

AUGUST 2010

- **Community-manufactured blocks for cheaper housing in CAMBODIA**
- **5-Country Indochina Network visits savings groups and housing projects in LAO PDR**
- **World Habitat Day to be launched in Asia this year**
- **Visiting ACCA-supported community upgrading projects in MONGOLIA**
- **An idea to organize country-wide reform-by-people in troubled THAILAND**
- **Bad floods in northern PAKISTAN and in Ladakh, INDIA**
- **New MOU to support the expansion of people-driven community development into 15 cities in FIJI**
- **Update on ACCA Program: new projects, planned events + New compilation of VIDEO FILMS on upgrading**

BUILDING MATERIALS are CHEAPER when COMMUNITIES MAKE THEM:

The Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) in Cambodia is now providing loans and technical support to community-planned and community-built housing construction projects in some 15 cities around Cambodia - and the ACCA program is helping to up this number rapidly. As the cost of conventional building materials like wood, bricks, cement, steel and concrete blocks keep going up, the houses which poor people can afford to build keep getting smaller and smaller. So in the past year or two, one of the subjects on everyone's minds has been how to make houses cheaper.

Community-manufactured CONCRETE blocks : One idea that came from the community networks in Thailand was for communities to make their own concrete blocks, and a team from Chantaburi in Eastern Thailand came to Cambodia to help set up a community block-making unit and train the first generation of block-makers in Phnom Penh. The blocks that the community network have begun to manufacture in this workshop cost almost half as much to produce and build with as the fired bricks conventionally used in RCC construction in Cambodia. The first community-made blocks are now being used in the project to reconstruct houses destroyed by a fire earlier this year in four riverside communities in Roessei Keo District.

Community-manufactured SOIL CEMENT blocks: During an exchange visit to the Philippines, a group from Cambodia saw the beautiful, golden-colored interlocking soil-cement blocks that the Homeless People's Federation in Iloilo were manufacturing themselves and using to build 2-story row houses at one of their largest-yet housing projects, using equipment from Thailand and technical support from a local NGO. The idea caught on, and the Cambodians have now negotiated to get a soil-cement block machine from Thailand and held their first training workshop in July 2010, in the northern Cambodian city of Samrong. 50 community builders from 4 cities (Kampong Cham, Serey Sophoan, Samrong and Phnom Penh) learned how to test the soil, formulate the right mix, make the blocks and use them in constructing one and two-story houses. All these community builders are from communities that are now in the process of planning and implementing their own housing projects, with support from the UPDF and the ACCA Program. A technical person from the community network in Thailand's Surin Province, where the soil-cement blocks are being widely used in urban and rural housing projects, played the role of visiting professor. The workshop was partly held in the Samrong Thmey Community, a squatter settlement in the center of Samrong which has negotiated to be given the public land they occupy on a collective community land title. The people in this community have upgraded their drains, with support from a small ACCA grant, and will be rebuilding their houses. They are keen to use the soil cement block technology and see if it can help bring down the cost of their houses. *For more information, please contact Somsak at UPDF: updf@clickmail.com.kh*



INDOCHINA NETWORK VISITS SAVINGS GROUPS IN LAO PDR :

For the past year or two, groups in neighboring countries within different parts of Asia have been taking advantage of physical proximity and closer cultural ties to "break the boundaries" between their countries and intensify their collaboration, mutual learning and mutual assistance in different ways. This kind of sub-regional collaboration has been especially strong among the five countries in Indochina - Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma and Lao PDR. Groups of ten or twelve people can squeeze into a van and drive to each other's countries very cheaply, visiting several cities and projects along the way, and they do so all the time now, for exchange visits between ACCA cities, savings seminars, community block-making training and community design workshops. Usually, it's mostly community leaders, with a couple of NGO support people along to act as translators and facilitators.



In March 2010, at a gathering of community groups from the five Indochina countries, in Siem Reap Cambodia, this highly informal and highly friendly sub-regional collaboration was ever-so-slightly formalized into a network, and they now have their own coordinating team and a small budget from ACHR to plan and manage their own exchanges and meetings and boost their collaborations in different ways.

In July 2010, the Indochina Network organized their first big 6-day exchange visit to Lao PDR, as hosted by the national women's savings network, the Lao Women's Union and the Women and Community Empowering Project (the NGO which supports the Lao community savings process). Van-loads of community leaders from Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Burma (about 50 people total, with another 70 people from within Lao PDR) all converged first at Muang Khong, in Champasak Province, where they were greeted in style by the Deputy Governor, visited savings groups in fishing communities living along the Mekong River, exchanged notes on techniques for running community savings and credit programs and using community savings groups as a platform for tackling issues of natural resource management, and visited some

community-managed water supply projects being developed by poor villagers living on islands within the Mekong River, with support from ACCA.

The groups then proceeded on the long road trip to Vientiane City, where they spent the next day helping plant trees and plaster newly-reconstructed houses with the community members in Nong Duang Thung (84 households), the country's first-ever community-driven, on-site urban slum upgrading project, where the land people have been squatting on for decades has been given to them by the government on a long-term collective lease. These weren't just ceremonial visits, though, but a venue for intense discussions - both formal and informal - between community people from neighboring countries who are all involved in their own struggles for secure land and housing and hungry for new ideas, new perspectives, and also hungry to tell their stories.

The vans then proceeded to Pak Ngum District, in the more rural part of Vientiane Province, where the community savings movement in Lao began 11 years ago, and where every single village now has an active savings group - some with members from



every single household. The district-level community development fund which links all these savings groups and which is jointly managed by them, was the subject of much of the discussion here, since many of the Indochina visitors are in the process of setting up or strengthening their own city-based or province-based community development funds, to add financial and collaborative power to their negotiations for land, housing and access to finance.



The Indochina Network's visit to Lao PDR was well-documented, on film and on paper - for more information please contact Minh Chau in Vietnam (minhly21302@yahoo.com) or ACHR.

WORLD HABITAT DAY TO BE LAUNCHED IN ASIA THIS YEAR :

Every year, UN-Habitat selects a different city to be the focus of its celebration of World Habitat Day, which falls in the month of October. This year, the chosen city is Shanghai, and since we've got a city in Asia this time, there has been some discussion within the ACHR network about the idea of extending the celebrations to become a region-wide celebration of the enormous array of community-driven housing and upgrading initiatives that are underway in countries across the Asia region. The theme of this year's World Habitat Day is "Better life, better cities, which could not be a more apt slogan for the kind of housing and community upgrading projects that are now underway in 81 cities and in 15 countries around Asia, with support from ACHR's ACCA Program (Asian Coalition for Community Action).



World Habitat Day celebrations can be planned strategically so that they increase awareness and build understanding and capacity within local communities to be the core actors in city-wide upgrading and in developing lasting, large-scale solutions to problems of housing, land and access to services in their cities and countries. For many years now, the community networks in Thailand - with their partners at CODI and in NGOs - have used the whole country as a stage and the whole month of October for celebrating World Habitat Day, with a thick schedule of ribbon-cuttings, land-lease-signings, ground breakings, project inaugurations, ministerial visits, seminars, exhibitions and symposia on housing, upgrading, savings, community welfare and community development funds. All these events involve busloads of community leaders traveling around the country, and all of them are planned deliberately to open up a big, big space as possible to showcase and boost what people are doing, and to draw as many politicians, government officials and other key civil society stakeholders as possible into supporting the country's people-driven community upgrading process in different ways.

This year's World Habitat Day presents an opportunity for all the cities involved in the ACCA process around Asia to follow Thailand's example and use the October celebrations to boost their city-wide and nation-wide community upgrading processes and to make the event into a big, prominent celebration of the achievements of the urban poor - a celebration which creates a vibration that continues beyond the event itself. The possibility is also being discussed of linking with the UN-Habitat's regional office in Fukuoka to collaborate on this region-wide celebration of World Habitat Day. ACCA-supported housing and city-wide upgrading projects are now being implemented in 81 cities, in 15 countries around Asia. With so many cities in the process and this kind of scale, the ACCA program provides a ready-made framework for possible collaboration with UN-Habitat and a strong base for scaling up to 100 cities, or 200 or 300 cities in the future.

It's just a month away now, so we'd like to encourage our active ACCA partner groups around Asia to start planning their World Habitat Day celebrations, considering how to link in other groups (local and national government, international agencies, NGOs, academics and others) to participate in the celebrations, both within their cities and around the country. The celebrations are an occasion to increase awareness of the housing problems facing the urban poor, and how the problems can be solved and ARE being solved through the capacity of the poor themselves. World Habitat Day can include all sorts of activities, including project inaugurations, exhibitions of housing designs and technology, workshops on community activities, tours of community upgrading projects, and other opportunities for learning and exchange between communities and other key development actors.

Please contact ACHR with your ideas about how we can work together to make this year's World Habitat Day into a big, region-wide celebration of what poor people can do to tackle their problems of land, housing and poverty.

ASSESSING ACCA and CITY-WIDE UPGRADING in MONGOLIA

So far, regional trips to assess the ACCA process have been organized in three countries: The Philippines (January 2010), Vietnam (April 2010), and the most recent - Mongolia (July 24-28, 2010). These ACCA assessment visits are not a kind of policing or grading exercise, as assessment missions often are, but are organized to be a friendly but rigorous opportunity for horizontal learning between poor community people who are struggling in their different contexts to upgrade their settlements and lives. The trips allow teams of community leaders and their support organizations from other countries - all of whom are intensely involved in implementing their own city-wide ACCA upgrading projects - to meet their peers in other countries who are doing projects, learn more about the projects, see how they are progressing, compare notes and discuss together what the strong and weak points of the projects may be. The assessment trips are also an important chance for all the groups doing ACCA projects within that country to strengthen their national linkages. Here is the super-short version of the report on the Mongolia trip, from Diane Archer :

ACCA in MONGOLIA : By August 1, 2010, ACCA-supported projects were being implemented in 12 cities and districts in Mongolia, where 5 big housing projects and 65 small upgrading projects are now finished or well underway.



The ACCA assessment trip to Mongolia included teams of community leaders from Thailand and Korea, with a big contingent from the ACHR secretariat (Maurice, Somsook, Diane, and two Thai community architects, Nad and Wan). For most of us, this was our first trip to Mongolia, and we were given a very warm welcome by the many community savings groups we visited, and by the teams from the two NGOs which are implementing ACCA projects in Mongolia - the Urban Development Resource Center (UDRC) and the Center for Housing Rights and Development (CHRD). A group of about 30 Mongolian community members also joined the trip. During a very busy four-day schedule, we were able to visit ACCA-supported small and big upgrading projects in four of the total 12 cities where ACCA projects are being implemented: Ulaanbaatar (with 1.1 million people), Tunkhel Village (with 4,000 people), Darkhan (with 100,000 people), and

Bayanchandmani District (with 4,000 people). In all of these places, more than half the population (in some cases 90%!) live in vast, un-serviced informal settlements, called *ger areas*, named for the round tents which are the traditional dwelling of Mongolia's nomadic herds-people. The community process is still new in Mongolia - most of the savings groups we visited were only formed in 2009. Because the country's winters are so long and harsh, only about three months are left when communities can implement housing and upgrading projects, so that has slowed down the ACCA process a bit.

- **Ulaanbaatar:** After an introductory meeting at the CHRD office in Ulaanbaatar, we visited savings groups in Khan-Uul District, one of the city's largest low-income *ger areas*. One savings group had built a concrete path along the edge of an unpaved road to make it easier for residents to cart water to their homes. Another group had renovated the fences of all the savings group members, while many residents had benefited from loans to renovate their houses or to set up income generation projects.
- **Tunkhel Village:** That evening we caught a train to Tunkhel, admiring the beautiful scenery along the way. After spending a night in a *ger* camp, we headed to Tunkhel Village, where we visited more savings groups, most of which had built playgrounds for their children, clearing up areas that had previously been garbage dumps. The village's big ACCA project was the reconstruction of housing in the place of Soviet-era barracks, and one of the innovations in this project was to eliminate the high fences which usually separate houses in Mongolia's *ger areas*. After a wrap-up meeting and an energetic show of traditional dances by Tunkhel's youth, we caught a late train to the northern city of Dharkan.
- **Darkhan:** In Darkhan, we were welcomed by the local government in a meeting at town hall, and then visited the community center which unites all the town's savings groups and provides information about Darkhan's projects. The center also has public showers and a cement block factory. We visited a recycling plant run by two savings groups, which uses waste plastic to make furniture. While there is still room for improvement in health and safety at this factory, it is innovative, providing employment for savings group members and helping to reduce waste. One savings group we visited was composed entirely of women-headed households, and another was a "model community" on the outskirts of the city which recycles 90% of its waste and produces building blocks using a mixture of fly-ash, sand and concrete.
- **Bayanchandmani:** After a traditional Mongolian "hot pot" meal by the river, we headed towards Bayanchandmani by bus, stopping to visit the mayor's horse camp along the way. There we were treated to a spectacular horse race, and checked up on ACHR the horse, given last year to Somsook (*he's doing well!*). In Bayanchandmani, we were given presentations by many savings groups which have completed projects with ACCA support, including greenhouses, playgrounds, see-through fences, and renovation and insulation of 40 houses (ACCA big project).



The special context of the Mongolian case - the transition economy, harsh winters, and traditionally nomadic lifestyle - made it a very interesting learning opportunity for the foreign visitors. It was good to see how active the savings groups have been - the challenge is for them to remain active, especially beyond the summer months, and to expand their membership for further collective benefit. Nad stayed on in Mongolia an extra five days to help organize an earth-building workshop with community members and local university students.



IDEA: REFORM BY PEOPLE in THAILAND'S TROUBLED SOCIETY

Moving from a political crisis to an attempt at national reform in Thailand : In the wake of the violent political crisis which rocked Thailand for three months recently (March - May 2010), there have been efforts to organize national reform processes in various forms. The government has set up several national committees, including one to investigate the violent riots in May, one to readjust the Thai constitution, one National Reform Committee and one People's Assembly for National Reform.



In June, Somsook was appointed to be one of the 19 members of National Reform Committee, which is chaired by former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun. This committee is working in close collaboration with the other national committee - the People's Assembly for National Reform. The objective of both committees is clear: to organize a national reform process which will include all the different people's sectors across the whole spectrum of Thai society. At the moment, 14 subcommittees have also been set up to facilitate the participation of all the key people's sectors around the country. The idea of this reform process is to study and analyze the structural causes and effects of the injustices and disparities which plague Thai society, and to search for more structural solutions to those causes and effects.

The thing nobody wants is for another small group of government-appointed wise men to come up with their own highly professional blueprint for reform, which neither the government nor the citizens will ever pay much attention to. So the big questions for these two national committees are how to make this important reform movement into a national process, how to create a very large and very lively space where a very large cross-section of Thai society and large numbers of people around the country can participate, and how to bring the energy and power of Thailand's people to the difficult and highly political task of bringing about *real reform*.

Somsook has been especially involved in the subcommittee looking into reform of local communities all over the country. The plan is to try to facilitate a highly decentralized, highly participatory reform process which begins at the roots of Thai society, in all 8,000 wards in the country. In each ward (both rural and urban), all the communities in that ward (about 8-12 in each ward) will link together and work with other civic groups, local authorities and other key institutions in the ward to discuss their problems and develop whatever possible solutions to these problems - solutions they can implement together, as well as solutions they can propose to other layers of government. In this way, the real reform in each ward will be implemented by the people who live in that ward themselves, and it will touch all the fundamental issues that affect their lives: poverty, landlessness, debt, management and revival of natural resources and environments, rebuild of local knowledge, depopulation of rural communities, etc. This ward-wise reform process will allow local communities to examine all the various problems they face and find solutions together, to see what structural changes are required to accommodate those solutions, and to propose and negotiate for those changes. In this way, the reform process begins with the realities on the ground and leads to proposals based on those realities to the upper structural layers of government to find possible ways to make change.

THE CRUCIAL ISSUE of LAND : Some crucial issues such as land reform can also be dealt with by local communities within each ward, by surveying and mapping all the land in their wards and making plans for how to use all the unused and vacant land for various public purposes - such as providing land for landless households, allocating land for reviving natural resources and environment and using land for local people's economic generation. In this way, information about the enormous amount of land which is lying vacant in wards around the country - under both private and public sector ownership - will be brought out into the open, and the agencies owning that land will have to prepare good answers why they shouldn't let the local people use that vacant land.

We will be watching this attempt at participatory, bottom-up reform in Thailand and will keep you informed on the progress. It's an important experiment, not only as a possible way out of Thailand's deep political crisis, but as an example for others to learn from, since many other Asian countries will be facing similar political problems and challenges, sooner or later .

BAD FLOODS in NORTHERN PAKISTAN and LADAKH, INDIA

FLOODS IN PAKISTAN: Since the last few days of July, 2010, heavy monsoon showers have caused some of the worst floods in Pakistan in 80 years, especially in the Northwest of the country and in Pakistani Kashmir. By August 9th, over 1,600 people had been killed, 2 million were made homeless, food stores were wiped-out, herds of cattle were drowned, vast swaths of farmland had been destroyed and hundreds of towns and villages submerged. As the heavy rains continued, the disaster has been spreading into Pakistan's most populous provinces of Punjab and Sindh. Perween, at the Orangi Pilot Project's Research and Training Institute (OPP-RTI) sent us a note on August 9th giving some details about the catastrophe. She writes that there is flooding within four to seven kilometers on each side of the Indus River, which flows North to South across Pakistan, and in these areas, the devastation is catastrophic, with houses submerged and roofs caved-in, and increasing numbers of landslides. The OPP's partner organizations in many of the flood-affected areas are now involved in relief work - setting up medical camps, providing food, sheltering the displaced in schools, offices and other community spaces. From Karachi, OPP has initiated urgent support for medicines, by mobilizing some of their own limited resources, since cholera, diarrhea, skin infections and snake bite cases are becoming common in the flood-hit areas. We're now discussing with Perween how ACHR can help. *For more information please contact Perween at opperti@cyber.net.pk*



FLOODS IN LADAKH, INDIA: The same monsoon weather-front that is dumping such record quantities of rain on Pakistan is also wrecking havoc in northern India, with flash floods in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and especially in the remote region around the city of Leh, where our friends in the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF) are working to restore Leh's Old Town. We got news from Pimpim at THF on August 10th that the floods hadn't so far affected the Old Town of Leh, which is mostly built on steeply sloping hillsides. But the damage is terrible in lower-lying parts of the city, where flash floods have killed at least 137 people and left another 500 missing. Roads have been swept away, along with buildings, bridges and power cables, in a tide of rock and mud. Thousands of families in Leh have abandoned their houses and moved to higher ground, where they have been sleeping in the open, despite the cold and rain. Pimpim writes that the rain has stopped, for the time being, and people have started to work to look for survivors, administer basic medical care and start to clear the debris, with the help of soldiers, police and para-military troops. The road from Leh to Delhi was badly-enough damaged to make access to the city extremely difficult, but they hope to repair it soon and start to truck in more aid and personnel. Andre reports that everyone in the THF team is fine, but some relatives of the local team may be missing. There is still no electricity or internet in Leh. It's clear that the village in the lower part of Leh will need to be rebuilt, and hopefully, THF may be able to chip in to the efforts, but the details are not clear yet. *For more information, please contact Pimpim at: pemamarpo@yahoo.com.hk or Andre at: al-iskandar@gmx.net*



FIJI UPDATE : MOV TO EXPAND PEOPLE'S PROCESS to 15 CITIES



The People's Community Network (PCN) in the Pacific island nation of Fiji was just launched in 2006, but it already links together more than 50 slum communities in the Suva region, all with active savings groups, with about 15,000 members. The network is expanding quickly into other cities, and is working to design and test alternatives to eviction in which the poor themselves take the lead in securing land and building better housing for their families - on land where they are already staying or else very close by. The network's first on-site housing upgrading project is now underway at the Lagilagi community, which is part of Fiji's largest squatter settlement with over 2,000 households. With support the PCN, 100 families living in Lagilagi have negotiated to collectively lease the 2.8 hectares of government land they had been squatting on, for a nominal rent of US\$235 per year, for 99 years. The families will own their houses, but the land will belong collectively to the whole community. This project is a first-ever partnership between the

government, the community and the community network. The PCN has also completed the construction of a paved access road which links nine poor communities in the Wailoku area of Suva. This project, which was supported by a small project grant from ACCA, involved more carefully-nurtured partnerships and cost-sharing agreements between the community members, the PCN Network, the government and other donors.

NEW MOU TO EXPAND CITY-WIDE UPGRADING IN 15 CITIES : These community initiatives by PCN have caught the eye of the national government in Fiji, which seems increasingly to recognize the People's Community Network as an important potential partner for resolving the country's serious problems of eviction and land and housing for the urban poor. After some negotiations, an MOU is about to be signed between the PCN, the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment and ACHR, to work together to adopt a city-wide and people-driven upgrading approach on a national level, in cities around Fiji. The city-wide upgrading approach, in which the poor are the key actors in resolving their own problems of land, housing and basic services, starts with the process of surveying and gathering key information



about the land status and housing needs in all the slum communities in each city. Under the terms of the MOU, this process will be piloted in 15 cities in Fiji over a 3-year period. These pilot cities will act as demonstration cities, so that other cities in Fiji can also start to follow the process of people-driven, partnership-based, city-wide upgrading, and the goal is clearly to create a new approach to housing in Fiji.

The PCN will facilitate the process of identifying the 15 pilot cities and help communities in each city to start savings groups, as the first step in developing a financial system which belongs to the people themselves. A city committee will be set up in each city to guide the city-wide upgrading process, with representatives from the communities, PCN, development agencies, local government and other actors. These city committees will act as a joint mechanism for planning, negotiating to secure land, and other relevant matters, holding ongoing meetings to understand the immediate needs of the communities to plan and to jointly consider and support projects proposed from communities and build the capacity of the actors to work together as a team.

This process will be supported by some modest funding from ACHR's ACCA Program to implement this city-wide upgrading process in 15 cities over three years. The Ministry and different agencies and actors involved will be exploring options for increasing funding to expand the process nationally. The tentative support from ACHR/ACCA will follow the usual ACCA parameters and include :

- Support for the national coordination: **US\$10,000 per year**
 - Support for city-level surveying, mapping, savings, coordination: US\$ 3,000 per city x 15 cities = **\$45,000**
 - Support for small-scale upgrading projects: \$15,000 per city (minimum 5 projects per city) x 15 cities = **\$225,000**
 - Support for more comprehensive housing projects : \$40,000 x maximum 8 cities = **\$320,000**
 - Support for national survey and mapping : **\$10,000**
- Total over 3 years = US\$ 610,000**

These funds will go directly to cities, via the national committee, which will transfer the funds to the joint committees as set up at the city level, which will then pass on the funds to the communities. It is hoped that cities will start their own City Development Funds (CDF), so that money can be transferred directly from the national committee to the CDF, which will function as a revolving fund to which people will pay back loans, allowing longer-term sustainability of upgrading. The first three years of city-wide upgrading as set out in this MOA will serve as a demonstration of the mechanism of community-based city-wide upgrading, with the various relevant actors, in the expectation that the process will continue beyond the three years.

COMMUNITY ARCHITECTS SUPPORT THE PCN : This exciting MOU involves the implementation of a considerable number of actual housing and community upgrading projects over the next three years. Between mid-August and September 2010, a team of three young community architects will come to Fiji to support the PCN and the communities as they begin to plan and implement this city-wide upgrading in Fiji. As the PCN works on community surveys, mapping, planning and looking out for possible community upgrading and housing projects, these three architects will come to support their work, helping with community surveys and planning for community upgrading - both small upgrading projects and bigger housing projects (either in-situ or relocation). Hugo Moline and Heidi Axelsen are young Australian architects from a Sydney-based community architecture group called Milkcrate Urbanism, and the third team member is Anna Russell, a young architect from New Zealand who joined the ACHR Community Architecture Workshop in Chiang Mai in June 2010. It costs a fortune and takes forever to fly architects from Asia down to Fiji, but for people in Australia and New Zealand, it's just a four or five-hour flight to Suva. That's why a decision was made to let Hugo, Anna and Heidi make up the key community architect support team for the PCN for the time being, until a local technical support team can be built up. The team has just set up a blog for discussion of the work in Fiji as it develops, which will be a platform for the whole Asia network to comment, give advice and share their experiences with PCN in Fiji. <http://suva-projects.blogspot.com>

ACCA UPDATE : NEW PROJECTS, UPCOMING MEETINGS and EVENTS

A NEW SET OF ACCA PROJECTS JUST

APPROVED : The last ACCA / ACHR meeting was held in Lang Son in April 2010, and the next planned ACCA committee meeting wouldn't be happening until September, 2010 (in Cambodia, along with the Cambodia assessment trip). Because the gap between these two committee meetings had become a bit long, several groups with new and urgent projects to propose asked for an intermediary round of approvals by e-mail, so their projects could get started - especially the big batch of projects in Mongolia, where they have to work within a very short construction season. So we asked these groups to submit their proposals to the ACHR Secretariat by July 10. A report which presented brief summaries of the new proposals that were submitted (from 7 countries) was sent out on July 12 to all the ACCA Committee members, so they could read it and send in their questions and comments on the new proposals, and indicate whether they felt the proposed activities and budgets were acceptable. The deadline for comments from the ACCA Committee was July 20, 2010, and once the comments and questions from the committee had been circulated and answered by the groups, the final list of project approvals was sent out at the first of August 2010. If you haven't received a PDF copy of the report which describes in detail those projects, you can download a copy from the ACHR website. Here's a brief summary of the projects which were approved in that July 2010 round :



Summary of NEW ACCA project proposals, approved July 20, 2010

(All figure in US Dollars)

Country	City / District	Total budget approved	Big projects	Small projects	City process	Underst anding cities	Other city and national process	Disaster	Com-munity savings and fund
BURMA	Hta Winbe Ward, North Ukkalapa township, Yangon	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000				
	Ahlae Yaw Ward, Hlaing Tar Yar Township, Yangon	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000				
PHILIPPINES	Bulacan Province	33,000	--	30,000 (10)	3,000				
	Rodriguez Municipality	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000				
	Typhoon Ketsana	20,000						20,000	
	Sorsogon City	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000				
	Kidapawan	40,000	40,000						
Digos	40,000	40,000							
VIETNAM	Quy Nhon	4,590						4,590	
	Hai Duong	40,000	40,000						
	National CDF activities	32,139							32,139
SRI LANKA	Galle	58,000	40,000	15,000 (5)	3,000				
	Women's Bank Information Unit	10,000					10,000		
MONGOLIA	Baganuur District, UB City	15,000		15,000 (8)					
	Baruun Urt District, Sukhbaatar Province	15,000		15,000 (8)					
	Bulgan District, Bulgan Province	15,000		15,000 (6)					
	Tsenhermandal Dist., Khentii Province	15,000		15,000 (4)					
	Sukhbaatar District, UB City	15,000		15,000 (5)					
	Darkhan	2,000		2,000 (3)					
THAILAND	Chiang Mai Urban Learning Center	20,000				20,000			
PAKISTAN	Karachi Goths	15,000				15,000			
	OPP in 4 new towns	20,000			20,000				
TOTAL		641,729	320,000 (8 projects)	182,000 (67 projects)	38,000	35,000	10,000	24,590	32,139

ACCA PROGRAM UPDATE : And here is a summary of all the approved ACCA projects, as of August 1, 2010 :

- Activities approved in 80 cities / towns / districts, in 15 countries
- 48 big housing projects (Total big project budget approved: US\$ 1,805,767)
- 392 small upgrading projects (Total small project budget approved US\$ 1,013,000)
- Community-driven disaster rehabilitation projects in 4 countries : Cambodia (1 project), Burma (4 projects), Philippines (6 projects), Vietnam (1 project)
- National surveys in 6 countries, finished or in process

UPCOMING ACCA MEETINGS AND EVENTS :

- **August 13-24, 2010** : Comprehensive community planning by people, workshop in Yangon, Burma
- **August 17-October 27, 2010** : Four community architects (Hugo, Anna, Heidi, Nad) assist national survey and mapping in Fiji
- **August 31-September 6** : City-wide slum survey in Vientiane Lao PDR, with Faculty of Architecture, WCEP and Thai YPs
- **September 7-11, 2010** : Assessment trip and ACCA Committee meeting in Cambodia
- **September 8-12, 2010** : Nad and Tee in Penang to prepare for upcoming regional workshop on communities and heritage
- **November 9-13, 2010** : Assessment trip and ACCA Committee meeting in Nepal
- **November 22-27, 2010** : Bamboo construction workshop in Davao, Philippines, with HPFP and regional YPs (*tentative*)
- **January 16-20, 2011** : Assessment trip to Sri Lanka (*tentative*)

NEW VIDEO FILMS ABOUT UPGRADING IN 8 ASIAN COUNTRIES

ACHR is about to release a new DVD compilation of new video films that were produced by ACHR friends from eight countries across Asia. This compilation of films is an attempt to start a process of video production and dissemination about urban poor issues in Asia for learning by communities, NGOs and professionals - and in many cases for public education, advocacy and showing on public media. The subject of most of the films in the set is community upgrading, and many look at upgrading projects that are being supported by ACHR's new ACCA Program (Asian Coalition for Community Action), which supported small and large community upgrading projects in more than 64 cities across Asia in its first year. While many of the principals behind these community-driven upgrading processes are common, the political and social contexts in the countries where they are being implemented are very different. And so communities have adapted their upgrading approach in different ways, and in these *differences* there is learning.

Seeing is believing : We hope that following the exciting ACCA-supported upgrading processes in Vietnam, Nepal, Mongolia and the Philippines on film will help others to see what poor communities are capable of and will inspire others to plan and implement their own upgrading projects. The video produced in Pakistan, called "Why Upgrading?", presents a powerful case for why on-site upgrading of existing slum communities is the best, the most efficient and the most humane option for housing the urban poor in Asia. A similar message comes from the Indian film, which also presents an understanding of how all the other local development stakeholders can be involved. From Thailand, there are a number of videos which focus on how young community architects can help facilitate community-driven planning for a variety of development and settlement improvement options.

The planning process for these videos took place in Bangkok in August 2009, when teams from ten countries participating in the ACCA Program were invited to Bangkok for a four-day workshop. Most of these country teams included one person involved with video production, one linked to ACCA and one linked with mass media. The countries which joined the workshop included Vietnam, Philippines, Mongolia, India, Thailand, Pakistan, Korea, Nepal, and United Kingdom.



The teams from Indonesia and Kenya were unable to attend. Our objectives at the workshop were to share experiences with making videos, develop plans for producing 8 - 10 short videos on urban poor people-centered development and upgrading, and to more clearly understand and improve our links and access to the public and public media.

For a copy of the DVD, with all the films in this compilation, please contact Maurice at ACHR.