

HOUSING BY PEOPLE IN ASIA



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Dear Reader,

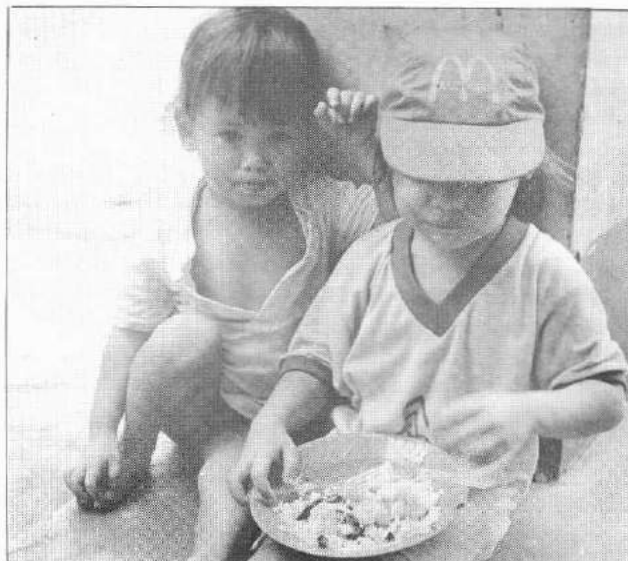
In housing the world's poor, not much has changed the past 20 years. The executive director of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements writes: "There is no evidence that the shelter situation of the poorest people in developing country cities has improved over the last two decades as measured by affordability, tenure, standards and access to services. In absolute numbers, more urban residents are facing a shelter situation which must be considered inadequate."

To do better we have to know why we stumbled. It doesn't seem to be a matter of programming. Most people agree the basic thrusts of HABITAT I, held in Vancouver in 1976, are still on target. These include maximum peoples participation, toleration of squatter areas, slum upgrading, reducing evictions, modification of housing rules and regulations to accommodate the poor and more accessible financing.

Perhaps we didn't do as well as we expected because we failed to appreciate how stoutly land developers and owners and their allies in government would oppose the new thrusts. We were not politically astute.

There were many reasons for the poor performance, but the opposition of the powerful was surely the most important. It is put more euphemistically as "a lack of political will". The opposition will continue into the future with the same negative results in the field of housing unless we can find some way to modify the power structures in our cities. This requires some reshaping of the political forces in the city.

We must be able, it seems, to convince mayors and others that it makes good political sense to follow the suggestions of HABITAT I, and that it is political suicide to ignore them. This may happen if we can help the poor, who are 50% or more of the population, form a political constituency for



Children of families evicted in Manila. Forced evictions affect over a million Asian men, women & children each year. Women and children suffer most of all. Such evictions are a "gross violation of human rights", according to the United Nations.

good city planning and care of the poor. We have to help people become political actors.

An article written by Bishwapriya Sanyal takes up this same discussion and also has some critical words for NGOs.

Also in this issue:

Housing Is A Human Right: Letter of Philip Alston to the U.S. State Department. **Eviction Watch:** Reports from Kirabati and Karachi. **UN Criticizes Philippine Government Housing Program:** NGO Charges and UN Response. **Before Government and NGOs Arrive the People Are:** How People Themselves Develop Their Neighborhoods. **How to Work With Poor Communities:** The Experience of Orangi Pilot Project. **Free Trade Economics and Housing:** New Economic Model Causes Housing Problems. **Women, Housing and Beijing:** Equal Rights to Land and Housing.

HOW TO HELP — SOME EXPERT ADVICE

The Orangi Pilot Project of Karachi has had great success in its projects. It is especially famous for its community sanitation work there that now serves 30,000 families. OPP helps peoples groups in many urban slums. Here OPP leaders Perween Rahman and Anwer Rashid share some of the lessons they learned. They are talking principally of laying down sanitation lines.

Some Principles and Methods

1. Each community has resources, that is, skills, finances and managerial capacity. In addition the community is aware of the problems, what is missing is the relationship of problem to other issues, the possible methods of solutions and the appropriate technology required.

The community needs social and technical guidance to properly utilize its resources. So there is need to develop a package of advice. (What type of drains are needed, for example.)

2. Problems in katchi abadis (slums) are obvious.

A study is not needed to identify the problems. What is needed is an understanding of the people and the community. For example, the extent of the problem, how people perceive the problems, what efforts have they made, what possible solutions/method would they suggest?

This can be identified through dialogue and discussions with the community and observation. This interaction starts a process of mutual understanding between the technicians and community.

3. Role of an NGO - as a support organization.

A team of technicians and social organizers is needed to support the community. Technicians develop the package of advice and social organizers extend it.

Social organizers need to be from the community. This resolves

the problem of time, language, culture and rapport with the community.

Working with a community requires consistency, flexibility and a low profile, which should suit NGOs.

Our experience shows that the government, due to its inconsistency, and the CBOs due to their local politics, can not serve as support organizations.

4. The package of advice is developed through interaction.

A package of advice is developed by technicians through interaction with the community. This interaction takes place at all levels, with councilors, elders, local leaders and individuals.

An attitude of mutual respect, sharing and learning is needed. The concept that the community knows all or the technicians know all are both incorrect.

5. Role of activists (local leaders).

There are some people in the community who are aware of the problems, think about it, try to solve it and are willing to listen. There is need to identify such people.

In the process of developing a package of advice, while interacting with the community, activists are identified. These are the early adopters who extend the programme. A bonus of this method is that the community identifies with the programme.

6. Level of organization - the

smaller the better.

At the initial stages, the demonstration requires much concentration, time and effort. Therefore the level of organization needs to be small. For example - in Orangi a lane of 20 families is the level of organization. At a small scale the understanding is better, conflicts are less, disputes can be easily resolved, the trials and errors can be controlled.

7. Initial process is slow, but after the demonstration, there is a snowball effort.

In working with the community, change in attitude takes time, but once the breakthrough takes place, it has a multiple impact. For example in Orangi, it took six months for the first lane to construct an underground sewerage line. Later sewerage lines were being laid in 25-30 lanes at one time. Programmes of health, housing and income generation were easy to extend.

Don't try for quick results. Also it can have a damaging effect on the programme. If a subsidy is given in one lane to have quick results, then others expect the same.

8. People and Government are partners in development.

Problems are at all levels, neither the community nor the government can solve these problems alone. It has to be a combined effort. Our work in sanitation shows that there are two levels, one the internal development - which can be financially managed and maintained by the community, and two, the external development, which has to be the responsibility of the government.

IS THERE A RIGHT TO HOUSING?

Philip Alston

This letter of Philip Alston is addressed to John Shattuck, U.S. Department of State, June, 1995. Mr. Alston is the Chair of the UN ECOSOC Committee. This is the Committee which reviews government's reports on their compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. He is one of the world's leading authorities on ECOSOC rights and holds one of the most prestigious positions in this area of work.

Dear John,

I am writing to you not in my capacity as Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but in my personal capacity as one who attaches great importance to the potential leadership role of the United States in promoting respect for human rights. I want to express my deep concern at the position which was taken in relation to housing rights by the United States delegation in the preparatory process for the HABITAT II Conference, held in Nairobi in April 1995. I understand the U.S. delegation argued, in very forceful and adamant terms, in favor of the proposition that there is no such human right as a right to adequate housing, that this right is not recognized in international human rights law and that the right has never been recognized in international treaties. The delegation indicated that it attached great importance to this issue, that it would call for a vote upon any paragraph referring to the right to housing in any way at all and that the U.S. would vote against the inclusion of any such reference.

I will refrain from speculating as to any ideological motivations that might lie behind these propositions and confine myself to considering their validity and the implications for international human rights law in general of this policy position on the part of the United States.

[A] Validity of the U.S. position

As you know, article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that;

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [sic] and his family, including...housing..."

This formulation, which was fully supported

by the United States Government when the Declaration was drafted, actually derives to a very significant extent from a draft placed before the United Nations by the American Law Institute. The ALI's "Statement of Essential Rights" made express provision for "the right to adequate food and housing." The statement was, in turn, inspired by President Roosevelt's State of the Union Address in 1944 when he defended "the right of every family to a decent home".

It was subsequently reflected in article 11[1] of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which provides that:

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing.

This formulation was accepted by the United States when it signed the Covenant in 1978. When Secretary Christopher referred to the Covenant in his important address to the Vienna World Conference in 1993 there was no suggestion that this support was subject to the non-recognition of any right to housing or of a right to food. It might also be added that every Western nation, with the exception of the U.S. and Turkey have long been parties to the Covenant.

During debates and discussions in Nairobi at the Habitat Pre Com, US delegates apparently adopted several different strategies to support the proposition that no right to adequate housing has ever been recognized in international law, despite the clear wording of these provisions.

The first argument was to effect that these provisions recognize only "a right to an adequate standard of living" but not a right to housing. This argument is spurious. In the first place, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as well as

the General Assembly and a host of other bodies have regularly referred to the right to housing in documents, legal instruments and other texts between 1948 and today. The suggestion that there is no right to housing has never before been asserted. Indeed, not a single report submitted by any of the 131 States parties to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has ever even challenged, let alone denied, that there is a separate and distinct right to adequate housing recognized in this Covenant. How odd it is for the United States, a non-party to the Covenant, to be the first and only State (and then only for the first time after well over 40 years of debate) ever to discover that, contrary to the interpretation accepted by all of the 131 States parties, there is actually no such thing as a right to housing recognized in the Covenant!

Secondly, if there is no right to housing based on these instruments then there is, equally, neither a right to adequate food, nor a right to clothing. Is it really the case that the United States now disputes the existence of the right to food?

Thirdly, as a matter of logic, the right to an adequate standard of living, the existence of which the asserted U.S. position would seem to acknowledge, is clearly composed of several elements. One of these is housing. If there is a right to the overall package, there is clearly a right also to the component parts, and thus also a right to housing. Fourthly, this argument would also apply in relation to many of the central provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Suffice it to note that there is no reference to a "right to be free from torture" but merely a statement that "No one shall be subjected to torture....." It is thus apparent that the argument put forward in Nairobi in relation to the right to housing is thus without any logical or legal foundation.

The final argument apparently suggested by the delegation was that a right to housing would be incompatible with the "enablement" reflected in the U.N.'s Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. This argument could only be plausible if the right to housing is radically misinterpreted so as to equate it with an obligation upon a government to actually provide every in-

dividual with housing. Such a proposition could only be advanced from the vantage point of great ignorance.

[B] The implications of U.S. policy for international human rights law

The present U.S. administration has responded in an appropriately firm and uncompromising manner to suggestions by certain governments that some of the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Bill of Rights are not "really" human rights. These assaults on the principle of universality have correctly been rebuffed. It is extraordinary, however, that the United States now seems to be engaging in precisely such an assault, albeit in relation to a different human right. The implications of denying the existence of one of the long-recognized human rights is a strategy fraught with danger and one which cannot help but undermine the international legal regime. It is one thing for the U.S. to insist that it does not recognize for itself an obligation to promote the right to housing (except perhaps for the non-discrimination element dealt with in CERD). That insistence is legitimate, even if some would question its appropriateness. It is, however, an entirely different matter to deny the existence of one of the internationally recognized human rights and to oppose all reference to it, even in a non-binding, recommendation by an international conference which is of no more than general policy relevance.

For the reasons outlined in the preceding analysis I would urge you to review U.S. policy in relation to the right to housing with a view to the adoption of a policy consistent with international human rights law by the time of the next Habitat II Prep Com. I would greatly appreciate any light which you may be able to shed on the issues that I have raised. Because I believe the policy in question to represent a major threat to the foundations of international human rights law I intend to make a copy of this letter available to interested groups and individuals in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Philip Alston

ECONOMIC MODEL AT ROOT OF HOUSING PROBLEM

Several groups and individuals have pointed out in recent months that the world's current economic model adds to the growing chaos in our cities. They agree that part of the answer lies in the reformation of our political institutions to bring power to the people. Here are samples of this thinking:

Kuantan Conference - A Citizen's Agenda, Malaysia, April 1995

"This disturbing reality (growing poverty, social breakdown, environmental disregard) is in large part a legacy of the ideologies and institutions of the twentieth century, and in particular of the dominant neoliberal economic development model of unfettered economic growth, unregulated markets, privatization of public assets and functions, and global economic integration that has become the guiding philosophy of our most powerful institutions. This model spawns projects that displace the poor to benefit those already better off, diverts resources to export production that might otherwise be used by the less advantaged to produce for their own needs, destroys livelihoods in the name of creating jobs, and legitimates policies that deprive persons in need of essential public services. The model advances institutional changes that shift the power to govern from people and governments to unaccountable global corporations and financial institutions devoted to a single goal — maximizing their own short-term financial gains. Its values honor a compassionless Darwinian struggle in which the strong consume the weak to capture wealth beyond reasonable need. It creates a system in which a few make decisions on behalf of the whole that return to themselves great rewards while passing the costs to others. For them the system works and they see no need to change. The many who bear the burden have no meaningful voice.

"Two great issues inform our efforts to rebuild our habitats, our living spaces: 1) the need to transform our ways of living to bring them into balance with the natural ecosystems of our planet,

while assuring the right of all people to a good and decent means of livelihood as productive contributors to secure and vibrant communities; and 2) the need to transform our institutions to restore to people the power to govern their own lives. We recognize that meeting these needs will require that we transform the values and institutions of the existing global system to one that places life ahead of money, the basic needs of the many ahead of the extravagant consumption of the few, and the rights of people ahead of the rights of corporations. This transformation must be people driven, growing out of the aspirations, needs, and life experiences of people everywhere. We recognize that the issues are political and that change will require effective political action."

NGO Statement, Preparatory Meeting for HABITAT II, Nairobi April 24-May 5

"We are concerned that the macro economic reforms, globalization of economy and market development models pursued by developed and the developing societies are widening inequalities, causing exclusion and marginalization, promoting wasteful consumerism, undermining sovereignty, destroying environment, depleting nature's resources, causing



A woman in Manila peers out of the shell of her house that has been demolished in a forced eviction. Women often suffer miscarriages during evictions.

cultural alienation and seriously damaging a national society's capacity to find solutions rooted in its culture, social norms, value system and traditional wisdom.

"We believe it is necessary, even at this seemingly late stage, to seriously examine if (a) there are ways to development which respect consideration of wealth distribution and environmental sustainability in pursuit of productivity and profit and (b) which are more suited to the cultural heritage, value system, social structure and traditional wisdom of societies for which they are meant.

"This matter of alternative development model may not lie strictly within the traditional boundaries of human settlements sector. However, it has profound influence on sustainability, urbanization trends, nature of human settlements development, and quality of life in cities, towns and villages."

David Korten, Preparing for the 21st Century

"In the March 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen the representatives of a globalizing civil society issued a broadly based consensus document: "The Copenhagen Alternative Declaration." It rejected the official declaration agreed on by their governments on the ground that its embrace of the neoliberal economic system of growth, free markets, and free trade contradicted its professed commitment to eliminating poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration. Even before the summit closed, more than six hundred civil society organizations from around the world had signed the declaration — and the sign-ons continue. Symbolically it represented a citizen vote of no confidence in the world's governments.

"The breach between the people and their governments has become a great chasm. As that chasm grows, people are coming to realize that their future depends on reclaiming the inherent power of civil society from an economic and political system ruled in secret by distant and unaccountable global corporations and financial institutions.

"The Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas state

in Mexico provides a metaphor for these emergent citizen efforts to redefine the relationships between citizens and ruling states that have been coopted by alien corporate interests. Unlike the revolutions of the twentieth century which involved contests for state power, the Chiapas revolution seeks to secure from the state the right of all people to govern themselves within the borders of their own communities. Its goal is to reclaim the power of civil society that distant corporations and governments have coopted. Mexican political analyst Gustavo Esteva has appropriately dubbed it the first revolution of the twenty-first century."

Kirtee Shah, Paraphrased from a Paper Presented in Bangkok, July 1995

The current international global market type of economy favors the growth of big cities. It lays emphasis on quality production to stand competition in the international market. This quality production, besides capital flows, requires advanced technology, skilled labour, trained professionals, banking and other service institutions and an access to information and communication technology. These are based mostly in big cities. Foreign businessmen also prefer big cities.

Such economic activity will demand better infrastructure in the cities — luxury accommodation, recreation centers and good quality, high specification work places. Money spent on this type of infrastructure will not be available to supply the basic needs of the poor.

There may be labor unrest if governments in an effort to accommodate business try to hobble labor unions.

Land prices will rise. The corruption price tag on land transactions is going higher. Disputed, under-utilized and neglected lands are coming under development. Pressure on slum dwellers and other unauthorized encroachers to move, to part with occupied lands, is greater. Evictions are more frequent and buying over of slums and encroachments probably more subtle.

The poor will suffer. Even the most ardent supporters of the economic reforms admit that in the short run the poor will be at the receiving end and will suffer greater hardship.

PHILIPPINE NGOs TAKE HOUSING ISSUES TO THE UNITED NATIONS

In May a group of Philippine NGOs appeared before the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to protest their government's violation of people's housing rights. The Philippine Government presented its position on the matter. Afterwards the Committee issued its "judgment" in the form of recommendations that mostly agreed with the criticism and suggestions of the NGOs. The Philippine group was helped by the COHRE staff (Scott Leckie and Miloon Kothari), Habitat International Coalition and MISEREOR. Here in brief are the major NGO criticisms and the Committee's response.

- * The NGOs pointed out that up to half the urban population was urban squatters and their health, economic standing, housing and environment situation were deteriorating.
- * Government evicts illegally about 5,000 families a year in Metro Manila. Over half of all known evictions are illegal. In addition observers believe there are two or three evictions unknown to NGO groups for everyone known. Government doesn't know how many evictions there are each year or even how many squatters there are.
- * The government's relocation program, for families evicted due to public works projects or other reasons, takes families 35-45 km outside Metro Manila, where there are few basic services and no jobs. As a result up to 80% of the relocated families return to Manila, according to studies done for UNICEF.
- * Only 10% of the money allocated for housing by government goes to families under the poverty line which is about \$200 per month. The rest goes to upper income families in the form of generous mortgages and medium rise buildings. The buildings are too expensive for families under the poverty line. Average urban poor family income is about \$80-\$90 per month.

- * There is no slum upgrading program.

The United Nations Committee responded:

The Committee observes that economic difficulties, aggravated by a strong migration from the rural to the urban areas and the servicing of the external debt, have had a constraining influence on the implementation of the Covenant.

Politico-social obstacles including oligarchical and entrenched conservative religious influences have often times inhibited and aborted attempts to improve the lot of the disadvantaged classes and to remove some of the socio-cultural ills which beset the Philippines.

The Committee also notes the highly detrimental consequences of the persisting civil conflict in the south of the country for the effective implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.

The Committee expresses particular concern at the use of criminal law provisions to deal with problems arising from the inadequacy of housing. It notes in this regard that Presidential Decree (PD) 772 has been used in some cases as a basis for the criminal conviction of squatters and that PD 1818 restricts the right of due process in the case of evictees. While the Committee does not condone the illegal occupation of land nor the usurpation of property rights by persons otherwise unable to obtain access to adequate housing, it believes that in the absence of concerted measures to address these problems resort should not be had in the first instance to measures of criminal law or to demolition.

The Committee has received information from a variety of sources indicating that large-scale forced evictions occur frequently and are estimated to have affected hundreds of thousands of persons since the ratification of the Covenant by the Philippines. One figure presented to the Committee asserted that some 15,000 families were forcibly evicted between June 1992 and August 1994. The scale of forced evictions and the manner in which they are carried out are of concern to the Committee. The Government itself acknowledges that planned forced evictions may affect up to 200,000 families, and that the

Government has identified only 150,000 relocation sites. If these estimates are correct a very significant number of persons currently threatened with eviction will not receive adequate resettlement. Such a situation would not be compatible with respect for the right to housing.

The Committee is unable to accept statements made by the Government to the effect that the Covenant provides no protection from forced eviction. The right to housing cannot be interpreted as being silent in relation to such an issue and the Committee has consistently drawn the attention of other States Parties to this matter.

While it is not for the Government itself to build or finance the housing units required to satisfy all of the demand in the country, it should make every effort to ensure that a fair share of the resources available is utilized for making low-cost housing available to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors of society, and enabling the private sector to contribute to that endeavor. The Committee notes, however, that existing expenditures appear to benefit higher income groups at the expense of the poor.

In terms of the availability of resources, the Committee notes with concern that a greater proportion of the national budget is devoted to military spending than to housing, agriculture and health combined.

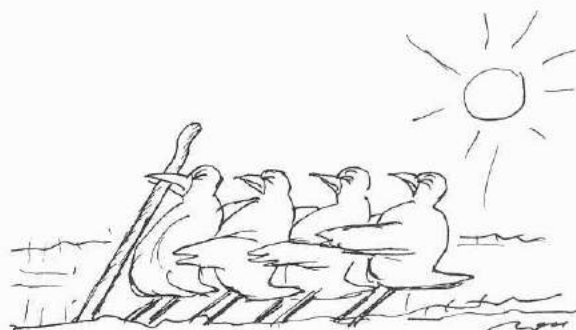
The Committee recommends that consideration be given to increasing the proportion of the national budget devoted to slum upgrading programmes, to community mortgage programmes and programmes in the field of health and agriculture designed in particular to benefit the poorer members of society.

The Committee also recommends that greater emphasis should be placed within the framework of official development assistance (ODA) provided by donor countries to support social adjustment programmes for purposes such as the financing of low interest credit to the poorest farmers, slum upgrading and other programmes for housing the poor. The Committee recalls that every effort must be made in times of structural adjustment to ensure that the basic disadvantaged sectors of the population are pro-

ected to the greatest extent possible.

The Government should ensure that forced evictions are not carried out except in truly exceptional circumstances, following consideration of all possible alternatives and in full respect of the rights of all persons affected. The Committee urges the Government to extend indefinitely the moratorium on summary and illegal forced evictions and demolitions and to ensure that all those under threat in these contexts are entitled to due process. The Government should promote greater security of tenure in relation to housing in accordance with the principles outlined in the Committee's General Comment No. 4 and should take the necessary measures, including prosecutions wherever appropriate, to stop violations of laws such as R.A. 7279. In general, the Committee urges that consideration be given to the repeal of PD 772 and PD 1818, and recommends that all existing legislation relevant to the practice of forced evictions should be reviewed so as to ensure its compatibility with the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee considers that, when relocating evicted or homeless persons or families, attention should be paid to the availability of job opportunities, schools, hospitals or health centres, and transport facilities in the areas selected.

The Government should consider the establishment of an independent body legally responsible for preventing illegal forced evictions, and for monitoring, documenting and reviewing any ongoing or planned forced evictions. The Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor could also be given an enhanced mandate to protect housing rights, and to collect accurate and reliable indicators and statistics relating to urban problems such as homelessness, forced evictions, the numbers of those relocated, and the number of squatters.



Sometimes the early birds have to work together.

WOMEN, HOUSING AND THE BEIJING MEETING

This is the joint statement for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995 of UNCHS (HABITAT) Women in Human Settlements Development Programme; HABITAT International Coalition, Women and Shelter Network; GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together for Sisterhood); and International Council of Women.

PREAMBLE

Human Settlements development must be a major concern at the Fourth World Conference on Women because the development and maintenance of our human habitat is an essential part of the struggle for equality, development and peace. Whatever else they do, women operate within the subsistence economy, both in the urban and rural contexts, especially in the developing countries of the world. In these countries, but also in the developed countries, the daily struggle to eke out an existence for their families is becoming increasingly difficult. The lack of humanly adequate sewerage, schools, health and child-care facilities, economically feasible and timely transport, street illumination etc. - makes women's roles more burdensome and often dangerous.

Housing is a **basic human right**, which is, however, not adequately recognized or enforced. Residential struggles are more and more prevalent and women are at the forefront. Women have new leadership roles in both rural and urban human settlements, but these roles are not sufficiently recognized and are often openly opposed by private industry and governments. Massive evictions are still quite prevalent in many countries and it is the women and children who are most affected. Destruction of communities, for any reason is inhumane, socially and economically counterproductive, and is a practice that should be brought to an end. This is the meaning of Commission on Human Settlements resolution 14/6 adopted in 1993.

Even though women are active human settlements managers, they are often discriminated against when it comes to access to and control over land and property. It is not so much laws as customs and traditions that prevent women from inheriting and controlling land and buildings on

an equal basis with men. Women's equal rights in this respect must be treated as fundamental human rights.

In the last two decades, women have suffered even more because of the prevailing model of economic growth. People-centered development is needed. Women, as well as men, must gain control over the decision which affect their living and working environments.

The fact that women are not equitably involved in the decision-making of the design of the home, the choice of the area to live in, the planning and development of the neighborhood and, even more importantly, the planning, development, and maintenance of their villages, towns and cities, makes the world further removed from achieving the right kind of sustainable development for its families and communities.

Human settlements policies should be based on priorities coming from the community level, where women are active organizers. Policies must be based on community development.

II. PRIORITY ISSUES

1. **The model of economic development:** Plans for Economic growth should take into consideration environmental sustainability and the support of human life;
2. **Women's fundamental right to own, inherit and control land and buildings,** on an equal basis with men must be treated as a fundamental human right. Different forms of property also need to be encouraged i.e. sharing, cooperative, rental and so on.
3. **Equal access to credit for housing,** infrastructure and income-generating activities, for women as well as for men;

4. **Specific training and job development** for women in order to enable them to better qualify for jobs within the human settlements development field:

- a) Formal construction skills; and
- b) Managerial and advocacy skills.

5. **Capacity-building in gender-awareness for women and men**, who have a clear-perspective and can communicate this perspective to others to build up gender competence:

6. **Research and development** of specific "gender-sensitive tools" for use among human settlements development practitioners.

III. OBJECTIVES

We want to support the creation of countries, cities, towns, and villages, where all of us — women and men, girls and boys, conscious of our differences and respecting those differences — can feel a part of, responsible for, and participants in, the building of our common future. The development and maintenance of the "Human Habitat" will not be possible without the participation of all of us! The world social agenda cannot be complete without focusing on human settlements development. Women are crucial in making "human", "sustainable" and "environmentally sound" development happen.

We, as women and men, together, must be the designers of our own future — a future without constraints, without dominations.

IV. STRATEGIES

1. Human models of development must be planned for and implemented by governments. These must be placed above the priority of increasing trade.

2. **Women's equal rights** to land and housing should be enshrined in international conventions, with the full backing of laws, legal advice services, public-awareness campaigns and human rights education. Mechanisms need to be set up for the monitoring of implementation of all existing and new conventions relating to these fundamental rights.

3. The right to adequate housing enshrined in international conventions should be implemented

and monitored at the national level by adequate mechanisms so that mass eviction no longer occurs. This particularly applies to the Commission on Human Settlements resolution 14/6 regarding forced mass evictions.

4. **Local responsibility** for formulating and implementing detailed land and housing issues, based on partnerships between local government and appropriate agents of civil society, including community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations, should be encouraged.

5. **Governments, both central and local, must have the political will and the financial means** for putting a gender-perspective into their policies, plans and actions.

6. National and local government officials in charge of developing and implementing human settlements policies, must be **trained in gender-awareness**.

7. **More democratic and accountable systems of representation** should be created - at local, intermediate and national levels.

8. **Networking**, an arena for exchange and building solidarity (technical, financial, social, informational), needs to be strengthened in order for women and women's groups to be more actively visible and to influence policy formulation and implementation within the human settlements development process. Networking among women at the community level is the priority.

9. **Demands** must be put on local and central governments and "report cards" issued regarding their provision of both the structure and control necessary to ensure women's participation, as well as men's, within all phases of the human settlements development process.

10. **Women's contributions** within households and communities must be acknowledged and adequate support systems established. The key strategy is to encourage peer exchanges at the grassroots level around women, housing and community development issues.

11. Government should respect and encourage the active participation of grassroots organizations and the community based organizations should respond as conscious and active citizens.

EVICTION WATCH

From opposite ends of the Asia-Pacific world comes news of evictions and urban problems. In big countries and small the problems are similar.

Republic of Kiribati

There is growing awareness within Kiribati (2,000 km east of Manila in the Pacific Ocean) of the problems associated with the increasing urbanization of South Tarawa. Population pressures and urban drift continue to impact across a broad range of services.

The Republic's total land area is 810 square kilometers. In 1990 the population was around 72,500 across the 21 inhabited atolls. Around 35% of the total population live in South Tarawa which is the administrative centre. Although the national population growth rate is around 2.3% per annum, the rate in urban South Tarawa is around 6% per annum. It is anticipated that by the year 2010 the Republic's population will be around 90,000 and in South Tarawa it is likely to be 40,000.

South Tarawa consists of a land area of 16 square kilometers which is around 300 meters wide and 35 kilometers long. The population density for South Tarawa averages 1,800 persons per square kilometer. The density in Berio is around 5,400 per square kilometer and is the highest in the Republic.

The unplanned and uncontrolled growth of urban South Tarawa continues to cause severe problems which are magnified due to the increasing demand for urban services impacting on the limited capability and capacity of the infrastructure services. During the course of the next 6 months the UK (ODA) Project will be assessing the technical and financial assistance required to commence a replacement programme for the worst public sector stock (i.e. the Labour Line dwellings). The intention of the UK (ODA) Project is to encourage the involvement of the communities in determining the possible solutions and thereby own the changes that may result.

Advice Center

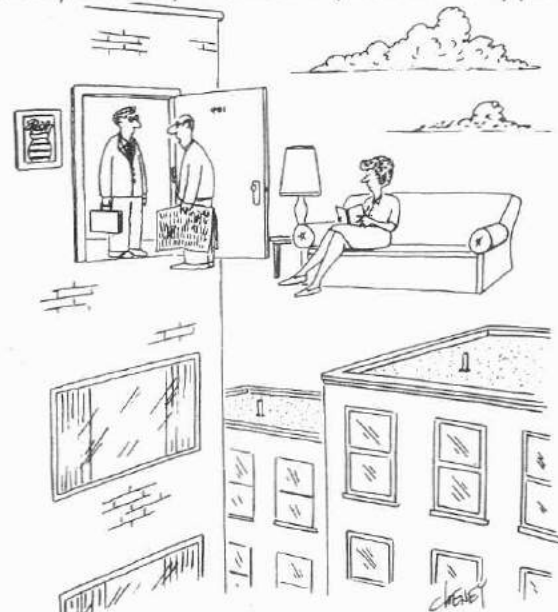
A new venture by the Kiribati Housing Corporation and the UK (ODA) Project will see the opening of the first Housing Loans and Advice Centre. The centre will specifically target the poorest sections of the communities. Advice will be available on making improvements to a dwelling (e.g. providing clean water and sanitation), building affordable houses using local materials and obtaining the money to start the work required. Any member of the public can seek the services of the centre providing that they are from within the poorest sections of the community. The Centre will also run workshops for potential building contractors with a view to encouraging the start of private sector housing provision albeit within the current limitations caused by land tenure in Kiribati.

David de Silva, Kiribati Housing Corp.

Karachi, Pakistan

Since 1980 6,710 houses have been demolished in Karachi, many with more than one family. In addition at present 30,250 families are in danger of eviction in Lyari Nada (a riverbed) and Karachi Colony.

The Lyari Nadi Welfare Association (LNWA) is an organization with contacts in forty mohallas (areas) of the Lyari riverbed, that have appealed



"See what happens when there is no land security."

against the construction of the Lyari Expressway that will affect 30,000 houses. Most of the houses are of concrete blocks, have electricity and water supplied through community taps.

The LNWA met the chief minister. The meeting was facilitated by their Member of Provincial Assembly. The minister assured them they would be provided with alternative plots. However, they do not trust him.

URC assisted them make alternative plans for the expressway, mainly suggestions for alternative routes. The cost of the alternative was also provided. The whole plan was explained to them. URC assisted them in preparing a dossier with photographs and maps as part of their alternative plan. This they have given to the Chief Minister and a copy to the Planning and Development Department. The alternative plans have given the group technical support that has strengthened their lobbying efforts.

Kalapul

In March, ten houses were broken to prepare for the construction of the Kalapul Bridge. The

houses were destroyed to build the foundation stone that Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, was to unveil. The families had been living in this area for 35 years. They were given no notice and when they approached the District Commissioner, he promised in writing that alternative plots would be provided. To date the group is running around trying to get their alternative plots. URC has assisting them in writing appeals.

Karachi Colony

This colony comprises 250 houses and has a population of about 2,000 people. They were given notice by the station commander on a piece of plain paper to vacate their houses by March 1995. The land belongs to the army and is in the cantonment area, it was said. The people claim they were living there before partition, before any cantonment area was demarcated. After meeting with the station commander, they filed a case in the High Court. The new station commander asked them to withdraw the case and he would provide alternative plots. The people resisted this move.

Kenneth Fernandez, Urban Resource Centre

NOTES:

♦ STRENGTHENING THE POOR

In view of their reduced power in society, the poor can only break the cycle of poverty and move from being recipients to becoming agents for change, by developing solutions to their own liking and strengthening their own organizations. Experience has shown that an organized community is not only aware and articulate of its own needs, it is also better equipped to negotiate with more powerful groups in society and plan and implement development activities.

Community organization can serve as a goal in itself, as it allows individuals to anchor their lives in their communities. It also has the potential of reducing the risks of increasing ethnic or communal violence which may erupt with the weakening of the nation state.

Adnan Aliani

♦ WHAT TO DO WITH HABITAT II

Readers are invited to submit suggestions on this topic. Despite some skepticism about the usefulness of another worldwide United Nations meeting, most housing NGOs are involved somehow or the other in preparations for HABITAT II. Please share with our readers whatever you think is of interest in the approaches your groups are taking. HABITAT II will be held in Istanbul in June 1996.

The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights for example has given priority to bringing the voices of the urban poor to Istanbul. It is encouraging member countries to have national meetings or at least surveys to find out what the poor think is the important message to be brought to HABITAT II. There may be an Asia wide meeting of peoples group to allow the peoples representatives to study each other's proposals and agree on a set of priority points. A team of Asian poor people may go to Istanbul to tell the world's governments and NGOs what the poor of Asia want.

Please let us know what you're planning?

NGOs ALSO TO BLAME

Bishwapriya Sanyal

In the course of an article written last year on the demise of the alternative development movement as an economic formula for nations, Bishwapriya Sanyal offered some hard criticism of NGOs. He says their weaknesses were one reason for the withering away of that development approach. The approach, associated with the basic needs thinking, redistribution and bottom-up economics was enthusiastically supported by economists and others in the 1970s in opposition to the export led, top-down economic planning that stressed growth. The main reason for its downfall was its lack of a realistic assessment of the political forces it was threatening. But NGOs were also to blame. The following is from Sanyal's paper "Ideas and Institutions: Why the Alternative Development Paradigm Withered Away." Is what is said of alternative economic models true of the housing alternatives of HABITAT I?

By the mid-1970s, a whole range of new slogans appeared in development discourse. "Development from below", "bottom-up development," "grass-roots development," "development as if people mattered" — these were some of the slogans coined to advocate an alternative development (AD) model which would shift the emphasis from the state to the people. The AD model was to be counter-hegemonic to the "top-down/trickle-down" approach of the economic growth paradigm (EGP) whose central objectives, the critics argued, was to achieve state-led uneven development. Top-down EGP had failed, the critics claimed, because the institutions created to foster development from top had themselves become the greatest hindrance to development. The primary target in this criticisms was the state, but other institutions at "the top" were blamed too. For example, market institutions, such as large private firms, were criticized as inefficient. Established political parties were criticized for seeking power by manipulation of the poor and collusion with the army and the elite. Trade unions were chastised for protecting only the interests of the "labour aristocracy" and for being incorporated by the state into "the system".

As an alternative to this top-down model,

the AD proponents suggested a different constellation of actors, issues, values, and modes of action — in other words, a different paradigm. The new paradigm was to be "bottom-up", meaning that it was to be institutionally based on small institutions at the bottom of society, such as community groups, NGOs, and grass-roots-based social movements. These institutions, it was assumed, were relatively independent of the state and other institutions at the top; and this lack of linkages, both economic and political, was considered a sign of strength of these institutions. As a result of this attitude, some bottom-up projects for income generation with the assistance of NGOs were implemented without any consideration for the economic and financial linkages of these projects to either the macro economy or large financial institutions. Politically, community groups and non-party based social movements were assumed to be empowering the poor by helping them to break away from the traditionally exploitative patron-client relationship with party-based political leaders. This, the AD advocates claimed, was better for the poor because the mainstream political process — controlled and manipulated by the state, the official political parties, the elite, and in some cases the army — was not responsive to the needs of the poor. What the poor needed was to organize themselves, not as another political party that could be co-opted by the system, but as small, territorially bounded, autonomous groups which would function as "democratic cells" culminating in a system of self-governance.

The autonomy from, and lack of linkages with, the institutions at the top, particularly the state, created more problems than solutions for bottom-up AD efforts.

NGOs, although successful in small, isolated efforts, proved to be too small in scale for the gigantic task at hand. One factor that contributed to the weakness of the NGOs was their inability to cooperate with each other. This lack of cooperation, coupled with their unwillingness to forge institutional linkages with the government, greatly reduced their impact. At best, their efforts created small, isolated projects which lacked the institutional support necessary for large-scale replication.

Some NGOs tried to expand their scales of operation, not by cooperating with other NGOs, but by increasing the size of their own operations. In the process, they lost their comparative advantage of being small and focused on one activity or one geographic location. Typically, they fell apart as either the scale and array of problems became unmanageable or the original leaders were challenged by others who had broken away from the organization, taking with them some of the best workers. This, in turn, made cooperation among the NGOs more difficult, thus undermining their ability to create a unified, broad-based institutional form independent of the government.

The lack of economic linkages with institutions at the top also proved to be counterproductive for most bottom-up projects. As I mentioned earlier, these projects were designed with the assumption that the economy at the top was not connected with the economy at "the bottom". And the few who did believe such a connection existed had argued that this connection exploited the poor and, hence, should not be encouraged. Consequently, bottom-up projects were designed without regard for any connection between them and the macroeconomic performance of the developing countries. But, as most developing countries entered an increasingly difficult period of low (and in some cases, negative) growth rates, declining export earnings, and lower average real incomes by the 1980s, it became apparent to even the staunchest AD supporters that no amount of independent effort at the bottom could generate an increasing income stream for the poor if the macroeconomic conditions of these countries steadily deteriorated.

If economic autonomy of AD projects proved to be a problem, their political economy from dominant political institutions, such as political parties, proved to be an even bigger problem. As mentioned earlier, institutional linkages between NGOs or community groups and political parties were vigorously opposed by AD proponents on the grounds that such linkages would reduce the NGOs' autonomy and, hence, the effectiveness of their operations. It was also assumed that linkages with corrupt and opportunistic political parties would compromise the ends as well as the means of AD.

These assumptions led the AD proponents to suggest that NGOs could politically organize the poor without relying on local political parties. The NGOs were to rely instead on "solidarity groups" which regularly brought together small groups of

poor families to discuss how to administer small businesses, how to build homes, or how to achieve good credit records. It was assumed that participation in solidarity groups would enable the poor to break away from their traditionally exploitative relationship with local moneylenders, middlemen, landlords, and politicians. Underlying this assumption was yet another assumption: that the NGOs could organize the poor into solidarity groups that would better represent the poor's interests than local political parties because the latter were dominated by the local elite.

This shielding of AD efforts from the mainstream political process hurt these efforts in three ways. First, although the solidarity groups functioned relatively well for loan recovery and similar administrative purposes, they never evolved to become an alternative mechanism to the traditional party structure to challenge even the local government's resource allocation policies. Second, because the NGOs consciously avoided any institutional linkage with political parties, they had to function without political backing, ironically making them even more vulnerable to pressures from the local elite and strongmen.

Third, and most important here, because political parties were kept away from involvement in AD efforts, no political party included AD in their legislative or election agendas. And since bureaucrats, too, were excluded from AD efforts in order to keep from corrupting the process and causing it to deviate from its noble purpose, AD had no vocal supporter in the policy-making process. True, some NGOs occasionally raised their voices about the relevance of AD, particularly for poverty alleviation efforts, but lacking any permanent institutional support within the policy-making process these lone voices were very rarely transformed into strong state actions.

This weakness in political judgment on the part of AD proponents is truly surprising, since at the time AD emerged as an alternative paradigm it was pushed by its proponents as an explicitly political model of development. It was customary in those days to hear how the goals of development would not be restricted to economic growth but would also involve the general empowerment of the poor. Yet, when it came to influencing the political process for policy purposes, the AD proponents proved to be rather naive politically.

THE PEOPLE DO IT THEMSELVES

Ana Marie Dizon

In Manila and Karachi groups of poor people have done for themselves everything that real estate people, architects, contractors and city agencies do for the rich. The poor find empty land, measure it out to families, plan roads and pathways, provide basic services, including garbage disposal, and in some instances reblock their neighborhoods at government insistence.

In the City of Manila, along the Pasig River small pockets of squatters of 12-120 households have done everything for themselves. In one community under the Quezon bridge residents realized the reason for the numerous demolitions they had experienced (more than 20 evictions over the years) was the fact that their shanties overhung the river and were therefore very visible. They came up with a design that would accommodate all of them further back from the river and reconstructed all of their houses within a day.

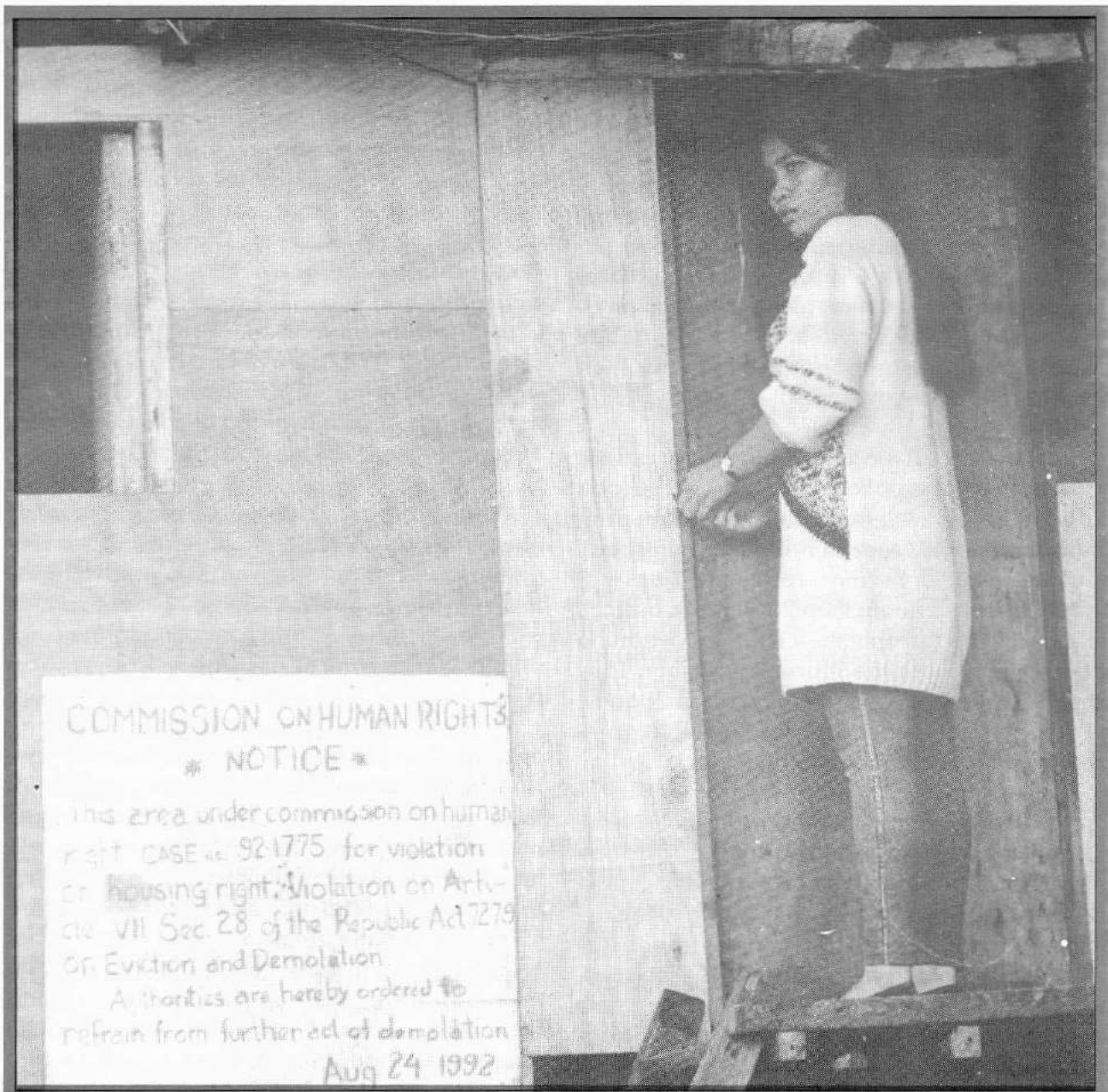
In Rio Vista near the presidential palace, the community launched *Bantay Kapitbahay* (neighborhood watch) a project aimed at curtailing dumping into the river. It encouraged the riverside residents to practice proper garbage disposal. Households were required to put their garbage in plastic bags outside their houses which would be gathered by the community organization and be ready for pick up in the morning by the garbage collectors. Leaders check which households did not turn in their garbage to know who among the residents was therefore dumping into the river. Residents were encouraged to report violators. The punishment for first time violators was sweeping the open area outside the community gate; at the second violation, the guilty people had to provide snacks for the community night watchers; and at a third violation, the guilty people would be asked to leave the area.

In Quezon City, communities within the proposed National Government Center (NGC) managed to improve their communities by putting roads and drainage systems. Despite the fact that portions of the area had been set aside for hous-

ing, a renewed threat of eviction loomed over a number of communities. This did not stop the communities from improving their settlement and their lives. The majority of the communities had no access to piped water despite the fact that they were very near the La Mesa Dam which supplies water to Metro Manila. A number of communities were organized and made regular mobilizations to the Quezon City Hall and won grants to build artesian wells. They were able to build three wells with the money government gave for one well. In the end more than a hundred artesian wells were built within the NGC to serve 18,000 people.

In Karachi, Pakistan people of *Orangi katchi abadis* are slowly changing the face of the biggest slum area in Karachi. The area which is home to one million people is undergoing development which is wholly willed and controlled by the community with technical assistance from a local NGO. Many communities within the area were greatly improved by the construction of a technically sound sewerage system; flooding, water contamination and sickness were minimized. With these positive effect on their lives, people become more diligent in maintaining infrastructure systems and are now looking forward to improving their individual dwellings. Other *katchi abadis* are taking the cue and are now trying to follow what Orangi began. In Lyari, community residents on their own have taken up the issue of drinking water and sewer system and have identified the health and environmental connection of the two. By having water samples analyzed, they were able to identify the cause of health problems in the community and filed a case against the local water and sanitation board in the Supreme Court which prompted government to repair and change the faulty sewer lines.

In these areas in Manila and Karachi the people occupy the land without any approval or even awareness of government. They start from scratch and as pioneers do everything.



This woman's community in Manila when threatened with demolition went to the government's Commission on Human Rights and brought a case against the mayor. They put up their own sign. The people were evicted anyway and brought to distant relocation site. Almost 40% of the families have returned to Manila.

Housing by People is prepared by Denis Murphy and Melinda Romero with the help of Bimbo Fernandez, Lim Jee Yuan, Sheela Patel, and Ho Hei Wa.

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