclable waste materials dumped there. Most are extremely poor widows and children, to whom scavenging offered self-employment without any capitol. On a good day, they can make about 3,000 Riels.

● **Drains in Juliana Roadside Settlement :** 46 families living along the alley behind Juliana Hotel have had serious flooding problems for years. This year they'd had enough, collected contributions from families, planned and built their own 82 metre underground drainage line, which connects to the city sewer out on the main road.

CONTACT :

Urban Sector Group (USG),
Lim Pai, Nith Sopha
PO Box 1055, Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA
TEL (855 23) 427807 FAX 460568
E-mail: USG@forum.org.kh

Community-Built Boardwalk in Boeng Salang :

Score one point for people in the age-old battle against water ...

Boeng Salang is a large community built on the mucky edges of a large lake in the southwest part of Phnom Penh, in Khan Chamkar Mon. The low-lying land belongs to the Municipality and has always been a natural drainage outlet for the city, but now, increasing population and development has made Boeng Salang into a massive sewer.

During the rains, black, sewage-filled waters rise around Boeng Salang's hundreds of houses. The only means of access is by hopping nimbly along a network of rickety bamboo poles that connect the houses. It's always a battle against the water in Phnom Penh, but here, the battle is made harder with stink, disease and infestations of mosquitoes. This year, a child fell in and drowned.

USG has helped start a community savings group in one part of the Boeng Salang settlement. Many of the families here are headed by widows, and most came from the refugee camps. One of the group's leaders is Ngat Hom, who settled here in 1985. She lives with her family in a wooden house she built herself, on high stilts over the water. The polished floorboards have gaps between them, designed to let in cool air from below and ventilate the rooms, but in Ngat's house, they also let in a sewage-smelling stink.

This year, the UNCHS Project (*Phnom Penh Urban Poor Communities and Development Project*) has helped build bridges and board walks in many of the city's flood-prone informal settlements, by offering materials grants and technical assistance to communities willing to do the building themselves. The UNCHS team helped 11 SUPF communities in Basaac to build bridges. When news of these projects reached Boeng Salang, the community formed a "bridge committee" and applied for help building a boardwalk of their own. They began by collecting 5,000 Riel contributions from each family.

The UNCHS team helped the community design the boardwalk and provided all the wood. All the labour and 100,000 Riels of the project's cost came from the community. It was built during the rains in October. The 93 metre-long wooden boardwalk at Boeng Salang is stoutly constructed on deep wooden piles and connects 53 houses, some perched as high as four metres above the muck.

And at Konkear Phos ...

Another flood-prone community at *Konkear Phos* has designed, built and paid for their own underground drainage system. There have been troubles with levels, though, and the community is now working with USG and UNCHS to repair the problems and resurface throughout the settlement.

Wooden Walkway at Boeng Salang: Everybody pitched in, children helped carry planks and hold handfuls of ten-penny nails, mothers brought bowls of soup and cigarettes to the workers, and neighbors cranked up the sentimental songs on their radios.

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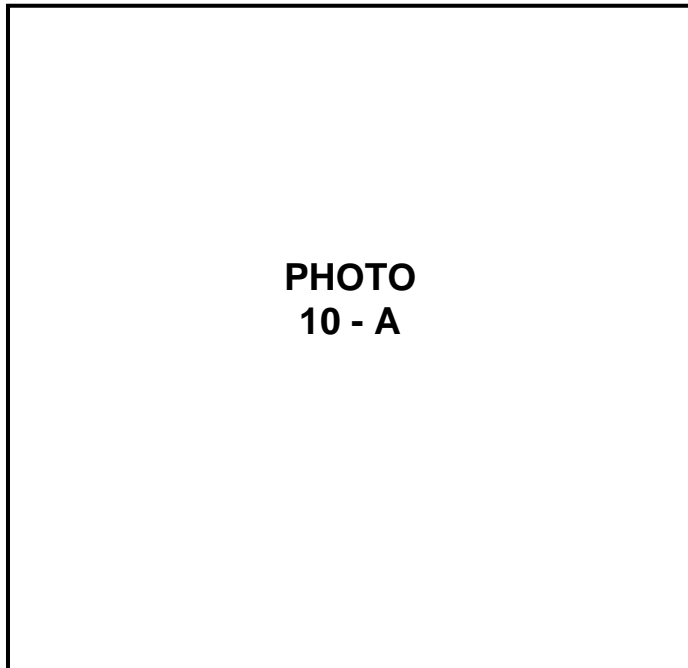


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Women from all over Sri Lanka came to Colombo last March to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Women's Bank. Groups of women from India, Namibia, Nepal and Vietnam also came to learn from the poor women who have built stronger communities and better opportunities for themselves through the bank that they manage themselves. The exposure visit was the subject of a video film entitled "People to People."

News From Women's Bank :

The Women's Bank has reached an important point in its evolution with the drafting and formalising of its National Constitution, which has now been submitted to the Sri Lanka Government's Cooperative Department for registration. The full legal name is a mouth-full: Sri Lanka Women's Developmental Services Cooperative Society (Women's Bank) Limited. Here are some other news bits, sent in to ACHR in Bangkok just recently by Nandasiri Gamage:

1 Real Voices in Development: The Women's Bank is collaborating with the AP 2000 Programme to prepare a book entitled *Real Voices in Development*. The book will contain stories from one hundred women who are members of the Women's Bank network around Sri Lanka. The stories were originally narrated by the women themselves, and describe their own lives, in their own voices and with all the atmospheric colour of their own expression. They were transcribed first into the Sinhala language, and later translated into English. Professor Hosaka is also planning to arrange for the book's translation into Japanese. Both Sinhala and English editions of the book will be published in July 1998, and will be available from Women's Bank, at the address below.

2 Outreach in the Eastern Province: The Women's Bank has scheduled a women's meeting of women on the 4th of April in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province, at the Mahaweli 'C' Zone. About 5,000 women will participate in the meeting, which is intended to broaden participation in Women's Bank activities in the Zone. Most of these women are part of poor rural farming families, and many have been through hard times during government resettlement programmes. One of the purposes of the meeting is to increase the government's awareness of problems faced by these resettled farmers.

3 On-going Exchange Programme: A continuous programme of local poor women's exchanges is one of the fundamental building blocks of the Women's Bank and the primary means of disseminating the bank's concepts. This kind of "people-to-people" learning is now in the process of extending outside of Sri Lanka. Women's Bank leaders will be traveling to visit similar savings and credit schemes run by poor communities in the *Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)* in Ahmedabad, India, and the *Urban Community Development Office (UCDO)* in Thailand.

CONTACT :

Women's Bank - Community Resource Centre,
151/13 E Zone, Seevali Pura, Borella, Colombo 8, SRI LANKA
Tel (941) 696742
E-Mail: womensbank@lanka.gn.apc.org

SRI LANKA :

Community Contract at Nelumpokune : 40 Toilets and a bathing well . . .

Much of SEVANATHA's work in Sri Lanka has to do with helping poor communities carry out settlement improvement projects. An interesting sanitation-improvement project has just been completed in Kandy, the capital of Sri Lanka's Central Province.

The 220 households in the Nelumpokune community had no toilets, water taps or drainage. A project to improve these dismal conditions was planned, under the sponsorship of Kandy's **Metropolitan Environmental Improvement Programme (MEIP)**. The work was implemented as a partnership between a CBO (Nelumpokune community), a local authority (MEIP) and an NGO (SEVANATHA).

A common bathing well, which was being used by 40 families, was renovated as a *community contract*. Community members did all the construction work, SEVANATHA helped out with technical advice, and MEIP paid the bill. 40 pour-flush latrines were also built by the community, on a cost-sharing basis with SEVANATHA. This project makes a good case for the partnership approach as a means of bringing appropriate, affordable infra-structure to poor communities.

CONTACT :

SEVANATHA Urban Resource Centre
220/3 Nawala Road, Rajagiriya, SRI
LANKA
Tel / Fax (94 01) 862148
E-Mail: sevanata@sri.lanka.net

People to People Video :

Last year, ACHR and the UNCHS CDP-Asia Programme collaborated to produce a video about people-to-people study tours. Women from Namibia, Nepal, India and Vietnam traveled to Sri Lanka on the occasion of the Women's Bank fifth anniversary. The 28-minute video follows their 6-day study tour through poor settlements in Colombo and Provincial cities, and offers insights into how the Women's Bank has grown into a movement controlled entirely by its members.

CONTACT : UNCHS - CDP-Asia

United Nations Bldg, Rajdamnern Ave.
Bangkok 10200, THAILAND
Tel (662) 288-1604 Fax (662) 288-1097
E-Mail: swan.unescap@un.org

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SOUTH AFRICA :

A tour of the Housing Capital Subsidy System :

Land is still a burning issue in South Africa. Invasions of land followed by evictions happen frequently. There are 15 million people squatting in shacks all over the country.

After the elections in 1994, the ANC promised to build one million houses within five years, to be provided through a **housing capital subsidy scheme**. Any family with a monthly income less than R1,500 qualifies for housing subsidy. The idea was that R15,000 subsidy goes through a private developer, who buys and develops the land and builds houses. In reality, the subsidy gets eaten up in developer's profit margins, land costs, municipal fees and infrastructure costs - the poor get very little back.

With legislative blockages, property protections, land and infrastructure costs, the subsidy policy has run into problems. By 1997, only 92,000 units had been built. And without secure land tenure and finance, communities haven't been able to access subsidies directly. Some say South Africa's housing policy has three fundamental flaws:

- it doesn't build on the creativity and resourcefulness of poor people and excludes them from policy debate.
- it is based on housing delivery through the private, for-profit developer sector.
- it promises profits to the private sector and adequate homes to the homeless, which cannot be combined for the very poor.

Within this context, the **South African Homeless People's Federation**, and their partner **People's Dialogue**, have sought to develop an alternative housing delivery process, based on people's control. The message is clear: *let people access their housing subsidies and build their own houses.*

The following stories were drawn from "Backyard Fax" Reports from People's Dialogue.

Carports and Toilets : A visit to some "Uvezanyawo" and to some real houses ...

All across South Africa today, you see clusters of tiny, brightly-painted new houses on equally tiny plots. These are contractor-built "RDP Houses". People call them uvezanyawo: "where your feet show", because they're so small your feet stick out the window when you sleep. Life in uvezanyawo can be even worse than in a shack in an informal settlement, and many poor families sell these houses and move back to squatter areas.

First Stop : "Toilets in the Veld"

A sign "Free RDP Houses" stands by a track of grassland in Sebokeng recently cleared for development, our first exposure to a low-cost housing developer's version of *uvezanyawo*. Rows and rows of toilets, attached to 18 m2 concrete floors, with four corner poles holding up zinc roofs (no walls), stretching a kilometre along the highway. They look like carports. In a few sites, the poles have been enclosed with zinc sheets, creating new tin shanties. Children play in the dust outside, women stand in the doorways looking at passing traffic. The rest are empty.

These "Free RDP Houses" are neither houses nor free, of course. They've been paid for by poor people's housing subsidies, and by bitter resistance to years of oppression. What little choice these developers offer the poor. For the same money, Federation members can build real houses and install real infrastructure.

Next Stop : Botshabelo Settlement

Across the Golden Highway from this hideous development is the small Botshabelo squatter settlement, with ten proud houses, built substantially of compressed soil blocks and zinc roofing. They were built by the women who live in them, all members of SAHPF-affiliated Boikaho Housing Savings Scheme. Everybody in Sebokeng knows these people-built houses cost as much as the carports built by the developers across the way.

The problem is that developers can waste the people's subsidies and the poor have no choice but to make do with such waste. The people themselves are as yet unable to access their subsidies directly. Boikaho women have paid for their houses out of their own pockets. Through links with other savings groups, they've seen what the poor can do for themselves and have invested their savings in the search for a *real* home. They hope to get the subsidies to pay off their loans; they know they may not, but every night they go to sleep within four strong brick walls.

The saddest part of the story : *The democratically elected ANC Coun-cillors insist the people move into the developer-built carports and even threaten to demolish the stout brick homes built by the women in Boikaho. Why aren't they demanding the developer work with people to ensure they get their full subsidy's worth of house?*

The South African Homeless People's Federation consists of over 40,000 households in over 1,000 Housing Savings Schemes, *linked through ten regional federations. Its membership and leadership are overwhelmingly drawn from homeless communities: shack settlements, backyard dwellers and hostel inmates.*

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"We do everything ourselves: saving, planning, making models, finding out what is affordable, and building. We have already finished 60 houses. We work every day from 8 to 5, and if you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you get a "yellow card." We have to be very disciplined." (And occasionally, a visitor or two drops in to help at Victoria Mxenge . . .)

First case of the Capital Subsidy going directly to people . . .

The federation has proven through its many house-building projects that people-driven development can deliver housing on a scale and at a cost far below that of the private sector. On our next stop, we see where the federation's struggle to win support for its model finally bears fruit, but how much ruckus is stirred up when people get their subsidies directly and the old systems are challenged :

Next Stop : Victoria Mxenge

The Victoria Mxenge Housing Savings Scheme is a group of 300 residents, mostly women, from the Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town. Since 1992, they have made their homes without any government help, on a piece of swampy, low-lying land given to them by the Archdiocese of Cape Town.

Last year, the group's efforts, along with support from enlightened officials, led to a path-breaking subsidy agreement which allowed women at Victoria Mxenge to access their capital subsidy *directly* for the first time and to make more efficient use of the money. The project became national news.

With this injection of funds, they were able to fill in their site and start building houses. They found a local demolition company willing to dump a certain quality of construction rubble at the site as land-fill. When the company started dumping unsuitable fill, containing whole tree-trunks and big chunks of concrete, in breach of their agreement, the women protested. But in the end, the community was stuck with the bad fill. To deal with this, the women adopted a foundation technology used by poor residents in Bombay. Formal engineer's foundation alternatives would have swallowed up their housing funds in one gulp.

When house-building at Victoria Mxenge was well underway, the Cape Town City Council engineers decided to involve themselves. But instead of helping, they set up a noisy public protest to the women's project, claiming the landfill and foundation designs would lead to cracking houses!

The real issue here was not about cracking houses . . .

but about the nature and control of development in cities. Till now, the rules affecting urban development in South Africa have served a dual purpose: maintaining impossible first-world standards, and keeping the poor out. See what happens when a group of poor women are implementing development instead of white guys in suits? In the end, the women kept right on building.

Stocking up the precedents of direct access to housing subsidies by people :

Next Stop : VukuZenzele

VukuZenzele Housing Savings Scheme has 237 members, all of whom are back-yard shack dwellers in New Crossroads, Western Cape. Land has always been VukuZenzele's first need. In March 1997, the group invaded a strip of land on Landsdowne Road to highlight the plight of back-yard shack dwellers in Cape Town and to draw the authorities into negotiations. In this regard the invasion was moderately successful.

With support from *People's Dialogue*, they found a 7.5 hectare piece of vacant land in Philippi, owned by a prominent Cape Town family. While negotiations for purchasing the land went on, the VukuZenzele community started planning their housing layout and site development, which will include space for a crèche, school, workshop sites and for-sale commercial plots to cross-subsidise their house building. After six months of negotiations, the Department of Land Affairs agreed to finance the purchase of the land, using a portion of the people's subsidies.

The subsidies are once again in people's control. The Utchani Fund, the financial arm of the Federation, has agreed to provide bridging funds for housing development since part of the people's subsidies will be tied into the commercial section of the development.

The VukuZenzele land is situated directly opposite the Victoria Mxenge development, making it the second phase of SAHPF's most high-profile development in South Africa.

Final Stop: Joe Slovo Village

After a year of negotiations, SAHPF got land for seven savings schemes in Port Elizabeth. The 263 hectares of land will be bought by the Land Affairs Ministry, using a portion of the people's subsidies, and transferred to the community. *Joe Slovo Village* is the first significant case of urban land being purchased by the government for the homeless poor, and will provide formal tenure to 2,500 families, who will plan and build houses and infrastructure, making it the largest people-driven housing initiative in South Africa.

CONTACT :

Joel Bolnick, Mama Iris
People's Dialogue, PO Box 34639,
Groote Schuur 7937, South Africa
Tel (27 21) 475116, Fax (27 21) 474741
Email : dialogue@sprintlink.co.za

PAKISTAN :

OPP-RTI : Training local kids to become Sewer-laying and House-building experts ...

For the past few years, the **Orangi Pilot Project's Research and Training Institute (OPP-RTI)** has run a special programme to train young people from the *Katchi Abadis* (informal settlements) to become technicians. There is much talk of helping professionals to bring technical assistance to poor communities, but here's a programme that achieves the same thing the other way round - training technicians from the slums. This was drawn from OPP's 72nd Quarterly Report:

Our work in Orangi shows that everywhere, people are making efforts to solve their area problems. A survey of 114 *katchi abadis* in Karachi, comprising 6,724 lanes and 60,701 houses, showed that people have invested Rs 66.2 million to lay sewer and water lines in 45% of those lanes, on a self-help basis. This kind of community initiative is amazing, but the quality of the work is often poor because the technical skills of the local masons hired to do the work are usually inadequate.

In order to strengthen technical skills within the community, OPP-RTI began a training programme on sanitation and housing in 1995, to provide skills to students and young people from the *katchi abadis*, who can work for their area, particularly on sewer construction. The key to the programme's success is students eventually becoming independent self-employed "community consultants".

One course is offered in sanitation and sewers, another in house construction. The 90-day, no-frills courses teach the specific skills required for local projects - surveying, leveling, cost and materials estimating, sewer and toilet design, construction skills and site supervision. Students get a small stipend during the course and afterwards, most graduate directly into projects in the *katchi abadis*, where on-site guidance by OPP-RTI staff continues. Eight students are receiving training now and two graduates in Orangi have set up their own housing consultancy in their lane and have begun taking on small house building and upgrading contracts.

CONTACT : Arif Hasan, Orangi Pilot Project
Plot No. 4, Sector 5/A, Qasba Colony
Manghopir Road,
Karachi 75800 PAKISTAN
Tel (9221) 6652297 Fax (9221) 452 2361
E-mail: arif@archtct.khi.erum.com.pk

The OPP Programme is being replicated by community-based organisations in 46 settlements in Karachi and in seven other Pakistani cities. The leaders from these organisations were trained at the OPP Research and Training Institute. The total outreach covers about three million people.

PHOTO
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"Little Contracts" : OPP's approach to stocking the existing building culture ...

*Karachi has a highly-organised informal sector, whose systems for supplying land, houses and services to the poor cannot be matched for affordability or availability. All the OPP-RTI's training programmes, and most of OPP's work, centre around a pragmatic acceptance of these informal supply systems as being imperfect, but by far the most effective and far-reaching available. OPP's work looks squarely at these systems, to see where there are kinks, and then makes judicious interventions which smooth the system, improve its efficacy and equability. Here is a look at the building systems at work in the *katchi abadis*, which for the OPP continue to be figure ground :*

Ninety-three percent of Orangi's one million houses were built with financial and technical assistance from the local building-component manufacturing yards, operated by entrepreneurs. These yards exist in all neighborhoods, and are known as *thallas*, their owners as *thallawalas*. When a new *katchi abadi* comes up, a *thallawala* purchases land in the settlement, moves in, sets up a yard and begins establishing a good relationship with the new community. The *thallawala* provides materials on credit to house builders (and sometimes cash credit to pay masons). He also helps design houses, takes on house-building contracts or supplies masons to those wishing to do the unskilled work themselves.

The "thalla" system is rooted in intricate local relationships and extremely local control, and is about as far from being a "housing project" as you can get.

The *thallawala's* intervention has improved housing quality in *katchi abadis*, but the problem is, his materials, house designs and technical advice all tend to be sub-standard. Bad workmanship by poorly-trained masons also leads to poor quality houses. Masons and skilled labourers working with *thallawalas* need better technical advice on such things as the right concrete mix, curing, sizing of supports, roof slopes, water-proofing walls. But this kind of training wasn't available. So OPP decided to support the existing *thalla* system by bolstering its technical base.

- Where the quality and variety of building materials was low, OPP upgraded the *thallas*, introducing mechanized block making machines, pre-fabricated roof and floor-slab elements which make make cheaper, stronger and better-quality houses. 42 *thallas* in Orangi have been upgraded. Now, all new housing in Orangi uses machine-made concrete blocks which are stronger, larger and easier to use. Many also use the batten-and-tile roof, foundation and ventilation details developed by OPP. Production at the upgraded *thallas* has tripled and their income doubled.

- Where house design and sewer construction were sub-standard, OPP has worked to upgrade the skills of the masons and small contractors who build most of the houses, through the kind of training courses described earlier. The important thing is, you don't have to be an engineer or an architect to do this properly - a little training and some rigorous apprenticeship can make for an enormous improvement in the quality of the houses, *without changing the system*.

Karachi Mega Sewerage Plan Checked : People's practical solutions show up "think-big" scheme ...

Overflowing gutters, choked drains and the stink from dilapidated sewers are daily facts of life in Karachi. Sewerage remains one of the city's most serious problems. But instead of taking a cue from the small-scale, decentralised sewer ideas developed by OPP, the government has launched a massive scheme, the **Greater Karachi Sewerage Plan**, (GKSP), which will cost the city over 12 billion rupees and most fear will only make matters worse. This brief look at the scheme is drawn from clippings and documentation from OPP, one of the project's strongest opponents.

1 The City's Sewerage Plan : Communities all over Karachi have laid their own sewers, which are functioning and which empty into the city's nine drainage nullahs. The GKSP overlooks these systems, as well as all of the city's existing sewers, and superimposes an entirely new system over them. Instead of following natural contours, allowing nullahs and gravity-flow to carry sewage to small treatment plants, the plan calls for pumping most of the city's sewage uphill, over great distance, to two large treatment plants. In Baldia, a large *katchi abadi* included in the project's first phase, new trunk sewers were laid throughout the settlement, but aren't functioning. Existing infrastructure systems laid by communities and by the city weren't shown on maps drawn by the GKSP consultants. As a result, two and sometimes three sewer lines were laid in the same street - one by the people, one by the KMC and another by the new project!

2 The Opposition : Opposition to the project has been led by OPP and CREED (Collaboration in Reforms for Efficient and Equitable Development), an NGO-citizens alliance. Their strategy was to convince the Asian Development Bank, the project's principal funder, to withdraw. Fortunately, ADB's history of disastrous mega-development projects across Asia has made it somewhat willing to listen to sense. The opposition's major weapon? An alternative plan based on 18 years' accumulated wisdom about effective, affordable community-planned sewers.

3 The Alternative Plan : A cheaper and more sensible alternative is to clean, upgrade and integrate the existing systems. As a first step, the existing sewerage system should be properly mapped, showing exactly where people have constructed their own sewers and where there are problems. The city's nine major nullahs, which carry most of the city's rain and waste water, should be cleared of silt and blockages. Then trunk sewers should be laid at their bottom, which will carry sewage to small, decentralised treatment plants, using natural gravity flow instead of pumping. Existing systems, both city and community-built, can be integrated into this main disposal system. The cost: less than one tenth of the GKSP budget.

The latest word is that the Sewerage Plan is still alive, but it has been accepted that all existing community and KMC-built infrastructure must be documented and integrated into a new plan. Plus, in two areas, Orangi and Mehmoodabad Nala (with a population of 2.5 million people), the OPP sewerage concept has been accepted and is being implemented.

PHOTO
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"We need to develop systems that match the skills and resources we already have. We don't have to take huge loans from international donors and burden ourselves further. All we need is to clean and upgrade the existing system. And being decentralised, it would be easier to maintain."
- Arif Hasan, OPP

"Khuda ki Basti" : When development authorities borrow land-grabbers' strategies

Since 1975, regularisation and upgradation of *katchi abadis* has been state policy in Pakistan. But red tape and corruption slowed early regularisation programmes and kept them from reaching the truly needy. **Khuda ki Basti** was the Hyderabad Development Authority's experiment in providing cheap, legal land rights to the poor in 1987.

HDA looked at why the system wasn't working and came up with some simple but revolutionary strategies, borrowed from the informal land-grabbers. *Khuda ki Basti* turned the regularisation process around and showed that development authorities can successfully assume the role of "informal sector" to provide shelter to the urban poor at affordable prices.

- Reception camps: Officials go to the people, set up "reception camps" on available land. All allotment work done on the spot, with the help of community members.
- Simple procedures: application, leasing and allotment steps reduced to a minimum.
- Immediate building: allottees must start building houses as soon as taking possession, to separate speculators from needy.
- Only layout is fixed : all house building is left to the people.
- Services later: Initially only water provided. Further infrastructure implemented in OPP-style, with community-control, financed on cost-recovery basis through people's instalments, so upgradation is self-financed.

OPP's research on informal processes was a vital part of *Khuda ki Basti* and subsequent regularisation programmes. In Sindh Province, the government's *Katchi Abadi Regularisation and Improvement Programme* is handled by the **Sindh Katchi Abadis Authority (SKAA)**, whose engineers and staff were trained by OPP-RTI. SKAA has simplified the leasing process and now involves communities in planning and implementing upgradation of the settlements. SAIBAN is an NGO involved in promoting and expanding the ideas of *Khuda ki Basti*.

CONTACT :

• SKAA
Sindh Katchi Abadis Authority
Tasneem Ahmad Siddiqui, Director
Sindh Assembly Bldg. Annexe
Karachi 74200 PAKISTAN
Tel (92 21) 2634574 Fax (92 21) 2634573

• SAIBAN
Action Research for Shelter
GRE-319 (2-B), Britto Road, Garden East,
Karachi 74800 PAKISTAN
Tel (92 21) 7219055 Fax (92 21) 7219049

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PAKISTAN :

Karachi URC Fills Gaps :

Karachi has 12 million people and keeps drawing poor migrants. The government's inadequate response to this large migration has fueled the development of a thriving informal sector, which provides 75 percent of the city's employment, 60 percent of its housing and 70 percent of its transport. Most official planning still pretends this dynamic force doesn't exist. Consequently, most of Karachi's real urban issues are not dealt with, at least officially.

When citizens groups try to involve themselves in the planning process, they come up against big gaps - in the city's understanding of urban realities, and in citizen's information about what officials are up to. Since 1989, the **Urban Resource Centre** has worked to fill in these gaps, supporting active community involvement in all facets of Karachi's development, to bring it closer to ground realities.

EVICCTIONS: Evictions of poor households in Karachi have increased dramatically in recent years. URC figures show over 12,000 houses and shops were bulldozed and 2,556 huts were burned in arson attacks since 1994. Another 27,600 houses are under eviction threat. Besides keeping detailed records of these evictions, the URC has stocked communities with information about dislocation laws and possible relocation sites, to strengthen their negotiations for secure tenure with municipal authorities.

TRANSPORT: In another case, the URC helped form a citizens forum which raised concerns on the multi-billion rupee foreign-aided *Karachi Mass Transit Programme*. The forum presented alternatives which eventually persuaded the government to make changes, so nobody would be evicted, bus ways would be converted to light rail lines and existing rail systems would be revitalized.

CONTACT :

Urban Resource Centre, Muhammad Younus
3/48 Mualimabad Jamal uddin Afghani Road
Karachi 74800 PAKISTAN
Tel (92 21) 455-9275 Fax (92 21) 452-2361
E-Mail: urc@cyber.net.pk

URC's Work : Lyari River Expressway

Some years back, the city decided it needed better transport access to and from the Karachi Port at the western edge of town, and developed plans to build an elevated expressway over the Lyari River. Almost everyone agreed, this would be an environmental disaster for the city. Not only would it replace one of the congested inner-city's last open spaces with a swathe of air and noise pollution, and cost so much that the city would be in debt for decades paying for it, but it would mean the demolition and resettlement of 25,000 houses along the river bed and the destruction of billions of rupees worth of civic infrastructure.

The struggle against the proposed Lyari Expressway was led by the **Lyari Nadi Welfare Association**, a strong association of 46 settlements along the 17 km stretch of Lyari River-bed, many over 200 years old. In this case, the community association held the front-line position, carrying out all the demonstrations, lobbying and negotiations with the city, while the URC played the role of behind-the-scenes supporter, feeding ammunition to the campaign in the form of handbills, posters, press-releases, studies, technical analysis and statistics. The alliance between the URC and a vigorous community-led campaign for land rights proved to be a winner, and the city has scrapped the project in favor of the alternative northern by-pass.

Perhaps the most important contribution the URC made to the communities' campaign was the development of several alternatives to the expressway over the Lyari River bed. Two of these alternatives involved re-routing the expressway through a northern bypass, which would avoid the river entirely and entail less environmental destruction, no evictions and dramatically lower costs for the city.

A lesson in sensible and non-sensible urban planning :

Alternative	Government's Plan	URC's
● Plan	Lyari Expressway	Northern Bypass
● Cost	US\$ 80 million	US\$ 10 million
● Completion	4 years	1 year
● Evictions	30,000 Houses	None
● Outcome	Increased Traffic	Decreased Traffic

The Lyari River meanders through the middle of Karachi.

Besides being home to nearly 200,000 people who live in 46 settlements along its banks, the Lyari corridor could become a much-needed inner city green belt, with a little work and ingenuity.

Two options for the Lyari River :

On top, the city's idea, with eight lanes of traffic roaring through the middle of Karachi. Below, the URC's idea transforms the Lyari into a long, green park, winding through the city's congested heart.

PHOTO
16 - B

PHOTO
17 - A

URC Solid Waste Management Facts:

1. 98% of the city's rag-pickers are male, a quarter of these are children and most have come to Karachi within the past 5 years.
2. Their average working day is 14 hours, during which each collects an average of 80 kgs of materials.
3. The yearly turnover of Karachi's recycling industry is over one billion rupees.

URC's Work : Informal Recycling

Lots of work has been done on urban issues relating to the poor by international agencies, development authorities, academic institutions, NGOs, professionals and journalists. The problem is, this research lies scattered all over Pakistan, and its existence is unknown to the researchers, planners, citizens and community groups whose work it could directly benefit.

An important side of the URC's work is in collecting, cataloguing and disseminating this information to those who can use it, particularly community groups. In this role, the URC has for several years been collecting documentation the important role informal recycling plays in Karachi's solid waste management. Here are a few striking facts and some good sense from the URC's bulging file of news clippings, reports and studies on recycling and waste-management, some drawn from a thesis by Mansoor Ali, an engineer and one of URC's founding members :

1 Karachi's residential areas generate 5,000 tons of garbage every day, only 2,500 tons of which is collected by the municipal disposal system. 1,600 tons is collected from people's homes by the city's 2,000 *kabaris* (itinerant waste-buyers) who sell their collection to the city's 1,000 recyclable materials dealers. An additional 10,000 scavengers collect recyclable material from streets, bazaars and garbage dumps. 1,500 tons of organic waste is not collected and is thrown into open drains, vacant plots or burnt.

2 The recycling industry plays an important role in garbage collection and disposal in Karachi, and provides large scale job opportunities. It is expanding every day and becoming more sophisticated, with strong links to industrial cities of Gujranwala and Faisalabad. The recycling industry transforms paper into cardboard, glass into bottles, plastic into toys, utensils, cushions and electrical conduits, bones into ornaments and fish feed, and all types of metal into utensils and machinery. In addition rags are turned into fluff for upholstery. Its total production of recyclable materials is 1,230,800 tons per year.

3 All the various actors in Karachi's garbage management and recycling systems are interlinked. The housewives who sell to *kabaris*, middle dealers who buy waste material from the *kabaris*, main dealers who buy from middle dealers and also process some of the materials, recycling industrial companies, municipal sweepers, waste pickers and municipal officers. The relationships which exist between all these players is not recognized formally, and this lack of recognition and regulation is a major source of corruption and of the malfunctioning of Karachi's solid waste disposal system.

4 Technically, environmentally hazardous land-fill sites are completely unnecessary. If all these interdependent informal recycling systems were assisted and formalized, *virtually all of Karachi's solid waste* could be divided into materials which can go into the recycling industry, and organic waste which can be composted, and practically nothing would be left.

Demolition in Sahiwal:

This note was written by Ashfaq Fateh from Toba Tek Singh's Eviction Watch Team and sent to us by Father Bonnie Mendez. It describes the demolition of a colony of 500 landless Christians in Sahiwal, outside Faisalabad. Demolitions like this are still common in Pakistan, despite the efforts of many groups to demonstrate many more productive, sustainable and humane alternatives for the landless poor.

A group of poor families, mostly daily wage-earners, had occupied this land for three years. Community leader Bashir Masih explained that after a long struggle to get land from the government, the Sahiwal Municipal Committee had finally issued the community a "No Objection Certificate" in 1997. With tenure finally secure, the families began building houses.

On February 21, without warning, a squad of police and municipal workers entered the settlement with bulldozers and demolished the houses, despite panicked attempts by community members to stop them, and to show their "NOC".

An elderly woman, Nawab Bibi said, "It was about noon. We were preparing the meal in our houses when the police wagons came with municipal workers and began destroying our houses with bulldozers. They took away all our precious things - windows, doors, beams and roofing sheets." Another woman, Parveen Bibi, had just finished building her house with materials she'd gotten on loan. "They have taken everything, and still I have to repay the loan."

Another woman Nasreen said, "They broke the drains near our colony's church. We tried to stop them, but they beat us and pushed us back. Now they have stopped supplying us drinking water."

Perhaps with prior notice of the demolition, they could have gone to the courts for a stay order. Some believe that influential people who want the land were behind the demolition, but the people have not given up their right to the land. They continue to occupy tents on the site, with only a little support from Church authorities.

CONTACT :

Human Development Centre
Father Bonnie Mendez
Waryam Road
Toba Tek Singh, PAKISTAN
Tel / Fax (92 462) 510617
E-Mail: hdc@fsb.infolink.net.pk

INDONESIA :

Big Trouble for Indonesia's Poor during the Economic Crisis :

The monetary crisis which has rocked the Asian "Tiger Economies" has hit Indonesia hard. In the early stages, the crisis was a monetary crisis, marked by the fall of the value of the Indonesian Rupiah to the dollar. At this stage, the impact was felt primarily in entrepreneurial circles and among the middle-class and up. However, as the crisis has deepened, all levels of society have been impacted, and now it is the poorest who are bearing the brunt of the crisis, as a result of skyrocketing prices of basic commodities, mass lay-offs and shrinking incomes. *Recent media reports give a good indication of the effects of the crisis on Indonesia's poor :*

- **Prices** - The prices of basic commodities like rice, sugar, vegetables, meat, cooking oil, milk and soybeans have risen by anywhere from 50 to 200 percent. At the same time, incomes have decreased by 30 to 50 percent.
- **Lay-offs** - There have been massive lay-offs in factories across Indonesia. In the first week of January, 17,300 factory workers were laid off in Bekasi alone, most without legal notice or severance pay.
- **Utilities** - The government has decided to increase electricity, water and mass transit prices, effective April 1998, which will lead to overnight increases in all commodities.
- **Food vendors'** profits in Bundung, Jakarta and Surabaya have declined by 50 to 60 percent, and as many as half have shut down for lack of business.
- **Small businesses**, like shoe and handbag makers, have stopped production, because materials costs have doubled.
- **Taxi and bus drivers** have experienced 30 to 50 percent decreases in income.
- **School** - In Jakarta, 16,814 elementary school children from poor and low-income families will have to leave school because their parents cannot afford school fees and books.

CONTACT :

Abdul Hakim
Lembaga Pengembangan Inisiatif
Strategis untuk Transformasi
Jl. Pondok Asri, Blok A II, No. 2
Jakarta 11460 INDONESIA
Tel (6221) 861-6715 Fax (6221) 861-0942
E-Mail: lpist@indo.net.id

Future community upgraders in Kualuangnua Village in Chantabury District. The community managed savings and credit scheme in the Sihom area is Lao PDR's first glimpse of what communities can do together.

PHOTO
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LAO PDR :

Technical Support to People's Initiatives :

The UN-sponsored *Sihom Rehabilitation Project* began in 1991 with the idea of improving conditions in seven *baan* (communities) along the Sihom Canal in Vientiane, by rehabilitating the canal and improving roads and drainage. Community involvement in the Sihom Project helped ensure the contractor carried out those large-scale drainage improvements properly and motivated people to invest in building pathways and drainage channels to the upgraded canal.

The project was proof that poor communities can participate centrally in the design, construction and management of infrastructure, and are willing to invest their money and labour to improve their environment. The trouble is, without technical assistance, their improvements are not always of the best quality.

After the Sihom Project ended in 1997, local and national government officials asked UNCHS representatives for help building on the Sihom experience. The UNCHS *Community Development Programme for Asia* is setting up a technical support office in Chantabury District for community-based initiatives. The office will open in April 1998, headed by an Sri Lankan engineer with experience in appropriate technology and settlement upgrading. He will train two local technicians to assist community volunteers in their on-going community upgrading projects.

The office will focus on technical assistance and training, and will also work closely with the SIPSACRES Savings scheme, which can provide loans to community groups for building drainage channels, toilets and walkways. If all goes well, this model will extend into other districts in Vientiane, and other towns.

- **CONTACT :** Peter Swan, UNCHS / CDP-Asia, United Nations Building, Rajdamern Avenue, Bangkok 10200 THAILAND, Tel (662) 288-1604 Fax (662) 288-1097, E-Mail: swan.unescap@un.org

SIPSACRES Update :

Here's a note just in from Niid van den Brink in Vientiane, with an update on the SIPSACRES community savings and credit scheme:

Since the Sihom Project ended last October, the community-managed **Sihom Savings and Credit Scheme (SIPSACRES)** has continued full steam ahead. SIPSACRES is now involved in the UNCDF/UNDP *Micro-Finance and Sustainable Livelihoods Project*. Their role in this micro-credit project will be to serve as an example and help extend their community-managed savings and credit model to the two northern provinces of Oudomxai and Sayaburi.

Bonsuane Thiraj is SIPSACRES leader. He and a team from Sihom have visited the provincial areas twice and report that there is good potential for replicating the Sihom Savings Scheme. Meanwhile, village leaders and interested people working for local and international organisations continue to visit the tiny CDC office in Sihom, which is SIPSACRES headquarters, and demands for training and experience-sharing are increasing. Plans are on now to expand the savings scheme into 12 new *baans* (communities) within the Chantabury District.

CONTACT : Sihom Savings and Credit Scheme
PO Box 6929, Vientiane, LAO PDR, Tel (856 21) 215603

Martin Sheen and Evictions in Philippines :

When **Urban Poor Associates** (UPA) and **Habitat International Coalition** (HIC) organised an eviction fact-finding mission to Manila, they decided to include a celebrity. The man they invited was Martin Sheen, a Hollywood actor who was not only a seasoned housing activist, but had deep personal attachments to the Philippines, where he had come to film the Vietnam epic "Apocalypse Now" twenty years ago. The mission launched the **Urban Poor Colloquium's "Campaign for a Just and Humane City"**, which focuses on moderating government plans to evict half a million people to make way for development projects in 8 areas of Metro Manila.

The inclusion of Martin Sheen was strategic. In November 1997, he and the other mission members, Justice Rajinder Sachar and Mary Racelis from UNICEF, toured Manila's informal settlements, where nearly 4 million people live in squalor and uncertainty, without tenure or basic services. The packed programme was carefully planned by the organising team, and for poor communities and housing rights activists, it was a big success. For four days, the bright lights of media scrutiny penetrated some of the city's darkest, densest, foulest inhabited corners, and followed the team from settlement to settlement. A veteran media strategist said she couldn't remember any Philippines visitor receiving as much coverage, except American presidents.

Sheen was a hit. He put the urban poor and their problems on the front pages of newspapers, on radio and TV news and talk shows. He kissed babies, shook hands endlessly, posed for photos, signed autographs - but above all, he *listened*. Sheen was straightforward about his position: "I can't solve your problems. I am a witness to your suffering, and have come to create awareness." He kept repeating that he felt "nourished by the courage, good humour and humanity which survives in such appalling poverty."

Sheen's message to those in power was clear: "Listen to the poor. They have their own solutions." And to the poor, he recalled an old farm-workers slogan from California, "The people united can never be defeated."

He praised such government efforts as the *Community Mortgage Programme* and resettlement apartments for scavengers at Smokey Mountain, but said clearly that government wasn't doing enough, and was appalled at the conditions he saw people living in. Everything Sheen said, and everything the mission highlighted, are points housing activists, NGOs and community groups had been making for years, but the injection of celebrity magic lit them up.

The visit scored a few concrete points. The team met with Secretary Lina Laigo of the Department Social Welfare and Development, who promised to organise a government-private task-force to review the plans in areas under eviction threat, and to support the Urban Poor Colloquium's suggestions in government circles. Cardinal Jaime Sin offered to host a meeting between government officials and campaign persons to discuss the housing rights problem.

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PHOTO
19 - B

Reactions to the Martin Sheen visit . . .

Celebrity-endorsement as an awareness-generating tactic hasn't been used much by housing-rights movements around Asia. The Martin Sheen visit was successful in bringing unprecedented attention, for a few days, to the problems of the poor. The large-scale evictions have stopped, for the most part, but that has perhaps more to do with the upcoming Philippines elections, although Sheen's visit certainly helped.

One of the few criticisms to Sheen's visit came from a columnist who asked, "*Is it necessary for an American to tell Filipinos how to handle their affairs?*" But the overwhelming consensus was that Sheen's visit put the housing rights movement several steps ahead.

In the Philippines, the urban poor face enormous obstacles, and without other shelter options, end up getting stuck in the all-too-familiar cycle of squatting and evictions. Many feel the Martin Sheen visit, with all its excitement and personal charisma, did much to shake things up, to breathe fresh excitement into the old issues.

The visit was worth it just for the sheer excitement of watching CNN television crews squeezing into ramshackle huts in Tondo, or following scavengers in Payatas as they sorted piles of stinking garbage for recyclable materials - all the places where nobody wants to be, but where so many are forced to live.

But as mission-member Mary Racelis cautioned, "*Successful as Sheen's visit has been, it is organised poor communities in the long run who must, with our support, lead the movement for a just and humane city. By insisting on their right to shelter, livelihood, and decent neighborhoods, they will hold their government accountable for serving the disadvantaged majority.*"

CONTACT :

Urban Poor Associates, Denis Murphy
80-A Malakas St., Barangay Pinyahan
Quezon City 1116 PHILIPPINES
Tel (632) 426-4119 Fax (632) 426-4118
E-Mail: emc321@wtouch.net

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PHILIPPINES :

Freedom to Build : *Meanwhile, 5,000 Affordable housing units later ...*

Market economics theory tells us that where there is demand, entrepreneurs will appear to produce goods to meet that demand. While this formula works nicely for soft drinks and running shoes, it has fallen totally apart when it comes to affordable houses - for which there is a bewildering demand, which very few entrepreneurs seem able to meet.

Home ownership in Manila, generally, is not available to anyone below the 70th percentile. The price of land, the cost of finance and the time-consuming delays caused by bureaucratic procedures all combine to push house prices far beyond their means. Add to this the uncontrolled profit margins of the private developers and the result is a housing delivery system which excludes the majority and results in cities filled with squatter settlements.

Freedom to Build was started by Bill Keyes, who is a kind of nice guy in the dirty world of property developers. He set out in 1976 to see if it was possible to work *within the property-developer's system*, but to build and sell houses for as little as possible. It wasn't easy (and it's getting harder every day) but through a combination of conscience, sharp business management and simple design, he has been able to develop houses that are affordable to the urban poor - *though admittedly not the very poor*. And he's made the formula quite productive - 5,000 poor and low-income families in four large subdivisions and a waiting list of about 17,000 families.

Freedom to Build purchases the land, develops it, builds 20 s.m. expandable "starter houses" and sells them to working families earning decent but low incomes, who are unable to find housing they can afford. Private sector developers' lowest priced units are usually double the wage-earning family's affordability, while government housing programmes tend to limit their involvement to squatter communities and resettlement.

How they keep the price down ...

Freedom to Build sells houses which are fully legal and come with land title. The primary concern of all the design, management and planning decisions is controlling costs and keeping the affordability level down.

1 Cheap land on the urban fringe : FTB starts by finding sites which are as close as possible to transport, schools and markets, but all the properties FTB is developing are on the urban edge of Manila. Recently, land was purchased for 200 pesos per square metre, a figure unlikely to be seen ever again. They have a land-bank of 21 hectares. Many people travel at least an hour to work, and sometimes access to infrastructure and transport isn't fully ready at the beginning.

2 Infrastructure : Right now, the cost of fully developing the new land in FTB projects is running about 200 Pesos per s.m. This includes bulldozing the site, storm and waste-water drainage, sewers, roads and paving, electricity and water supply lines - everything but house construction. This figure, which is extremely low for Manila, is possible because of the large scale of the projects and because the Philippines has a special building code for social housing.

3 Management, scale and repetition : Most of FTB's construction crew-members are permanent employees. This saves the money of sub-contracting and makes for better quality control. Through sheer repetition and scale, the design of the basic house unit, which does not vary, has been refined, and the procedure for building it has been reduced to the utmost efficiency. This is an important part of the economy of the FTB projects.

4 Starter Houses : The 20 s.m. rowhouses, with common side walls, sit on 60 s.m. plots and can be expanded to 40 s.m. on the ground floor, or to 70 s.m. with a second floor, depending on the preferences, needs and resources of the family. The "starter houses" are unfinished, but come with all the basics - block walls, sheet roofs, doors, windows, electricity, water taps, toilets. The families themselves put in ceilings and internal partitions, and do the plastering and painting.

5 Government Mortgage Programme : The government's *Home Development Mutual Fund* offers special 25-year mortgages at 9%, for loans up to 180,000 Pesos. Mortgages above this amount go up to 12%. That small increment makes a huge difference in monthly payments, and hence affordability, so FTB does everything it can to keep the house sale costs below that 180,000 Pesos ceiling. Current market interest rates for loans are at least 20% in the Philippines. These government mortgages are vital to the accessibility of FTB's houses, and without them, the projects would be beyond everybody's reach.

PHOTO
20 - B

Freedom to Build's just-finished De La Costa 4 Scheme in Manila. Where these "starter houses can be sold for 180,000 Pesos, a finished house might cost 250,000 Pesos. People can move in, and as their finances allow, they can build additions at the back or on top.

Contact : Bill Keyes, Freedom to Build, PO Box 64, Green Hills
San Juan, Metro Manila, PHILIPPINES Fax (63-2) 631-4060

The mountain you can see looming smokily behind this woman's house in Payatas is not a real mountain - it is the 15-hectare open-pit garbage dump. Despite the pollution and disease it brings, the dump means survival for members of the Payatas Scavenger's Federation.

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Payatas Waste Pickers Update :

Since 1993, The **Payatas Scavengers' Federation** has brought together families who live and work around the 15 hectare open-pit garbage dump at Payatas, in Manila. The scavengers who make their living gathering, sorting and selling recyclable waste around the dump are among the poorest of Manila's poor. Their federation is supported by Father Norberto and the *Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation* (VMSDFI).

Tenure security and decent houses are top items on the scavengers' list of needs and the key to their genuine development. Father Norberto and his group have been working closely with the Scavengers Federation to help the communities prepare for the day they get land. *Here is a good example of what a set of energetic community preparations can look like :*

1 Finding alternative land : The scavengers federation has a special land acquisition team that has been looking for potential building sites in or near the Payatas area. Once a good site is spotted and the land-owner has been determined, the team begins the process of negotiating with the owners for possible purchase.

2 Saving and organising finance : The Scavengers Federation runs a community-based savings and credit programme which now includes 15 communities and 1,200 families around Payatas. The savings groups make loans to members for emergencies and to help them set up small businesses or expand their recycling operations. These micro-enterprise activities have bolstered incomes, strengthened the federation's financial and organisational capabilities and given the scavengers increasing clout in their negotiations for access to larger credit for housing. The next step is housing savings, and plans are now on to establish a revolving housing loan fund and link up with government home financing programmes.

3 Designing solid affordable houses : The Payatas scavengers are accomplished builders of houses, and the federation is now using design workshops to sharpen their building skills, increase their design options and explore cost-saving measures which will lead to better, cheaper and better-fitting houses. They are also exploring settlement layout options which include space for their long-term dream - a Cooperative Recycling Enterprise. Community members have made exposure visits to house-building projects in India and South Africa and are planning a trip to the *Zabbaleen* waste-pickers community in Cairo.

4 Spreading out the learning : The scavengers' housing preparations are a kind of self-run adult education, and as such, can offer concrete lessons to other grassroots groups struggling for land and decent houses. Community exchanges between groups from around the Philippines, and around Asia, have been a part of the process at Payatas from the beginning, and are helping to build a *National Federation of Urban Poor Savings Associations*.

The Kabalaka Home-owners Association is Launched in Calaparan with a Bang :

The **Kabalaka Homeowners Association** in Iloilo City is an offshoot of the savings programme in Payatas, and part of VMSDFI's efforts to help build a country-wide federation of community-savings schemes in other provinces. (*Kabalaka* translates as "We Care" in the Visayan language)

There are 673 families in the Kabalaka Association, which covers several urban slum areas in Barangays Calaparan and St. Nino Norte. Since beginning last year, they have saved nearly 400,000 Pesos towards housing, and may be part of the region's first ever people-driven land and shelter initiative. The breakthrough came when they found a piece of undeveloped land nearby, 44,000 square metres and close to the city. The communities went through the steps of finding out who owned the land, researching the zoning and right of way, and in November, struck a deal to buy the land.

Meanwhile, Kabalaka members were negotiating with the National Housing Authority for help buying the land through NHA's *MPP Housing Credit Programme*. NHA has surveyed and subdivided the land, according to NHA standards, into 50 square metre plots for 614 families in the Kabalaka Association. When the purchase is final, NHA will develop the land and people will build their own houses.

The cost of each NHA-developed plot works out to 54,000 Pesos. Each family will make a 10% downpayment of 5,400 pesos and borrow the balance of 48,600 Pesos from the MPP Programme, at 12% interest, payable in 15 years on monthly payments of 670 Pesos.

The trouble is, things have gone *a little too fast*, and the housing savings of Kabalaka Association members aren't quite up to the being able to make the full downpayment, so the people are negotiating with NHA for bridge financing to meet the downpayment.

CONTACT : Father Norberto Carcellar
Vincentian Missionaries Social
Development Foundation
221 NIA Road, Tandang Sora Avenue
Quezon City, PHILIPPINES
FAX (632) 454-2834
Email: vmsdfi@mnl.sequel.net

HONG KONG :

SOCO's Housing and Human Rights Work continues after the 1997 Handover ...

Since the handover last July, human-rights watchers around the world have kept a sharp eye on developments in the densely-populated Hong Kong. Nobody's certain how Chinese rule will affect Hong Kong's housing situation.

The **Society for Community Organisation (SOCO)** is a 26-year veteran advocate for Hong Kong's marginalised urban poor. For its director, Ho Hei-wah, post-handover work with the city's badly-housed and un-housed is *business as usual*. The territory continues to have one of Asia's highest growth rates, but also one of the greatest disparities between rich and poor.

In a society which prides itself on self-reliance, SOCO has worked with people who are often resented for their needs - the elderly, the homeless, "cage people", illegal immigrants, boat-dwellers and street hawkers. SOCO brings these communities together in groups to fight for their housing rights and has used protest marches, demonstrations and hunger strikes to highlight their right to better housing and livelihoods. At the same time SOCO is also well respected by the housing authorities for its thorough research, quiet advocacy and genuine determination to negotiate viable housing options.

Governments and tactics may change, but SOCO is optimistic, and remains committed to bringing about change, no matter who's governing Hong Kong.

The government policy to commercialise public housing flats continues, even though it defeats the purpose of Hong Kong's once-admired public housing system. When the public housing estates go through privatisation, the rents shoot up and the poor are forced out. SOCO's work in several public housing estates has involved helping tenant families to form residents associations. The struggle now is to formulate a rent-reduction policy for poor families and to build many more affordable rental units in all districts.

CONTACT :
Society for Community Organisation (SOCO)
 Ho Hei-wah, Director
 52 Princess Margaret Road, 3rd Floor
 Kowloon, HONG KONG
 Tel (852) 2713-9165 Fax (852) 2761-3326

"CAGE PEOPLE" :

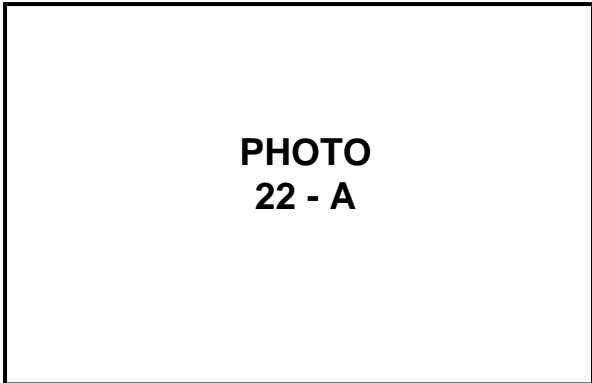
The underside of Hong Kong's "economic miracle" ...

SOCO's work with "cage people" began in 1989 with residents of the Triangular Building in Fuk Tsuen Street, who were facing eviction under the landlord's pretext of redevelopment. The building was home to an astonishing number of people, most of them elderly and extremely poor, who paid high rents to live in rented cubicles, "cock-lofts" and cage-dwellings, in conditions of crowding and squalor that are almost beyond imagining.

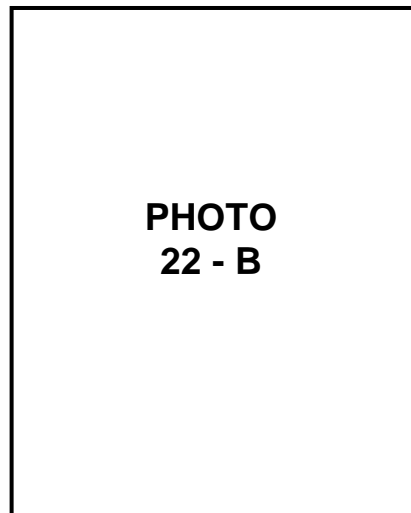
Hong Kong has a large population of single, elderly people and poor families living in such conditions, in old tenements, cage dwellings and rooftop huts. In order to expose the predicament of cage-dwellers, photographers began shooting pictures of "cage people" in different parts of the city. SOCO has held exhibitions of these photos, and published a book of them. This has led to the formation of an interest group on cage dwellings, and the establishment of the *Cage-dwellers Home* and the *Elderly Housing Development Projects*. *These photos and notes are from SOCO's 1997 documentation the lives and living conditions of the cage-people :*

▶ *With 40 years of history, this is the oldest cage-home, with rows of criss-crossing triple-bunk beds. This 1,000 square foot flat has been home for 170 people. Most came from China in the 40s and 50s to work as coolies and construction workers.*

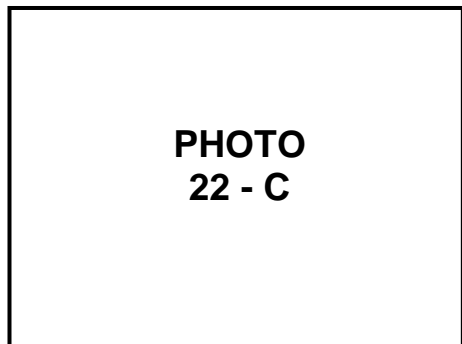
▼ *Eating, sleeping, playing or doing home-work in "coffin-like accommodation."*



**PHOTO
22 - A**

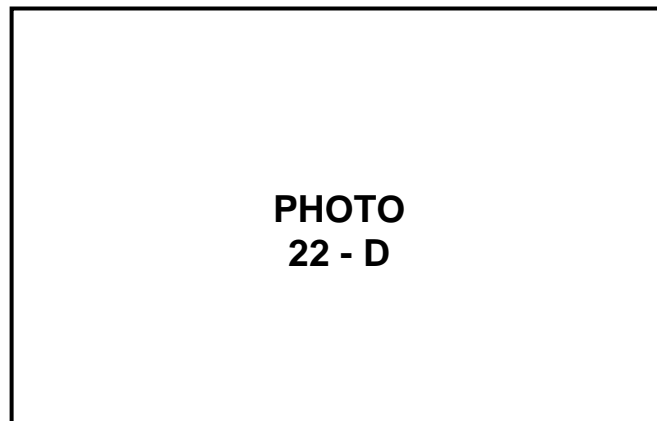


**PHOTO
22 - B**



**PHOTO
22 - C**

▲ *"We live like canned sardines!" This four-member family lives squeezed into a partitioned cubicle of 40 square feet, in a flat they share with twenty other families. The rent for their cubicle is HK\$ 2,300 per month.*

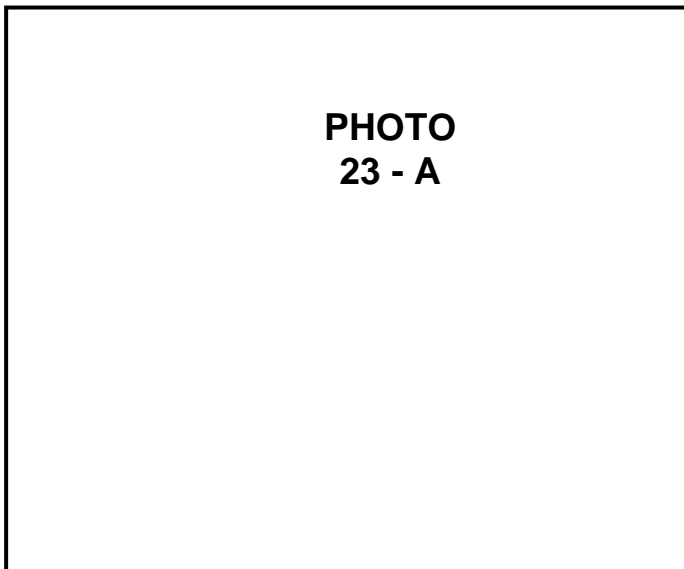


**PHOTO
22 - D**

◀ *Born in the Ching Dynasty, 96-year old Tam Mei Nam is the oldest cage-dweller. Except for a few sweaters kept from the Maoist era, a tile-pillow, a metal mug and a tongue scraper which he has kept for over seventy years, Tam has virtually no other belongings. Looking back, old Tam sighs, "Life is but emptiness."*

In the background, the way things look after "Redevelopment" in Seoul. In the foreground, the way things look during redevelopment. For low-income tenants, this process often means the loss of their homes to skyrocketing rents and evictions.

PHOTO 23 - A



The News from KOCER in Seoul :

Myong-Ho Shin is the General Secretary of the Korea Center for City and Environment Research (KOCER) and sent in these updates about the recent situation in South Korea :

1 Korea's New President Kim Dae Jung, considered the most reform-minded candidate, took first place in Seoul's poorer districts. But nobody is sure whether his policies will favor the poor, since he was partly supported by capitalists and conservative forces. But on the new government's policy list is a plan to build 500,000 units of low-income rental apartments. One of our tasks will be to keep promoting this policy.

2 Ordinary Korean citizens are feeling the effects of IMF management policies more severely day by day. Unemployment statistics indicate that lesser-educated and lower income groups, especially manual and day-labourers, are suffering greater increases in unemployment than other groups. In Seoul, only two out of every ten construction labourers are working, and they are receiving only 70% of their former wages.

3 **Redevelopment of Traditional Markets:** South Korea has 1,545 traditional markets, each with an average of 130 stalls. These markets offer self-employment to about 2 million vendors, most of whom have been selling goods for decades. The total value of goods sold at these markets is 10 times that of department stores and 4 times that of large retail outlets. Despite these astonishing figures, the government has judged traditional market facilities as being out-dated and uncompetitive in this age of expanding commerce. In 1996, a law was passed to allow for their redevelopment, and 200 traditional markets are now being "modernised". The actual market vendors, however, have been carefully excluded from the projects and are being evicted.

4 **Forced Evictions in "Redevelopment Districts"** and evictions of vendor's stalls in market redevelopment projects around Seoul continue. The evictions are carried out either by the local city administration or by thugs from the city's private eviction agencies. It is uncertain what position the Kim Dae Jung government will take on evictions - it may claim that it cannot interfere in evictions carried out by local authorities, and that it needs more time to respond to the evictees needs.

5 **Housing Standard Law:** KOCER is working with the Seoul Catholic Diocese **Urban Poor Pastoral Committee** on a project to promote the adoption of a *Housing Standard Law*, which would guarantee a certain housing standard for all citizens.

6 **ACHR Korea Eviction Watch** is publishing a 100-page report on the violent eviction of 43 families in the Haengdang 1-2 Urban Redevelopment District of Seoul, in October 1997, who were struggling for the right to stay in their district. This eviction, in which many women were sexually molested, was the subject of widespread media coverage and Asia-wide protest. The report is available from KOCER.

KOREA :

4 Years of Korea-Japan People's Exchange . . .

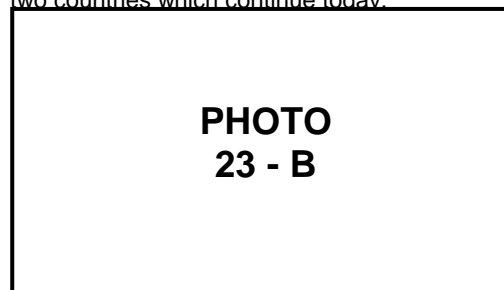
Architect Etsuzo Inamoto is an active member of ACHR-Tokyo and has been involved in community improvement projects with the Buraku Liberation League. In 1988, he made his first trip to Korea, which was then preparing for the Seoul Olympic Games. Nearly 3 million people were facing forced eviction from their homes to make way for Olympic projects. With Father John Daly, he visited bleak temporary housing, and saw the beginnings of a housing movement.

On his second trip to Seoul in 1994, hosted by KOCER, the forced evictions were still going on, but this time the resistance movement had matured. Besides opposing evictions, people now had some clear strategies and proposals:

- People evicted in "Redevelopment Areas" should have the option of staying in public rental housing in the *same area*.
- All residents, rich and poor, tenant and owner, should be involved in the planning and construction of new housing.
- Groups from different redevelopment around Seoul were working together to lobby for their housing rights, and wanted communities to be the building block of redevelopment.

These ideas reminded him of Japan's Buraku movement. Etsuzo felt the Japanese and Korean movements had much to learn from each other. He raised the idea of exchanges with KOCER and BLL, and the following year, a group of Korean activists attended an ACHR-TAP community-improvement workshop in Asaka. That was the beginning of a productive series of exchanges between the two countries which continue today.

PHOTO 23 - B



CONTACT : Father Mun-Su Park
ACHR Korea Committee
ILM Bldg, Sogang University
#1 Sinsoo-dong, Mapo-gu
Seoul 121-742, KOREA
Tel / Fax (82 2) 701-9004
E-Mail: KOCER@chollian.net

PHOTO
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JAPAN :

Kobe's Homeless People :

*Even before the devastating earthquake in 1995, there were homeless people in Kobe, but the loss of jobs and accommodation after the earthquake sent their numbers soaring. Since then, several homeless people's groups and NGOs have come together to begin building a homeless movement in Kobe, a movement with two distinct parts: the earthquake-affected homeless and the unemployed homeless. Last December, Somsook traveled to Kobe, and met with people from the **Kobe Homeless Association** at their headquarters near the city's main train station, which is a kind of shelter, where homeless people can come for meals and assistance. Here are a few bits from her notes:*

Technology is always changing employment patterns in a highly industrialised country like Japan, and these changes have victims - particularly men in the construction and manual labour sectors - who find themselves suddenly unemployed and homeless. Japan's social welfare system depends on having a home. Without a proper address, people cannot get welfare benefits and find themselves ostracized from Japanese society, harassed by police, even attacked by city youths.

"They think we contribute nothing, only cause trouble. They see us as value-less, something not even human, as garbage."

The *Habitat International Coalition's* fact-finding mission to Kobe in September 1995 showed how badly the government had responded to the homelessness after the earthquake. The mission proposed that there should be no evictions without providing two weeks notice and some alternative accommodation. But evictions continue, especially in the railway stations, where many homeless people find shelter, and where the numbers of homeless people are growing day by day.

The **Kobe Homeless Association** is working to find solutions to the problems of homelessness - employment, access to social welfare and medical assistance, housing and discrimination.

Four Years Later : Homeless earthquake victims look within their own communities for shelter solutions . . .

Over 450,000 families lost their homes in Kobe's earthquake. Estimates suggest about half of these are staying with relatives or have rented flats or taken loans to rebuild their houses. The government neatly classifies these as "self-supportedly recovered." But for the rest, without such resources, self-support is insufficient.

Rents in Kobe have shot up and new housing is unaffordable to many. Four years after the earthquake, 28,000 families still live in government-provided temporary housing, in various parts of Kobe. Families in these temporary settlements occupy tiny rooms of ten or twenty square metres, with common toilets. Others are still camping out in tents and pre-fabricated rental units in city parks and playgrounds, and on demolished building sites. Since August 1995, the government has classified these as "squatters", and subjected them to eviction and harassment.

People in most of the temporary communities have applied for low-rent public apartments, but these are in short supply and despite promises, the government is slow to construct more. The provincial government has built some alternative housing outside the city, but it's far from jobs and support systems. "We're city people. We've always lived and worked in the city, we can't move out there."

Now some 600 families from different temporary communities have organised a network to tackle problems of housing rights, social benefits and employment. Tanaka-san, a leader in one of the temporary housing sites, is not happy with the government's resettlement idea and thinks people should remain near their former houses. Despite evictions and intimidation, he and many others have refused to leave their old neighborhoods, where they continue to live in tents or even in rented shipping containers.

The network's simple proposal to the Government is this : give each earthquake-affected family a one-time compensation and let them find their own shelter and make their own way back to normal life.

The people cite an earlier earthquake in Hokaido, where all affected families were given 12 million Yen, which was enough to start over, without the need for any government housing programmes. "Japan is a rich country," one said, "Five or ten million Yen is a very modest amount, but for us it would be at least a beginning, to start a new life." But many in the temporary communities feel the government is afraid giving such compensation would set an expensive precedent. "What if there were an earthquake in Tokyo, and all those millions of people expecting compensation?"

Not surprisingly, there is a fair bit of cynicism running throughout Kobe's temporary communities. "What has the government done? We don't remember anything!" And from someone else: "They're only interested in building the new airport, not houses for people. What a lonely country Japan is to live in."

PHOTO
24 - B

CONTACT : Mitsuhiro Hosaka, Economics Faculty, Nihon University
Okuda, Mihama-cho, Chita-gun, Aichi 470-32 JAPAN
Tel (81) 569-87-2211 Fax (81) 569-87-1690
Email: VET05375@niftyserve.or.jp

PHOTO
25 - A

"We made it clear that this is not a poverty-relief job grant. We operate as a business. Some people in Buraku tend to be depend on BLL or government, and seek easier jobs. If our employees don't work well, the companies will discontinue our contracts. Our approach is different."
- Yamamoto-san

Buraku Liberation League : Self-Funding through "Enterprise Development" ...

Three million people in Japan come from a community which has traditionally been discriminated against in housing, employment, marriage, education and social status. Most live in Burakus ("outcaste settlements"). For 25 years, the dynamic **Buraku Liberation League (BLL)** has struggled for their rights, and people in about 840 Burakus have been able to improve their communities and win support from central and local governments. Yamamoto Yoshihiko is the leader of the BLL's branch at Asaka, outside Osaka. He spoke recently about a new BLL enterprise venture, and this note is drawn from his interview with Hosaka :

Asaka is one of the improved *Buraku* settlements, near the Yamato River, with a university campus on one side and Osaka's subway yard on the other. The subway yard was constructed against Asaka people's strong objections, since it cut off access to the community. After strenuous efforts by the *Buraku Liberation League*, the yard was removed in 1988 and the community took part in redeveloping the site for parks, playgrounds, housing and schools.

For the people in Asaka, however, physical improvements are only a part of the liberation process, which includes all aspects of community development. Over the last few years, Yamamoto-san and his group have developed a community-based enterprise, *Asaka Personal Relations*, in connection with their *Buraku* movement.

The idea behind the enterprise was to find sources of income for the *Buraku* movement, which depended on external funding for 90% of its activities, so it could be self-financed.

Things started when the *Asaka Buraku Liberation League* obtained a contract from the Construction Ministry to maintain the Yamato river banks near the settlement. It seemed awkward for a "liberation movement" to go into business, so they established a separate company.

The company's next contract came from Osaka Municipality to clean the subway yard site after relocation. Everybody felt that if the company could cover more activities and earn more, it could offer jobs to elderly and unemployed residents. A community member who had just retired from a building maintenance company arranged a joint-venture which led to more building maintenance contracts. Workers were trained and more contracts came in. The company now employs 25 people and generates annual proceeds of 150 million Yen. 13 million of this is transferred to BLL's Asaka Branch. Now the company is expanding into pharmacy management, food-selling and paints importing.

CONTACT :

Yamamoto Yoshihiko, Buraku Liberation League
Asaka Kaiho Kaikan 1-4-62, Asaka Sumiyoshiku
Osaka 558 JAPAN

Shinjuku Evictions Update

In the last issue of *Housing by People in Asia*, we ran a report about the violent eviction of 200 homeless people from their cardboard shelters in Tokyo's Shinjuku Station, and the subsequent trial of two homeless men charged with "Forcible obstruction of business". Here are some recent developments, sent by Hosaka and Yuzo Uchida in Tokyo :

1. Fire in Shinjuku Homeless Settlement :

Around 5 AM, 7 February 1998, a fire broke out in a cardboard settlement in the basement of Shinjuku Station. Three people died and two were hospitalised with serious burns. 40 of the 200 cardboard shelters were burned down. The Tokyo Fire department is still trying to identify the cause of the fire.

By afternoon, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government had put up fences around the settlement in the name of "reconstruction work," enclosing the unaffected 260 shelters too. There have been many forcible evictions of homeless people from Shinjuku. The TMG has offered temporary housing, but because it is at the other end of Tokyo, only nine people have applied.

Over 500 homeless people live in and around Shinjuku Station, most of them elderly men who have lost their jobs as construction labourers and factory workers, during Japan's recent economic slow-down. Some are disabled from work-related accidents, a few were white-collar workers.

Japan has a social welfare system and has maintained certain standards, but there are many cases of homeless people being turned down for livelihood assistance on the claim that they were "not willing to work." And many are not covered by welfare service for the reason that without a proper address, they cannot be registered in the national health insurance scheme.

2. Homeless Activists Found Innocent :

In February 1998, the Tokyo local court declared innocent the two homeless activists in Shinjuku. The case has now been brought to the high court. As part of the defense case, supporting groups have been able to cite cases around Asia where municipal governments have found alternatives to eviction of homeless families. In Phnom Penh and in Bombay, for example, municipal governments have acknowledged the right to housing by providing alternative land to homeless families living along urban roadsides.

PHOTO
26 - A

GARBAGE :

Waste Wise Asia Pacific: Combing the Asia Region for People's Solutions to People's Garbage ...

Systems for managing garbage vary widely across Asia. In wealthier countries, waste management tends to be mechanized, capital-intensive and central-ised, while in poorer countries, insufficient collection, open dumping and weak regulations create big environmental problems in cities unable to handle their own garbage.

But what these poorer countries *do have* is long-established, informal recycling systems that would put environmentally conscious northern countries to shame. Kids grow up with household waste recycling and many poor families survive by gathering and trading recyclable waste materials. As vital as these activities may be to the families they support and the cities they help keep clean, they don't always add up to clean cities. To make matters worse, official waste-management strategies often clash with the poor's recycling efforts, when the two could be allies in the war against the rising mountains of garbage.

Waste Wise Asia Pacific is an informal network of organisations and individuals dedicated to promoting waste management solutions that are environmentally and socially responsible, launched in 1997 in collaboration with **AP-2000**. The Secretariat's database in Bangalore lists over 250 groups in Asia working in solid waste management and publishes **Fact Sheets** with detailed explanations of the pros and cons of different waste management approaches, such as *integrated waste management* and incineration.

CONTACT :

Waste Wise Asia Pacific, Anselm Rosario
373, 100 Ft. Road, HAL 2nd Stage,
Indiranagar, Bangalore 560 008 INDIA
Tel/Fax (91 80) 525 5543
E-Mail: mythri@giasbg01.vsnl.net.in

SEVANATHA in Sri Lanka :

Household Composting by the "Barrel System" ...

One of the problems of composting household waste is *WHERE* to compost, especially in poor communities, where space can be a spare commodity. Here is Chularathna's story about a simple solution to the *how's* and *where's* of household composting from SEVANATHA : **Barrels!**

Municipal garbage collection throughout Colombo is spotty, but is especially bad in slums and lower-income areas at the city's fringe, where municipal trucks don't come for weeks and garbage mounts up in stinking, vermin-ridden piles. SEVANATHA has teamed up with the Ministry of Environment to try composting to supplement the city's ineffective waste disposal.

Since December, SEVANATHA has been experimenting in several poor communities with separating recyclable and biodegradable waste "at source" and composting the biodegradable "wet" garbage in special barrels, right at each house. The idea is that a little simple recycling and composting, at household level, can dramatically reduce the amount of garbage each family leaves for municipal collection. And this cuts environmental pollution by decreasing the volume of garbage left at municipal dumping stations.

The "**barrel system**" has been a hit, and SEVANATHA is organising a campaign to spread the idea around. The special composting barrel costs about 600 Rupees (US\$ 10). Every day, a family dumps its organic waste into the barrel, and after about 90 days accumulating garbage - **Voila!** All those mango peels and fish bones have become rich fertiliser for the vegetable garden.

The open-bottomed barrels are made of 40-gallon recycled cooking-oil drums. A local welding shop drills holes in the sides and makes the drum top into a removeable lid with a handle. The bacteria comes up into the garbage from the soil at the bottom to break it down. To help poor families purchase the composting barrels, SEVANATHA is offering them on installments. SEVANATHA is also keeping a database on barrel-users, to help refine the system and expand its use in Colombo and in other urban areas around Sri Lanka.

PHOTO
26 - B

Thailand : *Khon Kaen Community Network Takes on Municipal Garbage Management ...*

Like so many cities around Asia, Khon Kaen in northern Thailand is generating more garbage than its waste-removal systems can handle. Changing living standards have brought changes to the quality of garbage, which is now filled with plastics, chemicals and materials that are bad news for the environment.

The energetic community network in Khon Kaen, **Saha Chumchon** ("*communities together*") has started savings and credit groups in 15 of the poorest squatter communities, carried out settlement improvements and set up health care systems. Now **Saha Chumchon** is collaborating with the Municipality to develop a city-wide garbage collection and recycling system. Many of the city's *saleng* (informal waste-materials collectors who ply the streets on 3-wheel cycles) live in **Saha Chumchon** settlements, and are at the centre of the plans, which involve house-to-house collection and recycling, and seeks to make a profit-making business out of recycling and garbage management.

With a 395,342 Baht grant from the DANCED Programme, and "shares" from members of the community network and the *saleng*, they have bought tricycles and tools, and are now setting up an extensive "factory" for sorting and processing recyclable materials, on land provided by the city.

PHOTO
27 - A

The "Eggs for Garbage" Scheme in Bangkok's Klong Toey is showing that with a little community spirit and a small inducement (in this case eggs), communities can help reduce the city's garbage-collection burden and clean up their settlements. (See story on page 31)

India : Street Kids and Mahila Milan team up to broaden everybody's waste-management options . .

Nobody can miss the garbage that is all over Mumbai. And nobody wants it there - neither the 11 million people who have to live with it, nor the municipal administration that can't keep up with its disposal. Thirty percent of Mumbai's total municipal budget goes into garbage-removal, but less than half the city's waste is collected.

Over the past few years NSDF, Mahila Milan and the street kids in *Sadak Chaap* have been testing some fresh strategies for managing solid waste through recycling and composting - in their own settlements and in different situations around the city. These experiments are just a beginning, but they show clearly that poor communities can be good partners in managing the city's overwhelming garbage burden and that community-managed recycling and composting are viable supplements to municipal garbage collection.

One of the most exciting outcomes of the federation's waste-management experiments is a budding partnership with one of Mumbai's largest wards, whose population of 750,000 people includes a large majority are slum dwellers. Last October, NSDF/MM/SPARC sat down to talk possibilities with L-Ward officers and these possibilities are shaping up :

- Communities have begun to set up composting and recycling systems to reduce the garbage in their own settlements. In return, the ward is helping build recycling sorting platforms and composting facilities in the settlements.
- Communities and teams of street children are taking on municipal contracts for composting waste from fresh markets and restaurants, which means more savings on transport and fuel for the ward and savings on land fill space for the city.
- Communities are also taking on municipal contracts to encourage more recycling and to keep streets clean.

For a copy of the report and video "Garbage Talk" contact :SPARC, PO Box 9389, Mumbai 400 026, INDIA, Tel / Fax (91 22) 285 1500 EMail admin@sparc.lbom.ernet.in

How's that again?

Just imagine the role reversal this process is bringing about. Until recently, waste-picking was considered an offense in Mumbai. Street kids with jute-sacks slung over their shoulders were considered pests and thieves of waste. But now, *Sadak Chaap* members are the ones training wealthy residents to clear the garbage piles in their colonies! They are the experts the city is hiring to set up composting systems for reducing market and restaurant waste! They are idea-bringers and the welcomed guests in informal settlements all across the city!

A few other Garbage-related stories :

- *Payatas Waste-Pickers Federation explore resettlement and rebuilding and new land options in Philippines (see page 21)*
- *"Eggs for Garbage" Recycling in Bangkok's Klong Toey (see page 31)*
- *Informal Sector Recycling, Karachi URC (see page 17)*

Bangladesh : Composting in Dhaka by Waste Concern

Dhaka's 7 million inhabitants generate 3,500 metric tons of solid waste every day. Only 42% of this is actually collected by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The rest is left to rot along the city's roads and open drains. Most of this is picked clean of recyclable materials by the city's informal waste-pickers, and most of what's left (and 85% of all waste generated) is organic "wet" waste. **Waste Concern** is conducting a pilot composting project which involves:

- promotion of "at-source" separation of garbage into organic "wet" and non-organic recyclable waste, leading to better-quality compost.
- collecting organic waste from houses, restaurants and bazaars for processing into organic fertilizer (*green compost*).
- setting up a composting unit using the aerobic technique of compost reduction, processing one ton of solid waste and producing 200 kg of compost each day.

So far, 300 households are included in the house-to-house waste collection programme, and Waste Concern is running a literacy and environment-education programme for children in waste-related work.

CONTACT :

**Waste Concern, A.H.Md. Maqsood Sinha
Tel (882) 911-9249 Fax (882) 956-4723
E-Mail: dal@citechco.net**

Cambodia : Formalising Informal Recycling . . .

The newly-formed **Community Sanitation and Recycling Organisation** has conducted a study of waste-pickers in Phnom Penh, many of whom are children. In January, they began a project to find ways of involving waste pickers and poor communities in more formal garbage collection and recycling. The project will focus on building and supporting informal recycling systems already operating in the city, organising a waste-pickers cooperative and setting up a recycling centre where sorting and processing of waste can happen and where social development activities with waste pickers will take place.

**CONTACT : Community Sanitation and Recycling Organisation (CSARO)
Heng Yon Kora, PO Box 2015,
Phnom Penh 3, CAMBODIA
Tel (855 23) 265535 Fax (855 23) 363153
E-Mail: citi@forum.org.kh**

THAILAND :

DANCED/UCDO

Environment Fund :

UCDO teamed up with DANCED (Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development) to start a **Community Environment Development Fund**, which began in 1996 with a grant of US\$ 1.3 million. The fund channels grant money to poor settlements for small improvement projects such as wells, drainage, community centres, walkways, and operates in such a way that all decisions about how the money will be used - what projects, where and how much - are made by national and local community networks.

The scope of the DANCED projects is extremely small, with an average project cost of 90,000 Baht (US\$ 2,250). When the local networks make decisions about how to divide up their portion of the fund and when communities plan and propose their own projects, they are learning to negotiate, to compromise, to work within a larger whole. They're dipping down into the deep well of their own resourcefulness for building ideas, cost-cutting tricks, solutions nobody has even dreamed of yet.

And because they are working with resources that are *within their control*, and to which they have contributed, the projects are *theirs*, and they are in a strong position. Many communities have used the money to leverage more funds for their plans from the city. The programme also brings the networks together with other urban actors from the municipality and NGOs, and helps to build relationships that will mean more resources for community-managed improvements in the long term.

The DANCED fund helps pay for innovative, low-cost solutions which improve sanitary conditions, infrastructure and common facilities in poor communities. But more importantly, the programme tips the balance of power a little, and helps change the *systems* which determine how communities are improved.

100% Fat-Free Development Assistance :

The DANCED fund is managed in such a way as every penny goes directly into community improvement projects and into the network-building process. None melts away in the big professional salaries, airfares, office overheads and equipment of conventional development projects of similar scale. The DANCED programme's extremely modest administration (only 4 Thai staff) piggy backs on UCDO, which is itself self-supporting.

PHOTO

28 - A

These concrete walkways in the So Cho community in Songkhla were designed by engineers, built by a contractor and paid for by the NHA, all without any involvement of the people who live here. The walkways serve the purpose, but what could people have done with the huge amount of money it cost to build this expensive solution? **Answer : Keep reading!**

Community Upgrading in Thailand : Still a long way to go before communities are in control ...

The **National Housing Authority's** Community Upgrading Programme started in 1977, just when the phenomenal Bangkok building boom was taking off. Back then, the idea of upgrading poor settlements was new, and didn't have much support in a city where urban renewal generally meant demolishing all the old wooden houses and building multi-story concrete buildings.

Cost-Recovery Model: NHA's first community upgrading projects followed the World Bank "*cost-recovery model*", which stipulated that engineers design the improvements, contractors build them and communities pay for them. Ban Khrua was one of the National Housing Authority's first upgradation projects. When the people were told they would have to pay for their wooden walkways to be ripped out and replaced with expensive concrete ones, they said *No way!* (See *related Ban Khrua story on page 30*). Ban Khrua's strong, unified veto of the cost-recovery model was instrumental in killing the cost-recovery model.

Subsidy Model: Next came the subsidy system, in which government foots the bill, not communities. The first subsidies in the late 70s were 5,000 Baht per household, and have now climbed to about 18,000 Baht. But the expensive engineering continued, with standardised procedures and designs for walkways, drains, sewers and toilets. It is still tendered contractors doing the work, and communities have very little say in how the projects are designed or carried out.

Community Contract Model: The new frontier is community involvement. The term "community contract" is just now starting to be heard in a few cases around Asia, but not much yet in Thailand. The DANCED programme is giving a big push to the notion that poor communities can plan, construct and even help pay for their own environmental improvements, which turn out to be cheaper, more varied, more appropriate and better maintained than the government's improvements.

Environmental Improvements and Tenure :

When poor people live in settlements with uncertain tenure, clean community facilities and healthy surroundings may be high priorities. But people are understandably reluctant to take on the financial burdens of improving a community in which they have no equity. But when communities do upgrade their own settlements, in their own ways and with their own hands, their projects become a vivid, palpable expression of their right to be there, a consolidator of their housing rights.

DANCED Community Projects in Chiang Mai:

Over 135 environmental projects, affecting 24,932 families, are underway around Thailand. The rule is that at least 20% of the project's cost must be contributed by the communities, either in cash, labour or kind. Different community networks around Thailand have found different ways for deciding how their DANCED grants will be used. The **Chiang Mai Community Network**, for example, requires that projects cost less than 200,000 Baht (US\$5,000), be built entirely with contributed labour, and benefit everyone in the community. Here is what a few of the communities in Chiang Mai have done with grants from the DANCED Programme.

PHOTO 29 - A

Sala at Ton Kaam

The old **Ton Kaam** community at the centre of Chiang Mai had no temple, no meeting hall. The 2-story community centre (*sala*) they planned and built is now the proud centerpiece of the community. It cost about 250,000 Baht, of which 190,000 was a grant from DANCED. The people contributed cash and all the unskilled labour. It took about three months from start to finish.

Boardwalk at Tung Pattana

Tung Pattana is a small squatter settlement, with 30 houses built on stilts, on public land along a drainage canal. The families settled there after being evicted from private land nearby. Even though the possibility of eviction still looms, **Tung Pattana** is filled with evidence of the human impulse to make a home. Balconies are hung with orchids, spirit houses and songbirds in cages, and the merry confusion of clothes hung out to dry.

But the most potent expression of this impulse is the boardwalk **Tung Pattana's** people have come together to build. During the rains, when floodwaters fill the canal, houses can only be reached by wading through the water or hopping along bamboo poles strung between houses. The community asked for 100,000 Baht (US\$2,500) from the

Environment Fund, and, with their own sweat and ingenuity, built a boardwalk *which is a marvel*. Reinforced concrete fence-posts, which come with pre-drilled holes, made strong, water-proof legs for the boardwalk. During the dry season, when the water was low, they concreted these posts in the bottom of the canal, in pairs, at two-metre intervals. Then they bolted wooden cross-members to the columns, nailed teakwood boards to these and trimmed the edges. The boardwalk is assembled in easily-liftable sections, so the entire system can be taken apart and re-bolted at a higher level during flooding, or carried away to a new place in the event of an eviction. (All this without a peep from any engineer or architect!)

PHOTO 29 - B

PHOTO 29 - C

Deep Well at Central

The poor hill-tribes families who settled on this land, owned by the Central Department Store, had no water supply, toilets, electricity or drainage. The 7-metre deep well and water filtering system they constructed, with a small DANCED grant, sits in its own beautiful wooden shelter, and has made an enormous difference in their lives.

Community Video News-magazine

UCDO has experimented with Thai-language newspapers, posters and radio programmes for disseminating community news around Thailand. Their latest effort is a lively Community Video News Magazine, which tells the story of five effective initiatives, one of which is the DANCED Programme. Story and script were prepared by community representatives, with technical help from Pajjong Laisakul of *Multimedea Makers Thailand*. English editions are available from ACHR, and include these stories:

The Forum of the Poor: Earlier last year, a broad-based collective forum of 10,000 people from all over Thailand camped outside Government House in Bangkok for 99 days, demanding government resolutions on 122 urban and rural cases involving land rights, forests, resettlement and development. Intense negotiations ended with resolutions on all the cases, and commitment of US\$240 million to various agreements with the Forum.

Community Radio: A twice-weekly radio programme of stories, music, call-in discussions and information about all sorts of community actions is being written and produced entirely by poor women and men in Thailand *National Community Network* and broadcast on commercial radio.

National Women's Network: was formed in Songkla last year and has carried out extensive household surveys in communities around Thailand and are now organising themselves around the problems identified in the survey.

Hopewell Project: Bangkok's massive elevated train project has necessitated the clearing of hundreds of houses in its way. Through the *Forum of the Poor* and long negotiations with government agencies most of these communities have been able to secure affordable resettlement sites and are reconstructing their houses.

● *This video is the first in a series of community video-magazines which UCDO will be bringing out every three months or so. A project to prepare similar video magazines in countries around the Asia region, and to experiment with the video medium, is being planned through ACHR.*

CONTACT:

Urban Community Development Office
2044/31 New Petchburi Road,
Khet Huai Khwang
Bangkok 10320 THAILAND
Tel (662) 718-0911 Fax (662) 718-0937
E-Mail: UCDO@mozart.inet.co.th

PHOTO
30 - A

"We're like a big family here. I can eat in anyone's house. You can't find these kind of relations in Bangkok nowadays. People in flats and town-houses live separately. Their dogs bite your heels when you walk by."

BANGKOK :

Ban Khrua : 200 year old community resists eviction . .

Ban Khrua is a two centuries old community of 1,200 teakwood houses, built along one of Bangkok's last navigable *klongs*, surrounded by skyscrapers and roaring expressways. Umat Damrilert, the community's proud historian, unrolls an 1875 Bangkok map with Ban Khrua clearly delineated, surrounded by orchards. The Cham Muslim community's spiritual life is closely attached to this land, which was granted to their ancestors by the King.

In 1987, a controversial decision was announced by the *Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority (ETA)* to construct a "CD Road" through Ban Khrua, to ease traffic congestion. Besides expropriating half the community and bulldozing the mosque and cemetery, the plan meant ten lanes of roaring traffic would cover the rest. When they learned of the plan, the people took to the streets in outraged but peaceful protest.

Their protests led to adjustments to avoid mosque and cemetery, but 800 houses were still to be expropriated. The people, by now thoroughly organised, rejected the revisions and continued their campaign. The complex dispute has dragged on ever since, with two public hearings, numerous cabinet resolutions, canceling and resurrecting of the project at various times, symposiums, petitions, seminars and more protests. The city still refuses to scrap the project, and the community refuses to give up one house or one inch of its ancestral land. *In Ban Khrua,*

Ban Khrua's 10-year struggle against the ETA road has been documented as a special case study on eviction resistance for Habitat International Coalition (from which this story was excerpted). Contact ACHR for a copy.

A Lesson in Resistance : How Ban Khrua has kept the bulldozers at bay for ten years . . .

The ten-year battle with ETA hasn't beat this remarkable community, but created an almost unbreachable resistance to the forces which threaten their land and community and made Ban Khrua an object lesson in community mobilisation. But people pay a big price when they fight cities. "We haven't slept in peace since the project was unveiled. And it seems the sleepless nights will persist," leader Saroj Phuaksamlee laments. Cities may have the full power of legal authority to intimidate and displace, but strong communities have a few tools of their own :

ORGANISATION : Since 1987, Ban Khrua's highly organized fight against the road has been organised by their ad-hoc committee, which plans all meetings, protest marches, sit-ins, rallies, symposiums, exhibitions, keeps tabs on developments and conveys them to the community.

INFORMATION : From the beginning, community members have attended all ETA meetings and equipped themselves with information. They know "under-developed" settlements like Ban Khrua are treated like blanks on the city map, and projects like the CD road give the city a legal way of eliminating them. Two public hearings have determined the CD road is unnecessary, but powerful retailers are pushing the project to improve parking access to nearby shopping malls. Many also feel that if Ban Khrua "wins" against the CD road, it will set a precedent for other community-versus-development disputes around Bangkok.

ALLIES : Ban Khrua's sustained, peaceful resistance has touched a deep chord in Bangkok, a city increasingly aware of all it has sacrificed in the name of *development* - history, community, environment, beauty, health, peace. Academics, historians, journalists, human rights activists, senior officers at NHA and UCDO have placed themselves squarely behind the community's struggle from the beginning.

The Threat of Arson :

Volunteer security guards at Ban Khrua's entrances guide strangers to their destination and see them out again. 26 loudspeakers wired to security offices broadcast warnings or announcements. But says 65-year old Somjai Nuangniyom, "*The most dreadful thing for us is the fear of arson.*" Everyone is conscious that a single flame, carefully set, could destroy their community overnight and make their ongoing dispute with the ETA irrelevant. To counter this threat, the community maintains three fire-prevention stations, each with 20 well-trained volunteers operating in shifts, 24 hours a day. Eight motor boats fitted with sophisticated fire-fighting equipment sit under special awnings along the klong. There have been only minor fires in Ban Khrua, and in practice, the community's well-trained fire-fighting unit has become famous for it's readiness to help put out fires in other areas, where municipal fire-trucks cannot reach.

PHOTO
30 - B

"My wooden house was very old and had a leaky roof. When I went to school, my grandfather walked with me, while my rich friends rode in big cars and lived in concrete houses. I was always embarrassed about this. But when we were about to be evicted, I began to learn about our community, our ancestors. We never realized how precious our community and our roots are until we were about to lose them."

- Ban Khrua leader
Saroj Phuaksamlee.

"I'm proud of the changes we have brought about. Before, we were isolated, but now we have made a strong organisation of Under-Bridge communities, we have made friends who support us, we've gotten water supply and electric metres and registered to vote and put our children in school."
- Khun Santi, leader at the Makasan Under-Bridge Community.

PHOTO
31 - A

Bangkok's Under-Bridge Communities :

Over 780 families live in shelters under 67 bridges around Bangkok. They earn their living as labourers, vendors, junk collectors or garland sellers and are among the city's poorest. Former governments have wanted them out of Bangkok, even though many have lived there for 3 generations.

In 1995, leaders from 20 under-bridge communities came together and formed the **Under-Bridge Community Network**, with support from *People's Organisation for Participation* and the *Human Settlements Foundation*. After surveying under-bridge settlements around Bangkok, they started looking for ways to improve things and formed a committee of community leaders to negotiate with the government.

Besides living in damp, squalid conditions, under-bridge dwellers couldn't enroll their children in school or get electricity connections, both of which require a household registration number. Interior Ministry regulations stipulate that any house which falls below legal housing standards cannot get a registration number. Consequently, they had to pay ten times the regular rates for water and electricity, through private arrangements with nearby houses.

After long negotiations with the National Housing Authority and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, and finally joining the Forum of the Poor, the under-bridge dwellers began to make some headway, securing household registration numbers, electricity and water connections, and an agreement to stop evictions. They also persuaded the city to provide alternative land for resettlement, for the first 300 under-bridge families.

As part of the agreement, the under-bridge committee would choose the land. They combed the city looking for land close to jobs and schools, and identified 3 sites, which were then bought by the NHA, who prepared layouts, and is now installing infrastructure. Each family will get a 48 square metre plot on a long term lease. The monthly rent is still being negotiated, the people are holding out for a maximum 500 Baht. Meanwhile, a special committee is working to organise the other 47 under-bridge communities.

New House Ideas : "I want a door!"

While land negotiations were going on, each community set up housing savings groups, and in January, the network held a house design workshop with *POP* and *HSF*. 80 community members made models, drew plans and compared ideas about how to build affordable houses when they move to the NHA land. When one woman from the Makasan under-bridge community was asked what she would like in her new house, she answered unhesitatingly, "I want a door!"

CONTACT :

- Human Settlements Foundation
463/1 Soi 39, Ramkamhaeng Road, Wangthonglang, Bangkok, THAILAND
Tel (662) 718 6472 / 234 2145 Fax (662) 718 6473
- People's Organisation for Participation (POP)
33/6 Soi Pipsat 2, Convent Road, Silom, Bangkok 10500 THAILAND
Tel (662) 243 2145

"Eggs for Garbage"

The community committee in Klong Toey's "70 Rai" area has recently fired up a new recycling scheme they call "Eggs for garbage". The idea is to promote sorting household waste into wet (biodegradable) garbage and dry (recyclable) garbage. The wet stuff goes into the wet bins the community has placed at the top of each lane. The dry stuff is then brought in to the collection point.

A big bag of dry waste will get you 6 eggs, a small one 4 eggs. Since the committee gets a good deal on the eggs, the pay-off is only worth 8 or 10 baht, but the incentive of something "free" for garbage has proven to be an attractive inducement to recycle.

Volunteers at the collection point sort everything into piles of paper, tin, plastic and glass, to sell to materials traders in order to buy more eggs. The scheme is self-supporting, and on the verge of becoming a profit-maker for the committee. The "70 Rai" area is reckoned to be 70% cleaner since the *Eggs for Garbage* scheme began. Nearly 200 people queue up every morning with their bundles of dry garbage, and there's always the worry that the popular scheme will run short of eggs! The scheme has sparked off interest in recycling, especially among children, whose teachers are now adding recycling to the curriculum in Klong Toey primary schools.

CONTACT :

Duang Prateep Foundation
Lock 6, Art Arong Road, Klong Toey,
Bangkok 10110, THAILAND
Tel. (662) 249-3553 Fax (662) 249-5254
E-Mail: dpf@internet.ksc.net.th

Human Development Centre bags UN Award

Another long-established organisation working for Klong Toey's development, the **Human Development Centre**, has won the 1997 ESCAP HRD Award for "Empowering the Urban Poor". For the past 25 years, HDC has run a kaleidoscope of programmes in Klong Toey - health and education programmes, savings and loan schemes, shelters for street kids and AIDS hospices.

CONTACT :

Father Joseph Maier, Director,
Human Development Centre
3757/15 Soi 40, Sukhumvit Road,
Bangkok 10110, THAILAND
Tel (662) 392-7981 / 381-1821
Fax (662) 391-4968

LAND SHARING :

The latest news on Bangkok's unique solution to the classic urban stalemate :

Bangkok has about 1,000 slums, a quarter of them under eviction threat. On one side are the landlords, who claim it's the government's job to protect their legal land rights and to clear the squatters. On the other side are the slum dwellers, who claim they have nowhere to go without losing their means of survival, and have the right to stay on land where they have stayed for years. If so many must suffer so a few can benefit, then the law is unjust, they say, and it is government's responsibility to help solve the problem and house them properly.

Governments find themselves in a stalemate, unable to fully support either claim. As a consequence, landlords can't develop their land while squatters stay, and slum dwellers can't invest in better houses while eviction looms.

Land Sharing is Bangkok's unique way of resolving these conflicting claims. Slum dwellers faced with eviction have organised and bargained successfully for a share of the land they occupy, and landlords have agreed to sell or lease them the land. Everybody benefits. But land sharing also divides the cream of urban prosperity a little more equitably: the poor get minimum, decent housing, and the private sector, which profits from development and from the poor's cheap labour, helps pay for it.

- Landlords can clear some land for immediate development, save time and costs of long eviction litigation.
- Slum dwellers can stay where they have been living and working, get formal land tenure and keep their community intact.
- Government gets land and housing to the city's poor communities without having to pay for it.

But land sharing is a long and complicated process, and doesn't work in every situation. Behind a successful land sharing scheme, there must be a strong community organisation and a skillful inter-mediator. But at the core of the land sharing process is the ability to translate conflicting needs and conflicting demands into a compromise **which takes a concrete form**, and which is acceptable to the parties involved, and not to any abstract policy or set of regulations.

That's the scheme at Klong Pai Singto, towering in the background over the remains of the old settlement in the foreground :

The original community occupied 14 rai of land (22,400 sq.m.). Two 28-story towers, with 264 apartments, were built on 3.5 rai, leaving 10.5 rai open for commercial development (that's the "sharing" part).

PHOTO
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Land Sharing at Klong Pai Singto :

Since the 1980s, several landmark land-sharing schemes have been developed in Bangkok. Because the process is based on compromise and negotiation, each project is very different. Here is a brief look at Bangkok's most recently completed land sharing project. These notes were drawn from the Thai script of UCDO's second "Community News Video".

The 345 families in the long-established Klong Pai Singto community were tenants of Bangkok's semi-public **Crown Property Bureau**. When a fire levelled the settlement, their formal rental contract was cancelled, and later, when the city expropriated land for road-building, the community was cut into two pieces. The people stayed put, though, amidst skyrocketing land values and increasing fear of eviction.

• **Crown Property** : As luck would have it, their's was one of Bangkok's few landlords with some vision. 73 of Bangkok's 1,000 informal settlements are on Crown Property land, making it the city's largest slumlord. When the CPB proposed land-sharing for Klong Pai Singto, it acknowledged people's right to stay where they were living and working, and saw the project as a model for redeveloping poor communities on other Crown Properties.

• **Joint Venture** : The project was undertaken by a joint-venture comprising three legal partners: the community association, the CPB and a Community Development Foundation (as a neutral third party). The community was a key party in every decision about the project's design, and every decision involved negotiation - apartment sizes, rental rates, common facilities.

• **The Deal** : The buildings are rented to the community's *Ruam Jai Pai Singto Association*, which in turn allots units on 30-year leases to members at monthly rents of 20 Baht per square metre. All families in the community's 1990 survey get apartments - even renters - small families get 32 square metre apartments, bigger families get 48, and renters get 24. People can stay where they were before, keep their jobs and get apartments that are secure and legal. The CPB gets 10.5 rai of the hottest property in Bangkok to develop.

Land Sharing Projects in Bangkok :

Wat Ladbuakhow	67 families	private land
Klong Toey	7,000 families	public land
Samyod	150 families	public land
Manangkasila	200 families	public land
Rama 4	800 families	public land
Sengki	200 families	private land
Intamara 10	70 families	private land
Klong Pai Singto	264 families	public land
Klong Plabpla	400 families	public land
Bonkai	400 families	public land

• **Allotment System**: The system for allotting apartments allows extended families and groups of neighbors to draw numbers on the same floor. In government schemes, people often sell their rights and move back to the slums. In Klong Pai Singto, the people have rules for handling these inevitable turnovers. Anyone who opts out of the scheme gets a fixed compensation from the association, based on area he was eligible for.

• **Design** : Many residents are street vendors, and the design includes special areas for selling, preparing food and stowing their carts at night. The scheme also includes shopfronts for those with shops in the old community.

The Transformation of Klong Toey :

Strong communities and land sharing principles help carve out 4 different options for the poor . . .

Nearly 10,000 families live in Klong Toey, Bangkok's largest slum, on Port Authority land. The area is in the middle of the city and is a convenient place for the large numbers of dock labourers to live. The first squatters settled in Klong Toey's marshy, reclaimed land when the port was established in the 1950s, and the settlement has kept growing since then. Not too long ago, it was notorious for some of the worst living conditions in the city.

But Klong Toey is also the source of some of the most innovative solutions to how the "illegal" poor and the "official" city can find terms which allow both to benefit. After years of evictions and arsons, the community began organising in the 1970s. With the help of several voluntary agencies they built the capacity to counter eviction threats by the Port Authority, which planned to use the area for port expansion. Once they mastered eviction resistance, these community organisations began negotiating options for their own rehabilitation.

1 First Option - NHA rental flats : In 1981, after more eviction attempts and strong resistance, a six hectare site at the edge of Klong Toey was transferred to the National Housing Authority to build rental flats for rehousing 1,440 families. The project was the beginning of land sharing in Klong Toey.

2 Second Option - Serviced Plots in "70 rai" area : In 1983, the Port renewed eviction attempts in the eastern part of Klong Toey to make way for a new container station. The NHA intervened, to propose a land sharing plan in which an 11.2 hectare (70 rai) site in the marshy centre of Klong Toey be prepared for resettling 1,300 families from the eastern area. After much negotiation, the final agreement called for preparation of 60-sq. mtr. serviced plots on long-term lease. The "70 Rai" area was ready by 1985 and families began moving in and rebuilding their houses. Many took advantage of a saving scheme for building materials initiated by the *Human Development Centre*.

3 Third Option - On-site "Reblocking" : When the 70 Rai project was complete, NHA proposed "reblocking" some additional areas in the east of Klong Toey, in order to introduce roads, footpaths and infrastructure. With this option, people stay in the same area, but agree to adjust their houses a little to make way for the laying of drains, sewers, water supply lines and footpaths.

4 Fourth Option - Resettlement : Communities also now have the option of resettlement to serviced plots which have been prepared at Vacharapon and Nong Chok, on the outer edges of Bangkok. Both sites are about 20 kilometres away, but the benefit out there is that people get *legal land title*. Most families would rather stay in Klong Toey, but for a few, the resettlement option is viable. The important point is *that resettlement is one of several options, not the only one*. Needless to say, the Port Authority, which still dreams of seeing Klong Toey cleared, is most keen on this option and is fiercely applying every tactic at its disposal to push the relocation option. Despite all the victories Klong Toey residents have won, their battle with the Port Authority is far from over.

PHOTO
33 - A

*"Earlier we were angry and defensive, because we never knew what was going to happen. Now we know what we need, and we know how to negotiate, and we have information. So we are in the offensive position. Now we negotiate before things happen and not after."
- A Klong Toey resident*

PHOTO
33 - B

Land Sharing, Indian Style : SRD in Bombay . . .

The land sharing process in Thailand is not prescribed by fixed rules and works through negotiation. In India, Maharashtra State's revolutionary *Slum Rehabilitation Programme (SRA)*, which is now in full swing in Mumbai, is based on land-sharing principles, but applies them in a very different way. This Indian land-sharing cousin is a formal government policy, and although it keeps being revised for the better, its projects are determined by a set of fixed rules.

Earlier SRA formulas stipulated exactly how much area should be developed for market-sale and rehabilitation, according to allowable FSI. Adjustments in the past year have loosened things up and given both communities and landlords more choice in deciding exactly *how* and *how much* to develop.

- **More Subsidy Options:** Communities can now opt out of building any resale units at all and have the option of subsidising their redevelopment costs by selling up to 50% of their FSI. This is called TDR, or *Transfer of Development Rights*, and it's like gold to developers - it allows them to build higher and rake in bigger profits. To further enhance this option to builders, the restrictions about the use of TDR elsewhere have been relaxed.

- **More Design Options:** TDR gives communities more options when it comes to designing buildings that work for their needs. Earlier formulas forced them to settle for high-rise buildings (and for inevitable headaches of broken-down lifts and inconsistent water pressure), when low-rise, hi-density kinds of development, with 4 or 5 floor walk-ups, meet poor community needs better.

- **Resettlement:** The SRA policy also provides alternative land for the 20% of Mumbai's slum population which cannot be re-housed on the same site (*like pavement dwellers*).

Eight slum communities within the NSDF/Mahila Milan network are now neck-deep in SRA schemes in their settlements. For more information these SRA projects, check out the current issue of CITYWATCH : INDIA, available from SPARC in Mumbai.

PHOTO
34 - A

INDIA :

Partnerships to expand options for Mahila Milan savings collectives ...

By now, the Mahila Milan's systems for managing savings groups around the country are well-oiled, but working overtime! As the volume and complexity of the network's savings grows, SPARC and MM/NSDF federation leaders are exploring partnerships with organisations that can assist the process in different ways and expand options available to the poor, through their savings collectives.

The idea behind a good partnership is simple: each partner helps do something which brings benefit to both, but which neither partner can do alone. The more you contribute to a partnership, the more benefit it brings you. Poor people have, for the most part, been partner-less, and had to go begging for resources on their own, as best they can. But as the federations of poor communities gain in strength and numbers, they have much to offer potential partners. And the more varied the partners, the more broadly their *win-win solutions* will be supported.

There was a time when community groups or NGOs that *fraternized* with commercial or state institutions were considered sell-outs to the enemy. But things are changing. Today, some of the most unlikely partnerships are producing the most innovative urban solutions to big problems which affect *everyone*.

Here's a quick look at a two of the federation's emerging partnerships, both excerpted from the March 1998 issue of the Hindi-English CITYWATCH : INDIA.

CONTACT : Sheela Patel, SPARC
Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres
Post Box 9389, Mumbai 400 026, INDIA
Tel / Fax (91 22) 285 1500
E-Mail: admin@sparc.ilbom.ernet.in

1. Partnership with HUDCO :

The *Housing and Urban Development Corporation* is one of India's main housing finance institutions, which only made loans through government agencies to build housing projects for the poor. HUDCO has recently set up a scheme in which community cooperatives with secure land can take loans, through an NGO. SPARC and NSDF helped design this scheme and are testing it now in projects in several Indian cities. The partnership with NGOs like SPARC allows HUDCO to follow through its commitment to providing housing finance to the poor, while sharing the administrative burden.

Here's how the scheme works: families in the community deposit Rs 2,000 - 5,000 with HUDCO, as security, and take loans up to a maximum Rs 30,000, repayable in monthly installments, over 15 years, at 12% descending interest.

● **But there's a magic trick in the scheme:** that security deposit is invested and *grows* while the loan is being repaid, and at some point, the shrinking debt and the growing deposit become equal. Families then have a choice: to pay off their house in one stroke and be done with it, or to keep making payments and have a fat windfall to look forward to when the house is paid off.

2. Partnership with Unit Trust of India :

As more communities save for housing, many find themselves ready with down-payments of several thousand rupees, but still without land. The lag time between when communities are financially ready and when they get secure land can be very long. Meanwhile, their growing housing savings just sits in a bank, earning 5% per annum, at the most.

India is filled with attractive investment schemes, where middle-class Indians put their savings, most with minimum investment rules which put them out of the poor's reach. *So why should a poor people's money earn smaller returns and leverage fewer credit options than anyone else's?* SPARC and NSDF have been exploring the possibility of setting up an investment scheme especially for very poor communities, where their savings can grow safely while their housing options evolve.

So they went straight to the mother of all investment schemes, the **Unit Trust of India**, whose track record would be a confidence-booster to poor communities, wary of get-rich-quick scams. An enthusiastic team led by UTI's managing trustee, Mr. Nayak, worked with SPARC to fashion India's first *Very Small Investors Scheme*:

- Minimum investment will be Rs 1,000 (US\$ 25), and subsequent investments can be in multiples of Rs 500 each.
- People can take their money out any time, but will agree in principle to keep it in the scheme as long as possible
- Accounts will be in individual names, but MM will handle collections and transactions with UTI collectively.
- The scheme will start modestly, open only to MM/NSDF in Mumbai until the process is all worked out.
- The investments will earn between 11 and 15%, which is a lot higher than 5% in a savings banks.

Back to the Partner-ship Principle:

For UTI, this is not *charity*, but a joint-venture with a poor federation to develop an investment strategy as a commitment of mutual social responsibility. The UTI folks feel it will tap a new market in the long run. The NSDF/MM's ability to deliver numbers as the process evolves, at reduced administrative costs, makes the federation a winning partner.

PHOTO
34 - B

PHOTO
35 - A

Toilets make good community and federation builders. They can be built with relatively little money and time, communities can handle them by themselves. They teach communities to plan together, to prioritise, to estimate costs, to handle money - all skills they'll need later when they build houses or negotiate for secure land with the state.

TOILETS : Looking for a decent place to sit . . .

Men, women and children in Indian cities are squatting by the millions, not in toilets at all, but along roads, rail tracks and gutters, where they are shouted at, molested, insulted. Nobody would endure these things if they had any other choice. Either toilets aren't available, or else they are in such bad condition that squatting in public is preferable. Indian slums are littered with broken-down, badly-planned, badly-maintained public toilets which even stray dogs won't go near, much less people.

Laxmi Naidu is a footpath dweller and one of the senior members of the Byculla Mahila Milan. Here is her description of the toilet situation on Sophia Zaubert Street : *"We have to wait an hour in the queue to use our municipal toilet. The man takes a rupee from everyone, even from a child. If you have six members in your family, that could cost 6 or 12 rupees a day."* Conditions like these are behind an ironic joke still making the rounds of Bombay's Pavement settlements, which quips that the poor are the only ones who can't afford to get diarrhoea.

Another Byculla Mahila Milan leader Rehmat says, *"In our idea, there should be one toilet and one water tap for every four houses. Anybody can use a public toilet, and nobody will be willing to clean it up. When toilets are in our own hands, we can clean them and maintain them. And if they get dirty, we know who to shout at."*

The **National Slum Dwellers Federation** and **Mahila Milan** have helped communities in nine cities around India to design and build over 300 toilets. That's a drop in the bucket when you look at how many toilets are needed. But what these toilets have done is shown new ways for poor communities and cities to work together to provide more toilets, better and cheaper toilets, using the greatest source of energy in India : communities.

Shared costs, shared responsibility :

The federation's simple cost-sharing toilet paradigm is this : Communities plan, construct and maintain toilets in their own settlements. The state brings sewers and water supply to the site and pays for the materials.

Why not toilets inside the houses? When housing for the poor in India is designed with toilets inside, it very often ends up being sold to better-off families. Common toilets like those the Mahila Milan and NSDF have built around India are a big put-off for middle class families, but an advantage for the poor in several ways :

- Common toilets are affordable to everyone, even the poorest.
- In areas with sporadic water supply and over-stressed sewer lines, unflushed pans can stink up the whole house.
- Not building toilets inside means cutting 25% off the cost and saving 25% of the area of tiny one-room dwellings.
- Common toilets are a common asset and a powerful *community-gatherer*.

For more information, contact SPARC for a copy of "Toilet Talk", a report which analyses the NSDF/MM/SPARC alliance's sanitation ideas and describes in detail many of its community toilet building projects around India.

The clean toilet test : *Would you be willing to throw a party around your toilet?*

Most people in slums have never seen or used a decent toilet. And most state officials who make decisions about sanitation in slums have never seen a viable, community-managed toilet themselves. With all these poorly-stocked imaginations, it's no wonder things are slow to change. There is a poverty of examples, of how to make toilets that are affordable, replicable and work.

That's where the NSDF/MM federation's community-built toilets fit in. All of them are idea-testers, built to provide examples for everyone to see and learn from. None are perfect, and the boobos were an important part of the learning. Others came to watch what was happening, helped out, and took those ideas back to their own settlements, where they began building their own toilets.

When you build toilets many times, in many different situations, you get more efficient, find short-cuts, streamline the process and pull more people in to learn. You've developed new standards. In these ways, the process of building community toilets begins to click into higher gear and the scale grows.

The big surprise for everybody in these projects is that shared toilets don't have to be "dirty places".

PHOTO
35 - B

Many of the Kanpur toilets, for example, are so clean and well-managed that they've become popular pit stop for mill-workers, head-loaders and rickshaw pullers, happy to fork out a rupee for the pleasure of a clean *soo-soo*. People congregate outside the enclosures, pan stalls and chai wallahs set up business. *Imagine public toilets becoming places of congregation!* The heavily-used toilet at Sangam in Kanpur, for example, has racked up a Rs 80,000 surplus from their 10-seater pay-and-use toilet, which is now subsidising community toilets in other settlements. Now the World Bank is sending its sanitation engineers to Kanpur to learn! ***This kind of sanitation success story is no accident.***

NEPAL :

NEPAN in Kathmandu : *Anyone for a nice Friday afternoon Electronic chat ?*

The **Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN)** has been working to promote participatory methods and strategies of disseminating information since 1995. This isn't always easy in a country like Nepal, where physically getting from place to place can be difficult.

One of the innovative strategies NEPAN has used to disseminate information is a Friday afternoon chat session, which includes people who are flung all across Nepal's mountains and valleys. The question is, how can as many as 15,000 people talk to each other at the same time, from their offices and homes, without running up huge bills for long distance phone calls?

NEPAN's coordinator, Kamal Phuyal, has used the technology of the internet in innovative ways to connect grassroots and NGO practitioners who cannot easily meet in person.

By employing what's called *Internet Relay Chat (IRC)*, those with computers and modems can "chat" with others, via type-written messages, which are transmitted instantly to the computer screen of whoever you're "chatting" with. Questions and responses can go back just as fast as somebody else can type them and press "Enter." In computer lingo, this is called "real time." The advantage of IRC over ordinary e-mail is in the system's immediacy and it's ability to connect many people at once.

Kamal has organised a network of grassroots and NGO computer "users" around Nepal to be "on-line" (at their computers and connected up) each Friday afternoon. The expense is only the price of a local phone call for each person. The effect is quick exchange of information, strengthening of relationships and, when necessary, quick decision-making that might otherwise take weeks.

CONTACT :

Kamal Phuyal, NEPAN
Post Office Box 890
Kathmandu, NEPAL
Tel (977 1) 421617 Fax (977 1) 419718
E-Mail: nepan@mos.com.np

PHOTO 36 - A

People who come to Kathmandu are always struck by the friendly scale of the city, its temples with places to sit, it's markets, it's old brick houses and old brick lanes filled with children playing.

Newsletter for Communities : "City Care"

The **Lumanti Support Group for Shelter**, in Kathmandu, has recently come out with the first issue of its bilingual English / Nepali newsletter, called **City Care**. Here are a few excerpts from the stories :

Low Income Rental Housing in Kathmandu : An estimated 24% of Kathmandu's population lives in rental housing, 95% of which live in single room rental units. Many of these rental units are located in slum and squatter settlements around the city, and provide a vital source of affordable housing for poor newcomers to the city. But conditions in these one-room rentals are often very poor, without piped drinking water, most using common toilets shared by an average of 36 people. The issues and problems of low-income rental housing were the subject of a one-day workshop organised by Lumanti last July.

New Toilets, New Name : Another story describes how 70 families in a squatter settlement at Mandikhatar got together to start a savings and credit group, and then decided to pool their ideas and labour to build 64 pit-latrines in 26 days. The new toilets had a big effect on people's perceptions about their own settlement - which until then had been nameless. The story ends with the ceremony to inaugurate the new toilets, and to unveil the community's new sign-board, hereafter bearing the name **Srijana Basti**.

Mana Kumari builds a house : This item tells the story of a woman living in the Mandikhatar squatter settlement, in a deteriorating house with a leaky roof, bending walls and a damp floor. Her greatest wish was to rebuild that house, but even when her husband, a low-level government employee, was able to borrow some money from his provident fund, it was still not enough to build the house. So 30 of Mana's neighbors in the settlement pitched in their free labour to help her build. With all this injection of *community power*, her solid brick, 2-room house was completed in 8 days.

Sensitising Young Professionals : A group of students from the Urban Planning and Engineering institutes in Kathmandu did a 3-week study of the informal sector, as part of their academic work focusing on the *Banshighat* squatter settlement in Kathmandu. In the interest of sensitising these young future-decision-makers, Lumanti helped organise their exposure and facilitated the interaction with the communities.

CONTACT :

Lumanti Support Group for Shelter
Kupundole, Lalitpur, Post Box 10546, Kathmandu, NEPAL
Tel (977 1) 523822 Fax (977 1) 520480
E-Mail: shelter@lumanti.wlink.com.np

GRAMEEN BANK :

Food for thought from the bank's founder and pioneer of accessible credit for the poor ...

This January, Muhammad Yunis, the founder of Grameen Bank, was interviewed by Tim Sebastian on the BBC's "HARDtalk" Programme. The following notes were drawn from that interview.

Muhammad Yunis is fond of admitting that as a young "economics star" at Chittagong University many years ago, he knew nothing of *real economics* until he started visiting villages. When he signed as guarantor on some small loans to free 40 poor villagers from debt traps that were like being bonded labour, all the bankers called him a crazy idealist, and warned him that poor villagers weren't credit worthy. When the 40 labourers paid back their loans, those bankers told him, *they are tricking you! They are holding out for greater amounts!* Yunis lent more and was repaid. Even after he'd expanded credit to a programme in 50 villages, the bankers were still unconvinced.

Banks were not only biased against the poor, they were biased against women, with only 1% of borrowers being female. Yunis says it took six years for people to realise that lending to women brought much more direct benefits to the family, that women were better money managers, more cautious, more efficient than any man.

Grameen Bank now operates in 37,000 villages in Bangladesh, employs 12,600 banking staff and has lent to over 2 million borrowers, 94% of whom are women. One third of its members have crossed over the poverty line, and another third are about to. Borrowing is accompanied by a dramatic decrease in infant mortality. Loans to the poor are now available to finance affordable "Grameen style" houses and education. All this because a big gap in the banking system has been identified and filled.

Converts include US President Bill Clinton, who set up a Grameen-style bank for the state's poor farmers when he was governor of Arkansas. Banks modeled on Grameen principles now operate in over 50 countries, including poor sections of Los Angeles and Chicago, all inspired by the notion that accessible credit is a way out of the poverty trap.

Despite the Grameen Bank's success, Yunis admits feeling frustrated that the process is not happening faster. This he attributes to a "mind trap" among development professionals who get side-tracked by their own agendas, entrenched in their own ideas about poverty. Micro-credit still doesn't play a very important role in their minds. They are believers in what Yunis calls, "Big power plants," rather than the alternative, in which each human being is a power plant of creativity, with far more energy than that big one.

PHOTO 37 - A

Yunis contends that if the right to credit is extended to the poor, the poverty problem could be solved in 30 years. "People themselves can overcome their own poverty provided the barriers are lifted."

PHOTO 37 - B

BANGLADESH :

Habitat Council Formed in Dhaka :

Last year, a broad-based *Habitat Council* was formed in Dhaka, which brings together people from NGOs, CBOs and elected municipal officials in the Dhaka City Corporation. One of the driving forces behind the council was Abdul Gofran, who's experience mobilising slum dwellers with the government's slum development projects had revealed the need for dialogue between different actors in the city. Large portions of Dhaka's population live in squalor and insecurity in slums. The municipal government's answer to these problems had been either eviction or government-controlled rehabilitation, neither of which was working.

The *Habitat Council* has been successful in attracting the Prime Minister's attention to slum dwellers' housing problems, and is now negotiating with the government for policies and budget to address these problems in more creative and sustainable ways.

Water and Sanitation Project :

Dibalok Singha, director of *Dustha Shasthya Kendra (DSK)*, writes that DSK is involved in a project to bring water supply and sanitation to several of Dhaka's slum settlements. The project seeks new institutional approaches for water agencies in Dhaka to expand their services to cover more urban poor settlements, on a cost-recovery basis. Dibalok writes that the project is financially sustainable in terms of cost recovery, and socially sustainable because it involves the community. Other NGOs are now replicating the project's model. A report about the project was published in *Waterlines* journal, by ITDG in London.

CONTACT :

Dibalok Singha, Director, DSK
16514 Tejkunipara, Tejgaon,
Dhaka, 12165 BANGLADESH
Tel (880 2) 815764 Fax (880 2) 863060
E-Mail: dsk@citechco.net

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EXPOSURES :

How do communities really learn ?

When the *Training and Advisory Programme (TAP)* began 6 years ago, it set out to create systems of mutual learning and support for grassroots groups, NGOs and professionals working to improve the lives of Asia's urban poor. There were many experiments in TAP's first years - workshops, community-process support, col-laborations, networks and *exchanges*.

These experiments were carefully monitored, a few questions continuously asked - which ones had a significant impact on improving the lives of the poor? Which strengthened poor communities and their negotiations with other urban actors? This *impact analysis* took the form of national and city meetings, regional surveys, interviews and informal assessments with communities. **Two things emerged clearly from this analysis:**

- Those regional workshops which brought together *"integrated teams"* from poor communities, government and NGOs led to *perceivable* and *immediate improvements* in everyone's understanding and, in many cases, to collaborations back home.
- Direct community-to-community exchanges stood out from all the other "learning processes" as having the most immediate short and longer term impacts.

ACHR's experience with community exchanges goes back to Father Jorge Anzorena, who'd been travelling around Asia for years, meeting other professionals and NGOs, attending workshops and visiting innovative projects. He began to wonder why he and other development professionals should have a monopoly on all this vast experience? Why shouldn't the poor themselves, with hunger to improve their own lives, be exposed to the best of Asia's community development? And so began the exchange experiment, and one of TAP's mainstays.

Exchanges, Exposures, Exhibitions : The philosophy of people-to-people learning . . .

How do poor people learn? By being given lectures and hand-outs? Or by seeing, joining in? Who decides how they learn, what they need, what's useful to them - professionals or people? These are haunting questions for organisations trying to support the strengthening of community process.

Community exchange is one alternative to the prescribed curriculum of meetings and formal training, where there is an agenda, a schedule, catered snacks at half-past three. Meetings have their own culture, their own atmosphere - the minute you enter, the rules for communicating are altered. Slumdwellers can participate, yes, but to a large extent, they are foreigners in this element.

But exchange provides more than an alternative form of learning. After several years of exchanges, many communities are now hosting visiting groups and presenting their experiences, without the need for any NGO to filter their stories for visitors. When organisations of poor people begin running their own training programmes in this way, they're not just teaching, they're re-writing the development paradigm. *Behind this kind of transformation, there are some clear principles:*

- 1 The power of seeing** is stronger than all the talking and training and manuals in the world. When it is poor people themselves doing the seeing and meeting, it becomes a powerful and confidence-building experience for them.
- 2 Learning direct from the source:** People visit others involved in projects and struggles that are real, that are close to their hearts, so they have a stake. This is on-site learning, vital, unfiltered - "a pedagogy of the poor."
- 3 Nobody else's agenda:** Exposures don't specify *what* you learn or how you participate (unlike "training programmes" where all that is generally worked out by somebody else). Exposure gives people slack, to simply see what others are doing, to take what's useful to them and discard what isn't.
- 4 Learning doesn't happen immediately:** Most *deep learning* is not immediate or easy to define. Things need mulling over, thinking about, trying out on your own after seeing others do it. Only later do all the problems come out - the most important learning is how communities begin to deal with all these.
- 5 Bonds between communities:** Exchanges build powerful bonds between poor communities which are direct, which bypass professional control, develop a life of their own, beyond schedules and project parameters. Participation becomes control, a strong step away from external control of communities' growing.
- 6 Different role for professionals:** Many professionals are uncomfortable with forms of community learning in which the outcomes are open-ended, and in which their role becomes secondary, more like travel agents and interpreters and less like good shepherds.

PHOTO
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There is a Spirit in community exchanges that is hard to define :
Sometimes the programme is rough, things don't follow schedule, and it seems like nobody is learning anything specific, but there is a spirit in exchanges beyond rote absorption - being part of a larger whole, bonding, shaking the dust out of preconceptions from back home, seeing some thing new, fresh breezes, lightened by leaving behind troubles . . .

Things Happen : Four Exchange Success Stories . . .**Korea - Japan**

Community activists in Korea and Japan found common ground in their situations at an ACHR Regional Workshop back in 1995. Low-income renters in Seoul, who are struggling for the right to stay in their neighborhoods undergoing "redevelopment" and members of the Buraku Liberation League in Japan, have used several vital exchanges to learn from each other's strategies for sustaining a poor people's housing rights movement in countries at a similar stage of industrialisation and modernisation.

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**Integrated Exchanges:
Double Seeing pays off in
Double Dividends :**

Municipal officials used to evict squatters in Phnom Penh and refuse them access to services. That was the extent of the relationship. Then came a lot of homework by the SUPF federation and a few strategic "integrated" exposure visits to India and Thailand. Now the two are working together to set up revolving poor loan funds and planning relocation together. Same thing in South Africa, where the SAHPF keeps dragging their provincial ministers along with them when they come to visit India, and setting up collaborations back home - while they're in Bombay.

PHOTO
39 - B

Thailand Women's Network

A group of Thai community women, inspired by the Mahila Milan savings and credit networking they saw on an exposure visit to Bombay in 1989, came back and started networking and saving in Thailand. Women's involvement in savings and credit has helped boost their role in community processes and built the first women's network. In 1997, with support from UCDO, the women's network started community surveys in many parts of the country. At their national meeting, Mahila Milan women came to help out.

**Tips for Setting up Better
Exchanges :**

Why do some exchanges really fly and others flop? When groups of poor people travel around Asia, there are goof-ups - people get lost in airport bathrooms, some-times groups don't mesh - *they are almost never smooth!* There's a lot of room for im-proving and streamlining exchanges.

Planning an effective, productive exchange programme is hard work and requires perception and careful planning. The question is how to maximise the benefits of exchanges, and "plan" a process which is by nature whimsical, spur-of-the-moment, flexible, human, intuitive and dependent on what happens between all the different characters.

- **Don't go too soon:** Solid ground work and a strong community base at home is the first prerequisite for a good exchange.
- **Go with a clear purpose:** The best exchanges are the ones organised around the most focussed needs at that particular stage of the community process.
- **The right mix: Who should go?** Think about the mix of gender, age and experience level. Think about when to include other official and professional actors. Different mixes work at different times.
- **Don't do too much:** The opportunity for exchange can sometimes inspire people to attempt to do too much and lose focus.
- **A good match:** Identify the host group carefully in terms of matched objectives, approach, context and opportunity to learn.
- **Potential for follow-up:** One-time visits rarely yield lasting impacts. Good exchanges set things in motion and start relationships, and these require follow-up.
- **Sorting the confusion:** Groups develop their own ways of reflecting on the trip and evaluating their learning, but time needs to be set aside for this to evolve during and after the exchange.

India - Cambodia

The exchange programme between the NSDF/Mahila Milan alliance in India and SUPF in Cambodia began in 1993 and has led to some dramatic breakthroughs. NSDF/MM helped SUPF set up their community savings and credit groups, and used the exchange process to pass on many of it's community mobilising strategies - surveys, shelter training, model house exhibitions. Officials in the Phnom Penh municipal government have been integrated into the exchange process, leading to increasing collaborations.

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Pakistan - Kazakhstan

People from informal settlements in the Kazakhstan capitol Almaty and professionals from the Baspana NGO alliance have found support for their fledgling community housing process through exchanges with the Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi, where they learned about affordable housing and sewer construction that communities can build themselves. Plans are underway for more exchanges to help set up savings and credit groups and to strengthen local community organisations in the informal settlements.

Inspiration . . .

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40 - C

A water pump powered by the engine of a "moto-doop" in Phnom Penh, a ventilating wall made of cinder blocks and soda bottles in Bangkok, and a walkway hung with flowers in the discarded bottoms of plastic water bottles in Chiang Mai. There are conferences and workshops all the time for engineers and architects involved in alternative technology, but it's good to remember that there is an enormous storehouse of resourcefulness and whimsy that you won't find in the books . . .

ACHR

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
● Secretariat : Somsook Boonyabancha
● TAP : Maurice Leonhardt
73 Soi Sonthiwattana 4, Ladprao 110
Bangkok 10310, THAILAND
Tel (662) 538 0919 Fax (662) 539 9950
Email: achrsec@email.ksc.net