

Community Architects in Asia

A regional gathering held in Chiang Mai, Thailand

June 12-16, 2010

The Regional Community Architects Meeting which ACHR organized in Chiang Mai, between June 12-16, 2010, may very well have been the biggest-yet gathering of that tribe, at least in Asia. Some 125 people joined the meeting, which was hosted by Chiang Mai University's Architecture Faculty, and held (at least initially) in the leafy, open-aired "Umbrella Courtyard" of the faculty's donut-shaped building. It was mostly community architects and planners, and mostly youngish and idealistic ones, but there were also some mid-career and senior community architects from around Asia in the meeting, with a few friends from southern Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Colombia. There were also community leaders from several Asian countries who are veterans of their own community design and construction projects, as well as a team from the Chang Chumchon ("Community builders") network in Thailand.



The participants converged at Bangkok, and spent the first day making the long bus-ride up to Chiang Mai, with stops along the way to visit community-driven projects to revitalize a traditional market (at Sam Chuk in Supanburi), to upgrade informal settlements in Nakhon Sawan (the Chamlongwit and Ronachai communities) and to upgrade a historic temple in Lampang (Wat Pongsanuk).

The bulk of the 4-day meeting was given to presentations and discussions about the interesting and diverse work Asia's community architects are doing with poor communities, in some 20 countries, as organized in panel sessions on participatory planning and urban regeneration, community upgrading, rebuilding after disasters, and the poor in historic urban neighborhoods. But each day's sessions in the meeting room ended mid-afternoon, and our hosts in Chiang Mai organized a series of afternoon visits to historic temples, the new "walking street", an informal community upgrading project near the city's earth wall, a historic neighborhood-wide revival, and a dinner and culture show with the Mayor of Chiang Mai at a posh Lanna-style restaurant complex.

There was, of course, plenty of news shared, plenty of projects described and slides shown, plenty of good discussion and setting of plans for future community architects activities in the region. But for most, the most important part of this big gathering was simply getting together, meeting others who are working in this somewhat new, somewhat vaguely-defined corner of the design profession, and feeling a little less lonely, a little more part of a big, new movement. An after-meeting e-mail from one of the senior architect-participants, Kirtee Shah, described it this way: *"The energy of the young, their maturity and subject strength, richness of ideas, environment of togetherness and belonging, spirit of sharing, scale (23 countries!), variety and promise - all that was stunning and inspiring to me. It is working! It made me feel young again!"*

Two young Thai architects, Nad and Tee, were the key organizers of the meeting, and they prepared especially for the meeting a colorful 96-page book which describes in detail the work of some of Asia's key community architects. Copies of this book are available with ACHR, or can be downloaded as a PDF from the ACHR website. Full transcripts of the presentations made at the meeting, during the eight panel discussion sessions, have now been prepared and can be downloaded from the ACHR website.

A few words of welcome

Ms. Somsook Boonyabancha

For the past 22 years, Somsook has been the secretary general of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), which has been one of the region's key supporters of - and linkers of - community architects around Asia. In Thailand, her work as director of first UCDO (Urban Community Development Office) and later of CODI (Community Organizations Development Institute) also continuously sought ways to bring idealistic young community architects into a national process of supporting a people-driven community upgrading process in her own country. Somsook is herself a community architect, and these were her words of welcome to open up the gathering in Chiang Mai :

I think this is the most important gathering yet of community architects in Asia. Of course there are many more community architects working in different ways, in different corners of Asia, who are not here today. But as a regional gathering of about 120 of them, this meeting marks a kind of milestone for Asia's community architects' movement. We have with us here today community architects working in a wide variety of contexts in about twenty countries - students and young ones just out of school, mid-career ones and even a few very senior ones with decades of experience behind them. These architects are all working with communities and networks and local governments on projects involving community housing, settlement planning, upgrading, neighborhood revival, emergency rehabilitation and historic preservation.

At this event, we will have an opportunity to share our work and stories with each other, learn from each other, and work together to build a new system at the regional level which can help boost and facilitate the work of community architects in Asia, so that their work can in turn strengthen the poor communities they assist. This is why we are having this meeting. This is not just another international meeting, another tick on the list of promised "activities and outputs" on a funding proposal! We are coming here to share and to do something new, to build something bigger, deeper. So it's a very important meeting which brings us together here, to fortify ourselves, strengthen our links with each other, and to plan together a new set of actions and a new support system community architects in Asia in the future.



Many of you have been involved in ACHR's new ACCA Program - the Asian Coalition for Community Action - which is supporting a process of city-wide upgrading in Asian countries. The target is about 200 cities, and in the program's first year, we have been able to support city-wide upgrading in 64 towns and cities. This is not the ordinary kind of upgrading, but a community-driven upgrading process in which poor people themselves plan and carry out the improvements, and by doing so begin a process of changing their lives and their cities, in partnership with their local authorities and other local institutions and supporters. In this upgrading process, which is all about transformation, we need the support of good community architects. And if this city-wide upgrading is going to happen in ways that are realistic, we need to have more community architects to work with the people in all these cities, to support a new kind of people-driven development.

But the work of community architects in Asia has gone beyond only community upgrading. There are so many other spheres of development where community architects are working, and in this meeting, we will have a chance to hear about this work and to discuss together how we as ACHR and as a regional network of community architects can support it. This is not a meeting for meeting's sake, but a meeting to plan out some very concrete action. And by the end of the meeting, we will definitely have a plan how to support this important community architecture work, how to spread it out, how to get more people involved, how to get as many universities and architecture faculties to work with communities and get closer to poor people on the ground, to open up the doors of our societies so architects, planners, engineers and other professionals can join that process and work with the poor as a team.

The people and organizations who have come together to organize this meeting are many, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Faculty of Architecture here at Chiang Mai University, who have welcomed us so warmly and have generously provided us with this beautiful, airy courtyard space for our meeting - a space which brings to this big and prestigious meeting a tone of reality that no generic air-conditioned meeting room in a five-star hotel could ever have done. And thanks also to the co-organizers of the meeting: the Association of Siamese Architects, the Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts, the Community Organizations Development Institute, and many others. ACHR is a regional coalition of Asian people and Asian groups, and it is the backbone which links so many groups working with poor communities in different countries in Asia. It is a coalition of people who are doers, who have idealism, who are working in different capacities to make real change in their countries. ACHR links these kinds of people, helps them to come together and learn from each other, and supports the work they are doing in different ways. And I would also like to mention that the team that organized this meeting and moderate most of the sessions is made up almost entirely of young people, who represent the new generation of community architects - the ones who will become the driving force carry forward this very important work in the future - in Asia as well as in other parts of the world.

PANEL 1 :

An overview of the community architects movement in Asia

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the first panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was moderated by May Domingo and Supitcha Tovivich ("Nong"), and included the following panelists :

- **Mr. Yamamoto Yoshihiko**, a senior community leader from the Asaka community in Osaka, and also a national organizer and leader in the Buraku liberation movement.
- **Mr. Etsuzo Inamoto**, a senior community architect based in Tokyo.
- **Mr. Andre Alexander**, from the Tibet Heritage Fund, which has projects to restore and revive historic inner-city neighborhoods, historic structures and traditional building crafts in Tibet, China, Mongolia and India.
- **Dr. Vira Sachakul**, the dean of the architecture faculty of Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts in Bangkok and also the director of the Association of Siamese Architects.
- **Mr. Kirtee Shah**, a senior community architect from the Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG), an NGO based in Ahmedabad, India.



1. How professionals can learn from people and people learn from professionals

Mr. Yoshihiko Yamamoto

(May introduces) In 1965, Yamamoto-san started to organize the Buraku settlements in Japan. Since then, he has been very involved in organizing Buraku settlements, particularly in the city of Osaka, Japan. He has a lot to say to us and to teach us architects - from a community leader's perspective - about what the role of architects should be. In his role as a community leader, he has linked with universities, with government agencies and with international organizations, to share about how poor communities like his own can be empowered to work for their own development and transform their settlements into healthy, legal and beautiful neighborhoods.

A background note on the Buraku people and Machi-zukuri process in Japan :

Five hundred years ago, Japan's feudal society was organized into a strict caste system of warriors, artisans, farmers and merchants. Those who slaughtered animals, dug graves and worked leather (thereby becoming tainted with the impurities of death) were the system's "untouchables." Called first eta (filth) or hinin (non-human) and much later buraku (villagers), these outcasts were forced to live in squalor, poverty and social exclusion in designated settlements on the outskirts of towns and cities, where they were easy targets for abuse.

Discrimination against the Buraku was outlawed in 1871, but mistrust and hostility continued right up to the 1960s, when pressure from the Buraku's long-standing liberation movement induced the government to launch a series of special programs to help improve the lives and settlements of the Buraku. Besides improvements to education, employment and welfare, these programs provided support for the physical upgrading of Japan's 6,000 Buraku districts (representing some 3 million people), in which government budget was passed directly to the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) branch in each community. Two-thirds of this money came from the national government, and one-third from the local government, but it was up to each community to negotiate with its local government and decide how to plan and implement the projects.

Many less-active communities were content to let local governments take charge of upgrading their settlements, and most municipalities were only too happy to take on these lucrative construction projects. But a few Buraku communities, like Yamamoto-san's Asaka community, and the project at Kitagata which Yoko-san will describe in Panel 3, took advantage of provisions which allowed them to develop a variety of improvement projects themselves, in a more participatory style. In the 1960s, community participation was unknown territory in Japan, so the people in Asaka had to make up the rules for how to plan and redevelop their own community as they went along.

Machi-zukuri ("participatory town planning" in Japanese) is a concept which emerged from the project at Asaka, and from a few other seminal redevelopment projects undertaken in the 1970s by poor communities who wanted more say in how their neighborhoods were redeveloped. Through these early community-driven upgrading projects, Japan's Buraku communities played a pioneering role in establishing the institutional and financial arrangements for the machi-zukuri facility, and became test-cases for the model in which communities design and implement their own redevelopment and local and national governments support. These projects became very well-known and inspired other communities to do participatory plans of their own. Machi-zukuri was gradually incorporated into national town-planning policies and practices, through a series of new laws and regulations. Even today, this kind of community-driven planning continues to be most visible in Buraku settlements around Japan.

NOTE : For more information about the community redevelopment processes in Asaka and Kitagata, contact ACHR.

I'm afraid that I don't have enough time to tell you about all my work over the past 45 years, so I will try to squeeze some of the main points into ten minutes. I come from a Buraku community in Osaka, Japan. Many years ago, we completely rebuilt our community, and it is now a beautiful neighborhood. But discrimination against Buraku people continues in Japan - discrimination which makes it difficult for Buraku people to get married, to get jobs and to get housing.

In 1922, the Buraku Liberation League was formed and began to open up a discussion with the government and with other organizations about the discrimination Buraku people had faced for centuries in Japan. In 1965, the Japanese government enacted a new law which provided support and government budget for the redevelopment of the country's Buraku communities, in which the housing and living conditions were then as bad as any other Asian slums. Between 1969 and 2002, this law supported the upgrading of the housing and living conditions in many of these Buraku settlements around the country.

At the time that this new Buraku law was introduced in 1965, Japan also had an education law which entitled every Japanese citizen access to free primary and secondary school. But in my community in Osaka, very few children were able to go to school, and this was true of most other Buraku communities around the country. At that time, academics and professionals hadn't yet begun to work with Buraku communities, and we were on our own in our struggle to improve our lives and settlements. The Osaka City University is right next-door to my community, but nobody ever came to try to make contact with us.

My community, which is called Asaka, was a collection of dilapidated shacks and broken-down wooden houses built on the steeply-sloping banks of the river. In 1965 the conditions in Asaka were really bad, it wasn't like a settlement for

human beings at all. Every time there was heavy rain, our houses would be flooded by one or two meters of water, and sometimes even washed away by the currents of the river. In the beginning, we did what we could to improve our living conditions, and tried to negotiate with the government for support doing this. But besides trying to improve our physical living conditions, we also began discussing other problems we faced in our community, like education for our children, jobs and incomes and social welfare. Besides doing what we could to address these problems ourselves, we began discussing all these issues with the government. But at that time, we negotiated support for each issue *separately* (like housing, a day-care center or a kindergarten) - we hadn't yet found our way to putting it all together into a planning vision for redeveloping all aspects of our community.

First community survey starts the development process going : We wanted to study and understand our situation in greater detail, and so in 1974, we carried out the first survey of our settlement, with support we were able to negotiate from the university. We looked at all aspects of the community in the survey - household socio-economic information, education, jobs, incomes, housing conditions and infrastructure conditions. We also took photographs of the community and the difficult living conditions there. But our suggestion to the university students and professors was not only to help us do the survey, but to take time to sit and talk together in the community. This survey process took a year and a half, and when it was over, we used the photographs and survey information to show our own community members look more clearly at their community and its problems.

- **Issue-based community committees set up :** After that, we set up four committees in the community to work on different aspects of our redevelopment : housing conditions improvement, education, jobs and social welfare. Each committee tried to listen to the people about the actual situation, with regard to that issue, and then brought back the information they'd gathered to the community to discuss. This process built solidarity and greater cooperation within the community and it enabled the community to be much clearer about what they needed and what they wanted to improve. And this in turn made for much more specific discussions with their supporters in the university and in other organizations.
- **Professionals learn from people and people learn from professionals :** The key aspect of this process was that the community members in Asaka and the professionals and academics were all *learning together*, and learning from each other: people learn from the professionals, and the professionals learn from the people. This is something very important. On the issue of education, for example, the professionals and the community people discussed together, learned together, and finally worked together to lay plans for improving the education of children and young people in the community. Before, most of us put all our efforts into earning, and didn't pay much attention to the education of our kids, but we gradually came to realize the education is actually one of the most important aspects of our community's development.
- **Include both "soft" and "hard" aspects of community development planning :** In a community development process that really addresses people's human rights, this kind of "soft" development (like education and livelihood) is just as important as the "hard" aspects of development (such as housing and infrastructure). And if a genuine community development process is to be planned and carried out, both soft and hard aspects must be included in the planning. And that kind of "total planning" was what informed the development of Asaka's redevelopment plans.
- **Action starts :** Once our community had marshaled our friends in supporting organizations, developed our "total" redevelopment plan for Asaka and negotiated for funding support from the government (under the Buraku Settlement Redevelopment Act), we began the process of rebuilding our community.



Photos above : Asaka before and after "machi-zukuri"

In conclusion, I would like to suggest four basic principles for the redevelopment of poor communities like ours :

- **It should be based on "scientific" information** : The redevelopment plans should be based on detailed information about the real situation and the real needs in the community, which the community members are themselves involved in gathering, discussing and understanding together.
- **It should be democratic** : The redevelopment planning and implementation should be democratic, and should allow room for everyone in the community to take part of the process, not just the leaders.
- **It should be comprehensive** : The redevelopment should improve not only the housing and physical infrastructure, but should improve all aspects of the community's lives and deal with all its needs, including health, education, social welfare and livelihood.
- **It should be done in cooperation with others** : The redevelopment of a poor community is difficult when that community works alone, in isolation. But when the struggle to redevelop is something that happens in solidarity with other communities with similar problems, and in collaboration with professionals and support organizations, the redevelopment process will be stronger, more effective and more lasting.

A final message for young architects : To the professionals who would like to work with poor communities to help them plan their upgrading projects, I would like to say please spend a lot of time talking with the people you are trying to support, listen very carefully to what they say and learn from them, so that you both come to understand the problems together. For only then can your good professional skills and your design imaginations be put to the best use in helping the people to redevelop their housing and their lives in a meaningful way. This is something my 45 years of experience has shown me to be true.

Question from Mr. Sangachhe from Nepal : How did the Buraku people live and what work did they do to support themselves in the past?

Yamamoto-san answers : The problem of discrimination against Buraku people in Japan goes back hundreds of years. There are 6,000 Buraku communities in Japan, with a population of about 3 million people. Traditionally, many had jobs considered "unclean", like dealing with solid waste disposal, butchering animals, tanning leather and making drums (but not playing them). Buraku people also work as daily construction laborers, and in many other jobs. Even today, discrimination makes it difficult for Buraku people to get jobs with big companies, even they may have a good education - their addresses and names reveal their identity as Buraku community members. But today, many Buraku people can get good jobs in the public sector. Another big problem which still persists is that many people don't want to get married with Buraku people. There is also "area-based" discrimination which persists. In my area of Osaka, our neighborhood is called Asaka, and the rents and land values there are much cheaper than in the surrounding areas, and this amounts to a kind of economic discrimination. Besides working to upgrade our housing and living environment, our Buraku People's Movement is also working to address these other human rights issues and other minority issues.

2. How architects can learn to listen and see

Mr. Etsuzo Inamoto

(May introduces) Inamoto-san is also from Japan. He is an architect, designer and planner, but he also has a big heart for poor communities and poor people. In 1988, he was one of pioneers who helped found the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, and remains one of the main ACHR linking persons in Japan. He has also supported many young architects, inspiring them and giving them advice - not only in Japan, but also all over Asia. Here he follows up on the point raised by Yamamoto-san about how architects can listen and discuss and learn from the communities they are seeking to assist.

Today I will talk about two aspects of the work community architects do :

1. How can we look and really understand what we are seeing in a poor community? What do you see when you look at these two photos? (shows two photos of slum children - one group in Phnom Penh, the other in Manila) What is common to these two photos? These two slums are both in Asia, and Asian people's hair color should be black. But these children's hair is not black at all, but blond. This kind of discoloration isn't from dye, it is a sign that their diets are deficient in iron and protein. When young children don't get enough iron and protein, their brains can't develop properly and their intellectual development gets impaired. We architects may be looking only at the conditions of the houses or drains, and we might miss other aspects of a poor community's living conditions, like this. Sometimes we can look at a scene in a poor community, but we may not really be seeing what's really going on there.



2. How can we help communities develop solutions that are appropriate, in situations where there is no perfect solution? As one example, many NGOs help people develop wells as a source of safe drinking water, but then people get sick when they drink the water from those wells, as in Bangladesh and Cambodia, where large areas have ground water is contaminated with arsenic. So the problem is not simply a lack of safe drinking water, but an entire chain of interconnected causes and effects which this one simple solution of a well cannot solve alone. So it is also important that we architects understand the larger picture when we work with communities to find an appropriate solution to the overlapping and interconnected problems poor people face.

Community architects need to be able to talk with community people face-to-face, and to learn from them, as equals, not as superior beings from another world! The learning has to go both ways. Community architects can be catalysts in communities. If community members say clearly that they want to stay in the same place where they are living now, the community architect's job is to start thinking about how to improve the people's quality of life in that existing settlement, and helping the people to think and plan this way together.

- **How do we determine what is a decent quality of life?** (Shows two photos taken on the same March day in Japan: a snowy winter-time road in Hokkaido on the right, and a sunny, palm-fringed beach in Okinawa on the left) These two environments are both in Japan, but they are so different that they show that there is no standard for measuring quality of life. The qualities that make for a good quality of life in the snowy place are quite different than those in the tropical beachside place. So as community architects, we must ask the people to think about different aspects of their lives and ask them for ideas about what is important in their quality of life: these points include things like vernacular architecture, holistic development and cost.
- **There are no formal rules for development.**

May adds : I think the message Inamoto-san is trying to give us is how, as architects, we need to develop a sensitivity which allows us to develop a deep understanding of what is happening in the communities - not just a sensitivity to the physical housing conditions. Sometimes an NGO can be very sincere in trying to help the communities, but really they are doing more harm than help because there is no deep understanding. I think that is what the big message is, from both Inamoto-san and Yamamoto-san. And also the other big message is that there are no formal rules to development. And there are no manuals that can tell us architects about step one, step two and step three in our work either. It will all depend on how sensitive we are and how deep our understanding is with the people we are working with.



Nong adds : I think that as architects, we have been trained to focus so much on the physical elements of the environment around us. As the architect and teacher Nabeel Hamdi said, "I see what I see very clearly, but I don't know what I'm looking at." As architects, we haven't been trained to understand the stories and the meaning behind what we are seeing, behind the physical and aesthetic dimension of things.

3. Reviving local building traditions and building materials

Mr. Andre Alexander

(Nong introduces) Andre's organization, the Tibet Heritage Fund, has been working for over a decade to restore historic residential and religious buildings in mostly Tibetan communities in China, Mongolia and India. Normally, the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods focuses only on restoring the buildings themselves, not the people who live in them or the people who built them. But the Tibet Heritage Fund has sought to involve residents and community members in these historic neighborhoods and villages (most of whom are poor) in the restoration process, and to involve the traditional artisans who know how to build these buildings and train new ones, so the restoration process becomes part of a much larger revival of Tibetan culture.



I do the work that I do because I believe the role of community architects must be more than just to build the same kind of cement houses we see being built all over the place. Something really strange is happening in the world: wherever we go, the houses all tend to look the same, whether the place they get built is dry or wet, hot or cold, in China or Botswana. And that's because people all aspire to

the same dream houses they see on TV, and to the houses that are propagated by big companies that specialize in building these houses.



In fact, the quest for human shelter is very ancient - ever since people first started to think about how they could avoid the rains and the cold. Almost every place has some indigenous building tradition, which now people are very happy to throw away. Materials such as mud and straw have become very unpopular with the majority of lower-income communities, whereas the upper classes have rediscovered these materials and think they are organic and "green" and exciting.

In my opinion, it could be the role of community architects to guide communities and to show them that there are many possibilities, not only to reproduce smaller versions of the houses they see on TV and to believe solely in the safety of cement and steel. If we go to a place and look at what kind of building traditions and building materials are there, we can revive at least some of them, to create a mix, to create something new that is based on the old. We will create many local jobs in the process. In the past, most people built their own houses, with the help of just a few artisans, but very few people are able to do that anymore. So once you revive those building traditions, and begin using the local architecture and local building traditions, many local skills are revived, local jobs are created, and local materials are used. All these things flow directly into the local economy. And the buildings that you build or preserve reflect the local conditions. You preserve the local identity, but you also help people to advance their local identity, to join the modern world, but with an identity that is partly rooted in where they come from.

I saw some very nice photographs downstairs, from Kathmandu, where they have also used the traditional building traditions to restore an old temple there.

Of course the drawback is that at first people will say, "Mud? It's horrible, it's very dusty, I don't like it. Straw? How can you build a house using straw?" I think the community architect really has to try to show the possibilities and show the benefits that will come from building this way - maybe by making a model building. That's the way we usually do it: we find one model case and show it to the community, and they come and see it, and think that actually it's quite nice to do it that way.

4. In search of community architects: a new breed of architects

Dr. Vira Sachakul

(Nong introduces) Dr. Sachakul is one of Thailand's most honored senior architects. He has been working with the Association of Siamese Architects for many years, which is responsible for developing the architecture profession in Thailand. He has tried to support the training and community architect practice into the mainstream. He is also the president of the Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts, which is the first architectural school in Thailand to specifically train and produce community architects. He will share some ideas about what these kinds of professional architectural institutions and schools can do to support this kind of community architects' practice in Thailand and Asia.

Some of you might have had a chance to read some of the articles in the publication Nad and Tee prepared, about the work of community architects around Asia (*"Design by-for-with People"*). This book gives a lot of very good examples of how community architects can work, across many cultures. The topic of my talk today, is *"In search of community architects - a new breed of architects"*, and it draws upon my experience over the years as both a professional architect and as a teacher.

The problems being faced by the low-income majority in our fast-changing cities have never been well served by the conventional planning process or by the top-down development blueprints which proscribe the form our cities take as they grow. An alternative planning process is needed, to ensure communities and community organizations have a stake in city planning and urban governance. This alternative process has to emphasize participatory action by communities and in-depth understanding of the community situations and problems by the professionals who work with them. This alternative planning process should be bottom-



up rather than top-down, and it should focus on the interests of all stakeholders, not just a few. It should be a problem driven, community-based, participatory, fast, incremental and it should deliver results that are tangible, immediate and sustainable.

To facilitate this new kind of participatory, community-based planning, a new breed of community architect is needed. The problem is that our present mainstream architectural education, which is heavily influenced by the capitalist developed world, does not respond to the needs of the majority poor in the developing world, including many countries in Asia. And mainstream architectural practice, as product of that educational system, continues to have a narrow, client-based and limited universe. This is a situation we see in countries around the world, including Thailand.



I think it's time for us to look carefully at the academic system by which we produce architects in our Asian countries today. It is a system which does not reflect our original Asian values and Asian ways of thinking, but has been derived from the capitalist philosophy. In many of our Asian countries, seventy or eighty percent of the total population are poor, while most architects work only for the top ten or twenty percent, in urban areas. That's why I think it's time for us to prepare our architects to be able to serve the majority of citizens. I'm very happy to see a lot more architects in the younger generation working in this area. But I think we still need more - maybe a hundred or a thousand times more architects than we have in this gathering.

I think it's time to be brave, and to change this system, according to the real needs in our countries. We have to have some room for alternative educational system, in order to better serve the community development process in our countries. To develop a new, alternative educational program in community architecture, and to bring academia and poor communities together to work together in a meaningful way, three ingredients are needed :

1. A new set of community-based knowledge, which is based on three major issues :

- **Social and cultural issues** : The new community architect has to be concerned with a range of social and cultural aspects of the communities they work with, including its local history and traditions, its values and local wisdom, its family and community structures, its political and power structures and its way of life. These aspects may not be explicitly physical or architectural, but they are extremely important and shouldn't be overlooked. Traditional family and community structures and way of living as interdependent communities still exist in most Asian countries - especially in the rural farming communities. But once people migrate into the cities, these structures disappear, and they find themselves living individually, like other urban people, in isolation - no friends, no family, no connections, no networks.
- **Economic issues** : The community architect also has to develop an understanding of the economic base in the communities they work with, including their employment situation, their jobs, their incomes, their traditional and new trades and their work conditions. We as architects may go into rural situations and try to initiate development projects, but we often come up against the reality that there are fewer and fewer people living in these rural communities - especially people of working age. They leave their villages, where opportunities are so few, and they come to the city to work. So if there are mainly old people and young children living in the villages, the question is what are we developing and for whom? This is so true in Thailand: when we go into many village in the northeast of the country, we find the old and the less fortunate children living there. So whatever development project we initiate in these communities has to be designed to address this imbalance, which is largely based on economic realities.
- **Environmental and ecological issues** : The community architect also has to look carefully at the natural resources, the ecosystem and the man-made cultural landscape also - which may include local vernacular building traditions, settlement patterns and heritage buildings.



2. A new set of teaching and training methods : We need a different way of teaching - not the kind which prevails now in mainstream architectural education. I believe these new teaching methods must combine classroom learning with on-the-job apprenticeship, as in the old days. This is the "learning-by-doing" system which we've lost in our modern university system. There is also a need for students to work on real projects in real places, not just hypothetical problems in the classroom, as a parallel learning system as part of their architectural education. We also need group learning and sharing, which is very helpful in any educational process: if you study and work and do projects by yourself, you don't have anybody to discuss with, but if you go in a team (perhaps not just with other architects, but also with sociologists, archeologists, activists or community people), you can discuss and share ideas while you practice, and

through this rich exchange, you can correct what you did wrong today in order to improve what you do tomorrow. We also need to develop some new techniques for planning with communities, like gaming, role-playing, brainstorming, "knowledge management" and problem prioritizing.

3. A new mind-set and a new set of skills : We need to improve the personal qualities of the young architects who want to work with communities. I would call this a new mind-set, which has to be acquired during the learning process. All architects - even those working in mainstream practice - should have these qualities, but most architects tend to consider themselves as superior beings who know better than the people they work with. Nurturing a new set of skills and sensitivities, as an antidote to this kind of arrogance, would include learning to be a very good listener and keeping an open and "service-oriented" mind. It would also include developing a set of personal ethics and sense of commitment to guide these young architects when they move into complicated, real-life situations. It would also include developing the capacity for critical, analytical and positive thinking, as well as sincere respect for local ways and local wisdom. The skills for acting spontaneously and judiciously should also be developed, along with the more human skills to communicate, coordinate, mediate, collaborate, negotiate and compromise. Community architects need to be skilled at visualizing alternatives and at presenting ideas both verbally and graphically, since the designs they draw out of a participatory community design process and help refine can be powerful catalysts for change.



May adds : What touched me very strongly in Dr. Vira's presentation were his ideas about the role of the university, in producing this new breed of architects. Maybe this is something that each of our countries has to think about more. As Dr. Vira said, the community architects are very few and the problems are very big. The people in this room now cannot hope to solve all those problems, even if we work 24 hours a day in our communities! There is still a great need for more people to get involved in tackling these enormous problems, and I want to emphasize the strong role that the university can play in this new direction, in developing this new breed of community architects, so they become the mainstream, not just a minority.

5. A community architect is everything a conventional architect is **NOT**

Mr. Kirtee Shah

(Nong introduces) Kirtee is a senior community architect from India, who for nearly 40 years has been involved in housing projects for the poor, as well as a thriving private architectural practice. For many years, Kirtee is the president of the Habitat Forum, chairman of KFA Planning and Design Services, and is the director of the Ahmedabad-based NGO Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG). Kirtee will be the best person to speak last, and to summarize for us all the important points about the practice of community architecture.

A community architect is everything a conventional architect is not. Therefore, in order to understand what a community architect is, we first have to understand what a conventional architect is all about. I have a 14 point analysis of what a **conventional architect** is :

1. The conventional architect is elitist: he/she works for the rich, the privileged and the power elite.
2. The conventional architect is exclusive, not inclusive: he/she does not work in slums or villages or for tribal peoples or disadvantaged groups.
3. The conventional architect is western in his/her orientation: In many Asian countries (certainly in India) we look towards the west for solutions, for masters, for inspiration, for ideas. We look to le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, Philip Johnson for our architectural inspiration - all that is local is never in the picture.
4. The conventional architect ignores, neglects and negates all that is indigenous and all that is local. His/her universe is always very small.
5. 99% of the population will never be his/her clients or be part of his/her consultancies.
6. The conventional architect is an ivory-tower operator, works in offices, never sees what is happening. He/she thinks up solutions and delivers them.
7. The conventional architect imposes solutions, the solutions come from his/her wisdom and understanding, they didn't evolve from the context or the clients.



8. The conventional architect is egocentric. The individualist architect Howard Roark, in Ayn Rand's novel called *The Fountainhead*, is his/her hero.
9. The conventional architect is disdainful, disrespectful, ignorant and ashamed of his/her own culture, traditions and history.
10. The conventional architect always neglects and negates the planet, the environment, the ecosystem and local wisdom. Sustainability is never a part of his/her vocabulary.
11. The conventional architect is very narrowly focused. He/she looks only at his/her own building - the city around it doesn't matter, the community it is built in doesn't matter.
12. The conventional architect is anti nature. He/she fights nature and believes in conquering nature, does not want to sympathize or harmonize with nature.
13. The conventional architect is always focused on form rather than on function, on exterior appearance rather than interior, on envelope rather than content.
14. The conventional architect never sees the reality of people's housing, people's architecture or people's problem-solving strategies.

A community architect is one who rejects all these 14 points. But besides rejecting what is wrong with conventional practice, what are the positive principles and qualities which guide the work of community architects?

- **A community architect is one who sees the reality as it actually exists**, on the ground, on the bottom.
- **A community architect is the one who sees people, who works with people**, who sees their wisdom, who sees their solutions, and who builds his/her solutions based on people's solutions.
- **In Asia, at least 60% of the housing that exists has been created by people**, not by architects, not by engineers, not by development agencies, not by the World Bank. In India, we have 180 million housing units which provide shelter for 100 million people. 136 million of these units were designed and built by ordinary people - by villagers, by poor people, by local carpenters and masons. So the real architecture that we have in Asia - the architecture that trained architects refuse to see - is the architecture of the people. The housing that we know really solves problems is the housing and architecture that people make themselves. Therefore the community architect looks for ways to support and enhance this enormous, problem-solving, people-built housing process
- **The community architects' tools, techniques and understanding evolve predominantly from culture, from tradition, and wisdom of the people.**
- **The community architect is one who does not miss the forest when looking out for the tree.** He/she must see that his/her building is part of the much larger universe called community, called city, and called society. Therefore he/she is the one who does not look upon his/her client as the only client. His/her client is in fact the expanding universe, which includes client, community, city, nation and society as a whole.
- **The community architect is the one who respects the environment**, who doesn't want to conquer or defeat it. He/she wants to understand and work in harmony with nature. He/she has the humility to see that nature is the source of millions of solutions which are there for our taking, if we pay attention.
- **Community architects may be concerned primarily with buildings, but buildings have to do with place, and there can be no place without people.** Therefore the community architect must give as much importance to people as to place. There cannot be place without people, but the reverse is also true, for you cannot have people without place. There is a synergy, a harmony, a togetherness, a synthesis that has to be seen. Therefore a way to look at it is to see the two together, and to see the two as part of a single, evolving universe.

For 35 years I have complained that this cannot be done, but I'm learning now that solutions are possible, that we *can* solve problems, and that we can solve them if we start believing in people and in people's processes.

QUESTION : From a young Thai architect

(Zone asks) I'm still young, and I've just joined this community architecture movement. I wanted to ask one question of the panelists. During your careers working as community architects, did any of you face difficulties in your private life? If community architecture is something that we do out of passion and not for money, how can we also take care of our private needs and our families in the longer term?

Kirtee responds : I have always combined community architecture with a commercial architecture practice, and I feel the two go hand in hand. I have a very large commercial architecture practice in India. I find it very, very enriching and strengthening to be involved in both kinds of practice. You could certainly work for 20 years, day in and day out, building houses for the poor, in slums and villages and tribal areas, if you wanted to. I have built 40,000 houses for poor people in India over the past 35 years. But I know very well that the kind of creative joy that I get from designing a university campus is a very different kind of joy. I don't think that I have to deprive my creativity by passing up that particular opportunity. So I don't see community architecture and commercial architecture as being in conflict: they can coexist quite happily.

- **As a matter of fact, if you do community architecture, your conventional architecture becomes much richer.** I have found that I have become so highly sensitive to environment, to climate and to sustainability, and the buildings I design very strongly represent this larger concern about sustainability. In my practice, I hardly see a building in isolation - I tend to see building in its context. These sensitivities have come because I've been doing community architecture. Likewise my concern about low cost is not only for the poor. My concern about low cost goes across the board: whether I do 2 million square feet or 240 square feet of housing, I have the same concern

about saving on materials, reducing costs and preserving more. In these ways, I have found the two practices to be mutually strengthening.

- **And it's not just me, who rejected these 14 points of conventional architectural practice:** I dropped out of architecture college, my son dropped out of architecture college, my daughter dropped out of architecture college and my daughter-in-law dropped out of architecture college. There must be a tremendous wisdom in this rejection, because at least two generations of people in the same family have done it! And I think this is not just a negative analysis in which we are saying what is *wrong*, we are also saying what is *right*. And there is no universal right: we are saying what is right in our context, in our situation. I think that kind of maturity helps immensely.
- **It is a real privilege to be an architect.** It provides you an opportunity to bring in art, science and culture. You use psychology, you use sociology, economics and human understanding, which enriches you in the process. And it provides the possibility of doing design work up and down the scale of the built environment: starting with house, then the street, then the community, then the whole city. You can't do that being a doctor or a lawyer.
- **And Community Architecture is a very attractive career option, because you have the largest possible client-base:** the largest number of people in this world who are homeless are the poor. It's up to you to find it out, to convert this enormous number of people into your clients. It's like the base of the pyramid. And community architecture also provide you a tremendous opportunity to participate in the change process. You become agents of change, advocates of change, makers of change - change not only the sphere of housing, but change in the societies we are part of.

Dr Vira responds : How to make community architecture as a respectable profession? I have discussed many of these themes quite seriously with my friends, when we started a new program in "Architecture for the community and the environment" at the Arsom Silp Institute. I think an important question, that is both academic and professional, is how we can make this new community architecture practice into a respectable profession and a respectable career? We never talk about community architecture as a viable career path, so how can we persuade more young people to become part of our team? We have to face the facts, and carefully investigate this issue. We need to be able to explain clearly to the majority of architects that they can survive as community architects, that they can survive and make a decent living.

- **At the moment, most people believe that if you want to do community architecture, you have to be a volunteer,** you have to do it for charity, you can never think about getting rich or getting any benefit from it. I can sympathize with people who are put off by this. I think we have to face the fact that most architects have to support themselves and their families, and have to explore different possibilities for how to do that. Otherwise, I don't see any hope. The number of community architects will never increase unless we can show them that this is a viable branch of architecture practice and these are first-class architects. They are working not just for a few rich clients, but for the majority of the country.



Inamoto-san responds : That's a very good question, because you're right: there isn't much money to support the work of community architects! So how to survive?

- **Getting support from my family :** I opened my own design office in Tokyo in 1982, and in all the time since then, I have never once been able to give any money to my wife. But at the same time, whatever I try to do, I always have to negotiate with my wife, and agree to what she says. For those of us involved in this community architecture work, it is important that we explain what we are doing to our families and to the people who are close to us, because most of us depend on them for support in many important ways. After all, if an architect can't reach an agreement with his wife, he can never hope to reach an agreement with the community people.
- **Cross-subsidizing my community architecture work with commercial work :** Another important point on this subject is this: I am not a community architect all the time. I try to work about six months out of every year doing "real" architecture, to make some money. That leaves me free to do community architects the other six months, working on projects that may not bring in much money, or any money at all.
- **Community architects can work with communities of all sorts - not only poor communities.** There are also projects involving community architecture in middle-income communities and with government projects, and the role of special community architects in all these projects is very important, even though some may pay a professional fee and others may not.
- **A note on alternative building materials :** Many years ago, when I went to visit the Tondo slum, in Manila, I suggested to the people that they use bamboo for building their houses, since it was a cheap, strong, beautiful material and it was available locally. But the people didn't want to use bamboo, they felt it looked cheap and impermanent, like a shack in the rural village. They wanted a proper urban house made of bricks and cement. On the same trip, I visited the house of a very rich family which had very happily used bamboo to build their beautiful house. They loved that traditional material and saw the beauty and the strength in it.

PANEL 2 :

The community architects movement in Thailand

The following report is drawn from the second panel discussion, during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was not transcribed, but the following notes have been gathered to bring across some of the key points of the presentations. The panel included the following panelists :

- **Dr. Vira Sachakul** is the dean of the architecture faculty of Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts in Bangkok and also the director of the Association of Siamese Architects.
- **Ms. Supreeya Wungpatcharapon ("Noot")** is a young community architect in Thailand, who is a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture in Kasetsart University in Bangkok.
- **Mr. Chawanad Luansang ("Nad")** is a practicing community architect in Thailand, who is part of a group called Openspace, and works on a variety of projects - mostly with poor communities. Nad is also helping to coordinate ACHR's community architecture support work in the Asia region, and is involved in supporting the work of young community architects in other Asian countries.

1. Community Architects Network (CAN) in Thailand

Ms. Supreeya Wungpatcharapon ("Noot")

Ms. Supreeya Wungpatcharapon ("Noot") is a young community architect in Thailand, who is a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture in Kasetsart University in Bangkok. The presentation on the Community Architects Network (CAN) in Thailand was not transcribed during the Chiang Mai meeting, but Noot gave us the following summary later on. This summary gives a good overview of this new network of idealistic young (and not-so-young!) architects in Thailand, how it began and what ideas are helping to strengthen it.

Noot : As in other Third-world countries, many Thai people are living below the official poverty line and residing in congested settlements with poor conditions of services and insecure tenure. It is estimated that 3,750 urban poor communities in Thailand (1.14 million households, 5.13 million people) are facing physical, economic and social problems. In addition, 445 of these insecure communities (approximately 200,000 households) are in immediate danger of being evicted. Although the Thai government has developed low-income housing projects in various ways, these informal settlements have been struggling to defend their presence in society and to claim their right to the city. Here is a rough timeline which presents some of the milestones in the development of space for community architects in Thailand :



- **1960s - Urbanization picks up, first socialized housing built :** Tracing back to the 1960, Thailand followed the movement of Urbanization in Asia after the World War II, by developing housing scheme as the Singapore model. Therefore, new urban redevelopments resulted in slum clearance, by evicting slum inhabitants and providing them new plots. Flats were built on the redeveloped lands, such as flat Bonkai and flat Din Daeng.
- **1976 - NHA is established and implements its first slum upgrading and housing resettlement projects:** Later in 1976, the National Housing Authority (NHA) was established. It developed the "sites and services" model. In these schemes, the government and NHA played a role as the provider to subsidize houses and facilities for the low-income communities. Nonetheless, these schemes relocated or even evicted poor people who illegally occupied public or private lands without secure tenures. Housing located at the outskirts of the city could not suit the needs of people. They poor sold their rights and returned to live in slum settlements closer to the city, their sources of jobs and employment. These programs failed to solve the issue of land tenures as well as could not deal with the

increasing scale of poor communities in the country, while the government could not afford all the costs and resources.

- **1979 - AIT set up and first "land-sharing" projects in Bangkok:** With collaboration between NHA and ISH during 1979 to 1982, a training course linking NHA staffs with NGOs and AIT was set up. That exchanging of knowledge activity led to an initiation of the Land sharing scheme, implemented in various communities such as Thep Pra Than community, Wat Lad Bua Khaw, Baan Manangkasila community, Klong-Toey. At this land sharing scheme, the poor gained secure land tenures as the negotiation between private land owners and slum inhabitants was successful with the NHA as the mediator.
- **1992 - Thailand's civil society emerges and UCDO is set up :** After the Black May, a political incident in 1992, the movement of civil society in Thailand arose. Urban Community Development Office [UCDO] was founded that year to address urban poverty and work especially on community based saving and loan groups for income generation, revolving funds, and housing improvements.
- **1995 - ACHR's TAP Program opens space for young professionals :** Further, Training and Advisory program initiated by ACHR with DFID's fund in 1995-96 led to an initiation of Young Professional Training Program as a space for young architects to create and explore tools and techniques in working with the slum inhabitants.
- **1997 - New constitution promotes people's participation :** People's participation became recognized widely in Thai society, especially after the promulgation of the 2540 Thai Constitution (1997) and the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) that promoted people participation, by enabling and empowering local people to develop their own communities through decentralized government functions and resources, enlarged public participation, increased transparency and an improved system of governance.
- **2000 - CODI Established.** In 2000, the Community Organization Development Institute [CODI] was founded as an independent unit from NHA.
- **2003 - Baan Mankong Program launched.** In 2003, and Baan Mankong Community Upgrading Program was initiated by CODI, as a national poor community upgrading scheme (fully funded by the Thai government), which opened up a very big space for communities to plan and develop their own community upgrading projects, without any fixed rules. At the same time, the Baan Eua Arthorn Program was launched by the NHA - also with full government funding, but with a more conventional, contractor-driven and government-planned housing delivery model for poorer families. While the NHA's program subsidized pre-designed and pre-built housing units at affordable prices, the Baan Mankong Program employed people's participation and people's own initiative as the central tools in scaling up the program to national level, by regarding local people as the main subject of change, as a partner within the housing processes. According to CODI, the poor community organizations and their networks are the key actors. Therefore, they control the funding and the management. Flexible finance is provided to allow community organizations and local partnerships to plan, implement, and manage directly, tailored to each community's needs, priorities and possibilities. In this kind of project, architects therefore do not only act as the solely designer, but rather must work together with people. The role of architect expands to become a mediator, facilitator, and the catalyst of building change collectively with the inhabitants.

Community architects in Thailand could be categorized into three groups :

- **Community architects working within institutions :** The first group of community architects are those working within the institutions, such as an architectural design unit at CODI, which is working mainly with local people in the design phase of the Baan Mankong program, and related projects.
- **Community architects in academe :** The second group is academia bodies who are interested in the participatory design approach and implementing it in their research and/or design projects. There have been few lecturers, and in some cases with the students, from Schools of Architecture in Thailand involved in the practice of participation. For example, Ashram of Community and Environmental Architect, Arsom Silp Institute established in 2007 focusing on architectural design that concerns a great deal on community and environment with a belief that the genuine value of architecture emerges when the architecture facilitate and strengthen community building; The Consortium for Action Planning (CAP) established in 2009 by an academic action endeavor among Thai Architectural and Planning Institutes, Mahasarakham University, Sripatum University, and King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang; CROSSs founded in 2009 by a group of young architectural students, lecturers and architects who share a belief that employing people participation in architectural design can extend the boundary of architectural profession.
- **Community architects practicing independently :** The last group is few independent architects, working as individual practitioners or those forming as a group to engage with people in their design projects. For example, a well-known group may be Community Architects for Shelter and Environment (CASE), which was formed in 1996 and has been working continuously with informal settlements to improve their living environment in many places around the country. Another group is Openspace, a team of inter-disciplinary professions, such as Art, Architecture, and Culture, formed in 2007 to work with a holistic perspective on solving housing problems and focusing on participatory processes. Kon.Jai.Baan is a newly founded group in 2009 by young professionals who believe that architectural thinking can be a part of transforming processes in any development projects together with the community participation.

Most of architects in the second and the last group are also working closely with the NGOs, such as CTF, ACHR, or other appointed agencies of the government such as CODI, as a short or long term contract depending on the scale of each project.



Community Act Network (CAN) Since the number of the architects practicing participatory design is still limited within the network of those few groups of experienced professions, the current demands of projects require additional well- trained architects to get involved. As a result, some training programs emerged; for example, CODI has organized a training program for new recruited architects by the institute and invited experienced architects, such as those from CASE, to be the mentors. Moreover, in

architectural education, Arsom Silp Institute is the first Institution to launch a specific program in Community Architecture (for the Master degree) aimed at producing specialists and practitioners to serve the recent demands of participative projects. CASE itself also run occasional participatory design workshops with certain institutes, such as ASA's student workshop and an international workshop with Architecture Sans Frontieres (ASF, UK) in 2007.

How to expand the space of participatory practice to wider public and also the mainstream architectural profession becomes another issue that needs to be addressed. Further, participatory design requires additional skill, roles, values, and creative ideas from the architects beyond those practiced in the conventional practice. How to support the architects practicing participation with people is also essential if the demand for well- trained architects is also getting higher. Nowadays, community architects in Thailand are practicing separately in various sites with different tools and techniques. A space for collective knowledge in participatory design with/by/for people may need to be created to support those practitioners, to specially build capacity to the architects themselves.

The Community Act Network (CAN) has been informally founded in 2010 to connect all the groups of actors whose interest is to act and converse in community development work and with the concept of participative development. By not limiting participation to only architectural professionals, CAN welcomes other fields of profession who can be an alliance of architects and the local communities, in terms of mutual sharing and inspiration. The first assembly of CAN Meet and Greet took place in February 2010. The atmosphere was casual and fun, with around 15 presentations of photographs of projects and inspirations with 60 participants, including inhabitants from Baan Mankong housing project, Urban Farm group, CODI, academics, students, architects and activists. In March, CAN organized a workshop/ seminar "CAN Share+ Learn+ Envision" in order to converse the dialogue in a more profound aspect. Participants shared experiences, drew a timeline of the community architecture movement together, and envisioned how the network of community act(ors) should be in the future. Later in May, in collaboration with the Association of Siamese Architects under the Royal Patronage, CAN joined an exhibition of Community Architecture and held a series of talks about community building, co-housing design, and participatory tools and techniques.

CAN is currently trying to expand knowledge of community works to wider public as well as to promote this approach to the mainstream architectural practice. Linking to other organizations and sources of fund for supporting the activities and experimental projects for young professionals, working on knowledge management through production of books, documentaries, as well as organizing workshops might be the next step of CAN as it also needs to plan strategically on how to sustain this community act network.

2. Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts

Dr. Vira Sachakul

The Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts, in Bangkok, is one of the pioneering schools of architecture in Thailand to make community architecture a formal subject of study within the institute's curriculum, to make participation in real community redevelopment projects a major part of their students' experience while studying there and to make the training of community architects one of the institution's goals. Arsom Silp professors and teams of students have helped many communities around Thailand to develop housing upgrading and settlement redevelopment projects, with support from CODI's Baan Mankong Community Upgrading Program. This presentation was not transcribed, but the following brief summary was drawn from the Powerpoint presentation Dr. Sachakul made during this session. Dr. Sachakul is the president of the Arsom Silp Institute and one of Thailand's most honored senior architects. He has been working with the Association of Siamese Architects for many years, which is responsible for



developing the architecture profession in Thailand. He has tried to support the training and community architect practice into the mainstream.



Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts is a non-profit, private institution of higher education, accredited by the Thai Office of the Commission for Higher Education on October 7th 2006 to offer postgraduate programs. The institute is supported by the Roong Aroon School Foundation, the San Seang-Arun Foundation and Yamaluddin Foundation in order to advocate learning about the intrinsic value of virtue, beauty and truth and creation of community learning for developing people's hearts and souls.

The institute originated from the inspiration and expertise of intellectuals, scholars and teachers who have attempted to integrate various disciplines to evolve as one. The institute also emphasizes methods of learning that are culturally based.

Masters of Architecture in Community and Environmental Architecture :

This program at Arsom Silp is an open space for learners to practice on real situation of communities both in the city and countryside so they can have their own tacit knowledge of the relationship between places, way of life, and its value. It therefore encourages the learners to work as architects who not only design physical buildings, but also define the way of life within those structures, with values that are linked to the Thai traditional, Eastern way of life - as well as modern knowledge. This should lead to a strong and happy community, whose way of life is more naturally and environmentally balanced.

The ways of the Arsom Silp community include strong community of learning and knowledge management, strong relationships with communities, learning from the real situation in communities, learning from nature, and seeking solutions that are environmentally balanced.

The kinds of projects Arsom Silp supports include :

- **Community-based slum upgrading projects** and projects to preserve and revitalize existing low-income and traditional communities.
- **Environmentally-based projects** to explore the coexistence between human communities and the environment around them, as well as projects to preserve natural assets and local wisdom.
- **Urban development-based projects** to reduce the negative effects of urban development on local communities of all sorts, and projects involving urban redevelopment.



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3. A list of community architects in Thailand

Mr. Chawanad Luansang ("Nad")

Finally, Nad has given us a list of some of the key community architecture groups within Thailand, with all their contact details, and brief notes on their focus of work.

Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI)

- Year of Establishment: 1992 (UCDO), 2000 (CODI)
- Address: 912 Navamintra Road, Bang Kapi, Bangkok 10240, Thailand
- E-mail: codi@codi.or.th
- Website/blog: www.codi.or.th

Description: CODI is the organization of the people which has the strong willingness to strengthen the society to be stronger from the basis by the power of the community organizations and the civil society. The main target is to support and assist the community organizations and the community organizations network for career development, income generating and housing development. It supports both rural and urban communities. Its focus is on supporting the finance of the community organizations and the community organizations network. Its strategies are to support and enhance the role of the community organizations and of the local mechanisms in development, emphasize the role of community organizations as the core of the development process, to coordinate the efforts of civil society and their multilateral partners, to develop the learning process, knowledge body and information technology systems, develop the Community Financial Institutes and the community - oriented economy, build and develop the loan system as a tool for community development and improve the efficiency and transparency of CODI's management systems to allow the developed partners to participate and engage in its activities.

Community Architects for Shelter and Environment (CASE)

- Year of Establishment: 1997
- Address: 121/1 Ramkamhaeng Rd., Minburi, Bangkok 10510
- E-mail: casemailbox@yahoo.com
- Website/blog: www.casestudio.info

Description: CASE is a group of architects that have come together under a common belief in participatory design process that challenges the conventional role of architects. CASE works with communities in informal settlements to improve their living environment. CASE committed to building communities along with their homes; community participants are, therefore, vital to our projects and processes. Each project encourages community members to participate in all aspects, from surveying to community mapping, to group meetings, to action planning and most importantly, they are involved in all decision making stages. Each community we work with, whether formally or informally poor, participation is a learning process for all involved.

Baandin

- Year of Establishment: 2002
- Address: Wongsanit Ashram PO Box 1, Ongkarak District, Nakhon Nayok, 26120
- E-mail: baandin.org@gmail.com
- Website/blog: www.baandin.org

Description: *Baandin* means a mud house. The aims of the Baandin organization are to support self-reliance individuals, organizations and community through participatory training workshop; to conduct researches and experiments on natural building materials e.g. mud house; to produce publication, facilitate seminar and dialogue in order to share knowledge and strengthen the network of mud-house builders; to conduct training workshops and support mud-house builder volunteers.

Ashram of Community and Environmental Architect , Arsom Silp Institute

- Year of Establishment: 2007
- Address: 9/13 Moo 5, Soi 33 Rama 2 Rd., Bangkhuntien, Bangkok 10150
- E-mail: arch@arsomsilp.in.th
- Website/blog: www.arsomsilp.ac.th

Description: The aim of the institution is to act as an office for community practice in order to promote learning-by-doing of the students from live projects. Its focus is on architectural design that concerns a great deal on community and

environment with a belief that the genuine value of architecture emerges when the architecture facilitate and strengthen community building. The design process which concerns cultural and environmental dimensions and vernacular wisdom of a community in different contexts is a key. Participation and dialogues between architects and users in a design process is an important factor for sustainable architecture design.

Openspace

- Year of Establishment: 2007
- Address: 48/3 Ramkhamhaeng 192 ,Minburi, Bangkok 10510
- E-mail:chawanad@hotmail.com
- Website/blog: www.openspacer.org

Description: Openspace was formed at the end of 2007 to explore ways in which community based work could be pushed beyond its boundary. We work support community for planning and design and use participatory design process to create space for all people and stakeholder can involve in the process to find out alternative for improve living condition.

The Consortium for Action Planning (CAP)

- Year of Establishment: 2009
- Address: Center for Integrated Socio-Spatial Research (CISR), Faculty of Architecture, Sripatum University, 61 Paholyothin, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900
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Description: CAP is an academic action endeavor among Thai Architectural and Planning Institutes, Mahasarakham University, Sripatum University, and King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang. Oriented on development planning platform, its approach is to be an agent in the dynamic process of planning theory and practice and aims get better understanding of people-oriented development planning in the built-environment and its change by political, socio-economic, and spatial intervention.

CROSSs

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Description: CROSSs is a group of young architectural students and architects who share a belief that employing people participation in architectural design can extent the boundary of architectural profession. The group was originally formed because of a reconstruction project of a hospital ward at Koh Yao island, Phang Nga, initiated by the local community. At present, the group is working on fund raising and developing design schemes with the people in the community. The design of community-health-care center community bases on participation of interdisciplinary actors, including doctor/nurses, architects/architectural students, local physicians, patients and the people in the local areas.

Kon.Jai.Baan

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Description: The group believes that architectural thinking can be a part of transforming processes in any development projects together with the community participation.

PANEL 3 :

Participatory city planning and urban regeneration

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the third panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was moderated by Rollie Palacio (one of the pioneer community architects in the Philippines, who works with an NGO called Panirahanan) and Ann Wijitbusaba Marome (a lecturer in the architecture faculty at Thammasat University in Bangkok), and included the following five panelists :

- **Mr. Yoko Hatakenaka** : A senior community architect from Japan, based in the city of Kochi, on the southern Japanese island of Shikoku.
- **Mr. Sanchiro Nakajima and Mr. Keisuke Ikegaya ("Keke")** : Sanchiro is a young community leader from Kitashiba, a small Buraku community of 80 houses in Osaka. Keke is a community architect who lives and works with the same community. They present together.
- **Mr. Hugo Moline** : A young Australian community architect, based in Sydney. Besides being an artist and children's book illustrator, Hugo has been involved in housing and community-driven development projects in Australia, Thailand, Mexico, Venezuela and now Fiji.
- **Ms. Arlene Lusterio** : A community architect from the Philippines who is one of the founders of TAO-Filipinas, an all-women technical support NGO which works with poor communities on housing and community development projects in the Philippines.
- **Dr. Billy Tusalem** : An educator who works with the JF Ledesma Foundation on the island of Negros, in the Philippines.



1. Participatory community development in the Kitagata Buraku Community

Mr. Yoko Hatakenaka

(Ann introduces) Yoko Hatakenaka is a senior community architect who directs an NGO called Kochi Citizen's Council, which is based in the city of Kochi, on the island of Shikoku. Yoko-san has worked with Buraku communities to develop some of the pioneering community-driven settlement upgrading projects in Japan. One of these Buraku community upgrading projects, in the Kitagata Community, was developed in the 1980s, and is the subject of Yoko-san's presentation today.

Background note on the Buraku and Machi-zukuri in Japan :

Five hundred years ago, Japan's feudal society was organized into a strict caste system of warriors, artisans, farmers and merchants. Those who slaughtered animals, dug graves and worked leather (thereby becoming tainted with the impurities of death) were the system's "untouchables." Called first *eta* ("filth") or *hinin* ("non-human") and much later *buraku* ("villagers"), these outcasts were forced to live in squalor, poverty and social exclusion in designated settlements on the outskirts of towns and cities, where they were easy targets for abuse.

Discrimination against the Buraku was outlawed in 1871, but mistrust and hostility continued right up to the 1960s, when pressure from the Buraku's long-standing liberation movement induced the government to launch a series of special programs to help improve the lives and settlements of the Buraku. Besides improvements to education, employment and welfare, these programs provided support for the physical upgrading of Japan's 6,000 Buraku districts (representing some 3 million people), in which government budget was passed directly to the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) branch in each community. Two-thirds of this money came from the national government, and one-third from the local government, but it was up to each community to negotiate with its local government and decide how to plan and implement the projects.

Many less-active communities were content to let local governments take charge of upgrading their settlements, and most municipalities were only too happy to take on these lucrative construction projects. But a few Buraku communities, like Yamamoto-san's Asaka community, and the project at Kitagata which Yoko-san will describe in Panel 3, took advantage of provisions which allowed them to develop a variety of improvement projects themselves, in a more participatory style. In the 1960s, community participation was unknown territory in Japan, so the people in Asaka had to make up the rules for how to plan and redevelop their own community as they went along.

Machi-zukuri ("participatory town planning" in Japanese) is a concept which emerged from the project at Asaka, and from a few other seminal redevelopment projects, undertaken in the 1970s by poor communities who wanted more say in how their neighborhoods were redeveloped. Through these early community-driven upgrading projects, Japan's Buraku communities played a pioneering role in establishing the institutional and financial arrangements for the machi-zukuri facility, and became test-cases for the model in which communities design and implement their own redevelopment and local and national governments support. These projects became very well-known and inspired other communities to do participatory plans of their own. Machi-zukuri was gradually incorporated into national town-planning policies and practices, through a series of new laws and regulations. Even today, this kind of community-driven planning continues to be most visible in Buraku settlements around Japan.

NOTE : For more information about the community redevelopment processes in Asaka and Kitagata, contact ACHR.

Today I will be talking about a community upgrading project I was involved in many years ago, at a large Buraku settlement called Kitagata, in the city of Kitakyushu, in southwestern Japan. Kitagata is a large riverside settlement of 1,920 households (4,000 people), on about 30 hectares of land, just a few kilometers from the city center. The redevelopment process there began in 1983, and I was the community's 33-year old architect.

Machi-zukuri is the term we have in Japan for the process of community redevelopment, and I would like to stress in this presentation the human aspects of that community redevelopment process in Kitagata - which is the most important part. Please don't pay too much attention to what we actually built in Kitagata, but try to feel the human process that brought about the physical transformation in that community.



Kitagata is a very old Buraku settlement, and in the 1980s, the whole area had been very densely built up, with a temple at the center of the community. 57% of the houses in the community were badly damaged by time and were in a dilapidated condition. The alleyways which wound through the community were so narrow that two people could not walk beside each other - it was like a labyrinth inside there and outsiders could easily get lost. The houses were built so

close together that almost all got no daylight and were poorly ventilated. The community experienced frequent and devastating fires, which the municipal fire-trucks could not reach to put out.

Redevelopment process started in 1983 : In 1983, our institution was commissioned by Kitakyushu city to assist in a project to improve the community's housing and environment - a project which received funding support from the national government's special program to improve the living conditions in Buraku settlements. We started by renting a house inside the community for our team, moving into that house ourselves, and beginning to talk with community residents in various public places, such as the public bathhouse ("sento"), which was back then an important place of gathering in most Japanese communities. We also joined the local festivals and concentrated our efforts on simply making our presence felt in people's daily lives.

Breaking up the redevelopment planning into small, workable groups : Once the discussions and the learning about the upgrading possibilities had started, we divided this very large community into small groups, and began inviting the residents in these small groups to workshops. The theme for the first round of workshops was simply to discuss Kitagata's good and bad points. We planners and architects and city staff learned many things from the residents in these workshops. The residents themselves also came across facts and stories about their own community during the discussion process. These small groups later became the units for planning the redevelopment of the community, which wasn't done in one giant set, but was done in lots of little pieces. The final redevelopment plan was simply a collection of all these little pieces put together.



Discovering the community's spiritual treasures : During the course of the workshops, we gradually began to discover the community's spiritual treasures, which we call in Japanese *moyai*. *Moyai* literally means the process by which people share things and work together. The word *moyai* represents the way of life of residents who have shared many hardships together, faced many problems together, and known sadness and happiness together. We set out our aim of the project to improve the housing and environment, and at the same time to help the community revive this spirit of *moyai*, which is part of their heritage. When people clean the street together every day, that's *moyai*. And when people share stories about what's happening with each other in the morning and after work, that's *moyai*.



Getting the children involved : To get the children in the community to participate in the *machi zukuri* process, we organized an event. The children were all given maps of the community, with directions to go around in groups looking to find certain surprises and tricks at various points along the way. We wore masks and carried banners which depicted figures from the "paper-scissors-stone" game, and surprised the children at the corners of lanes. The children could only proceed on their way after winning "paper-scissors-stone" with the grown-ups. The idea of the event was to help the children to experience unexpected discoveries by looking at their own community from a different viewpoints, and learning how to make the best use of the alleyways in their community. Many children and their parents participated.

Project completed within ten years : After one a half year, the planning for the redevelopment of Kitagata was complete, and it was the community's choice to try to retain as much of the community spirit of the old settlement in the newly rebuilt community. By 1993, the construction of the redevelopment project was finished, with new roads, houses, apartment houses, parks and various public facilities.

Based on this experience working with the Kitagata community, I would like to suggest four points for professional community architects :

- **The architect has to be like a story-teller**, who can sit with people and help them visualize what buildings and conditions could be like in their community, after upgrading. An architect's drawings and words have to bring this kind of story-tellers' skills to the process of community planning and community design.
- **The architect has to help people change from problems to hope :** People in the community always have a lot of immediate problems which make it difficult for them to see beyond those problems to some better future. The architect has to help people see beyond those problems, and to translate worries into hope.



- **The architect brings in an outsider's perspective :** A community architect is a person who comes into a community from outside. And as such, the architect can bring in some good points and a new perspective which can help people inside the community to see new possibilities. One of the odd things about communities that sometimes, the people who most directly face problems have a hard time recognizing those problems as problems, and it can often be helpful to have friendly outsiders bring a fresh perspective in, and to see things the community people can't - both possibilities and problems.
- **Outsider can help rebuild the troubled human relations within the community.** But none of this can happen unless the architects can win the trust of the community people.
- **How to get the people's trust?** The best way to start is simply by listening to them, learning about their stories and their history, being there in the community with them. We have to learn from people, and if we really learn, we will win their trust.

QUESTION about community participation : (*Yoko responds*) Participation is a key issue in Japan. But what participation really is is a big question! After the 1980s, many communities started to get involved in their neighborhood redevelopment projects, and took on the "participation" idea. Many local governments and professionals also started saying that the "community participation way" was the best solution. But many people misunderstood the concept, because the real reason for participation is to solve the real problems by community people themselves. Many professionals come and organize "community participation" workshops with the people, but then nothing happens, no problems get resolved. This is a big problem now in Japan. I feel that *real participation* in the community means people grow together, learn together.

Comment from Hugo : Something similar goes on in Australia. Community participation is a real popular thing to have in development, and it often becomes a token thing that happens right at the end of the planning process, after all the major decisions have already been made. In this fake version, the participation is just a token which is used to justify the highly non-participatory decisions that have already been made!

2. Participatory community activities in the Kitashiba Buraku Community

Mr. Sanshiro Nakajima + Mr. Keisuke Ikegaya

(*Ann introduces*) *Sanchiro is a community leader, and also a local government assembly member in the area of Osaka, where he lives in a small Buraku community called Kitashiba. Sanchiro is a representative of the new generation who are participating actively in the community. Keisuke Ikegaya ("Keke") is a community architect who lives and works in the same Kitashiba community.*

I am from the Kitashiba community in Osaka, Japan, which is also a Buraku community. There are 80 houses in Kitashiba, with a population of about 500 people. In the 1960s, Kitashiba was a farming village outside Osaka, but now the city has expanded around it and Kitashiba is now a completely urban settlement, with blocks of government-built public rental housing, a community centers, a playground, a kindergarten.

A project to create a new community center and community space for Kitashiba : We will now talk about a *machi-zukuri* ("participatory town planning" in Japanese) community project we planned and carried out with the whole community, to create a new multi-purpose community space in the middle of Kitashiba. The project began in 2003, when we decided to make use of a small piece of empty land at the center of our community. The young community architects at CASE-Japan (Keke and Seiji) helped us to plan how to use this space. We use this space constantly, for events, games, concerts, gatherings, meetings, festivals and celebrations, and many people in the community join these events - from the very young to the very old.



The basic idea: "More happiness!" The idea of the community center was not just to make a new space or a new building, but to bring back a sense of happiness and togetherness in the community, so that people don't just live alone in their houses and think only about themselves, but open up to think about their neighbors and join together. By providing a space for all kinds of activities to take place which bring the community together - not just people inside Kitashiba, but our neighbors from surrounding neighborhoods also.

The planning process : The process of planning for how we will use this space involved all sorts of people in the community: children, young people, teenagers, grown-ups, housewives and elderly people, as well as representatives from the local government, who supported the project. With help from the community architects, we began by

organizing meetings where people had a chance to tell about their dreams for what their community center would be like and how it would be used. This empty land was covered with rubbish before, and the community members cleaned up the area and planted grass in the area.

Lots of discussion : The most important aspect of this project, and all the planning that went into it, was lots and lots of discussion: between the architects and the community members, and between community members of various sorts, who all had ideas about how to use the space, how to design it, how to bring their own ideas into it. This discussion process and the involvement of the people in every stage means they own the place, they own the project.

Buying two shipping containers to make an enclosure on the site : One community member had the idea to buy a shipping container and use it to create a ready-made room or some kind of enclosed space on the open land. So we went to the Kobe Port and bought two containers. The community members decided to set up these two containers at right angles, on the corner of the site, and began painting these containers, and fitting them inside with plywood walls and insulation, so they could be used for exhibitions and cafes.

The "unfinished" nature of the project leaves room for community people to imagine and to intervene : When you see photos of these two containers, it may not look like any great piece of architecture! But we tried to use these containers and the design of the space to connect people and improve relations in the community. The "unfinished" aspect of the open area and the *unfinished* containers is something which invites local people to use their own imaginations and think together about how to use the facility, now to *finish* the project together. All this required very little budget.



QUESTION (from Diane) : What did you use the shipping containers used for - a meeting room, a library, a bar?
(Sanchiro answers) We needed some space for the community to do whatever they liked, it was not for just one purpose. We didn't much push what the containers were for, we just made the space and then let people think how they would like to use it. Later on, many different projects were done in that container. (Keke) We just "threw the stone" out to the community, and they decided what to do with it.

3. Collective housing planning with Kapit Bahayan in Sydney

Mr. Hugo Moline

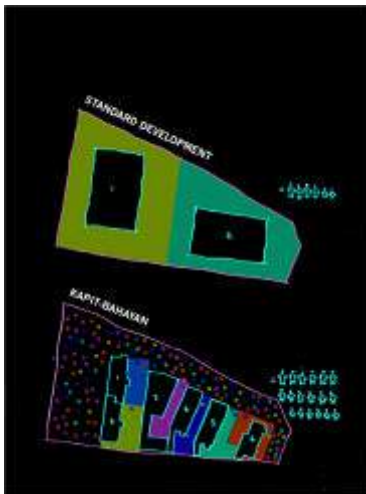
(Ann introduces) After finishing architecture school in Australia, Hugo worked on a community-driven housing initiative in the Philippines, and in 2007 won a traveling scholarship which allowed him to travel around the world, visiting and taking part in more people-driven community upgrading and housing projects in Thailand, Mexico, Venezuela and USA. He has now formed a community design firm back home in Sydney, called New Place Urbanism, where besides working in Australia, he has been getting involved in the ACHR-supported upgrading projects by the People's Community Network in Fiji. Hugo will talk today about a small community cooperative housing project he is working on in the working class Sydney suburb of Canley Valley, with a group of six migrant families from the Philippines who now live in public rental housing and are in the process of developing their own cooperative housing project, on land they have purchased together. The project is called Kapit Bahayan, which means "Attached Houses" in Tagalog.

The project I want to talk to you about this afternoon is quite small for a panel discussion on city-planning! But I think it's quite possible for architects to get involved with quite small projects in their cities which still deal with some of the bigger issues in those cities, and through these small projects start to influence the way the whole city develops.

Living in someone else's city : How I came to be involved in this work : Back in 2007, I was able to get a traveling scholarship, and with this grant I went to several countries around the world : Thailand, Venezuela, Mexico and USA, to look specifically how different architects in their own contexts are working with communities, looking at their own cities and their own problems and what they can do about it. One thing that really came out really strongly in all those places was that in any society, architects always work for such a few people. What that means for all the rest of us is that is that we are living in someone else's city, not our own.

Problems of excess in Sydney : In Sydney, we have a lot of problems. Some are to do with lack of things, but most of them are to do with an excess of things. One of the big obvious problems is housing affordability. It is very difficult for people to obtain their own houses these days. An average house in Sydney costs more than a half million dollars, and

those high housing costs get passed on to people trying to rent houses. The problem is made worse by government policies which encourage people to invest in land and housing, so houses are no longer seen as a place you live and raise your family, but as an investment you buy and then sell off in five years' time to make a lot of money. So the property developers often use this crisis of affordability to persuade the government to let them build more houses on more and more land, stretching the city limits out into areas that are now used for farming and are vital for providing the city with food. Sydney is now the third-largest city in the world, geographically, after Los Angeles and London. Once we pave over these farmlands and build roads and houses out there, where will the food come from? Also, there's no public transport, so everyone uses their cars. Sydney has some of the largest houses in the world - average houses have quadrupled in size over the last 50 years, as people add rooms and rooms that nobody ever uses. *It's kind of like obesity: even though some people might look very fat on the outside, inside they are actually malnourished.*



Solutions to these problems coming from an unexpected quarter : In Australia, immigrants are usually seen as being a problem, but in this case, it is a group of immigrant Filipino worker families who are coming up with a very solid possible solution to these serious housing and environmental problems Sydney is facing. Kapit Bahayan is a group of Filipino immigrants who came to Australia about 12 years ago, and in their struggle to find affordable land and housing, they have come together to try to find a collective solution. They have been collectively leasing public housing from the government. Usually, public housing tenants in Australia have no say about the places they live and no role in the management of that housing. And the six families in Kapit Bahayan also found the public housing model a poor fit for their lifestyle and their culture. But over the last 12 years, since they have managed and maintained the public rental housing units where they live themselves, they have been able to accrue enough rental surplus to purchase a new piece of land.

The Kapit-Bahayan project : I am working with them now on a project to design six new attached houses on that new land. These compact and interlinked houses are being designed specifically for them, to meet their particular needs. In Australia, people normally want to build a single, detached house on a big lot, with a big back yard and everything to themselves. By sharing the site, the six families in Kapit-Bahayan are able to make use of much more of the site, even though they have a lot more people living on the land, which would usually be used to build only two houses. The extra space will allow them to grow their own vegetables. The design of these six attached houses emerged gradually, as part of an ongoing dialogue and design sessions with the people - I've been working on this project for about two years now. The houses incorporate a lot of their ideas about how to ventilate and cool and heat and light the houses, naturally, without using a lot of electricity and fuel. One of the guys works in a cement factory, and was able to use the concrete testing samples for landscaping around their current houses - these kinds of ideas have come out of the process.



We've been talking with the neighboring school, with artists in the area and with the local government about how we can do some collaborations around and outside the project, so it involves more than just the six families who will be living on that small site. One idea was to organize an educational program for children in the area, so they can learn more about Filipino culture, about growing vegetables for themselves. Because this site is in the industrial part of Sydney, with a lot of factories nearby, we also tried to connect with some of the local industries to donate re-used materials or disabled building materials they could give us for a low price. In exchange, we helped them with their promotion, so Kapit Bahayan becomes a kind of "feel good" story for Sydney.

We just got the approvals from the local government to build it, and hopefully we'll be able to start construction some time this year.

4. Participatory community development planning in Pasig River slums

Ms. Arlene Lusterio

(Rollie introduces) Arlene is an architect, a lecturer at the University of the Philippines, and one of the founding members of an all-women's technical NGO called TAO-Filipinas. She will be talking about a project in Metro Manila, in which she and her colleagues at TAO-Filipinas worked with five large informal settlements along the Pasig River in 2001 to help them develop on-site upgrading plans, to use as a tool in their negotiations with the government to be allowed to stay where they are.

This project with informal communities living on the Pasig River, in Manila, was the first project we undertook, after forming TAO-Filipinas in 2001. This is where we had our "baptism by fire" as community architects!

Pasig River is a very important river which passes through six cities in Metro Manila, but it has become so polluted that people say you won't die of drowning but of the pollution if you fall in it! In 1994, during the Ramos administration, there was a move to rehabilitate the river. The Pasig River Rehabilitation Master Plan set out to clean up the river, so fish could grow and people could bathe in the river. Most of the Pasig River's banks are occupied by dense informal settlements, and of course, the government asserted that the pollution was coming from these poor riverside slums. But studies showed that about 40% of the Pasig River's pollutants come from domestic waste, and 60% come from the many industries located along the river.

The Pasig River Rehabilitation project, which was funded by a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), called for the clearing of a 10-meter-wide strip of land along both sides of the river, to open up space for the authorities to maintain the river and to develop landscaped "green strips" along the riverbanks as a public amenity, with walkways and trees.



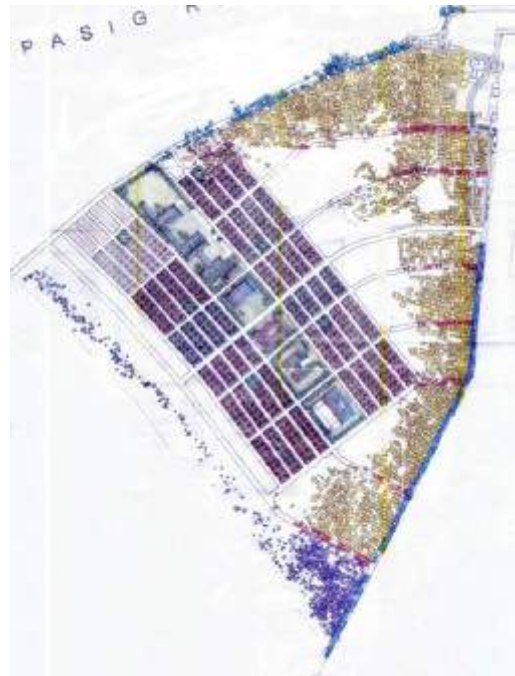
How did we get involved in this project? We were hired by the ADB, as part of the project, which included some requirements that the communities affected by the project be involved in the planning. We weren't exactly fresh graduates from architecture school back then - some of us had worked in private architecture practice and some had worked with poor communities on smaller projects. But none of us had ever worked at this large scale before, with very large communities.

We worked with five of these informal riverside settlements, in three municipalities of Metro Manila :

- **One settlement in Pasig - Pineda :** The Pineda Community, in the municipality of Pasig, is the place where a demolition crew-member died during a demolition, and after that, all the demolitions along the Pasig River stopped. This was the first of the five communities we intervened in. It was also the first area to be "proclaimed" by the President as land for social housing, and in effect given to the people.
- **Three settlement In Manila - Baseco, Parola and Punta Santa Ana :** Baseco has about 8,000 families and Parola has 12,000 families - this is where poor migrants coming from southern parts of the Philippines stay if they have nowhere else to go. In these two settlements, which are both also "Presidential Proclamation" areas set aside specifically for social housing, people can stay there, but they have to follow certain minimum standards for planning and design. And that means a lot of movement and reblocking of the existing settlement. Punta Santa Ana, which is like a peninsula which is surrounded by a curving bend in the river, is a difficult area to access. This strategic geographical position made it difficult for the government to enter and demolish and easier for the people to stay on the site during the project.
- **One settlement in Makati - West Rembo :** Makati is the city's business district, with very high land prices, and the West Rembo community is on land which used to be a military base, converted into a business district. Some of the people in this community, which is also a "Proclamation" area, now have land titles and they will never give up their land. Some portions of the settlement had already been demolished, but the people in this narrow settlement were only willing to give 3 meters of space back to the city (which is the standard urban riverside easement in the country's national "Water Code"), not 10 meters, as required in the river revitalization project. So our project here was to reblock the 10-meter strip within the community so the people move back 3 meters from the river edge, and squeeze together within the 7-meter inner strip of land, so nobody gets evicted, but everyone has to develop a new plan for sharing the reduced land area, with a good layout plan and better houses. The areas of the settlement that were inside the 10-meter strip were not part of the planning.

In all these informal settlements, the government could not easily remove the people because there were (and still are) thousands of families living there. So instead of evicting them, the idea was to upgrade and reblock those settlements, to make them better. The land in these settlements is almost all government land, but different portions fall under the control of different government agencies, and some portions have been "proclaimed" for social housing and some haven't. All of which makes developing an overall redevelopment plan in these areas extremely complicated. So the alternative redevelopment schemes we helped the people prepare were seen as being tools to help the community people negotiate with all these different land-owning agencies.

We spent about three months in these areas to develop the alternative plans, using community workshops and lectures to educate the people about minimum planning standards the government requires if they want to improve their settlements and get long-term secure land tenure. We also developed some guide questions to draw out the information from them, like "What kind of housing do you want? Are you willing to go into high-rise or medium rise apartment blocks? Do you want total reblocking or minimal reblocking? How big is the area of the house you need and how much can you afford to pay?" We didn't have computers back then - all we had were roles of tracing paper, some base maps from ADB and some markers.



The schemes we helped develop for the communities showed different options and housing types. In Baseco, for example, own scheme we developed showed that all 8,000 families could fit in easily if the community is reblocked into a row-house development with 32-square meter plots.

Our intention in intervening was to help the people in these five settlements to develop alternative plans to use as a tool in their negotiations with the government and with the Pasig River Rehabilitation project. It was also our objective to ensure that in the process of developing these alternative plans involved the participation of as many community members as possible. We asked the ADB how many consultations do you want us to organize and how many families should be consulted in the process of developing these alternative plans? They said 10% is enough, so for 8,000 families in Baseco, for example, we would have to consult only 800 families minimum

What happened? When we finished the project, we presented all these plan options to the government, which said *"That's very nice, thank you very much, we will consider what you propose when we develop our planning,"* and nothing much happened. In Punta Santa Ana, the government did not agree to the plan we proposed and evicted all the families within the 10-meter strip, but because they had seen the intense energy coming from the community to come up with an alternative plan, they allowed them to find their own relocation site.

Conclusions :

- People know best their own needs and affordability.
- Community ownership of a housing solution only takes off when there is meaningful participation in the process of developing the solution and in making informed decisions.
- Even hardline positions can change with correct information and proper understanding of the options.
- The availability of clear alternative plans in negotiations with the government could result in win-win solutions for a shorter period.
- Clear plans show that there is enough space for people in the city.
- A strong community organization is key to the success of any proposal for development.

QUESTION (from Sanachhe) : Was this project executed by you? Did it really happen? (Arlene responds) The Pasig River Rehabilitation project is not executed by us, but by the national government. So what we did was to help people come up with an alternative plan so they could negotiate with the government on what they want for their area - instead of moving out of the place.

QUESTION (from Anne) : What was your strategy as an outside architect, with regard to dealing with the government? (Arlene responds) Surprisingly to us, as architects, negotiating with the government was not a big problem. We thought it would be difficult, since NGOs in the Philippines are usually locked in an adversarial conflict with the government. But as technical professionals, we found that the government listens to us and they have respect for what we say. If you can show good, feasible, possible redevelopment plans, your negotiations can end up with positive results from the government.

"Technical plans can be a very powerful tool, because they can bring people together and become a point of agreement between groups that have been adversaries before - they can be an alternative to conflict."

5. A master redevelopment plan for San Carlos City in the Philippines

Dr. Billy Tusalem

(Rollie introduces) Dr. Billy Tusalem is an academician and dean. He is also the director of an NGO called the JF Ledesma Foundation, which promotes the use of alternative, low-cost building materials. Billy has worked with the Homeless People's Federation to teach community groups how to produce compressed soil-cement building blocks, which they are now using in several large housing projects in Iloilo and Mandaue. He will be presenting a project on "integrated shelter planning development" in which he was involved, which local community governance and city planning in San Carlos City - a small town on the northeastern coast of Negros Island, in the Visayas region of the Philippines.

I would like to tell you how the JF Ledesma Foundation, a local NGO, brought planning experts and communities to develop a redevelopment plan for the town of San Carlos, on Negros Island, the city where I live. The planning work started in 1998, and the redevelopment plan was finished in 2000.

San Carlos is a coastal town which has been part of the larger municipality of Calatrava, on the mountainous northeast coast of Negros. San Carlos has now been given a new status as an independent town. The town's natural port was one of the first places on Negros where sugar cane (the island's main agricultural product) was shipped out from, and the first sugar cane mill was built here in 1908. The town's subsequent industrialization and growth was largely based on the planting and processing of sugar cane. Over the years, the poor sugar cane workers, have built informal settlements all over the town, for lack of any other housing options.

In 1992, the sugar cane industry on Negros Island slumped, tens of thousands of poor sugar cane workers became unemployed, and the population of informal settlements in San Carlos swelled. There are now about 3,500 poor households living in slums in San Carlos. The JF Ledesma Foundation decided to formulate a master development plan for San Carlos, in order to develop a more planned vision for the city's growth which makes room for land and housing the city's poor in a more proper way. The master plan that we developed used "participatory rural appraisal" methods and involved all the stakeholders in the city. As part of the process, a set of development priorities were identified, and the San Carlos Development Board was set up as the legal body to implement that plan and those development priorities.

According to the master plan, "San Carlos will become an exemplary, modern, agro-industrial zone, and a new town which is distinct, memorable, economically viable, socially responsible and in balance with the environment." The plan includes provisions for civic infrastructure, education, health-care, economic development, recreation, greenbelts, limited density and decent housing - with zero displacement of poor communities. San Carlos' current population is 1,200 people, and the target population of our master plan will be 200,000 people.



The poor in the new San Carlos : One of the principles of the new planning is that it be community-driven. There will be no displacement of poor communities in the new plan, and the city of San Carlos has already invested US\$ 1 million in developing a land bank for the informal slum dwellers, to provide homes for the homeless.



COMMENT from Somsook : *City planning as a coup d'etat* : Professionals sometimes act like God, looking at cities as though they were a blank piece of paper to draw any design they like on! In this way, city plans are very often like a kind of coup d'etat! A coup d'etat in which local people have no say, and whatever is already there, whatever people want, whatever aspirations the population of that city might as well not exist.

- What we are searching for is a city planning process in which we participate in people's development and make a better quality development in the process. And an important part of doing this is changing the culture of what architects do.

PANEL 4 :

Small-scale upgrading and people's initiatives

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the fourth panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was moderated by May Domingo (another one of the pioneering community architects in the Philippines, who now works very closely with the Homeless People's Federation Philippines) and Supreeya Wungpatcharapon ("Noot") (a lecturer in the architecture faculty at Kasetsart University in Bangkok), and included teams from the following seven countries :

- **MONGOLIA** : Ms. Enhe Tsendendorj (Enhe) chairs the Urban Development Resource Center, an NGO based in Ulaanbaatar which supports community savings and community-driven upgrading in the poor "ger area" settlements around Mongolia.
- **VIET NAM** : Mr. Mai Van Sinh (Community leader in the Sewing Enterprise Collective Housing Community, in the city of Hai Duong), Mr. Le Nhu Nga (community architect) and Mr. Tran Thanh Zuong (community architect).
- **SRI LANKA** : Ms. Rohanna Rathnayake, a young architect from the Colombo-based NGO Sevanatha Urban Resource Center.
- **PHILIPPINES** : Mr. Carl Earvin Beray, a community architect who works with PACSII (Philippines Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives), the NGO which provides technical support to the national Homeless People's Federation Philippines.
- **INDONESIA** : Ms Irvana Lee, a young architect who works with the Jakarta-based NGO Volunteer Network for Humanity, which supports the ongoing upgrading of the large slum at Kampung Pulo (Jaringan Relawan Kemanusiaan).
- **KOREA** : Ms. Hong Seungsoon (a community leader from the Honey Bee "Vinyl House" squatter settlement in Seoul), Ms. Oh Minjung (who works with the Seoul-based NGO Asian Bridge) and Mr. Shim Hanbyul (a young architect who works with the NGO Space Research Group in Seoul).
- **CAMBODIA** : Mr. Srey Sideth (community leader from Roessei Keo District in Phnom Penh), Ms. Ny Kimchhorn (community leader from Kampong Cham), Mr. Chhim Sophanaroat and Ms. Chou Lennylen (from the Urban Poor Development Fund NGO), and Mr. Keo Sovandara (a young architect working with UPDF).



Above: The walkway at the Purok Albacia Community in Iloilo, before and after the community upgraded it.

Somsook on the importance of **SMALL SCALE UPGRADING PROJECTS** :

These kinds of small upgrading projects can play a very important role in several ways.

- **Starting with something small, simple that people can handle** : Because in many poor communities and many situations, it is very difficult to start off with something complex like a full-scale housing project. As we saw in the Kampung Pulo case in Indonesia, there was a need for a long, long process of developing understanding before anything could happen. And we still need that good understanding in communities, but sometimes the small projects can help shorten that long process. Because the small projects represent a very simple intervention, in the scale and pace of people.
- **Allowing people to think, examine their needs and start something right away** : The small projects allow people to start thinking about their immediate needs, and they want to do something together. And they can use the small projects as a way to link and bring the different people together. And with that simple, concrete achievement of the small project - whether it be a drain, a road paving, a water supply system or a community center - then it could move into more complex and more difficult like land negotiations or a big housing project.
- **"Warming up the engine" of the people's process** : This is the very important role of small projects, because there are so many small needs in the community. And we have to use these kinds of small projects in a strategic way to get the community people to start. The small projects may not have any sophisticated design, as architects may like, but they are the starting point for people's own design, for the design of the people's process. And through this people's process, which the small projects help start and "warm up" like an engine. When the people's process engine starts working like this, then the more complex process can go much, much easier. Then the architects can join the people, instead of leading them, in their process of dealing with the larger, more complex and more structural issues of land and housing.
- **Transforming communities from passive to active** : By starting the small projects, communities change, the relationships within communities change. Because people are normally static, passive, listen to other people, but by starting doing the small projects they are changing into the active ones, the doers, the owners of the project. They are now thinking, doing, implementing. And this key work of changing relationship of poor people who don't have knowledge, don't have energy, don't know what to do, into the doer and the owner of the implementation. Even though the project may be small, this transformation process begins in these action. This is the key issue of the small projects: using the small projects to change these relationships from being recipients, now people stand up and do it themselves, and use this first small achievement to move further.
- **New involvement in the community** : Also, in the small projects, when communities start doing something, it's not just the conventional leaders who have to tell you all the time what it should be, but the projects open big space for ordinary people in the community to participate with that new space. And through these projects a new system emerges in the community, which brings more people to come into the community process.
- **Small projects not for welfare delivery** : We can't use these small projects only for welfare purposes: if you don't have water, you get a little water with the project. That is the welfare purpose. But if we use the small projects in a strategic manner, that people come together, move together and achieve something together, and then move on to the more difficult issues together.

1. Small-scale upgrading projects in Mongolia

Ms. Enkhbayar Tsendendorj

Mrs. Enkhbayar Tsendendorj ("Enhe") is the chairperson of the Ulaanbaatar-based NGO Urban Development Resource Center (UDRC), which since 2005 has been supporting community savings activities and community-driven upgrading projects in the informal "ger area" settlements which are the major form of housing in Mongolia's towns, cities and villages. Enhe spoke about the housing situation in Mongolia and how small scale upgrading projects are helping people to get involved in improving their living situation and come together to make changes in their communities.

Mongolia is located between Russia and China, it has a population of 3 million and the land area is quite big at 1,568,000 sq km. About 60% of the people live in urban areas. In the urban areas in terms of settlement we have two distinct forms; apartments which have all services, and what we call the 'ger area'. In terms of structure and architecture they are unique. The ger has a round shape, it usually has been used for nomadic life, but the ger are also used in urban areas as a basic shelter; they are what many people can afford. But there are a lot of problems with living in a ger in an urban area. Actually in the ger area most people also have self-built houses as well as a ger, all without proper infrastructure. But in Mongolia they're not slums, they people



are not squatters, everybody has ownership of the land. In Mongolia we don't have so many problems about land ownership.

We were under a socialist regime with a top down economic system for 70 years. This means the government was taking care of who lived in which kind of apartments. Whether you are going to be staying in a house or an apartment was taken care of by the government, and there was a huge queue in order to get better housing. So when the Soviet Union collapsed these ger areas started getting much larger, expanding, as this is the only place people can go to that is urban. There are lots of issues with infrastructure, there are a lot of problems like you have everywhere in the world. So why small scale upgrading? So that people improve that area by themselves. First of all we have to work with them, they should understand, and we have to change their mindset, so they see they are powerful and they are part of the change. So they understand they can change their life by themselves.



Once people have initiative then how should professionals come to work with them? In my experience (I have been working in this area for the last 15 years), one of the basic issues is how we can gather people together; one thing is when we are ready to work with the people, and the other side is when the professionals like us are ready to go to the people to listen to them properly. There are needs on both sides that can then make a tangible result. So this is how we try to evolve the process, when we go to the community, the professionals or whoever, when we are not starting but just pushing them down and not listening properly, they will never listen again, they will get a very bad impression. So therefore professionals have to have the skills to work with the people. Like a psychologist or a sociologist. First of all we have to listen to people, then they will come up with lots of ideas that we would never know of. With mutual learning and mutual understanding at the end of the day we will learn a lot from them. It will not be that we will provide them with the answers. This is very important to keep in our mind working with the people.

Another side about process of how we make it work with government and people, when we started in 2005, when Somsook and some community leaders came to Mongolia and established some savings groups this was a real process we started. In order to not push them down, to let them grow, we just watched this process very closely. This process is not that we should be like a teacher or somebody who is an expert who knows everything and just pushes people somewhere, we just guide, putting the road in the right way so that they could go by themselves. This is the process we should follow as professionals, and we have to have some kind of an inside feeling about what kind of assistance we

need to provide people. In the beginning, in the meetings of the first one year when we started talking too much about complicated issues with the planning and sophisticated designing they would never understand, so therefore from time to time we have to educate each other, we then learn a lot about how much the people are powerful and we will get lots of benefits from them as professionals.

Through this process we are serving people. There are lots of projects that want money from the government and donor agencies and they are talking lots about participatory planning, it sounds very nice but how does this participation work? Professionals and local government and decision makers come to the people and saying "this is our budget can you tell us what you are thinking of doing?" and people just try and say something. In that sense there is no interaction, there is no conversation; that is not participation. In order to create participation you need discussion, it is an important process.

In Mongolia everybody has the right to own 0.07 hectares land free of charge. So this means everybody has a fence around their property, everybody lives within their fence, the poor, the rich.

As a tool we got people to bring their idea of their own problems they can solve together. People building the process themselves is very important. The people shape the project. We don't have much experience of thinking about this with professionals; most of the architects are professional architects, except Ms Uelun Altangerel (who is a lecturer in the school of architecture) and some others who are working in the University of Mongolia. Recently we have brought not only students and teachers but practitioners and designers and urban planners to involve them. In two communities 18 French students and 4 teachers stayed for three nights in 2 places, working together to do the community planning. The main issue is how should we work with the people? First of all we have to be very, very good listeners, patiently we have to listen to people. And then we can come up with other ideas and explore them.



In Tunkhel village we did community mapping and planning (shown on slides); this is how the French and the Mongolian students did it. Working on proposals, ideas, just exploring how they can work with people. So Ms Uelun with her students, working together with the French students, have started to develop small community mapping manuals for people.

Question from Somsook : What kind of changes have been made by these small projects? (Enhe responds) In a village of 2000 or 3000 people they initiated different projects by themselves. First of all they prioritized what they need to do and what kind of problems they have. We get funding from ACCA, and until now nine projects have been done. For ten years garbage accumulated, 10,000 cubic meters collected in the center of their village. People cleaned up the area within one month and built a very nice center. This is the kind of thing is what is changing the peoples attitude into a better community upgrading one. Once this process was finished and there was an events center all the people came together to make some changes. Nine projects have been done in Tunkhel village; this is how people are changing. People who are involved in these kinds of activities started to learn what is going on and they have a very positive impression. They have started to think about how to make new changes.

- **One more thing, when people initiate something the smart majors come along.** Now we have about seven majors who can talk in the same language as we do. They are going to have a meeting with all of the other majors and they will have this language to talk with each other. This changes the mindset, shows that the people can make changes by themselves. And one of the processes we can see through this is that we also learn, we find out lots of new things and have new experiences through this process. We are learning, I hope everybody is learning.
- **We learned that in order to make city wide change, it is much effective to start from small tasks.**

Noot : Small scale upgrading is not just to make changes to the physical area but it also triggers some change within the community's mind and also maybe in the professional's mind.

2. Upgrading a small collective housing in Hai Duong City, Vietnam

Mr. Mai Van Sinh + Mr. Le Nhu Gha + Mr. Tran Thanh Zuong

Mr. Mai Van Sinh is a community leader in the Sewing Enterprise Collective Housing Community, a dilapidated and eviction-threatened inner city community in the center of the Northern Vietnamese city of Hai Duong - the community which is being supported by ACCA to become the city's first-ever on-site, community-driven upgrading and reblocking project. Mr. Le Nhu Nga and Mr. Tran Thanh Zuong are two young Vietnamese community architects who have been working with this community to develop their upgrading plans. Hai Duong is one of the 28 cities in Viet Nam that have joined the National Community Development Fund Network in Vietnam.

Mr. Sinh : *Our collective housing area was built in the 1960s.* The sewing enterprise in the area built this as their housing, later on they gave these houses to the workers of the enterprise. Now, after a long time without maintenance

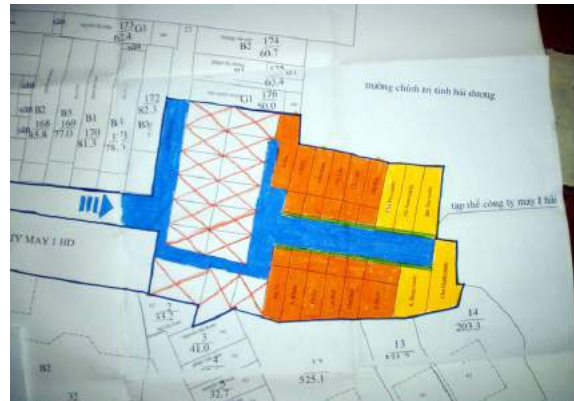
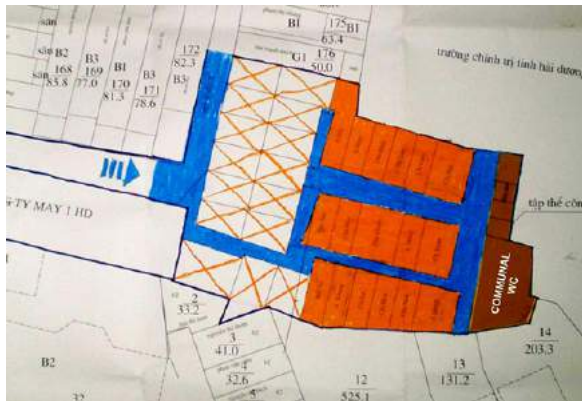
the whole area has become very dilapidated. It is very old and going to collapse soon. Many times we have petitioned local government to ask to rebuild the area but we are not allowed. The reason is that each of our houses is only 13.5 square meters per house for 4 to 5 persons to live in, and according to the law in Vietnam we are not allowed to build or sell. In the meantime the houses around our community have been built up and they have raised the area of their street and made our area a depression, like a valley, so whenever it rains we get a lot of flooding. In my opinion the community architect needs to first listen and understand the problems of the community in order to find the solution. To try and understand the way people live. The architect came to us talked to us. The first thing he did was to take us to another community which was successful in another city in Vietnam. The leader of another community which had successfully upgraded talked to us. During the time we went to talk to this other community leader our whole area flooded again.



Mr. Le Nhu Nga : (*brandishing an oversized pencil*) I have a great big pencil but I cannot draw by myself, I draw with the community leader with the community. Two houses collapsed during the time I was visiting the community. We talked to the leader of the other successful community. We talked with the community and we all agreed we must do something because the situation was very bad. We tried to analyze the common goal that we had. Before all of this we had to survey the area and measure it all. The community tried very hard, they had to think about how they would come together. Mr. Sinh brought back the ideas from the successful community back; the other community had done very well so we thought we could too.

Mr. Sinh : We needed to make space so we decided to move five houses which are in the middle to relieve the cramped conditions. We will try and achieve a size of 25

square meters for each dwelling. Fifteen houses will be rebuilt and we plan to connect to the city pipelines to relieve the flooding issues. Basically that's the proposal, and we hope that it will go ahead; it is planned, not yet approved or built.



ABOVE: The community plan BEFORE reblocking (left) and AFTER reblocking (right)

Mr. Nga : People don't listen at first to an architect; it takes time to build trust. At first they didn't listen to me because I was a stranger, it took a long time of us talking to each other. I learnt a lot working with the poor community, being in the poor conditions they are very creative. I learnt a lot from their wisdom. I think we as community architects have to adjust to their situation and to come to a good solution to their problems. Both sides have good things in this relationship, the community has a better environment, they become closer, and for us as community architects we learn a lot about life and our profession. Thank you for your time listening to voices from Hai Duong city, I hope that in the future you can come and see this project completed, at that time you can stay in our place just like family.

Mr. Tran Thanh Zuong : This is an ongoing process, it is not yet approved by the government but they are listening to this scheme, there is potential in it.

3. Communities involved in small-scale upgrading in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka

Ms. Rohanna Rathnayake + Mr. M. V. Thshara Akila

Ms. Rohanna Rathnayake and Mr. M. V. Thshara Akila work with the Colombo-based NGO SEVANATHA Urban Resource Center). They gave a presentation called 'Community Involved Small Scale Upgrading Programs in Sri Lanka' which explained the process of small scale upgrading in Sri Lanka, looking in particular at the example of the city of Nuwara Eliya. After identifying the most vulnerable communities through mapping and surveys Sevanatha uses workshops to see what needs are most important to the community to develop first.

Rohanna : We are from SEVANATHA URC, one of the leading organizations in Sri Lanka working for urban low income communities. We started working in 1989 in Colombo and we have been working with most of the international funding organizations - also with ACHR.

One of the cities which is involved in community upgrading is the central highlands city of Nuwara Eliya, which is getting support from ACHR's ACCA Program. This town is in the hill country where the temperatures are less than 14 degrees Celsius. First we consider how we involve the community as community architects. We did a community mapping program in the city, covering all of the city and we collected municipal council members and the community leaders for this survey and we gave comprehensive training for them about how to make this survey comprehensive and how to map the settlements. We conducted the survey after that training.



Looking at slides you can see some of the low income settlements we identified in our survey. This is in Nuwara Eliya municipal area. We identified 32 low income communities, one is under a bank in a landslide area, another is vulnerable for flooding and a racecourse settlement, it has to move to another location. After the community survey we prepared booklets, we call them 'City Shelter Profile' we have done the same for the other urban areas in Sri Lanka, we do the



survey and then prepare the 'City Shelter Profile'. We made a platform for low income communities with the participation of all the stakeholders; we call it a 'City Development Committee'. We as community architects established a 'City Development Committee' in every city where we have completed our surveys, to finalize what we had found in our survey and to make a participatory approach for the community and all other stakeholders in upgrading low income communities.

After this we can work in organizing in the community, we formed savings groups under the women's cooperative and well known cooperatives in Sri Lanka with micro financing activities. With the combination of small those groups we formed CBOs to empower the community.

According to the survey findings we prioritize settlements - which are the most vulnerable and which are the poorest settlements in the city. So in some communities we have workshops, planning workshops to identify what are their needs, what needs come first to develop. Some communities mentioned that they need infrastructure improvements, for some housing rights was most important, some needed to build their houses, and some of them needed to improve their livelihoods. In infrastructure improvements we came to a strategy called 'community contracts system'. That means we gave the CBOs the power to implement the plans, to plan the project and we gave the contract to the community to implement. Ensuring housing rights we communicated with the right organization or the government to ensure their housing rights or residencies. For improvement of housing we used a participatory planning approach, that means they designed their houses and they decided what they wanted to have in their houses and they decided what size they needed to have for their land. For livelihood improvements we did capacity development, loans and savings improvement and some of the trainings.



This is our process with small scale upgrading, it's a participatory community approach, and this was the first time we did this kind of community approach. We came to empowering through the participation, they have access to participation in planning and organizing, we form CBOs and savings groups. Then in workshops communities come to their own designs for their houses, and then we give the contract to the CBO so they can implement the project themselves. The community is actively involved in the improvements. *(Talks more about the slides, discussing the specific vulnerable communities and how they have changed their lives.)*

Comment by May : It's not only the involvement of community architects but also other stakeholders like the local government; they try and involve as many players in the planning process as possible.

4. A small community upgrading project in Davao City, Philippines

Mr. Carl Earvin Beray

Mr. Carl Earvin Beray, a community architect who works with PACSII (Philippines Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives), the NGO which provides technical support to the national Homeless People's Federation Philippines. He presents an example of a small-scale upgrading project to build a sea-wall ("rip-rap") along the eroded coastline of a small slum community in the city of Davao, in Mindanao.

Carl : This is a case study of a small scale upgrading to show the partnership, the work and the working relationship between a poor coastal squatter community and technical professionals. The first thing is to find the problems of the community. In the situation in this community, which is called the San Juan Seaside Settlers Association (SAJUSSA), we have a community where their main problem is that the road that provides access to the community is starting to erode because of the waves. San Juan is a coastal community, with 104 households. There came a time when the electrical posts in the community fell down, due to lack of soil support, because of the continuous eroding of the road by the sea. The community already initiated projects to fill the land on the seaside of the road, and to put in sand-bags to slow down the erosion. But these initiatives only worked temporarily, and so they decided to design and construct a more permanent structure (a kind of sea-wall or "rip-rap") to protect their road and coastal community from erosion. The project is being supported by a 32,000 Peso loan from the ACCA fund (at 3% annual interest, repayable in 18 months by the community's savings group members), which is managed by the Davao Homeless People's Federation.



Using the San Juan community as the focus of a community planning workshop : We had a national workshop in February 2009, which was a gathering of NGOs and others institutions, academics from various institutions, universities and also community representatives from other countries like Cambodia and Thailand and Indonesia. In this we had an activity that we went to a community to apply the actual process and learn from the participants. The San Juan community was selected to be the focus of that workshop.



First they did the mapping, mapping where they did site analysis in order to know what the condition of the community is and what level the water reaches in their area. Also they did a cost estimate workshop activity in the community for budgeting for their project, and they also had planting of mangroves. They also had planning in groups. At the end of the workshop they came up with a plan, the plan of their riprap for their community, and also a cost estimation of the project. (*Referencing slide* - it looks messy but it was understood what materials they needed for the project.) The community started to collect the materials they needed, they went to different suppliers and asked the cost of every materials, and they chose the lowest cost. After that they started to mobilize savings so they could get the ACCA loan program from ACHR which is about 1000 dollars which is the cost of the project. So they started to purchase materials and do the staking of the bamboo. We didn't have enough tools to pile the bamboo so we just used big stones. Children, parents, grandparents, also participated in the construction of their riprap.

What is the role of technical professionals in the process that we did? The role of a community architect, engineers was as teachers, as a guide for the community, so they can make the right decision in the technical aspects. Also to translate their ideas and designs and make them into a more formal plan.

So the positive impact of the project was firstly to lower the cost of the project, the loan for the project was used the materials and not for the labor. Because the labor was done the community, they built the structure. Also to show the government what the community can do, for their community. They are showing that they are serious to change and to have developments for their community. And thirdly it became a venue for learning and exchange of ideas to other communities, and for the community to discover their strength that they can change for their own community.



We had challenges: Sometimes the community overtook the rule of the Barangay or the Local Government Unit, the community delivered what the Barangay is supposed to do in developing the area. In the Philippines we have almost 18 small upgrading projects finished, and some are in the pipeline, still in the implementing process. They involve sanitation, drainage, water systems, communal toilets, bamboo bridges.



Above: The footbridge at the Freedom Village Community in Kidapawan, before (left) and after upgrading (right).

5. Upgrading Kampung Pulo, in East Jakarta, Indonesia

Ms. Irvana Lee

Ms Irvana Lee is a young architect who works with the Jakarta-based NGO Jaringan Relawan Kemanusiaan (Volunteer Network for Humanity), which supports the ongoing upgrading of the large riverside slum at Kampung Pulo, in East Jakarta, which the government has plans to demolish due to a river upgrading project. Jaringan Relawan Kemanusiaan has been working with this community for the past year, socializing with the community and encouraging them to make an alternative proposal for redeveloping their kampung - which does NOT involve eviction.

Irvana : I'm going to show you a project which we have been doing for about one year; it is in Kampung Pulo, in East Jakarta. This kampung is by the river, one of our biggest rivers in Jakarta. The government has done spatial planning along the kampung, widening and upgrading the river - that affects the kampung area as they are widening the river in a municipality project. They want to make half the kampung green open space and the other half urban space. And the other kampung will become low income housing, so they want to demolish their area. The people will lose their area. This spatial plan has been made without community participation; it's a top down policy from the government to the community. They just did some



socialization with several leaders from this community, not the people who live there. Our organization thought that this kind of policy is not good for the community. We've had several experiences helping eviction victims, and when we try to help them we found it is very difficult to help a victim. So we tried to think about how we can do some preventative projects. We tried to encourage the community to prepare themselves, to make an alternative design for their kampung. This is a big scale concept of our role as community architects. It's our role to encourage people to make their own spatial planning for their kampung.



As the first step we thought social interaction with the people is very important, and we did social analysis that involved the people. We did activities that involved people knowing about their kampung, because sometimes people have lived in their kampung but they don't know about their environment or history. Then, we after we had socially analyzed we did some presentations to the people of the community, presented the ideas they'd had and showed to the public. We hoped that in that presentation we'd get some input and feedback from the public too.

After the presentations we will have to make an action plan, not talking or presentation but a real action plan. This plan is not just one step, like number one goes to number two; it's a spiral movement that can go back and around. In this big scheme we hope we can encourage the people to get involved

by planning. We also encourage the participation of volunteer students from the provincial university of architecture and the private sector. We're hoping that people are going to be able to do their own kampung planning. We see benefit not just for the community but for the NGOs working with this kind of movement, because we want to work before the communities are eviction victims. We should try and do some programs not just wait.

From March until October last year we did activities with the kampung; first we did some socialization with the community, we introduced and we showed them the process that they should do. We gave them imagination about how to do participatory planning. Kampung Pulo is a private kampung so it's difficult to find a place where to get together with the community, talking, so we used the mosque to gather the people and all met in one of the leader's houses. We always did the socialization at night because during the day the community does their work. Sometimes we did socialization in the open spaces in the kampung.



After we did socialization we did activities, like doing surveys, making physical maps (which involved architecture students or practitioners architects who are interested in helping the community). This is the process of how the students work in the community. Sometimes after socialization the community invited us to have dinner together. We did manual mapping and then compressed the results of the manual mapping, we had separate maps and we also did some documentation about economic activities from the kampung. We have also been tracing the kampung's life story.

In October during the Muslim festival the community invited us to get together, and at that moment we shared our progress after almost one year. We showed them the results of the process that they had been doing for one year. Then we also showed the tracing of kampung history that we have been documenting for them. When they looked at the results they were so impressed because now everyone can know about their history in their kampung. They were so proud of the results.



I feel about this is that one year for socialization that it has been a long process. But now I realize it's a process that we should do because being a community architect is about doing work with the community. We cannot just use a plan that we prepared before.

6. Experiments in community-led upgrading in Seoul, Korea

Ms. Hong Seungsoon + Ms. Oh Minjung + Mr. Shim Hanbyul

The team from Korea included three people, who presented two different projects : the first looked at the vinyl housing communities which have had support from ACCA in the past year for some small scale upgrading projects, and the second about the 2007 Landscape Act in Korea.

- Ms. Hong Seungsoon is a community leader from the Honey Bee "Vinyl House" squatter settlement in Seoul
- Ms. Oh Minjung works with the Seoul-based NGO Asian Bridge, which supports a network of these "vinyl house" squatter settlements.
- Mr. Shim Hanbyul is a young architect who works with the NGO Space Research Group, based in Seoul.

Ms Oh Minjung : We have two presentations - the first one is about what is happening in small upgrading projects in Korea, especially the ones supported by ACCA in the vinyl house communities. Ms. Hong Seungsoon is going to report about what is going on there in the Honey Bee vinyl house community, where she is a community leader. And then in the second presentation, we will introduce residential landscape upgrading, which is related to a new land legislation in Korea.

Ms Hong Seungsoon : The history of the Korean vinyl housing community goes back to the 1980s when the Korean Government started building apartments for development so the victims like me in the apartment area were kicked out by the government and then moved to another place. So we started building vinyl houses especially near Seoul, whole vinyl communities. These vinyl houses are increasing; so far there are 48,000 people living in vinyl houses near Seoul. Among them the five leaders have the communities organized and the three villages have planned to build a community organization. Last year five communities got their own address - this is a big challenge and issue in Korea, getting an address is very important because we cannot get rights for government public housing without an address in Korea. Five of the communities are now networking with the ACCA program, and last year we joined ACCA small projects. I am the representative of Honey Bee Community, and I want to introduce the changes and achievements that have been going on.



In Honey Bee village we have three small projects. One thing is we established a recycling center by ourselves, we collect stuff in the village or outside and then once a month it is collected, we collect it and clean it and we earn money, and we have started saving it. Secondly the vinyl material of the houses is a big fire risk - the whole village can disappear, we have had this experience. So we have put 32 fire extinguishers in the community and one of the fire departments in Korea has supported this community to do this (with the fire extinguishers). The third thing is that 20 households opened their own bank account. Last year since the ACCA team visited and inspired us, they talked a lot and communicated and we understood and now 20 households have started with the savings program.

The other villages are now planning, no achievements, they just want to share and learn from the ACCA program. Honey Bee Community has to move to another area, there is another development by the government so they have big troubles now and they have to make another plan for the future.

Mr. Shim Hanbyul : I will introduce two different situations in Seoul; they are not part of the ACCA Program. I think they have some lessons for us.

1. The low-rise redevelopment of the Yongma Village : In the first case, Yongma village, it's related to the new landscape agreement legislation. A new law in Korea was established in 2007; it is the landscape agreement system, this means all the residents in the village have the right to landscape agreement about their landscape.

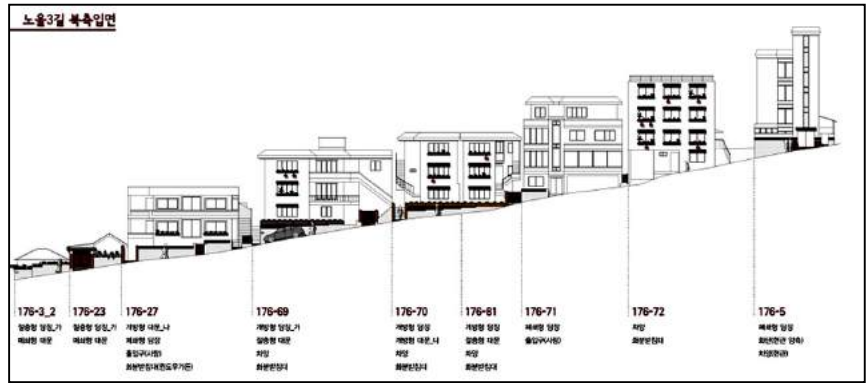


There are two aspects; as for government they want to preserve the detached houses for the city landscape, and on the other side the community architect wants participatory planning. Firstly in Korea we have to build a community network, because in Korea people frequently move because of the rental system, every household in Seoul moves every 2.6 years statistically. They don't have time for making community networks, which is one of the problems.

So the community architects have to find the community network and strengthen them. Next they survey and build, and since this is a new system they have to explain to the community dwellers what the landscape agreement is. For the first

case I have three issues, as it has now started to proceed, and there is no guarantee for community participation because organized regulations for the bidding system. We have to spend our budget by the bidding system so the community architect cannot take part in the construction procedure.

In the second case, another site with problems, the physical conditions are that the houses are high up stairs and old people live here alone, with little income. It needs to be changed. There is a need for funding independent from government.



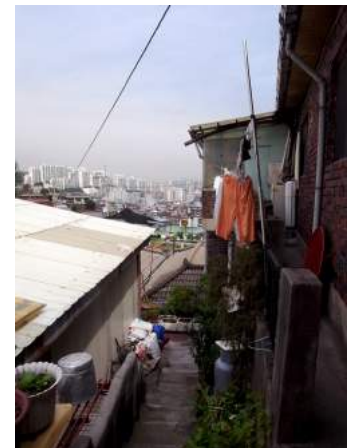
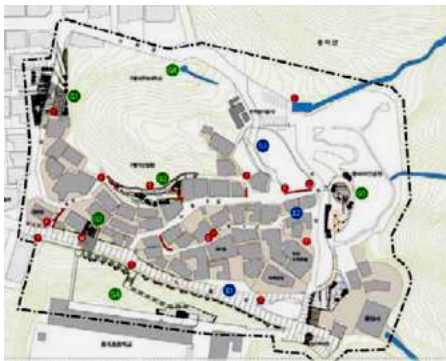
2. The low-rise redevelopment of a village in Seongbuk Borough : We have two levels of local government :

Seoul Metropolitan Government and Seongbuk Borough Government. They have different attitudes and make different decisions. Conditions in Korea are different than in your countries I think. It is a problem of housing policy, we may have rapid economic growth but it has sacrificed housing. Still we have ongoing struggles for community participation.



The new law in Korea, the 2007 landscape act

- To improve, create, manage the urban landscape
- "Urban landscape" covers physical condition and also cultural, historical context
- Defines several tools for urban landscape
- One of the tools is "Landscape agreement", which defines community participation(agreement between residents) to be compulsory process



7. Small-scale upgrading in urban slums in Cambodia

Mr. Srey Sideth + Ms. Ny Kimchhorn + Mr. Chhim Sophanaroat + Ms. Chou Lennylen

The team from Cambodia included two community leaders (Mr. Srey Sideth from Roessei Keo District in Phnom Penh, and Ms. Ny Kimchhorn the city of Kampong Cham), two development workers from the Urban Poor Development Fund (Mr. Chhim Sophanaroat and Ms. Chou Lennylen), and one young community architect who works with the UPDF and the national community savings network (Mr. Keo Sovandara). Together they gave a lively presentation on a range of small scale initiatives in Cambodia showing the major differences they are having in people's everyday lives.

Mr. Srey Sideth: I live next to the Tonle Sap River in Phnom Penh, in a very large community. In my community we have floods when it's raining or the water is high. That's why we have started to organize the community in 2000 and started saving groups, and made plans to upgrade the roads. We started the savings group with 59 members now we're up to over 100 families. The members of the community are fishermen. In the rainy season it is difficult to walk, especially for the children going to school. The YPs and community architects have come to help us to make a plan and do community mapping.

When we implemented the road improvements we had participation from the community and all the local authorities came and helped us. After the road upgrading we started to think about the green community, an environmental community. Before, the road was so small - it was 0.8 meters - so it was difficult to get access. The community members negotiated with the local authority and the people who live near the road to widen the road to 4 meters. And now we have a place for community meetings also. When we have ceremonies and members of the community have weddings we use this place as well. So thank you to the YPs, the YPs have come to sleep and eat with the community and it is difficult. The reason we had success in this project is because we had a saving network. I wish all the participants in this meeting to have a great trip and have a great shared experience.

The team from Cambodia sings a song.



Mr. Chhim Sophanaroat : Before any community starts an upgrading project, first we organize a meeting and do community mapping. The pictures you see are drawn by the people themselves, not the architects. We try to make sure the local authority is involved with the community. We have on-site upgrading projects and we have reblocking of houses that are on the road. *(showing slides)*

On-site upgrading at Samaki : This is the Samaki community, in Phnom Penh, that was built along the railway tracks and needs to move away from the railway a little bit, maybe 20 meters.

Land-sharing at Borei Keila : And this is the Borei Keila Community in Phnom Penh, which is also on government land. They presented the idea to the government that they wanted to share the land with the rest of the community. This community in the old place found it difficult to live and the government wanted to do upgrading so they moved to another site, but the government still has to provide infrastructure. They have a community committee for the responsibility for things like community finances and materials committee.

Community upgrading : This community was difficult to access and the people had a concept idea about what they wanted to do (to make a pathway). They put the rocks on the road and made a bridge. After they were successful with the upgrading they had friends visit from another place in the country, in different provinces and share experience so they can learn from each other. This is the role of community architects. They must go to the community directly and learn and inform us so we can get the knowledge. The children saw the idea and they wanted to make the plan for the place for play.



The community aspect of YPs is as the ones who make the plans and mapping for building the house. After we had a meeting with the community and we had done planning and mapping already, we chose to meet with the provincial government. After we upgraded the houses we invited the deputy Prime Minister of Agriculture to the open the ceremony of the house. Beside the community aspect we can learn with the community like in planting trees and water. In Cambodia we have a water festival so we invited the YPs to join us.

Noot comments : In the role of the architect you're not just the designer but sometimes you work with the locals together, like the presentation from Indonesia which showed us how to socialize, integrate with the culture or the religion. And also the role of the local is that they are not just having someone design for them but they also do need guidance. It is two ways of learning, we learn from them and they learn from us. With the small scale upgrading projects they build trust and the relationship between the architect and the local. This also helps the community to discover their strength, the power in them and how they can make changes for their lives. As we noticed this process is a long process, you need to be patient, try to learn and not only empower the locals but also empower us as architects as well.

May comments : Many of the presentations have shown how these small scale upgrading projects produced a big impact and big change, and how this has managed to attract attention of other stakeholders, of the local government, other NGOs, other communities, and get their interest and build their confidence to do the same in their own communities. This is the large scale impact of very small things.

- I think this small scale upgrading has the power to bring people together, and the role of the architect there is how in this technical process you can assist, it's kind of a technical process but as architects we are able to provide opportunities for as many members of the communities to be involved, not just the community leader or the federation leader but everybody. These are the goals of mapping and getting people to get the materials. I think the role of the architect as facilitator is there, trying to help them to visualize their plans, seeing what formally comes out of people's ideas.
- Another things that has been pointed out is the challenges of the community participation, that the architect has a place - amongst the countries that have been presented there are different stages; Cambodia, Philippines and Sri Lanka have very strong community networks, and it is quite easy for the community architect to come in and work with the people because there is already an established community and a network that is guiding them. In the places like Korea for example there is a real struggle to start the process with the people; there are very prohibitive legislations and things that keep it from developing much. Maybe the same in Viet Nam.
- And also we have different stages like Indonesia, they're starting to work with the communities, but there is no organization, there's no federation. So things like trying to play the role of the community organizer is what they are trying to do, trying to enlighten the people on how they have a community plan but at the same time mobilize them, which is difficult without support from a network. But somehow these are beginning something. As Irvana said it has been very tiring working one year doing just socializing, working with people, talking with people, and after one year they haven't yet come out with anything concrete. But they're still starting.

Somsook comments on the special role these kinds of small projects play in the process : With these small projects actually many locals said they are mixed with the big project. This is a very important role of the small projects, because for many of the communities to start something complex is very difficult (like in Indonesia's case). Sometimes a small project can help encourage them for that long process. Because it is a very simple intervention in the scale of people. Then people start thinking, they have something they have completed, they want to put something together, we use the small project as a way to bring people together. With that simple complete achievement, they can move into

something more complex, like land, like big housing projects. This is a very important role of small projects. Because there are so many small needs in the community, and we have to use it is a strategic way to get the community to start. So as itself it does not have a very sophisticated design (as architects), but it is the starting point of the people's design process. To the people's process which is starting then we can say the engine has started working, the engine of the people. Complex processes can go much, much easier. Then the architect can join the people.

The other point is that by starting a small project the community have change, it is a way to change the relationship. Because people normally are static, passive, they listen to other people. By starting to do a small project they change into the owner of the project. They are now thinking, doing, implementing. And this key of changing relationships from poor people who don't have knowledge, don't know what to do, into the doer, into the owner of the implementation. It increases the level of the work and the activity. We use small projects to change relationships from being recipients, being always the thing that someone has to see and do for the people, to now the people standing up and doing it. Small things are good achievements. This is a very, very strategic issue, and I think it is the key if you use small projects. Not only for the welfare of the cause, if you don't have toilet have a little bit of toilet, that is a small project. We can use a small project in a strategic manner to get people to come together, work together and then move to a more difficult issue. Also in the small project it's not only the conventional leader who tells what should be, but the project opens up a big space for the people in the community to participate. They've got more space for people come, it is a new system. You are getting more people to come into a community process, to build it to make it stronger.



The community walkway in one of Phnom Penh's riverside communities before upgrading (*above*) and after the community paved it (*right*).

Somsook comments: These small projects can play a very important role in several ways.

- **Starting with something small, simple that people can handle :** Because in many poor communities and many situations, it is very difficult to start off with something complex like a full-scale housing project. As we saw in the Kampung Pulo case in Indonesia, there was a need for a long, long process of developing understanding before anything could happen. And we still need that good understanding in communities, but sometimes the small projects can help shorten that long process. Because the small projects represent a very simple intervention, in the scale and pace of people.
- **Allowing people to think, examine their needs and start something right away :** The small projects allow people to start thinking about their immediate needs, and they want to do something together. And they can use the small projects as a way to link and bring the different people together. And with that simple, concrete achievement of the small project - whether it be a drain, a road paving, a water supply system or a community center - then it could move into more complex and more difficult like land negotiations or a big housing project.
- **"Warming up the engine" of the people's process :** This is the very important role of small projects, because there are so many small needs in the community. And we have to use these kinds of small projects in a strategic way to get the community people to start. The small projects may not have any

sophisticated design, as architects may like, but they are the starting point for people's own design, for the design of the people's process. And through this people's process, which the small projects help start and "warm up" like an engine. When the people's process engine starts working like this, then the more complex process can go much, much easier. Then the architects can join the people, instead of leading them, in their process of dealing with the larger, more complex and more structural issues of land and housing.

- **Transforming communities from passive to active** : By starting the small projects, communities change, the relationships within communities change. Because people are normally static, passive, listen to other people, but by starting doing the small projects they are changing into the active ones, the doers, the owners of the project. They are now thinking, doing, implementing. And this key work of changing relationship of poor people who don't have knowledge, don't have energy, don't know what to do, into the doer and the owner of the implementation. Even though the project may be small, this transformation process begins in these action. This is the key issue of the small projects: using the small projects to change these relationships from being recipients, now people stand up and do it themselves, and use this first small achievement to move further.
- **New involvement in the community** : Also, in the small projects, when communities start doing something, it's not just the conventional leaders who have to tell you all the time what it should be, but the projects open big space for ordinary people in the community to participate with that new space. And through these projects a new system emerges in the community, which brings more people to come into the community process.
- **Small projects not for welfare delivery** : We can't use these small projects only for welfare purposes: if you don't have water, you get a little water with the project. That is the welfare purpose. But if we use the small projects in a strategic manner, that people come together, move together and achieve something together, and then move to a more difficult issue together.

City planning as a "coup d'etat" : Professionals sometimes act like God, looking at cities as though they were a blank piece of paper to draw any design they like on! City plans are like a coup d'etat!

- Instead, we participate in people's development and make a better quality development in the process.
- We are changing the culture of what architects do.

PANEL 5 :

Comprehensive community upgrading

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the fifth panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was moderated by Mr. Hugo Moline (a young community architect from Sydney, Australia) and Ms. Supitcha Tovivich ("Nong") (a lecturer in the architecture faculty at Silapakorn University in Bangkok), and the following seven teams :

- **PHILIPPINES** : Self-help slum reblocking in the large slum at the National Government Center Slum, in Quezon City. Presentation by Mr. Rollie Palacio, a community architect with the Quezon City-based technical support NGO Panirahanan.
- **PHILIPPINES** : On-site upgrading of the Lower Tipolo Homeowners Association, Inc (LTHAI) in Mandaue, Philippines. Presentation by Ms. Vhal Libutaque, a community architect with PACSII (Philippines Action for Community-Led Shelter Initiatives), which is the support organization for the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP).
- **NEPAL** : Upgrading the Salyani Community, in the city of Bharatpur, Nepal. Presentation by Ms. Lumanti Joshi, a young architect working with the Kathmandu-based NGO Lumanti Support Group for Shelter.
- **SOUTHERN AFRICA** : An overview of the housing situation of the urban poor in southern Africa, by Mr. Shawn Cuff, a community architect with long experience, working with the NGO People's Environmental Planning (PEP) in Cape Town.
- **LAO PDR** : The country's first-ever on-site urban slum upgrading project at the Nong Duang Thong Community in Vientiane. Presentation by Mr. Sihalarth Pisith, a professor of Architecture at the National University of Lao PDR.
- **CAMBODIA** : Several housing projects in Cambodian cities, being supported by ACCA. Presentation by Mr. Keo Sovandara, a young community architect working with the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) in Phnom Penh.
- **THAILAND** : Several housing upgrading projects being implemented around Thailand, with support from CODI's Baan Mankong City-Wide Upgrading Program. Presentation by two representatives from the Northern Region Community Builders Network ("Chang Chumchon"), with two supporters to translate: one from the University in Chiang Rai, and one from CODI (Community Organizations Development Institute).



1. Self-help reblocking of the country's largest slum at NGC, Philippines

Mr. Rollie Palacio

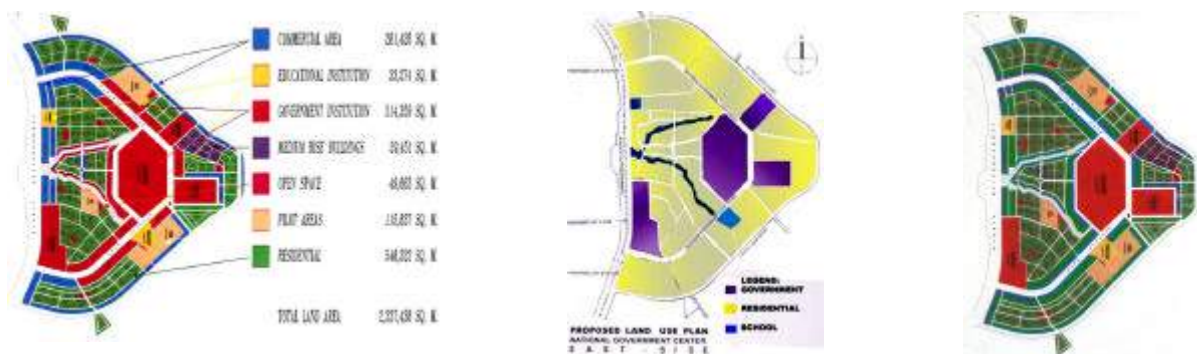
Rollie Palacio is a community architect, who is one of the founders of a Quezon City-based technical support NGO called Panirahanan, with a long record of assisting poor communities to develop upgrading, reblocking and housing projects, both in-situ and at relocation areas. Panirahanan (which is an old Filipino word for "human settlements") was set up in 1992 by a group of 20 idealistic young architects, just out of university, and has since grown into a team of about 25 still-idealistic but not-so-young architects, urban planners and development workers. Over the past 18 years, Panirahanan has built up a considerable portfolio of work. They have assisted urban poor federations to study government plans and develop alternative plans and they've provided technical assistance to self-help community upgrading and relocation projects in 106 urban poor communities - mostly in Metro Manila. They figure that the cost of providing this community architecture assistance works out to about 100 pesos (\$2) per household, even though only some of the work has been funded by donor grants or contracts from NGOs, and a lot of it has been voluntary.

One of Panirahanan's biggest and longest-lived projects has been its 15-year-long working partnerships with the Sama-Sama people's organization, which is based in the sprawling slum within the National Government Center (NGC) in Quezon City. Panirahanan has helped Sama-Sama to develop alternative redevelopment plans for the slum and continues to assist its member communities to reblock and buy the land they are now squatters on. With some 60,000 households, NGC is by far the country's largest slum, and the reblocking and land acquisition process which Sama-Sama and Panirahanan are assisting is the country's largest urban poor housing project.

Rollie : The National Government Center (NGC) is a vast squatter settlement of more than 60,000 houses. The area is divided into two parts: the NGC's West-side Economic Controlled Zone (status: negotiation phase), and the NGC's East-side, which is where the people's organization Sama-Sama is working, to support a very large community-led on-site upgrading process within the 238-hectare NGC Eastside. This project demonstrates how a people's organization which acts as a network of urban poor communities can mobilize people and government resources and effectively implement a participatory planning process (which we call in the Philippines "*transactive*" planning) on a large-scale. This reblocking and upgrading project in NGC East-side began in 1995 and is ongoing. The efforts of this enormous squatter settlement to resist eviction, organize itself, secure its land and develop its communities and housing, has gone through several major phases :



Phase One : Developing and negotiating an alternative "People's Plan" to counter the government's demolition plan : In the first phase, after years of resisting eviction attempts, Sama-Sama and the federation of communities within NGC lobbied the government to approve an alternative plan for the NGC area which they developed themselves, with help from Panirahanan - a plan which involved the on-site upgrading of the area's existing urban poor housing, with minimal reblocking of the existing layout. The government had another idea, however. The government's "table plan" involved the total demolition of the whole site and the building of new, contractor-built housing blocks, which the residents would then have to then build houses, and get contractors to do those projects. So the first stage was the people's onsite reblocking plan vs. the government's indicative plan. Eventually, the community was able to successfully get the government to cancel its redevelopment plan for NGC and a compromise plan was agreed to, with no demolitions, no displacements and following the people's idea of minimal reblocking of the NGC's existing housing stock.



(LEFT) The government's first plan, which called for the destruction of most of the existing housing stock in NGC Eastside, **(MIDDLE)** the people's alternative plan, and **(RIGHT)** the final compromise plan, agreed upon by the government, which more-less follows the people's plan developed with support from Sama-Sama and Panirahanan.

Phase Two: Surveying and mapping the existing communities by people : The second phase involved doing the participatory "transactive" re-planning of the existing squatter areas within NGC. The first step of this re-planning involved surveying and mapping the existing communities, which people learned to do themselves first. Later on, these people's "structural maps" were later formalized by licensed surveyors - a requirement for the government. With some training support from Panirahanan, the people were able to plot all the houses, measure the boundaries and calculate the area of each of each household's land, as well as the area of each member community (NGC is divided into hundreds of smaller communities). Panirahanan did the initial training to help people do all this themselves. Because NGC is a very big area, no architects could ever do all this surveying and mapping themselves, so in our case, the architects' role was basically to train the local people to do it. Then, it was the leaders who became para-architects or engineers. Through their dialogue the community came up with options. Sometimes alleys were nonexistent so they had to negotiate where the open space would be, and the connecting alleys.

Phase Three: Community planning for reblocking planning within each community : These are the steps involved in this community planning process (summarized from Rollie's PowerPoint presentation)

1. Validation of all households on their existing structural community map, corrections made
2. Determination of possible household displacement or generated lots in the area
3. Workshop on their basic elements of an ideal community design
4. Review of government minimum design standards
5. Other important planning issues/ pertinent information/ updates that need to be discussed
6. Break into smaller design teams (usually 8 to 10 per cluster) taking into consider basic planning parameters to their reblocking plan
7. Plenary presentation of the entire cluster's reblocking plan, making necessary corrections and refining it into one cohesive Community Development Plan
8. Majority decision needs to be made, through signatures/thumb mark in their final proposed Community Development Plan
9. Submission for final government approval.



Phase Four : Getting a professional engineer to formalize the people's reblocking plans for each community : Getting a For the fourth phase there was a participatory community development plan done, what we call transactive planning but it's now got a different texture. The first transactive plan is more like straw, but now here they have already got their contracted engineer who is accredited (you cannot get a geodetic engineer from the outside; they must be government accredited).



Phase Five : Integrating all the individual community reblocking plans into a large, master reblocking plan for NGC : Phase five involves the integration of the large scale reblocking. When there are issues they need to talk, so community A, with their contracted geodetic engineer talk with community B together with their geodetic engineer. When this is finally resolved/corrected this is then submitted to the government for CDP (Community Development Program, which takes care of the process of allowing community people to buy the government land they occupy) approval.



Phase Six : Doing the actual reblocking of each community, by people themselves. Then in phase six, if there are no major problems or disagreements with the plans, and the community's reblocking plans have been approved by the government, the next step is for the community people to actually do their self-help reblocking - which involves moving some houses a little, demolishing all of part of some houses to make way for wider and straighter roads and alleys and open spaces, making all the physical adjustments which bring that community up to the minimum housing standards set by the government - which are a requirement for the people to buy the land. There is no government intervention at this phase - communities have to do all this work themselves.

Phase Seven : Making a formal proposal to the government to accept the reblocking and start the process of negotiating the land purchase : In phase seven, reblocking is more or less finished, and this is when the people make their community proposal to buy the land from the government. The intervention of the technical team in this phase is pretty simple - just showing the community members how to make their letter proposals to the government, it's a formality and not complex. And eventually they will submit this to the government.

Phase Eight : Individual incremental housing improvements or reconstruction : In this phase, people do their self-help incremental housing improvements or complete reconstruction of their houses, depending on the situation. Usually this is done individually, in NGC, and it depends on whether the

family has savings or access to loans, if they have money they construct and improve immediately. If they have no money, they can delay this stage and continue to live in whatever kind of make-shift shelter they can manage, and improve it incrementally.

Phase Nine : Negotiating for help getting basic services and infrastructure in the newly-reblocked communities : In this phase, the communities negotiate with their local governments and the local utility providers for help getting formal electricity and water connections installed, as well as asking for help installing roads, drains, sewers, and other common infrastructure. Many communities at this phase have been able to negotiate to get their local government to help pave the roads and provide subsidized services connections, since they are poor communities.

Phase Ten : Negotiating the contract to buy the land and starting the land payments : Each community has a registered Homeowners Association, which is the legal body required to sign the contract with the government to buy the land (not individuals!). So the last phase is for the community's Homeowners Association to negotiate and sign a "Contract to sell" with the government. Since the land is public land, the government usually agrees to sell it at a very cheap price which is far below the market rate - usually about 700 pesos per square meter (the market price for land in the NGC area is about 30,000 Pesos per square meter). Usually, the land is purchased over a 10 or 15-year term, with monthly installments that are based on the amount of land they occupy, and are affordable to most poor families. The payments are made by each individual family to their Homeowners Association, and the Homeowners Association (which has the contract with the NHA to buy the land) makes one collective monthly payment. When the land is paid off ten or 15 years later, then each family will get individual land title.



There are three major federations active in NGC - Sama-Sama is only one of the three. What is interesting is that when communities under one federation - like Sama-Sama - learn the technology of doing all these steps themselves, they are willing to share what they've learned with other federations. The whole process is self-help driven, and the role of the architects is to facilitate this self-help spirit, not to subvert it by doing things ourselves. The role of the government is to provide what is required of them, to provide decent shelter. One very serious problem is that there is typically a lot of corruption in the government bureaucracy, and since the communities have to interact with various agencies and local and national government bodies all along the way, this corruption often leads to many delays along the way - it also causes and widens rifts within the communities, between those who agree to reblock and those who resist.

2. People-managed upgrading of the LTHAI Community, in Mandaue, Philippines

Ms. Vhal Libutuque

Vhal Libutuque is a young community architect who has been working for the past two years as a volunteer with PACSII (Philippines Action for Community-Led Shelter Initiatives), which is the support organization for the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP). One of the community projects she has been assisting as been the on-site upgrading of the Lower Tipolo Homeowners Association, Inc (LTHAI), in the city of Mandaue, in Cebu Province, Philippines.

Background on the housing project at LTHAI : LTHAI is one of several large poor communities located on public land in the center of Mandaue, which after years of eviction struggles the government has agreed to donate to the people - but only after they organize themselves and form homeowners associations and reblock their communities according to minimum government standards. LTHAI was burned to the ground in a devastating fire in 2007. 247 houses were destroyed and 913 people were left homeless. But the community used the crisis of the fire as an opportunity to start from scratch and totally re-plan their community, fill the land above flood-level and plan a full new housing project. The LTHAI is now working on their land-filling, drainage design, water facilities have been worked on and the first 14 houses have been completed, using compressed-earth blocks the community people make themselves, to lower building costs. The success of this project has had a great impact in Mandaue - showing other slum communities and other stakeholders in the city how a well-organized poor community can plan, manage and carry out a large-scale upgrading project. When the fire happened in LTHAI in 2007, the Homeless People's Federation, which is very strong in the city of Mandaue, responded to the disaster and they met with



the people and together identified what their needs are. With solid community leadership and a history of good working relationships with the local government, they set up their response to post-disaster reconstruction.

Vhal : The first initiative the community at LTHAI undertook was land-filling. 85% of the site they occupied was swampy land. The community organized construction committees to implement the project, and they asked for assistance from the local government for equipment, and technical support from universities for calculating the volume and the height of land-fill necessary. After the land-fill was completed, the community said *"Now we want to develop our land"*. So my organization PACSII, together with other technical professionals, conducted a site-development workshop with the community people. Technical professionals provided input into how to develop the site properly. The communities were the ones designing and conceptualizing their own site, and at the same time the workshops helped them develop their self confidence and improved their relationships with each other.



After the site development planning, the community identified more projects which led to housing. One of these projects was a drainage system design. They were presented two options for the design of the drainage system, and as soon as they had finalized their design, the technical professionals worked with the community people to estimate the costs. It was the community who provided all the labor, as well as managed the supervision, manage their materials purchasing and managed the whole project. So it was the technical professionals' role to help them develop these skills initially, through the various workshops we organized with LTHAI.



Next, along with the drainage, they tried to rehabilitate their water-supply facilities - drinking water facilities and water pumps as well. And then together with housing design workshops the community and technical professionals presented a layout of alternative technology for sanitation. The people had an extremely limited budget for sanitation - that's why we tried to research as many possible options for low-cost sanitation as possible. We came up with this technology which is called "Kotec" for their septic tanks.

The process here was that first the community conducted, or were given trainings and workshops, starting from planning, from designing, up to construction management, to procurement, to conceptualizing and trying to get their choice of house, their own dream house. They conducted a series of workshops in order to arrive at one prototype for the whole community. The community members designed and conceptualized as well as planned their own houses. This was done with the input of the technical professionals. These technical professionals who did the housing design workshops were the ones formalizing their dream houses. The options were presented to the community. At the same time, in order to achieve all this the knowledge is shared with them and we try, we always try in the initiatives to level off the learning between the community and the technical professionals.

Since there was a limited budget (we have a ceiling of US\$1,000 per project for housing and we have a lot of 20 m2) and conventional construction in the Philippines is quite expensive we have tried to use alternative technology for this housing. So with the help of our fellow YPs in Iloilo we have used alternative technology and this has been a big help with the community to achieve two story housing, two story row housing.



Comprehensive upgrading in this community does not involve just one person; it involves a lot of disciplines, a lot of technical professionals.



This project has had a great impact, not just to the LTHAI but as well to other communities surrounding LTHAI. LTHAI is part of a 9.2 hectare slum area and part of it is also starting to upgrade. This upgrading really helped them prove that the community can develop a big project. It has also been a way to start talking more to institutions to provide help doing the workshops in our initiative. We have arranged and made more initiatives with the Local Government Units. Before they did not believe in the capacity of the community to upgrade themselves, but after the land-filling project they believed that the community does have the capacity, and they tried to support the LTHAI all throughout their initiatives in housing until now. As well, more technical professionals are

interested in being involved and trying; they wanted to help this community upgrade themselves.

In summary, in planning and design, the community are the ones doing the design, doing the conceptualizing and doing the planning. The technical professionals are the ones who facilitate this process, and we try to present various technical options to the community so that they can make a better decision about which technical options work best for their needs and their budget - all of which they decide for themselves. And then we assist with the conditions of the site. In doing the actual construction, the community is the one managing the construction, supervising, purchasing and managing materials, providing and managing all the labor. The technical professionals are the ones that enhance and make use of their skills and facilitate better participation of the community. This process is being adopted by two of the comprehensive upgrading communities in the Philippines now, which are the MMVHAI (Malibu-Matemco Village Housing Association, Inc) and now they are also starting their land-filling project. And also we have one in Mindanao with the Purok Rosas Neighborhood Association, and they are already starting their initiatives and housing design workshop and they are now starting their reblocking. They think that if the community will just be given the chance to work with technical professionals and the technical professionals are able to uplift and enhance the community's self confidence in bringing up themselves, we can achieve a better society.

Supitcha Tovovich ("Nong") comments : From previous presentations or different panels we can see that there are many small scale upgrading projects and many small actions, like you work with kids, you're doing something small. And you know, small is beautiful, but it's not enough. Because the problem of slums is so huge, and you need a certain type of standardization. And also in the Philippines case it is quite clear that what you need is a partnership and you have to work with the government, you have to work with universities, you have to work with technical professionals, and how can you engage everyone in your process? It's very challenging. And at the same time, how can you scale up, how can you create something? People say there is no formula in slum upgrading, but at the same time you need a certain type of framework that you use in order to use it for the next project, in order to scale up. Not only is it physical, but it's also about social and political.

3. Upgrading the Salyani Community, in the city of Bharatpur, Nepal

Ms. Lumanti Joshi

Lumanti Joshi is a young architect who has been working for several years with the Kathmandu-based NGO Lumanti Support Group for Shelter. Over the past year and a half, she has been involved in supporting an important pilot community-driven upgrading and housing project in a small squatter settlement on Forestry Department Land, in the fast-growing provincial town of Bharatpur, in southern Nepal, with support from ACHR's ACCA Program. The community upgrading project at the Salyani Community is just part of the city-wide community upgrading process in Bharatpur, which involves community savings, networking, mapping, linking with the local government and carrying out small infrastructure upgrading projects.



Lumanti : First we did mapping with the poor people in the city. They helped the technical people who were involved in the process to come up with a map to determine how many poor communities there are in the city and what opportunities there are to collaborate with the government, the key stakeholders. Most of the poor communities are located along the border of the city, which is next to the national park. Most of the communities are members of the forestry department.

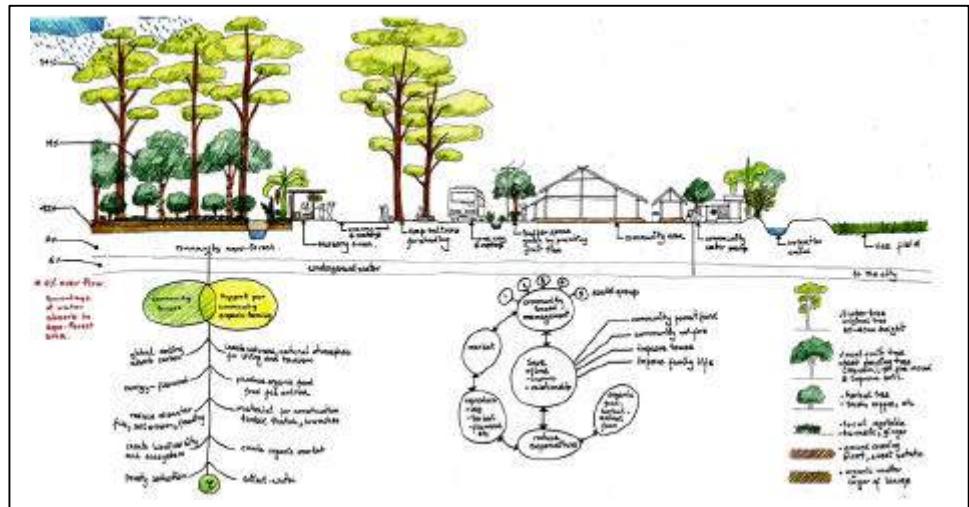
As preparatory work before initiating the process in the city we conducted several meetings. This was done to bring the people in the city to work together, through strengthening the networking between the communities through the city and by doing community mapping workshops, and the technical people having regular meetings with the community members. The existing saving groups within the community were strengthened, not only for the sake of saving but also as a process to bring the people together. As an important part of the project for the long term sustainability it was important to collaborate with many stakeholders, like the municipality and the community based organization forestry department. In the case of Nepal if you collaborate with the municipality, you can tap into the resources of the municipality. We conducted a series of workshops with community members to help them draw pictures of the community, of their living, of their strengths and things like that.



With the Salyani community we did comprehensive planning. Before the project was started the community was in a very bad condition. There was no ventilation in the houses, it was a compactly laid out community. The community comprised of 31 families who had been relocated here by the government from different informal settlements in the same ward. Each of the families had been given a lot of the size 5.15m by 16m. The community is located along the community forest and the forest is a buffer zone with the national park.

When we initiated the community design process there were several steps. In the beginning, for the community themselves to understand the site better compilation of the data and preliminary measurements of the existing site were conducted by the youth of the community. Then the people were divided into smaller groups to discuss the problems they're facing; the constraints they're facing were then listed and prioritized so they could decide what should be the first one to be tackled. The process helped to identify the leaders and the skills within the community. There were construction laborers and masons within the community so they formed a team to implement the project later.

Then there was a discussion on the opportunities and how these can be exploited for the project, like the forestry department, how to use the local resources, the forest, the neighboring areas. Then there was discussion about how their ideal community should be not just individual houses. Before the process was initiated the community wanted individual houses, they didn't think about living together, there were squabbles in the community. When the



process was started they realized how they could make their community better. They were taken to several projects, several houses in the neighborhood who were using biogas and things like that. Then several examples of vernacular architecture in and around the area using local resources were studied and analyzed and presented to the community. Several references from other countries were presented. This provided the basis for the development of the onsite upgrading design in Salyani. The women in the community came together to draw the maps, there were children explaining about how their dream house would look. And the youth in the community helped to measure the existing conditions in the community.

As architects, we facilitate the community members to realize what their problems are and how they can be solved. We provide them with alternatives as to how the community can be made better. When we started the process, the women in the community drew their dream houses and they showed in the map where the constraints are. The community is in a lowland so it needed land-filling - when we discussed this they came up with the idea to collaborate with the municipality and they managed to get funds to do the land-filling in the area. We helped them understand their ideas in forms of drawings, models. With the community taking their ideas and learning from each other we developed a plan to use local resources and make the community self-reliant. This is a completely community managed housing project; the community is responsible for the management of the funds, procurement of the materials, building the houses. There were several committees formed within the community who were responsible for various activities of the construction. The land and the infrastructure for the housing was provided by the municipality. There was maximum participation of women in the decision making and management of the funds, the women were involved from the planning development phase, and also making crucial decisions in the construction.

Since affordability was the major issue for most of the people the approach was incremental. They adopted the incremental approach, starting from small and getting to bigger. The community decided it should be a loan basis, and they took a loan depending on their financial status. The repayments of the loans have been very regular and very organized. The building has been entirely by the people, they use a variety of materials for construction, and you can see bamboo, bricks, and hollow concrete bricks. Through negotiation they managed to get timber from the department of forestry which is six times cheaper than the market price. They also negotiated with the forestry department to use the open space next to their community as their collective farming area.



What changed in the community through this process? The network of the settlements in the city of Bharatpur grew stronger than ever. There is maximum involvement of the women, a project management team in the community was formed and is functioning very smoothly, all the projects are handled by the management committee who are all community members. There is a constant exchange between people of ideas; it's providing a city wide momentum. There's more involvement of the stakeholders, and now the people have started collectively to think about a common goal. Before the municipality used to see the squatters as the bad part of the organization, now the perception of the municipality of the poor has changed, and they are considering them as the key change agent in the development of the city. The neighboring municipality have shown an interest in starting a project in their city.

Many challenges : The challenges have been that before the people were used to having NGOs and government being service providers, so in the beginning it was very difficult to get the process started. Now the people are working together to get their common goal. One of the difficulties we had was to get the people to use the local resources and local technology. The other problem is that due to the political instability in the country the municipality has not been able to give as much as they had committed before. It was a mutual learning process for the architecture team and the community. We learnt from each other and helped to initiate the people's process in Nepal, which is a completely new concept for the country.



Supitcha Tovovich ("Nong") comments : From the presentations from the Philippines and Nepal, we saw that to achieve comprehensive upgrading we need two things: first we need architectural processes that mean more than just physical things, and second, we have to be concerned with the impact of more than just a house. Concerning the first one we have to consider architecture process as something so much more than a physical thing. You can see by the example of the methodology used by them that you divide the working group into small groups so then they can feel confident to say what they want to say. And by doing it in a small group women or children or the elderly or someone who is less powerful in the community has their space to say what they want, have the space to say what their problem is. By doing that architectural design process is not physical anymore, but political, that you try to change the power relations in the community. And it's something that I think many architects haven't been trained to do, to think about architectural processes in that way at all.

Also have heard about a very interesting methodology, which can be used in other projects: the dream house, the community mapping and the measurement of the houses. I think that the aim of using the method from the community architect is that the role of the community architect is to encourage the people to understand their own needs and their own situation. This is the very first step of empowerment; you have to support and catalyze them to believe in themselves, to have confidence to say that you don't need an expert to say what you want. And the second point is that you have to encourage them to be able to act for themselves collectively as a group. And the third one would be to reflect on their own actions and by doing so I think that's the very first step to scale up the idea and to make architectural process as a comprehensive as it can.

How can we reach the scale of the slum problem? We need a flexible framework, I think you can see a guideline, that you need participation, you need community mapping, you need a workshop, action site planning. And I think we need a space like this to share the challenges, like Lumanti just mentioned that some people are not used to being the center of the process of change, and some methodology might not work in some settings. I hope we have time to reflect on the methodology used by community architects as well.

4. An overview of the self-help housing situation in southern Africa

Mr. Shawn Cuff

Shawn Cuff is a community architect with long experience working with poor communities in South Africa. He works with the NGO People's Environmental Planning (PEP) in Cape Town. In his presentation, Shawn spoke briefly for four organizations in three different countries in southern Africa (Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa) - all of which work within the principles of SDI (Slum/Shack Dwellers International). Shawn talked about how these groups work in the African context and how they compare to the Asian context.

Shawn : The common link between all of us representatives from southern Africa is that we work on the same SDI principles, which are pretty much the same as you use, the same key points: savings, enumeration, women's participation, community action planning and horizontal exchange of ideas.



The consistent themes that I have seen through every country's presentation over the last two days have been exactly those. All variations on the same theme. But you could see in all of them the same process. What has amazed me is that there appears to be a lot more success in those processes in the Asian context than there is in the African context.

It has worked well, we have built an excess of 18,000 houses over the last 15 years, a small drop in the ocean compared to the need, but it is a remarkable achievement considering what we're up against. I think one of the biggest problems, and the biggest differences that we have between Asia and South Africa, (which should be a bonus but actually it's an enormous burden), is that the South African government gives all poor people, (that is families earning below the equivalent of 500 dollars) a grant - a grant to build a house and put in infrastructure. What this grant has done is created a sense of entitlement amongst the poor people. They want to sit back, and they are waiting, they are waiting for government to provide housing, they are waiting for NGOs to provide housing. They are waiting for it to land in their laps. And this is a mindset that we are struggling to shift. There is certainly a lot of energy amongst communities but simultaneously there is a lot of apathy.



What one of our roles - certainly one of my roles - is trying to act as the interface between the formal and the informal. Together with the subsidy that I mentioned earlier come a lot of very prescriptive conditions; how to spend the money, standards, etc. So my role is to constantly challenge the standards, challenge the bureaucracy, but simultaneously try to find the middle ground between the completely informal and the formal.

I would like to invite you to speak to the other people of our group from the various countries. They have different situations; they're up against different problems. I think the work that we're doing is based on very similar principles to yourselves. Different challenges in different contexts, but we certainly do have a common language.

Comment by Hugo : I think that raises a very interesting question of how we can use these techniques that we're all developing in very different situations where we are faced with things like apathy and a political infrastructure that is not supportive. It's also nice to hear an outside perspective on what's going on in the Asian Federations.

5. A first in Lao PDR: the on-site upgrading of the Nong Duang Thung Community

Mr. Sihalarth Pisith, National University of Lao PDR

Sihalarth Pisith is a professor of Architecture at the National University of Lao PDR. Over the past several months, he and his students in Vientiane have been involved in supporting a very important process: the first ever on-site urban poor community upgrading project in the country of Lao PDR. The project at Nong Duang Thung, in the capital city of Vientiane, represents an important model for urban poor housing and an important alternative to eviction and resettlement in a country where the process of urbanization is just getting started and land conflicts are clearly going to get worse in the country's fast-growing urban centers. The housing upgrading project at Nong Duang Thung is being planned and implemented by the community members themselves, with good support and collaboration from the University's Faculty of Architecture, the National Lao Women's Union, CODI and the ACCA Program.



Professor Pisith : This project was started to find a way to empower the community in Lao PDR. It is important because this is the first project to improve the housing situation or to empower urban poor people around the issue of land and housing in Lao PDR. The land owner of land the Nong Duang Thung community has been occupying for more than 50 years is the government. There are 84 households living in the community. The first problem was the land ownership. Since the land is owned by the government, the community people feel they cannot improve their residences or sustain their tenure there. CODI and the Women's Union tried to help find a way with the community to solve this problem of insecure land. The houses and infrastructure facilities in the community are in very poor condition, and there are no specific savings and loan programs yet for housing improvements. The Faculty of Architecture entered as a technical partner to help survey the existing conditions of the community - the road conditions, the various infrastructure facilities, electricity, water supply, sanitary conditions.

We had four steps in our process of supporting the Nong Duang Thung community :

1. **Understanding the community.** This involves surveying the physical situation, to understand what happens and goes on in this area.
2. **Talking.** I don't want to use the word asking as the word talking involves two sides communicating, talking to understand people and their requirements and needs.
3. **Standing beside the people as a close friend, or like a relative.** So we can know what they need, the real needs. And we can find solutions with them, not with a command.
4. **Helping with the implementation of the project, as a friend.**

In understanding, we have to collect data and understand the context of this communication. And one of the understanding methods is to understand the activities in the community by the telling through the people, and our students can sketch through the telling, how they live. Also understanding through the minds of children what they think of their community; in their pictures you see houses, nature, family, this is what children think. They want a sustainable residence. In the community meetings sometimes there are arguments, and through participatory planning they end with an understanding.



We have had twelve students from our faculty to help join us in this work in Nong Duang Thung. This student team made a model and we had children to help glue up the model to make them feel like this work is for them and by them. There was a community map drawn by the villagers to help us understand the area better. This showed the situations that needed to be improved - some houses have to be removed, fixed or modified to be improved. Then there was a preliminary design between architect and community to find satisfaction. We try to help them think by themselves, to make budgets for improvements. We had discussions for a long time to obtain this plan. In the helping stage we had to rebuild some houses because we had to move some that had been built in the way of the road. A new arrangement of the houses was made. The community was happy to participate, to be a part of this work; they built their houses and are happy with it. We are standing right here to help you, standing among them, not far from them.

Hugo : Thank you - especially for this first attempt of the Lao architects to work with urban poor communities on the country's first upgrading project. This project shows us a lot of what it means to support an upgrading process which is really *comprehensive*, going through all the activities that are going on in the community, studying everything, observing everything and seeing what can be improved and what can be brought out from what already exists, what is already good and bad in the community and in the physical settlement.

6. Cambodia

Mr. Keo Sovandara, Urban Poor Development Fund

Mr. Keo Sovandara ("Dara") is a young architect who has been working as a volunteer with the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) for the past few years, since being graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. Dara talks about several community upgrading projects being implemented around Cambodia now, with support from UPDF and ACHR's ACCA Program, and about the role of community architects in the national community process in Cambodia.

Dara : For comprehensive upgrading in Cambodia, we have come up with eight strategies, or eight essential aspects of a strong community-driven development process - in which housing and community upgrading are just one part of a larger process of developing all aspects of the lives of Cambodia's poor communities :

- Community organizing
- Community saving and credit groups
- Community-managed loans from outside sources (like UPDF)
- Community-managed welfare programs
- Green communities
- Land tenure security and decent housing
- Human resource development
- Building partnerships with government and other local and national development stakeholders

Why do we need community architects, and what are community architects in Cambodia doing?

- Rehabilitating community security to poor people
- Learning from the Community
- Housing design with community
- Assisting community on small scale infrastructure improvement in city
- Linking between community with University

This is a brief background about the history of community architects in Cambodia. As community architects, we can't only do housing design - we have to think a lot with the community about many, many aspects of their housing and community development process. (showing a timeline on a PowerPoint slide)



- **Training workshops for young professionals to work with poor communities :** I would like to tell you a bit about the "Young Professional" (YP) training programs we have organized in Cambodia, in teaching young architects and professionals from other disciplines how to work with poor communities. We've had two of these summer training workshops for YPs, and I'm from the second batch. I believe that we first have to have some training, before we go in to work with the communities. So during the training workshops, we have field visits to community projects in cities around the country, and we also visit community upgrading projects in foreign countries like Thailand, Lao and Philippines.
- **Helping carry out settlement and city-wide surveys :** Before we start with comprehensive upgrading, the first important thing we do with the people is to carry out a settlement survey - both city-wide surveys which gather quick information about the poor communities in each city, as well as more detailed settlement surveys in the communities where we start to work. We have gone around most of the provinces in Cambodia, with members of the national community savings network and UPDF staff, to see the communities in new cities and help start something.
- **Working in many communities :** Many of the YPs working now in Cambodia are only students or recent graduates with little experience, so we have to connect with other students and more experienced architects as a community architects group, so that we can learn from each other through the actual projects. Most of us focus on not just one project, but on several housing and upgrading projects which we work on as a group.
- **Supporting small community upgrading projects in slums :** (showing slides of three community upgrading projects) These are three of the communities in the process of upgrading now - construction of paved walkways in riverside slums in the city of Phnom Penh, and upgrading projects that are in process in the cities of Kampong Cham and Prey Veng. These three community upgrading projects are in the process of being implemented now.
- **Helping the community to develop their housing designs :** For housing design, the community architects meet with the community to discuss what they want and what they need. So we talk and talk and talk, and work together in the field, with the community. We YPs work with both the community and the government to survey the land and survey the roads. The community architects don't work just with the grown-up people - we can also work with the children and the older people in the community, because they have ideas and needs too, and have much to contribute to the process of redesigning their houses and community.
- **Linking with the local and provincial government :** We often meet with the municipal and provincial governments, through the process of planning the housing projects, to try to get their support and cooperation.

- **Helping explore low-cost building materials :** To design for poor communities, the first thing we have to think about is how to make the materials low cost. For example, in Cambodia, we have involved the communities and the students to learn to manufacture our own cement blocks, which people can make themselves cheaper than the blocks available in the market. This kind of thing helps bring down the cost of the houses people build, and it also puts them in greater control of more of the housing process. The process of manufacturing their own building materials also helps bring communities together and organize and prepare themselves, even before the actual housing project starts.
- **Helping design and improve the housing environment :** When we work with communities staying in the same place, or with communities that move to new land, we have to see where the houses are located, and we have to think about where to plant trees and start vegetable gardens, because we can keep the environment clean, and with a vegetable garden the community's life is better as they can grow vegetables and send them to the market.

The case of the housing project in Serey Sophoan, at the Monorom Community (showing slide) In this relocation housing project in the northern city of Serey Sophoan, we got the provincial government to donate a good piece of land just two kilometers away for a small riverside squatter settlement. Every year, this community experienced serious flooding and many of their houses were washed away. Their relocation to free land nearby allows them big plots of land with room for vegetable gardens, fish ponds, animal rearing and fruit trees, besides their houses. The community people and the YP worked with the government to develop a good plan for the new site. After we talked about the layout plan with the community people, in a series of workshops on the site, we made a model for the community, the YPs worked together and showed the house for the poor community. Next we worked together to develop inexpensive core house types for the new site, which the people could afford, with small housing loans from UPDF. Here is the master plan of the new community. Now they have moved to the new land, which has been filled and developed, and almost half the houses are finished. This is the housing we are building.



Linking with other YPs and with university students : In Cambodia, we have community architects meetings every month. At these meetings, we talk about our experiences working with communities and share them with YPs and community leaders from other provinces and other projects. Part of our success building a community architects movement in Cambodia is because we continue to start with students, and introduce them to the idea of working with poor communities early in their professional exposure. Our community architects network also has working groups to deal with different aspects of our work. One working group goes around to universities, technical schools and architecture faculties to show slides of their work and to share their experiences working in the communities with students and professors. In this way, we use our real work on real projects to show our universities about what we students and young professionals are doing with UPDF. These presentations end up creating a lot of excitement and we recruit many new YPs this way. Otherwise, students in these universities might never have any exposure to the idea of working with poor communities.

For me, the most important part of becoming a community architect is being able to learn about the poor communities we work with, and to learn more by exchanging experiences with community architects working in other countries so we can improve ourselves and remind ourselves that architects don't just work for the rich, but they can also think about the poor too.

Comment from Hugo : It's another great viewpoint at how we can make things comprehensive, livelihoods, growing vegetable and adding to the value of the housing and the community and looking at it from a lot of perspectives.

7. Chang Chumchon: Thailand's national network of skilled community builders

Two community leaders from the Northern Region Community Builders Network + 2 supporters

The last presentation in this panel doesn't come from trained architects, but from some highly skilled builders who come from poor communities and who are representatives of Chang Chumchon, which means "Community Builders" or community members who have building skills or are trained to have the skill through the process of building their own community housing projects, with support from the Baan Mankong Upgrading Program. When we look at the scale of the slum problem in Thailand, we can see that even a hundred or a thousand community architects can never be enough to provide all the assistance communities need to upgrade their housing and settlements. So what community networks around Thailand - and their support institution CODI - have done is to try and support the creation and strengthening of a network of skilled community builders - Chang Chumchon - to be another source of technical assistance for poor communities undertaking upgrading projects in their settlements. Here is a group which shows us how technical support for housing and community upgrading can also be provided by teams of skilled and experienced community people themselves, and how they can be the ones that make changes and lead the changes by themselves.



The presentation team included :

- **Mr. Sutsust Janprakobkit ("Neng")**, a community leader from the Kasemlaot Community in Uttaradit, who is also a community builder.
- **Mr. Pojpiroon Chumponrat ("Tong")**, another community leader and community builder from Uttaradit. His experience as a community builder has not only included helping many communities plan and build their new houses and build up their own construction skills, but he has also moved to the next step and helped communities deal with livelihood and environmentally friendly building techniques and alternative energy.
- **Professor Kroek Kittikhun**, a lecturer in the Architecture Faculty of Chiang Rai University. He has been a supporter on the technical issues of the Chang Chumchon's program in the Northern Region.
- **Professor Sakkarin Sapu ("Seng")**, a lecturer in the Architecture Faculty of Mahasarakam University, and on the community architecture staff at CODI.

Neng : Our network of community builders has divided our the work in Thailand into seven regions, each of which now has its own network of skilled community builders to assist communities in that region. Each region has one leader in charge of coordinating the Chang Chumchon's work in that region. Khun Sinla, for example, is a community builder from a slum community in Chiang Mai, who is in charge of the Chang Chumchon Network's work helping communities within the northern region of Thailand. In that northern region - which has 15 provinces - the network has divided the work into different small groups, and these small groups meet every two months.



Why do we need Chang Chumchon community builders?

- **To help reduce building costs** : The first reason is that the price of construction materials is very high, so if we can do the construction by ourselves, it can reduce the cost of our new houses a lot.
- **To nix contractors and build more ourselves** : And the second reason is that most of us feel that if we hire a private contractor to build our new houses for us, we might get taken advantage of, since a lot of the contractors out there are pretty unscrupulous and ready to take advantage of people like us. But if we do the construction ourselves, we can control every aspect of the process, and we ensure everything is honest, open and fair.
- **To boost our confidence to make change in our own communities** : And the third reason is that because some community people feel they are not confident enough in their own skills and ability to transform their settlements themselves, but with a little assistance from Chang Chumchon - whom they can trust - they can feel supported enough technically to go ahead and make some changes in their settlements.

So the concept of the Chang Chumchon Network is that we want to strengthen the network of skilled craftspeople within the poor communities, to keep the benefits of these skills within the communities and available to them, to nurture the spirit of mutual-help and relationships of friendly cooperation between poor communities within the network, and to strengthen the sense of self-reliance within the communities that are undergoing upgrading. The point of Chang Chumchon is not only for people to help themselves, but to use the skills they have acquired through their own upgrading process to help others as well.

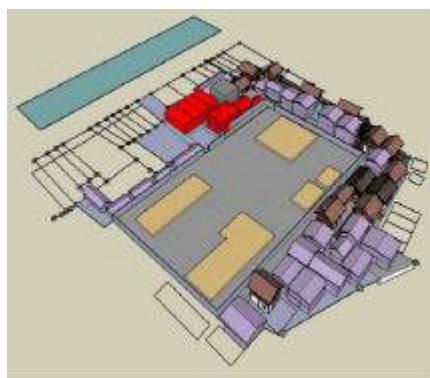
(showing slides) This diagram shows the framework of our network. You can see that it responds to different scales of problems - at community, network, provincial and regional levels :

- **Community level :** At the level of the community, we have Chang Chumchon which is divided into different teams: a team for surveying, a team to manage materials, a team to do cost estimations, a team to do project management.
- **Network level :** And the next level is the network level, where the Chang Chumchon try to connect different groups of community builders at the city level, to put communities that are in need of certain skills together with available people who have those skills, to help them.
- **Province and regional levels :** And then we move to the province level and then to the regional level. The Chang Chumchon Network have activities at both these levels, like training or seminars or meetings where they will come and share their experiences. (showing slide) This is a photo of one of the community builders training workshops organized by the Chang Chumchon network.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS CASE STUDY 1 : Upgrading the Wat Chiang Yuen Community. This is a case study from the upgrading project at the Wat Chiang Yuen community, in Chiang Mai. The people in this community were living in a flood-prone area and there was a lot of water and garbage on the site. At the beginning, the community members did not know what to do or how to start improving their community. And then the Chang Chumchon Network went there. They had a discussion with the community members, trying to find the common problems of everyone. And they found the main problems in this community were the flooding area and the garbage.



- **Starting with something simple and moving to more complex issues :** So since the idea of improving their housing and dealing with the flooding were a bit too complex for the community at that point, we began with something simple, which everyone could understand and everyone could take part in. So we began with the cleaning up all the garbage that was all over the community. And through the process of collectively removing all that garbage, the people in Wat Chiang Yuen began to understand more about their housing problems and about what they themselves could do to solve them. So we started with something very small and simple, trying to clear all the garbage together, as a community. Then we started to discuss the other problems the community faced and discussed how the people could improve the living conditions within the community. And gradually, one step at a time, the improvement process became a full-scale community upgrading process, with land filling, reblocking and construction of new houses.
- **Lots of meetings, lots of changes to develop the final upgrading plan :** At every step of the planning and implementation of this comprehensive improvement process, the Chang Chumchon Network worked with the community people, helping them to develop their new site plan together. We had so many meetings in this community! And sometimes, after all that work, we came up with a draft master plan, but the people said they didn't like the plan, so they changed it and we started all over again! At the end, they had developed a site plan with enough open space for a temple and an open square. So this is the outcome and the final design of the community improvements in the Wat Chiang Yuen Community (showing slides).



COMMUNITY BUILDERS CASE STUDY 2 : Upgrading the Taphanhin Community, in Pichit. The next case study is the Taphanhin Community in Pichit Province. This was a squatter community located on government land, and the community's tenure was extremely uncertain - they all lived in fear of being evicted. The community eventually became part of Baan Mankong upgrading program, but many community members didn't have much confidence that they could actually upgrade their settlement and negotiate to get their land secured on a long-term lease, so the project had stalled for a long time, without anything happening. So they started to work with Chang Chumchon. Again, we started with something small and simple, to get people active and to build their confidence to move on to the more complex and difficult aspects of community upgrading. There was a bit of empty land in the community, and Chang Chumchon first went to the community's very strong leader to talk about what to do with this vacant land.



COMMUNITY BUILDERS CASE STUDY 3 : Upgrading the Lang Khon Song Tak Community, in Tak. This is another Baan Mankong upgrading project, in a squatter community located on public land in the city of Tak. At the beginning, the people here all felt they couldn't build their own houses, so they hired a contractor to do all the work. But when the contractor left without finishing the work - as contractors do all the time! - there was a big crisis in the community. What to do? So Chang Chumchon came in and helped the people to build the first six houses, and trained the community people in the process of constructing these first houses. This "training by doing" showed the people that they could build their houses themselves, and it gave them the confidence they needed to finish the project on their own. So the rest of the houses were built by the community members themselves. (*showing slides*) Here you can see the houses on which Chang Chumchon worked.



COMMUNITY BUILDERS CASE STUDY 4 : Upgrading the Ban Keretong Community, in Uttaradit. This is a new project by Baan Mankong started in 2009. The most participatory concept is the conservation of the community, same as the other communities. The major activities of Chang Chumchon concern land mapping and housing construction and development in the community. We need clean energy to be used in the community, we have biogas and in the future we will have wind generators, upgrading by Chang Chumchon of Thailand. We must think about the community can grow together.



Question from Andre Alexander (Tibet Heritage Fund) : How much of the houses can community people build themselves? When you were showing that the local people got some training to build their own houses, could they build the entire house or just part of it? What percentage of a house could they build? (*Community leaders respond instantly and enthusiastically*) Oh, poor people can do everything themselves, definitely! They can build the whole house, from foundations to roof, walls, windows, doors, plumbing, electricity and all the finishing! Also energy, manufacturing materials, biogas, disaster rebuilding!

Comment by Somsook : I think that in the presentation just made by the Chang Chumchon Network, you can see the development of community networks. In Thailand, we have the Baan Mankong Community Upgrading Program, which is in some ways an institutionalization of the community driven settlement upgrading process, being implemented nationwide. In this program, the support resources are given directly to the communities, which manage everything themselves. In this nation-wide slum upgrading process, we have a growing number of architects and architecture schools to support the process. But even all these architects and students cannot deal with this kind of national scale. So the development of the Chang Chumchon community builders' network has grown to provide an alternative source of much of the technical support communities around Thailand need when they are planning and carrying out their community upgrading projects. The Chang Chumchon Network works within the cities, within the regions and on the national level. And this Chang Chumchon network adds another support system - a *horizontal* support system which lies somewhere between the high professionalism of trained architects and the informality of communities. As you can see, they can describe their work around Thailand in a very confident mood, because there is now a very large scale to the process which allows the community themselves to be the planners and the supporters of the upgrading process in Thailand.

- ***This community builders network is now more or less taking care of most of the construction*** - and even some of the design development - in many community upgrading projects being supported by Baan Mankong: whatever skills and expertise may be needed by different communities or groups doing upgrading and housing projects. This network of "para-architects" - many with much more practical construction experience than most architects - is growing stronger the more projects they assist. And their combined expertise and sophistication is also growing, as the projects they assist in various ways are implemented.
- ***So you can see that in some ways, this network is like institutionalizing the people's own process of internal support for their construction and support, on the large scale.*** The network is national, but its work is divided by regions, where regional networks of community builders assist communities within their same region. Communities can now come up with their own first plans, and they have support from Chang Chumchon to do this.
- ***This network isn't a replacement for community architects, though.*** Architects can still help with some of the more sophisticated aspects of planning and house design also. Architects, I think, can see the whole picture in a community upgrading process, but their limited time and limited numbers mean that they are not able to move with communities at the real scale of change that is happening in Thailand. They can offer support in a workshop here or there, or they can assist communities on a certain number of specific upgrading projects.

PANEL 6 :

Participatory recovery from disasters

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the sixth panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010 (as transcribed by Anna Russell, a young volunteer architect from New Zealand). This session was moderated by Ms. Suphana Sophonpanich ("Wan", who is a young Thai community architect who has worked on community development and post disaster projects in both Thailand and in other countries) and included panelists from the following seven countries :

- **HAITI** : Disaster recovery after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. A presentation by Suphana Sophonpanich ("Wan"), a young Thai community architect who has recently taken a break in her work with CASE in Thailand to work with an international NGO which focuses on assisting in disaster situations.
- **BURMA** : Recovering from Cyclone Nargis - the case of Kyaung Gone Village. A presentation by Ms. Van Lisa Htay Aung and Mr. John Si Thur, both of whom work with a small Yangon-based NGO Women for the World.
- **PHILIPPINES** : Community-led disaster recovery initiatives by the Homeless People's Federation. A presentation by Emy Bermuneo, a young community architect with PACSII (Philippines Action for Community-Led Shelter Initiatives), which is the support organization for the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP).
- **INDONESIA** : Construction of a new life in Aceh after the 2004 Asian tsunami. A presentation by Andrea Fitrianto ("Cak-cak"), a young Indonesian architect who has been working for several years with the Jakarta-based NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC) - most particularly the UPC's large project helping villages rebuild after the tsunami.
- **SRI LANKA** : Experiences from Sri Lanka after the tsunami, a presentation by Ms. Mihiri Vipulaguna, a young architect who works with the Colombo-based NGO Sevanatha, as well as the National Housing Development Authority.
- **THAILAND** : The upgrading of poor communities on Koh Mook, Trang Province, after the 2004 Asian tsunami. This presentation is by Chawanad Luansang ("Nad"), a community architect who is part of a very active group of young Thai community architects called Openspace. Nad and his colleagues have worked on a wide variety of community upgrading projects around Thailand. Nad also helps coordinate ACHR's regional community architects support work.
- **PHILLIPINES** : Integrating Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in site planning and housing development in Albay Province, in the Philippines. This presentation is by Arlene Christy D. Lusterio, a Filipina architect who is one of the founder members of TAO-Pilipinas, an all-women technical support group for poor community projects in the Philippines.



Above: The community in Banda Aceh that was rebuilt by the tsunami survivors themselves.

1. Disaster recovery after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti

Ms. Suphana Sophonpanich ("Wan")

Suphana Sophonpanich ("Wan") is a young Thai community architect who has recently taken a break in her work with CASE in Thailand to work with an international NGO which focuses on assisting in disaster situations. Wan was recently involved in the efforts to help people in Haiti after the devastating earthquake levelled much of the country this past year.

Wan : What happens when a large major scale disaster happens in a country? Normally there are different phases that happen when a disaster occurs. You have a relief phase, early recovery, medium / long term recovery and development. The projects we're going to be talking about in this panel normally come in at this stage, in medium and long term recovery.



I'm going to talk very quickly about my experience in Haiti which is in the relief phase which is in the first few weeks to months after a large disaster has occurred. In Haiti there was the earthquake that happened earlier this year where over 200,000 people died another 300,000 people were injured. There are something like 1.5 million people who are left homeless by the earthquake. So what normally happens is that you have a large influx of people who don't know the area coming in. You have hundreds of thousands of foreigners coming in who don't know the area at all. They come in, they set up camp. Looking at how the earthquake has affected; maybe it is a change of scenery because this is very much a top down process at this stage in the disaster. We are looking at emergency shelter where it's a distribution of plastic sheets and rope and tool kits. It's about encouraging people to come out with self recovery, to help themselves.



The urban context of Haiti makes it really difficult to work in. Basically there is nowhere to go, the city was too dense before the earthquake and then the earthquake happened, now it's full of rubble and there's nowhere to go. All the public spaces are taken up by all these 'spontaneous settlements' as we call them. But what's disturbing is this is four to five months after the disaster. The poverty level is so high that a large percentage of people have no way of helping themselves out of the situation.

So a lot of the work we do involves improving quality of the shelter they're already living in, support in prevention of flooding and also looking at construction of temporary structures. So lots of different criteria that we need to consider. The land is a big issue in Haiti at the moment,

there's no land, there's no land agreement can be had. The government is refusing to provide any sort of policy support in terms of land agreement for people who were renting before the earthquake. And this is at the stage where most of you will come in, this is at the stage where agencies are starting to talk to communities and work on local solutions on how to provide any form of housing to the people.



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Logos for UNICEF, UNHCR, and other organizations.

2. Recovering from Cyclone Nargis, in Burma

Mr. Htay Aung and Mr. John Si Thur

This presentation is made by Mr. Htay Aung, who comes from the Kyaung Gone Village, in the Khunchankone Township, near Yangon. His village was totally destroyed by Cyclone Nargis, which hit Burma (Myanmar) in May, 2008, leaving 140,000 people dead and 2.5 million people homeless. Mr. Si Thur John, who translates Htay Aung's story, works with a small Yangon-based NGO, Women for the World, which has been working with a growing network of cyclone-affected villages to support a community-managed and community-implemented process of rebuilding their houses, lives and livelihoods.



Htay Aung : My village, which is called Kyaung Gone, is very small. We have a population of 187 people - just 45 households. Cyclone Nargis hit our village on May 2nd, 2008, and the storm didn't stop hitting us until the next morning at about 11 AM.

There were strong winds and such heavy rain that the water eventually had nowhere to go and flooded the land around my village, as far as the eye could see. We lost everything: our houses, our animals, our food and seed stores. After the cyclone, we created a development committee for the village, which planned and carried out a number of crucial post-disaster activities: we set up a savings and loan group and a rice bank, we established a fund for education and health.



Rebuilding our houses : And we launched a housing project, with the support of our NGO (Women for the World) to rebuild our houses and renovate the village. We made a three-year plan for this village renovation. For the housing project, we organized a village meeting and all the villagers participated. We discussed how to plan and how to make the design of the house and how to do budgeting and then how to construct. We organized a set committee for the housing project. This committee managed the budgeting and the logistics and dealt with the carpenters and did many parts of construction. We did the housing project group by group, each group had one leader that leader managed the construction stage step by step.

This is the plan for the next three years; we will have a better livelihoods, better communication and information systems for learning with other communities, our community also cares about the natural environment and we have a vision for the sustainable development of the village community.

Comment by Wan : I think Myanmar was a great example of how people came together and rebuilt their villages after they were basically wiped out by the cyclone. And I think again you see the whole process of how the community came together and planned for their village and set a vision on how it should be regenerated after such a big disaster.

Additional information from Somsook : A few words just to point out the significant processes of change; in the example of Cyclone Nargis there was a lot of assistance by government and by international NGOs and others, and

most of them have the very clear system of what to do, how the house should be - like boxes - and people who are affected by disaster are just nobody. No one thinks that they can think of things. That is the major problem in disaster rehabilitation in most places including Myanmar. This group's experience is very important, instead of you just providing or telling or doing it for people, get all the affected people to get together and to think of what they would like to do. By sitting together, having a committee and investigating what is the disaster which is happening they start to think about what they would like to do, and build houses from their own skills and local carpenters, and they succeed building so many houses much cheaper than the donor agencies. And they show how many more activities can be included; a rice bank, funds, children's welfare and so on. This is coming after the disaster process, of course with some funds supporting the people to do it. In this way community who faced serious disaster and crisis has an opportunity when they work together to strengthen the community and develop many other things afterwards. In spite of the very top down restrictive government in Myanmar they know how to negotiate and create this space so they can continue.

3. Community-led disaster recovery in the Philippines, by HPFP

Ms. Emy Bermuneo

This presentation was made by Emy Bermuneo, a young community architect with PACSII (Philippines Action for Community-Led Shelter Initiatives), which is the support organization for the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP). Her presentation shows how the Homeless People's Federation Philippines - a national federation of poor community organizations - has worked with a disaster-affected communities to help them become key actors in their own recovery and reconstruction - all in one of the most disaster-affected countries in Asia.



Emy : The Philippines is located within the Pacific ring of fire and the typhoon belt of the north pacific. It is prone to different disasters; earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, storms, landslides, floods and droughts. Many urban poor communities are vulnerable to disasters, both natural and man-made.



Usually after a disaster the common thing that happens in the Philippines is that the families that have been affected are evacuated, sometimes into covered gymnasiums and into tents which serve as temporary shelters. In the Philippines we have the Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines (HPFP) which is a network of different community organizations nationwide, whose members are mostly victims of disasters. It's a common thing in our country that the national or local government has an approach after a disaster where they focus on relief and dole outs, then the donor driven non-participatory approach. But the HPFP does comprehensive community led, community driven approaches. Usually during the post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction the Federation do comprehensive community driven approaches which are comprised of organizing, social economic surveys,

horizontal exchanges, starting savings groups, land identification and purchase.



During organizing the community members' participation in the formation of the settlers' organization they do consultations and dialogues with the disaster survivors. Next they do a survey, site visits and dialogues with the affected families and they do assessments on how large the scale of the disaster is and what it has done to the community and the place. Sometimes there are communities who experience disaster for the first time and they do not have experience regarding relocation and what the right process is. So they sometimes do horizontal exchanges with other communities in other places to be able to get ideas on what to do. Then during the process they do savings, saving is promoted to the community in order for them to be able to get financial support. Sometimes when you experience disaster it's not that easy to pick up, and it is not easy for others to tell people what to do. We set up savings because it's traumatic for the people and it's so hard to encourage them on the savings part, so it is done step by step so they are able to arrive to it. There are cases in the Philippines where sometimes after the disaster there is no need to acquire a new lot, if there is

fire they can build their community again in the same place. But like in the case of the mudslide (in Albay) it's a different thing because the community was totally covered up with rocks and volcanic debris. It was impossible for them to return to their own houses. Or sometimes they could return but it was a hazardous area. Sometimes what the community does is purchase land together; sometimes the government produces land for them for a relatively small price.

Part of the immediate relief is that the community links up with the local government and other stakeholders to be able to address the needs of the community. They talk with some politicians, like the mayor or the governor, then after that they participate in the construction of transitory housing.



After the temporary housing they proceed to the permanent housing. In this part I will focus more on my place because this is what we have been working on. We have already done the housing design workshop and it's in this part where the technical supporters or young professionals have engaged with the community. The previous stage I have mentioned is all about people's process; it's the community that work on it. This is where the technical supporters have some integration. They do a housing design workshop then we do this linking with academe, it's an efficient way to get more technical supporters to help and work with the community. The young professionals assist the community during their housing workshop. They're young, like me.



People from Bicol have done some exchange learning in Iloilo on procurement and construction management. Because after the housing design we are going to do procurement and construction but we don't have many tools on how to do it, the process, we still lack ideas about it. So we went to Iloilo to learn so they could share with us what they have done with their projects. This is what the YPs have engaged into. We have done that exchange, now the next step for us is that we are going to do the community managed procurement and construction. Community members will undertake materials purchase and procurement, inspection of materials, delivery, inventory and release of warehouse materials. For me, the role of the community are as the planners, implementers and designers of the shelter projects. The technical supporters are there to help the community people come up with a more formal plan. In shelter we can withstand disasters.

Comment by Wan : This presentation brings to our attention the facts that disasters are happening more frequently in the world today, and that the poor are often disproportionately the ones most affected by these disasters. But then again, I think as was shown here that disasters can also be used as opportunities by the affected communities - to start a development process which would not have started without the kick-start a major disaster delivers. After a disaster, many of these communities are starting again from zero, but here we see that they are starting again with the skills and expertise to work with one another.

4. Rebuilding tsunami-devastated villages in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Mr. Andrea Fitrianto ("Cakcak")

This presentation was made by Andrea Fitrianto ("Cak-cak"), a young Indonesian architect who has been working for several years with the Jakarta-based NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC). Cakcak worked most particularly within the UPC's large and extraordinary project to help a network of 25 villages in Banda Aceh - all of which were completely destroyed by the 2004 Asian tsunami, and many of which lost as many as 70% of their community members in the waves. helping villages rebuild after the tsunami. These coastal communities, despite losing everything, completely rebuilt their villages within two years.



Above : *After the tsunami erased these coastal fishing villages in Banda Aceh (left) and three years later, what they looked like after having been rebuilt by the affected communities themselves, with support from UPC (right).*

Cakcak : Before the tsunami UPC had been working in Aceh for several years with communities, the founder Wardah Hafidz had been working with communities for two or three decades. But in Aceh it was the first time for us to work in construction. We managed to do it, and even though the organization hasn't anything to do with something physical before we were able to finish the project in two years without exit strategies that aid or disaster response organizations often talk about.

The Asian tsunami was exceptional, statistics say it was the most immense amount of aid donated for a disaster, and it involved multiple countries. People were confused, there was no guidance on what to do, and the Indonesian government released a ban on constructing near the ocean the second month after the disaster. They said no construction, it's too dangerous, and nobody can go back. It's happened in many places that disaster is ridden by people who have commercial interests, they evict people from community land, and it was the same in Aceh. So our team went to barracks that were set by the government. We listened to what the people were worried about, they had to go back and secure the land even though they had trauma and were afraid of the sea. Being located away from the sea was temporary. They knew that they were sea people, they were fisher folk and their ancestors were buried in the area. So people went back to their villages, and we provided assistance as much as possible. In very simple things, like setting up a community kitchen, cleaning debris, and getting construction materials that could be used. This whole phase was the disaster emergency response, which was done with local resources, with their own muscle, their own skill.

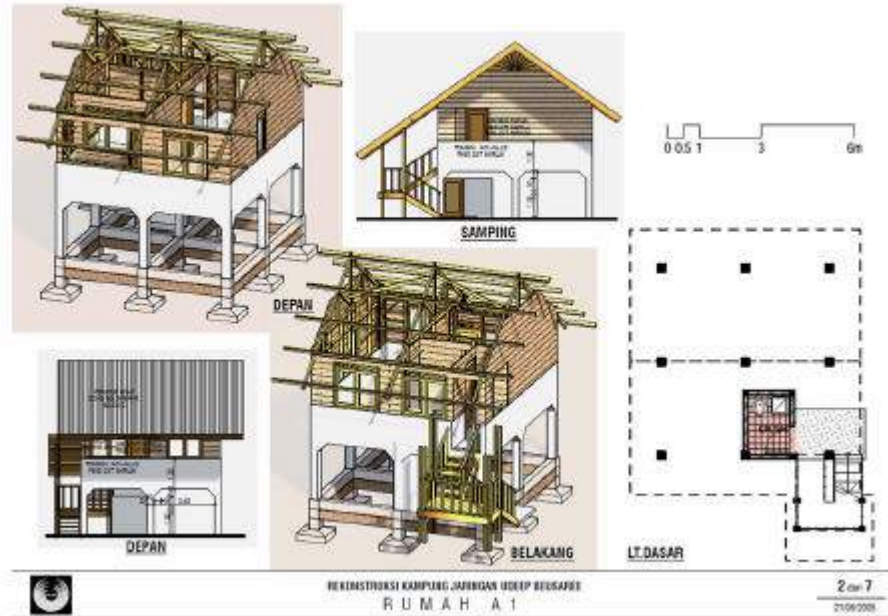


This was the west part of Banda Aceh so it's a semi urban, rural area. Although it's near Banda Aceh there was not much aid given to this area because it's considered as the rebels' base. No one would take the risk of the shootings; in that time it was still in war, until August when they agreed to peace.

For interim shelter four hundred and fifty units in four to five months were constructed. This provided space for returnees to go back and start working and to organize themselves. Working is the best healer for people with trauma, if you leave them with nothing to do in barracks they decline fast in their mind and become more traumatized. Data and mapping are essential when we want to plan to build something, and it was done in Aceh with participation. It was a tool to avoid exclusions and to avoid future disputes. Those who participated were sure that their land was secure. People recognized their plots by plants that were still there and there were still some coconut trees so people could recognize their space, their village.

In the third month we started thinking about planning and house design. We were around seven community architects at that time to assist fourteen villages which had formed into a community group.

People had forgotten their architecture, they're Acehnese, it's a good form of architecture, it's thermally comfortable, it has social spaces; so we tried to get this knowledge and deliver this to the community. To say; look what you had before, now you are embarrassed to have this, you want concrete houses like you have seen on TV. Little by little, by showing house models and by building the first house they became aware that what they need is a stilt house because it's a coastal area. It's also socially functional, the ground floor is a common space, a semi-public space where you can say hello to your neighbors. At that time we came out of the design session with five designs, so people could choose. At the beginning they chose the ground house, it was done with soil blocks, but there were some stilt houses, they understood that there are more benefits in building a stilt house as the space is doubled.



This project is also featured in the community architecture book so there are more details there on the process, like the construction process the home owners and the mason and the young engineers were trained in how to get involved in the construction of the project, the mud blocks and the economic space that we opened as much as possible, workshops for making the steel. So it was a multiple result, it was not only physical construction, also at the end the community organization expanded into 26 villages, and it's good because before they didn't know each other from within villages. So the tsunami was a tool to get stronger social cohesion.

Friends submitted this to a competition and it was recognized, and we got a nice response from the industry, from the sector. Building back better is about building better relationships between us, it's about improving the current relationship into a better one then you will improve the physical.



Comment by Wan : It is a great point that work in construction is a way to get over the disaster for the people, and also that you have a lot of debris from the houses to use to start. So you're always starting with something. I think that when a lot of things have been damaged you're forced to look at the whole issue, not just the built environment but also the relationship between the people. As Chak rightly named his presentation "the construction of life" it is about the people who are going to live in the community and it is about how they rebuild their life after the disaster.

5. Experiences in Sri Lanka rebuilding after the 2004 Asian tsunami

Ms. Mihiri Vipulaguna

This presentation was by Ms. Mihiri Vipulaguna, a young architect who works with the Colombo-based NGO Sevanatha, as well as the National Housing Development Authority. The tsunami affected communities around almost the entire circumference of the island nation of Sri Lanka, and was without question the largest-scale disaster it has ever experienced. Since the 2004 tsunami, Sevanatha has been one of the key NGOs involved in promoting a more community-driven tsunami recovery and rebuilding process in several cities around Sri Lanka - much in close collaboration with the Women's Bank - a national network of poor community women's savings groups with some 80,000 members around the country.

Mihiri : I am an architect working in national housing development authority at the Sevantha Urban Resource Center. Because of Sri Lanka's location, (we are an island in the Indian Ocean), we face a lot of climatic as well as natural

disasters every year. Common disasters in Sri Lanka we have to face are; land slides, floods, cyclones, tsunami. Cyclones like Laila have become common in some parts of Sri Lanka now.

The tsunami was the biggest disaster we have faced in our history. 40,000 people died from the tsunami in 2004 and more than 200,000 families were affected by it. I'm going to talk about what we have done to recover from disasters in Sri Lanka, and I'm going to summarize our experience in disaster mitigation projects.



Our organization is involved in several disaster mitigation projects, and Sevantha URC is involved in many participatory projects in both upgrading and relocation. Sevantha consists of community planners, community architects, engineers, technical officers and mobilizing officers. In the communities we form small community groups, that way we make a hierarchy through primary branches, provincial branches, and finally the women's cooperative (the women's bank). It helps to strengthen their savings. Sevantha works together with women banks and works under Clapnet. In the process of addressing vulnerable communities disaster prone areas are identified through community mapping. Organizing CBOs, that means savings groups under Clapnet forum. With participation of institutions such as local authorities, UDA, NHDA NGOs and INGOs and CBOs, different disaster rehabilitation projects are implemented through community participation.

This is what we did soon after the tsunami. Tsunami victims were relocated in temporary camps, transit camps. Then we worked on rehabilitation through community participation. When people were in the transit camps savings groups were formulated. Within this period community organizations were strengthened through CBOs. People were empowered through community workshops. It helped to identify their needs and issues, and can help to identify the development strategy. Communities planned their future development with the professionals, involving both their individual houses and infrastructure. Sometimes they developed systems for garbage disposal and water harvesting.



The final result is sustainable development through community participation. We as community architects get experience through our past projects to help our future projects succeed.



Comment by Wan : I think it is very interesting, as in this Sri Lanka process, to focus on the most vulnerable of the people after disasters, the people who are not so vulnerable will always somehow make their way of recovery. I think it's very commendable to be focusing their attention and work on the most vulnerable; they also have capacity to participate in the rebuilding of their houses and communities in the aftermath of a disaster.

6. Rebuilding tsunami-hit communities on Koh Mook Island, Thailand

Mr. Chawanad Luansang ("Nad")

This presentation is by Chawanad Luansang ("Nad"), a community architect who is part of a very active group of young Thai community architects called Openspace. Nad and his colleagues have worked on a wide variety of community upgrading projects around Thailand. Nad also helps coordinate ACHR's regional community architects support work. Nad's presentation looks at a post-tsunami reconstruction project he and his Openspace group were involved in, on the island of Koh Mook, in the southern Thai province of Trang. The island is home to 2,500 people (400 households) who live in a series of scattered coastal villages. After the tsunami, 94 families were left landless and needed relocation, 100 families needed house upgrading and land security, and 106 families had land but no funds to build houses. In considering how to rebuild their community, the issue of the environmental impact was very important to the people, especially as they are in a coastal area. They wanted to rebuild their social environment as well as the infrastructure and houses.

Nad : This is the one community on a small island in the southern part of Thailand, but it is part of a big movement in tsunami affected communities during that time. The main problem has been that most of the communities had no land security even if they had stayed there for hundreds of years. So after the tsunami more than thirteen communities came together as a network, this was organized by many NGOs, for example CODI, which tried to strengthen the network.

So how can we support the community in how to make a rehabilitation plan for their community? I will show you one project as an example, located near Trang, which is my home town.

(showing slides) See the settlement is only on this side, and the tsunami came from this side, so the people have been settled for more than a hundred years, on the other side there is no settlement because I think a long time ago people realized that it faced the monsoon. I met one crazy guy who is planting mangrove trees in the land of others, he's very proud of this because after the tsunami only a few small mangroves were gone because of some big trees hitting them but most are still growing.



When Thai people say "build a house" in Thai language they say "grow a house". A house must be related to the people, the family, to the society and the natural resources. The first thing we did here was to work and learn with the people. The first question they had after the tsunami was whether they could stay on this island, which had 400 houses; half of them don't have land security and one hundred of them were under threat of eviction, so we had just 3 months to provide a plan to propose to the government. We worked together with the community and started with the community mapping - we had just one week to do this process.

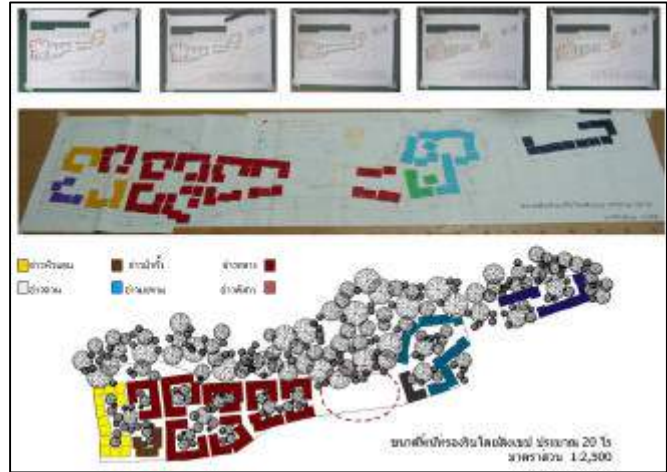


The people suggested we divide into six small clusters because they knew each other very well in each cluster, and each cluster finished the mapping in just one night. It was very easy to use this as a tool to identify who doesn't have land and who needed to relocate. As architects we transferred it to the map, which was divided into six zones. We wanted to solve all the problems on the whole island; the people face two different problems, first is the problem of housing rights, the second is of natural resources. From the survey and many meetings the people found out that 94 families were landless, so they needed relocation land. One hundred families wanted to upgrade their community; they occupied government land but had no security. And the remaining one hundred and six families had land but were in the coastal area and were afraid of another tsunami so wanted to

move inland. The relocation area used to be mangrove land but somebody had cut down the mangroves to occupy it.

(Showing plans on the slides) So this is what the 106 families wanted to do, they just needed some money as they didn't have enough money to build, but they already had land.

The 100 families who have occupied government land for 30 years didn't have security and wanted to upgrade their infrastructure. These are the issues we needed to address. When we had identified the problems we came together - 300 people at the same time is very messy so we divided into small groups and the people showed us the results of the meeting. This was the process of doing the master plan together. The people were concerned about the environment, how they could rebuild not only the infrastructure and the houses but socially also. What they suggested is that the six groups stay together as neighborhoods and they leave some space to plant the mangrove area again.



After they did the master plan we let people think about their dream house, this is important because they have lived on that island for more than a hundred years so they are the experts in house design for there. But we had a limited budget, 2000 US dollars for each house, so we made it a game; each group had to see how they could make a self sufficient house within this budget. They came up with many designs and we concluded with 3 sizes depending on the number of people, a very simple design. We finalized the design from the drawings of the people. They wanted to preserve the mangroves.

It was very interesting to look at the vernacular architecture of the area; we brought the community people to observe examples. In the final master plan the people proposed a communal area along with houses and infrastructure. Their houses are very small so they proposed a common building where all the people can have ceremonies like weddings or funerals. There is a small budget so we will start with a small scheme for this and when they have more support they can extend. They wanted a playground and a garbage management area, and as they are Muslim they would like a small mosque. The area has been set up like a canal, so they can bring their boat up and walk to their house, and there is room for a cooperative business for the tourists in the future, a restaurant, and a fish market where they can sell fish directly. The design has a cluster system.



We took the community on a field visit to other tsunami affected villages to encourage them, so they see they can do the same. They are very energetic to go back and do the project. We are training them on how to divide the plots by themselves; they have formed a task force. We don't have a vertical structure as it creates problems; we have a representative from each small sub-group in a committee and in the committee a small task force like the community builders and those who buy materials. With this the people started to build their community. We needed to do a simple modular design so the people could build the houses themselves. The land they will build their houses on they have no land title, so they used the master plan to bring the local government to visit their community and they have got a community land title now. The governor signed with another NGO, it's a commitment that the people can build their houses there but not a legal title. The people try to deal with the power and with the local government.

We tried to adapt and observed that their construction; they had used it before so we helped make it easy for them. Every evening they observed how it was going. They spent 2 years to implement it. We brought the Ministry of Social Welfare and Human Security on the ground to plant the mangroves with the people. We also did people mapping so we

knew the potential of the community. Many NGOs have tried to plant mangroves on this land many times before but it never happened because they just planted and then ran away, but this guy took time and took care of it, he spent 3 years taking care of a huge area by himself, but after 3 years when they saw the mangroves were growing so many people tried to help him. Like in our projects, we need a solution, a concrete idea to show the government what they will do, and it will be very powerful when the people can speak about it by themselves and they have a clear plan what they will do.



Comment by Wan : The issue of environmental impact has come up in a few of the presentations in this panel now and I think it is very important, also the protective affect it has on a lot of communities especially coastal ones but also what we do to the environment has a consequence when a disaster happens. We can learn from the people who manage to live well with their environment. In the documentary you can see the change in the people who go through this process with Nad. Initially you see Nad standing at the front of the room saying "what are we going to do?" and later in the documentary you see the people standing in front saying "this is what we're going to do". The change is amazing.

7. Integrating disaster-risk management in housing development in the Philippines

Ms. Arlene Christy D. Lusterio

This presentation is by Arlene Christy D. Lusterio, a Filipina architect who is one of the founder members of TAO-Pilipinas, an all-women technical support group for poor community projects in the Philippines. The presentation describes a research project TAO-Pilipinas was involved in recently to look at eight different resettlement projects done by different NGOs after the disastrous mud-slides which hit Albay Province, in the wake of Typhoon Remning, in December 2006. Their research evaluates these resettlement projects according to a set of technical criteria to see how resilient they were.

Arlene : The purpose of this research was to :

- To enhance the disaster resilience of communities through the integration of disaster risk management considerations in the physical planning and design of houses in the resettlement areas
- For the research outputs to serve as a guide for stakeholders in developing relocation sites into more disaster-resilient areas for human settlement. *(from power point presentation)*



What you have seen in this panel have all been examples of community participation in disaster response, what I am presenting is in contrast to that. What I am looking at is resettlement sites of disaster affected families and seeing if they are disaster resilient. These are projects initiated mainly by NGOs and the government and the participation of communities are very limited.

This is research that was conducted by three of my colleagues in TAO-Pilipinas with support from Prevention Consortium. We have an example here of a volcano where the debris came and covered an area. This area used to be a river but a developer came in 1818 and filled the site and sold the land to poor people through the community mortgage program. In 2006 the river reclaimed its space again. We came to the site about ten days after the disaster and many questions were raised by the people, like can we go back to our land because we've purchased it, we're almost paid up, what do we do about that? Or are we moving to a safer place? How do we design houses that are disaster resilient, resistant to the next hazard which we expect to be stronger than what we have already experienced? With those issues raised we thought it was necessary to look at what has already been done by various groups in this province of Albay. So we did this research with the objective to look at how resilient guidelines have been implemented, and whether they have been integrated in the design and the planning of resettlement sites. We hope that this research can be used to improve on what is existing and guide further resettlement projects, not only for affected communities but for other communities considering the affects of climate change.

We looked at eight models in Albay, at that time there were eight projects that were already completed but a lot more that were under construction. We compared the designs and planning of the site to a set of guidelines that were the result of a previous set of research done by another colleague. (That research was presented in 2005 in Aceh in a meeting also organized by ACHR). The models were varying in plans, in area, in cost, and done by various groups, by religious groups, by the government, by other NGOs. In summary the site was committed to be done by the provincial government, the site development was meant to be done by the government and they also provided septic tanks for the toilet. In general the budget covered materials plus labor, but the labor was mainly done by the community, so the presence of the community participation in this case was to help in the building of their houses.



These were the guidelines we looked at in assessing the designs: location of sites for housing, site preparation, the building shape, foundation types, posts and columns, floor design, exterior walls, door and windows, the roof and connections to the roof. Connections to the roof are a major consideration in building a structurally sound houses as Albay is in a typhoon risk area.

The findings were that in general the houses were structurally safe, but there were some things that needed improvement, for example houses were built before site development was done and this meant land filling needed to be done to get in and out of the houses. Some good practices in housing design; they looked at appropriate sites for resettlement, this was a major consideration. Projects were started late in 2007, the disaster hit in November 2006, it took so long because the government had to make sure the area they will put this resettlement site is safe. They had to review the risk map that they had before, to see whether the sites found within this are a risk area or a hazard or not. The resettlement sites are outside this risk area. They have compact floor plans, most are square, a few rectangular but very little difference. Foundations were appropriate for the site terrain and soil conditions, wall ties were embedded in reinforced concrete columns. The size and placement of doors and windows was also considered. The roof slopes were within recommended range of wind loads.

Gaps which need improvement for disaster resilience of houses:

- Substantial completion of site development and site preparation before construction of houses;
- Adequate and correct installation of reinforcements in columns and beams;
- Placement of lintel bands above door and window openings;
- Securing roof overhangs or eaves;
- Appropriate connections of roof structure with walls and columns (e.g. use of metal ties and straps); and
- Protection of exterior wood elements.

Different organizations had different considerations in factors and parameters in making their houses, first allocation of lots and lot sizes, building and planning standards, SPHERE standards (most of them complied with the 3.5 square meters per person), standard design by some donors who have their own prototype design which they apply anywhere in the country, it does not consider local conditions. With the donors budget for housing per unit the budget by the SWD was seen as a benchmark by some, the budget they had was 60,000 pesos and those who had other considerations in designing the houses had more, the maximum was another 20,000 above this. Availability of building construction materials in the area and building technology that is volunteer friendly, for example houses built by habitat for humanity need technology that anybody can do with minimum supervision. Community inputs to house design – among those only one had given value to the participation process, they are the Daughters of Charity. One considered providing space for livelihoods not just a house. The number of members of the family was considered and room for future expansion, which means providing houses which could be extended upwards (providing columns and beams which are strong enough to do that). Construction of houses before land development could be done caused difficulties in shelter assistance. The government is usually slower in doing their part, there is an agreement that they should do the site development before any housing construction is to be done but then the donors are demanding it gets done and some have to build without site development.

Hazards and challenges of living in the site; not all people who are resettled there came from poor settlements because the disaster affected different income levels so some people have to adjust from a bigger space to a minimum space. Cramped living spaces, restrictions on use of space; they were not allowed to expand the house as soon as they moved in. Lack of livelihood opportunities and lack of potable water and a problematic sewage system was the major problem in the community. Earlier you saw the septic tank used by HPFP, the "kotec" technology, this is the kind of septic tank that was introduced by the national housing authority, and people don't know how to use this so they had problems. Even though they are there they are not functioning properly. Community's level of awareness of site planning and house design; some have indigenous knowledge and use self improvisations, any involvement was in labor which is basically sweat equity.

What are the lessons? From our side we learned that of the eight NGOs that have initiated the housing projects none of them really had the technical capability to assess the designs that were done by people they hired, so they were dependent on the services of the professionals they hired. The burden of doing the right thing therefore lay in the hands of the professionals doing this resettlement project, and the community's role was very limited in this case. This study was presented to a multi-disciplinary provincial committee in Albay to discuss the problem of resettlement and rehabilitation for the people. The National Housing Authority was open to make up for the shortcomings that were mentioned and they addressed them as soon as they could (the problems with sanitation and site development). The guidelines were translated into Tagalog and shared with different groups. We did this work in 2008, and last year when tropical storm Ketsana hit we had these guidelines already, and they were useful especially for the communities in Metro Manila. That reconstruction is happening now.

Comment by Wan : This is a very important issue after disasters; how do we stop it happening again? The disasters will come, there will be cyclones, earthquakes, tsunami, sometime in the near or not so near future. How do we make communities more resilient? Not just what is built but the community itself as well, so next time when the disaster hits again how can we survive it better and come through it with less suffering and death?

Comment from Dr. Veera (Arsonm Silp Institute of the Arts): The solving of the disaster problem is another set of knowledge that we should prepare before solving the problem, prevention and mitigation. If you carefully study the overall disaster protection and mitigation process it's a very basic idea that preventive measures are the best answer. But if you cannot come up with the preventive solution the next thing is to really solve the problem. Preventive action can be based on knowing the topography and the geography of the site. In the past people knew where they should live, for example in the tsunami areas in many cases the fisherman survived because they lived at least 2 or 3 kilometers from the beach. With mangrove areas at the front so they won't have any problems. Those who died in the tsunami were new comers, new settlements who didn't know this traditional wisdom, no one told them. As we saw when the tsunami happened people ran towards the sea, they wanted to see what happened, the water level went down. That is the sign of the wave coming. We should investigate traditional wisdom, preventive is the most important, but if you cannot move from the existing situation now is the time for you to protect yourself. The houses on stilts we have seen in the presentations will survive, they do not obstruct the wave, while at the same time a one story building will be destroyed again in the case of tsunami. In landslide or typhoon area they have another kind of solution to protect their houses. Natural setting is also part of the solution, as Nad mentioned with the crazy guy growing mangroves along the beach. I think this should be the first criteria in your considerations.

Wan: Thank you Professor Veera. Hopefully, having been through these disasters, these communities will build more resilient houses that have better prevention measures put in place, in order to deal with future disasters.

Inamoto (Senior community architect from Japan) : In a disaster people lose everything, not just their houses but their minds and their family, everything, not only facilities. So the community architect has to see how we rehabilitate their mental damage to how we can think about the process, on the same level to think together with them. Economically we also have to think about economic rehabilitation together, the community architect needs to think wider to see other points also. In the planning we have to suggest the space as well as housing, community business space so he can suggest livelihoods as well.

PANEL 7 :

Heritage for people : poor communities in historic cities (Part 1)

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the seventh panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was moderated by Mr. Supawit Boonmahathanakom ("Tee", a young Thai architect who now works with ACHR) and Mr. Thip Srisakulchairak (a lecturer in the architecture faculty of Arsom Silp University in Bangkok), and included presentations from the following places :

- **LHASA, TIBET** : This presentation was made by Mr. Andre Alexander. Andre is one of the founders of the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF), which since 1993 has been working with local Tibetan communities to help restore their traditional Tibetan dwellings, temples and monasteries and revive the traditional arts and building culture which went into making these beautiful buildings. They have worked in vulnerable old city core areas in Lhasa (in Tibet), in Leh (in India's Ladakh region), and several rural communities in Tibet and Mongolia. The THF team has also been involved in a long-standing project to try to preserve and renovate some of the city of Beijing's very last surviving traditional courtyard houses, in the old "hutong" neighborhoods north of the Forbidden City - with their low-income occupants still inside of them.
- **YUSHU, TIBET** : This presentation was made by Ms. Anna Wozniak. Anna is a young architect from Germany who has been working for the past couple of years with THF, and has been primarily involved in restoring a Tibetan house in the town of Yushu, in Tibet.
- **SOUTH GOBI PROVINCE, MONGOLIA** : This presentation was made by Ms. Pimpim de Azevedo. Pimpim comes from Portugal, and along with Andre, she was one of the founders of the THF in 1993. For the past year or two, she has been working in rural Mongolia to help restore a beautiful Tibetan monastery in a remote village - a process which has not only involved building restoration, but the revival of traditional crafts and the setting up of a kiln to manufacture elaborate roof tiles for the monastery roofs.
- **PATHAN, NEPAL** : This presentation was made by Mr. Surya Bhakta Sangachhe, a Nepali architect who works with the Pathan Conservation and Development Program (PCDP), in the city of Pathan, in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

The theme for the discussions in panels 7 and 8 looked at ways groups in Asia are working to ensure that local communities - especially the poor and vulnerable ones - are involved in the preservation and conservation of the historic neighborhoods which still exist in their cities. The discussions looked at how to preserve not only the physical heritage of buildings and monuments, but also the traditions and cultures which go hand in hand with these buildings, such as the knowledge of local craftsmen and the persistence of traditional merchant and artisan cultures. While it is impossible to prevent new developments which pay little heed to vernacular building styles or local building materials, it is possible to combine conservation of historic city neighborhoods with development, making use of existing local assets.

Panel 7's discussion had a focus on the preservation and rehabilitation of houses and community buildings in Tibet, Mongolia, Ladakh and Nepal, which have much in common historically and culturally. The work of the Tibet Heritage Fund focuses on encouraging local communities to take part in restoring their houses, which are often neglected by conservationists in favor of monuments, using local craftsmen and traditional techniques. The case from Nepal demonstrates how local communities can be involved in restoration work with the support of local and national government. (Transcription by Diane Archer, ACHR)



1. Preserving local buildings AND local building skills in Tibet

Mr. Andre Alexander

This presentation was made by Mr. Andre Alexander. Andre is one of the founders of the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF), which since 1993 has been working with local Tibetan communities to help restore their traditional Tibetan dwellings, temples and monasteries and revive the traditional arts and building culture which went into making these beautiful buildings. They have worked in vulnerable old city core areas in Lhasa (in Tibet), in Leh (in India's Ladakh region), and several rural communities in Tibet and Mongolia. The THF team has also been involved in a long-standing project to try to preserve and renovate some of the city of Beijing's very last surviving traditional courtyard houses, in the old "hutong" neighborhoods north of the Forbidden City - with their low-income occupants still inside of them.



Andre : A historical painting shows how 1,300 years ago, the King and Queen watched over the building of a temple. From this we can assume that the Tibetans are proud of their building tradition, which they have held over a long time. The city of Lhasa has now grown around the temple, and historical photos show many vernacular buildings and typical Tibetan houses. Today, Lhasa does not look anything like that, and we have to look very hard to find any vernacular buildings at all, due to the changes that took place from the 1950s when the Chinese occupied Lhasa. In the 1960s they started a campaign to systematically destroy all evidence of the ancient culture, including entire buildings. This was not only a loss for architecture, but also of all the accumulated knowledge. From time to time the Tibetans voice their grievances, like in 2008 when they held major protests in Lhasa.



A map of the city will show that the historic old town is laid out like a spider's web. Here we can still see traditional flat-roofed, white-washed houses. However, in the 1990s there was another campaign to destroy more traditional buildings, including the state palace, and vernacular homes. The replacement buildings are of very low standard modern architecture, using pre-fabricated concrete slabs, and these buildings are inappropriate for Lhasa, for its climate and the risk of earthquakes - the concrete slabs will crush you. Just for the tourists, they try to build some shops in Tibetan style. So we can say that there are two visions of Lhasa: the official, Chinese part, with modern shopping malls and tall buildings, driven not only by ideology but by the greed for money. Then there is the traditional part, surrounded by trees, picnic spots, where everyone knows each other and there is no need for a car. These visions clash quite strongly.

In the early 1990s, some of us from THF decided we could do something, and it only took us three years of lobbying for the government to agree to let us restore a few houses. Once we had permission, we spent another year doing community surveys, getting a really good picture of the social situation of those who lived in these houses.

In our work we follow four principles :

1. **Bring time.** Time is such a wonderful ingredient if you can take it. Take your time, talk to everybody.
2. **All projects come from the community.** After the survey, we had meetings with the community, we told them that the government would allow us to upgrade some houses, but we didn't want to be the ones to choose. We discussed with the community how to upgrade their homes, and how to do it together.
3. **Don't trust the architect or the engineer, always trust the craftsmen first.** We don't like to work with contractors. We know the people have their own artisans, we see them in the paintings, and some of them are still alive. In 1961, traditional crafts were outlawed. For forty years there was a gap in transmission in knowledge about traditional crafts, but now these artisans are ready to come and out and start teaching their heritage.



4. **Don't trust drawings and plans like master plans, they are useless pieces of paper in which local people don't have a say.** All work is developed step by step with community people and craftsmen, and sometimes the architect helps with details.

To show an example from Lhasa : This is an old residential building, which was converted in the 1970s by the communist government into public housing for 17 families. It took us about one construction season, from April to October, to renovate it. And for the entire process, it was necessary to find out and revive many old technologies, from masonry to carpentry. To make the roof, the Tibetans stamp on it, to make it waterproof and it's very long lasting. It's important to teach the younger generation these skills, so we gave them stipends to come and work on our site. Now we have this big program in Lhasa, where we have up to 300 people learning skills, going to the countryside, learning from people there, and this is something that is spreading beyond Lhasa.



2. Using local skills to preserve a historic house in Yushu, Tibet

Ms. Anna Wozniak

This presentation was made by Ms. Anna Wozniak. Anna is a young volunteer architect from Germany who has been working for the past couple of years with THF, and has been primarily involved in restoring a Tibetan house in Yushu Town, in Tibet.



Anna : I have been a volunteer with THF for four years, and I have worked on the rehabilitation of the Gya Tshong Tsang house, in the outskirts of the Tibetan plateau in China. Yushu town is 3,500 meters above sea level, and was founded in the 12th century. However, in the last decade, many concrete high rise buildings have been built. The old town, however, is mostly mud structures, whereas the newer areas are concrete, high rise, and disregard the local context. So we came into this town in the hope of reviving the old buildings.

The house we restored in 2009 used to belong to a family that was involved in tea-trading between China and Tibet.

The house has a downstairs terrace which is the main living space for the family in the summer. For the restoration work we had skilled craftsmen from Lhasa and other areas, and we used local site managers, as well as a large local team. We worked strongly with the owner of the house.

The house is located on a slope, and before restoration, the whole house was slanting to one side, and there was a high variety of styles in the building. The building is a traditional structure, with a post-lintel structure enclosed by mud-brick walls, and the whole building is constructed with traditional earth building techniques: even the roof is of earth.

Because of the strong slant, we had to dismantle the whole upper story, taking down the roof. We numbered all the timber elements and stored them. All the earth piled in front of the building came from the roof, and it was all put back inside the building, using some water to bind the earth. So basically the building is completely constructed of natural materials and you could compost the whole building with no impact on the environment. Buildings made of earth are not necessarily dark and dusty, they form a very nice healthy living interior. The flooring is made of timber and the roofing is also made of wooden boards, so it's not dusty at all.



Above: the Gya Tshong Tsang House before restoration (left) and after the work was finished (right)

We applied small changes to the interior, working very closely with the owner before making any changes. We reworked the layout of the second floor as the rooms were very small and dark, and so we tried to enlarge the rooms, and we listened to the owner about how she wanted to use the building. On the ground floor, we opened up a whole room which is no longer used for tea storage, and the owner is planning to open a tea house on the ground floor, and also present the building to the public, with some pictures, to present the advantages of an old traditional house.



Traditional buildings stand up to earthquakes! On April 14th, 2010, there was a big earthquake which hit this town, with a magnitude of 7 on the Richter scale, and many buildings in the town were completely destroyed. Fortunately our building is still completely intact. As you can see, the surrounding buildings suffered severe damage, whereas we only suffered small cracks in the mud structure, which are very easy to repair.

So we hope this year to go back to Yushu, and that people will be more trusting of traditional buildings, which are best adapted to the local context and local environment, and that we can rehabilitate more buildings.

3. Reviving a community and a culture, through the restoration of its monastery

Ms. Pimpim de Azevedo

This presentation was made by Ms. Pimpim de Azevedo. Pimpim comes from Portugal, and along with Andre, she was one of the founders of the THF in 1993. For the past year or two, she has been working in rural Mongolia to help restore a beautiful Tibetan monastery in a remote village - a process which has not only involved building restoration, but the revival of traditional crafts and the setting up of a kiln to manufacture elaborate roof tiles for the monastery roofs.

Pimpim: Our project in Mongolia was to renovate the Sangiin Dalai monastery, located in Nomgun Sum, in the South Gobi desert, 700 kms from Ulaanbaatar. The site is located in the middle of nowhere, completely isolated.

According to information collected from the local people and the local former monk, there are only six of the original monastery's buildings left, as the others were destroyed in the 1930s by Russian soldiers. These six buildings show three characteristics: hybrid style, Chinese style and Tibetan style. The monastery was founded in 1772, and then extended 50 years later.

To do the restoration work, we started with an architectural survey, to assess the damage. Some of the problems of the building lie in the tiles and the bricks. There are two kinds of bricks used, mud bricks and blue bricks, which are very common in China. Many of the Tibetan style buildings suffered wood damage, because the roof beams collapse from the weight of the accumulated sand, which in the South Gobi can amount to seven centimeters of sand blown onto the roof in one season.



We also did an extensive social survey, and we found that there were three main problems:

- **People were leaving the town.** The monastery is in a small town with about 2000 inhabitants, and about 500 people moving in and out, who are students. Many of these 2000 people are leaving to the city, to find jobs, as there are no job opportunities here.
- **There is a lack of skills in building techniques.**
- **The materials were not available.** The only thing we can find locally is coal. So things need to be brought in from outside, and blue bricks are non-existent in Mongolia, so we decided to set up a brick factory.

We identified four families, and from these four families we chose people to work in a team. To work in a team is something very unusual in Mongolia - they are family orientated people, usually they work as a family.

To set up the brick kiln, we brought in an expert from China to explain all stages of setting up the kiln. We got other experts on making of tiles and bricks to come, who also explained how to choose the right materials, and how to mix the mud, which requires a special technique. The local carpenters made the molds for the bricks. The bricks have to be dried for seven days, then fired for seven days and eight nights. This is a very difficult process so we always focus on training the local people so that they can continue the process themselves.

Then we needed to train people in carpentry, because their carpentry skills were poor, since most Mongolians live in gers (the round, wool-lined tent structures which are the traditional dwellings of Mongolia's nomadic herdsmen) and therefore don't build houses. So we invited a German carpenter to train them in structural

carpentry. There were many symbols destroyed by the army, and one of these was the gabled roof, which we had to rebuild. One of the Mongolian carpenters made a model of how to assemble the roof, and for this he got a diploma from the local university. From China we brought in some experts on how to do the tiles for the roofing.



One of the ladies who participated became a local hero, and she got an award, from the Mayor of the town for participation in the project. Without the community participation we would never have managed to do this project. Another interesting thing is that as time went on, the Mayor started sending us teams from the village, for heavy work, to shovel the path, then he would send the doctors and nurses, then the teachers, then the office employees, to observe our process.

The official opening ceremony was the first religious celebration in the monastery after 80 years, since they closed it in the 1930s. The highest Lama of Mongolia came to consecrate it, and everyone was very moved, because they had the chance to see the monastery back to life again.

4. Preserving local building skills and local buildings in Leh, Ladakh (India)

Mr. Andre Alexander

This presentation was also made by Mr. Andre Alexander, one of the founders of the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF), which since 1993 has been working with local Tibetan communities to help restore their traditional Tibetan dwellings, temples and monasteries and revive the traditional arts and building culture which went into making these beautiful buildings. In the last few years, they have been working with communities and the local government in the old town of Leh, in the Ladakh region of northern India (another traditionally Tibetan Buddhist place) to restore some of the old houses and the crumbling infrastructure in this fairy-tale city in the Himalayas.

Andre : This process we are implementing in Ladakh is supported by ACCA. We have two programs there: co-



financing for housing, and building community drains. Ladakh is in India but shares cultural and social traits with Tibet, though it also has its own indigenous culture and traditions, like local dress. The palace of the Kings of Ladakh is now a national monument of India, made of mud timber and bricks, and is 300 years old. The old town is located below the palace, consisting of about 400 houses also built of timber or stone. But it's a very hard place to live, there is no water, very little drainage, you have to walk steeply uphill to cut trees, and only the poor families remain in that area today, all those who have money have moved out.



So again we started with a community survey, and we talked with everyone, and we found out that 50% of the people who live in the old part of town live below the official Indian poverty line and half the buildings are in very poor condition. There are only 5 water taps so people wait for 45 minutes in the morning for water, but they all know each other so there are no fights.

We started with a demonstration project, in a tiny local temple, to show that we were there to encourage traditional construction techniques. After the temple project, we had a meeting with the local people to say that we would pay 50% for the repair of their houses, if they would pay the other 50%. And many agreed to this. Of course some families are too poor to even finance 50%, but we are flexible, as long as they make some sort of contribution, providing labor or making mud bricks, for example.

We found that we could use any old soil to make these mud bricks, adding a little bit of straw to make them stronger. For some buildings we used Tibetan style stone masonry, but stone is already much more expensive, so mud bricks is for cheap affordable housing. We also used timber, as it grows very fast here, in 8 to 10 years, and almost everyone has family or friends who grow some of this timber, for construction purposes. We found there is an extensive social and family network across Ladakh, all Ladakhis are somehow related to each other, and they can ask their family to give them some trees. The timber is used for columns and secondary beams, and we use sticks or firewood to make the roof, over which is placed dried grass, and then different levels of soil and clay. So these are all materials that can be found cheaply. Then the parapets are made with a mixture of donkey dung to make them more resistant to the weather.



We had a little workshop in Ladakh to explore how the Ladakhis are prepared for earthquakes, for example the palace has survived for 300 years, and we found that the palace walls have timber brackets, and the walls are 1 meter thick on the ground floor, providing space for these brackets. So we copied this: after we put the timber in we filled in the spaces with mud. People brought their own traditional tools, they have no electrical tools, which would not be very useful anyway as there is almost no electricity. The people also built community drains.



When we talk about conservation, we like to conserve local communities, to have living cities. We don't help people who want to turn houses into guesthouses or boutiques. And we also want to revive and conserve building techniques. With regard to housing it's not so much conservation as rehabilitation. We try to encourage participation of inhabitants and we have a focus on livability. Lastly, compromise and negotiations are what we spend most time on every day.

I would like to thank all our volunteers on our projects, including four students from Chiang Mai university who visited us last year.

Comment from Tee : We learned from your story many things. Conservation is not only building conservation, but it goes beyond that, it is transmission of local wisdom, and conservation is concerned with the people and the risk of disaster. Like the Chang Chumchon ("community builders" network in Thailand), the THF have the local craftsmen.

5. Restoring the ancient city of Pathan, in Nepal

Mr. Surya Bhakta Sangachhe

This presentation was made by Mr. Surya Bhakta Sangachhe, a Nepali architect who works with the Pathan Conservation and Development Program (PCDP), in the city of Pathan, in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Mr. Surya Bhakta Sangachhe: Pathan Conservation and Development Project, Nepal

Surya : My focus is on Pathan city, located in Kathmandu Valley. I used to work as a member of the Pathan Conservation Development Program, and I was posted to work there in the early 1990s, as the town controller. This Pathan Conservation and Development Project (PCDP) is a joint program with the government of Germany, through the GTZ. The principles of PCDP are promotion of self-help and ownership - the program is owned by the people, not owned by the German government. The project builds upon the Bharatpur Development Project, which was initiated in 1992. It is an attempt to reconcile conservation and development of the town, through capacity building with on-the-job training and knowledge transfer. We are phasing out the Urban Development by Local Efforts (UDLE) support by the gradual shifting of responsibility to local partners and organizations.



Pathan is one of the oldest towns in the valley, over 2000 years old, and it has many monuments. The aim of the project is to safeguard the local culture of Pathan in the context of urban development, through the use of pilot projects, documentation, emergency repair of local monuments, building control, action plans and programs, integrated neighborhood improvement programs, and institutional support for local capacity building. The action plan was prepared by surveying with the local community: we went into all the neighborhoods and asked what the problems were: drainage and solid waste management came up. From this we created a multi-investment plan with funding from different sources, from the government and NGOs.

The pilot project was the restoration of the Chyusal Chapas community buildings, which are used for community meetings, marriage ceremonies, and community gatherings. These two

community buildings are built in the traditional Nepali manner. We used local materials, local craftsmen, and hundreds of volunteers to restore this building. In 2003, 500 residents, young and old, came together as volunteers, to re-tile the roof of the second community building. The tiles were passed hand by hand, washed, and then laid by the local craftsmen. After the day's work was done, everyone took part in a large feast, which was being prepared during the day. And now the project belongs to the community - people can pay a small contribution to use the center.

Technical assistance came from GTZ, which supported 45% of the costs of the larger Chyusal Chapas community center, while the local government provided 8%, and the local community contributed 57%. The smaller community center was restored in 2003, with GTZ financing 33%, the local government 1%, and the local community 66%. It was possible to save almost 40% of the total cost by working with the local community. This is in comparison to the Bharatpur Project, in which the local community was not involved.



QUESTION from Andre: Were there any conflicts, for example between you and the craftsmen? (*Surya responds*) Not between us and the craftsmen, because we didn't ask for things which were impossible. Conflicts were more between us (the architects and craftsmen) and the local residents, who sometimes have unreasonable demands, so we have to try and reach compromise, and rely on trust.

QUESTION : If locals do not value local heritage, then what is the role of the architect? (*Andre responds*) Architects can inspire both the craftsmen and residents, for example by using traditional skills to create new spaces and components. Our role is to inspire. (*and Surya adds*) In Nepal, the people wanted to use new construction styles. We as architects had to convince them of the validity of local styles and traditional materials, the identity of the locality.

QUESTION from Kirtee Shah : Your work is very inspiring and heroic. But I have one important question. Time is of the essence. The rate at which destruction happens is unbelievable. So it is very important that scaling up happens and we need more teams like yours - not just one Andre! So what are you doing for this scaling up happens? (*Andre responds*) You have to accept loss. You can only do so much. I am suspicious of scaling up and replicating - it is better to develop your own ideas and approach. But also we must work with local universities to share our experiences and methods.

Preserving historic structures and historic neighborhoods so that the people who live their don't get pushed out . . .

(*comments by Andre*) Groups like UNESCO and so on don't give money to poor local people. We like to keep the locals in place. The impact of too much conservation is that low income people get pushed out, as property prices rise. Also, preservationists pick out monuments and big houses to renovate, not the homes of ordinary residents which are not so grandiose. We have a plan to launch a program to help these people in Luang Prabang, to upgrade their houses, so that they can participate in being a UNESCO World Heritage Site and continue to live there, as they have every right to do so.



PANEL 8 :

Poor communities in historic cities : Heritage for people (Part 2)

The following report is a lightly edited transcript of the eighth panel discussion which took place during the Regional Gathering of Community Architects, which was organized by ACHR in Chiang Mai, June 12-16, 2010. This session was moderated by Mr. Andre Alexander (from the Tibet Heritage Fund) and Mr. Supawut Boonmahathanakorn ("Tee", a young Thai architect who now works with ACHR), and included presentations from the following places :

- **KOCHI CITY, JAPAN** : Mr. Yoko Hatakenaka is the Executive Director of Kochi Citizen's Council, in the town of Kochi, on the island of Shikoku, in southern Japan. Yoko has been a practicing community architect in Kochi for many years, but has also been involved in some of the country's pioneering "machi-zukuri" (participatory community planning) projects in poor Buraku settlements in other cities.
- **GEORGETOWN in PENANG, MALAYSIA** : Mr. Ooi Bok Kim is a Malaysian architect who specialized on the restoration of historic buildings. His office is in Penang.
- **CHINATOWN in BANGKOK, THAILAND** : Mr. Sakkarin Sapu ("Seng") is a practicing community architect and a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture at Mahasarakarm University, in Northeastern Thailand.
- **BANGKOK, THAILAND** : Ms. Niramon Kulsrisombat is a lecturer in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.
- **SONGKHLA, THAILAND** : Mr. Thip Srisakulchairak is a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, in the Arsom Silp Institute, in Bangkok. His presentation describes the work of restoring the Wat Kutao - an ancient Buddhist temple in Songkhla, in southern Thailand.

The discussions in panels 7 and 8 looked at ways by which groups in Asia are working to ensure that local communities - especially the poor and vulnerable ones - are involved in the preservation and conservation of the historic neighborhoods which still exist in their cities. The discussions looked at how to preserve not only the physical heritage of buildings and monuments, but also the traditions and cultures which go hand in hand with these buildings, such as the knowledge of local craftsmen and the persistence of traditional merchant and artisan cultures. While it is impossible to prevent new developments which pay little heed to vernacular building styles or local building materials, it is possible to combine conservation of historic city neighborhoods with development, making use of existing local assets.

The discussion on Panel 8 looked at heritage conservation projects in Thailand, Malaysia and Japan - all projects which seek to engage local communities in reviving their heritage - both physical and cultural - to ensure that conservation can be combined with development, by making the best use of existing assets and combining the old with the new. (This transcription by Diane Archer)



1. Using restoration to revive the community spirit in Akaoka, Japan

Mr. Yoko Hatakenaka



Mr. Yoko Hatakenaka is the Executive Director of Kochi Citizen's Council, in the town of Kochi, on the island of Shikoku, in southern Japan. Yoko has been a practicing community architect in Kochi for many years, but has also been involved in some of the country's pioneering "machi-zukuri" (participatory community planning) projects in poor Buraku settlements in other cities.

Yoko : Akaoka is a small town located near Kochi City, where I live and practice architecture. Akaoka has an area of only 1.64 square kilometers, making it the smallest town in Japan. It was a commercial trading area from the Edo period, and there are many buildings over 100 years old here. Around 1973, many of the town's shopping arcades began to decline. In 1977 we started this project, first by establishing a group to try to wake the community people up, to become more interested in issues. Akaoka has many elderly persons with good ideas for the community. This project aimed to help the town to make the best use of local resources, for example its buildings and culture, to maintain them for the next generation by keeping them alive. My role in the project is to be the

coordinator between outsiders, professionals, locals, and also take part in design.

The community development committee involves students, architects, artists, government officials, academics and community people. The community meetings were held in the disused public bath. The meeting leader was able to sit in the seat of the public bath's owner -this is a seat everyone in Japan dreams of sitting in! The committee started many activities after this first meeting: such as acting as Akaoka "detectives" to find the community's treasures, an activity which also involved parent-and-children teams. We wanted to reuse local buildings, the existing facilities, rather than building new ones. After these activities, the team was able to come up with its concept: *to revitalize local resources and find value in them.*

Some of the different buildings we focused on were:

- **A public bath:** We tried to change this into a more public space - an Indonesian shadow puppet show was performed there. The funds for conserving this building came from publishing a book for sale. This book contained photos taking by the locals with their own commentary.
- **A rice warehouse:** We decided to try to use this hundred-year old storage warehouse, owned by Japanese Agriculture, as a cultural stage. In the beginning it hosted small live concerts. After these events, the local government realized that this building was an important part of the town's heritage so started contributing local funds, including a planning workshop in 2003. In 2005 the warehouse was open as a concert hall, and it also displays the 23 famous kabuki paintings indoors as panels. After this project, many people from all over Japan came to visit this hall and Akaoka.
- **Vacant ancient houses:** These empty ancient houses are used as living-culture houses. Many local residents thought about how to use the vacant houses - for example, one lady opened a small bar/restaurant inside one old house.
- **A kabuki theatre:** This playhouse is where the kabuki drama is played, so this theatre was used for kabuki performances.



Eventually, however, the public bath building had to be dismantled. The committee had wanted to buy it, but the sales of the book did not raise enough funds, so the building was sold. However, the committee was able to retain many parts of the building, such as the windows and wooden panels, and two years later, they rebuilt part of the public bath, namely its facade, at the rice warehouse, as well as reusing some furniture from the baths inside the warehouse. Now this place has become a meeting point, and a place where people can remember their public bath and its history.

In the process, everyone discussed together - the local authorities and the community - about their goals and their future. They decided that it was important not to just preserve buildings, but to think about their goal, such as retaining old parts while continuing with new development.



Above: the rice warehouse before renovation (left) and after renovation, being used for performances and meetings

Comment from Andre : This presentation showed us the complete process of the true community process, and this community found that conservation is also transformation, using the spirit of heritage.

2. Saving Penang's historic town of Georgetown

Mr. Ooi Bok Kim

Mr. Ooi Bok Kim is a Malaysian architect who specialized on the restoration of historic buildings. His office is in Penang, and he is part of a group called "Penang Heritage Trust", which is trying to revive the physical buildings and the local culture in the historic district of Georgetown, in Penang (Malaysia) - an area which has been declared a "World Heritage Site", but which is in serious decline.



Ooi Bok Kim : Penang, in Malaysia, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2008. However, we still have many issues and problems in protecting the buildings. Many of the local people have been moving out of the heritage site, because the World Heritage status is attracting a lot of investors from Singapore, and overseas, who buy over rows of shophouses and kick out the local tenants. So we need to try and find a way to stop that and attract the local community back to their shophouses.

There are over 5,000 heritage shophouses in Georgetown. Their conservation so far was possible not just because we want to preserve these buildings, but because of the Rent Control

Act, which was abolished in 2000. From that year onward, many community people were forced out by the owners, and they had to move out to the outskirts to live in public housing, with the result that many of the buildings were left vacant and became dilapidated.

Our current project is around the Prangin Canal, which forms the boundary of the World Heritage Site. The map from 1798 shows how when Georgetown was formed, the British colonials chose a grid layout for the new town, for the new migrants from China, India, and the Europeans. The Prangin canal was originally a river, and the old maps of the city were used to define the boundaries of the World Heritage site. The canal was an important meeting point and also used to travel into the city center, and until the 1950s small ships could still travel up it to transport goods. The water of the canal is very polluted.

A chunk of land has been bought by the state government from the Penang Development Corporation, and the



government kicked out all the tenants here and started to build the high-rise tower and shopping mall. Now, some plots of land are still vacant along the canal, and we intend to turn them into a green lung, to revitalize the market and restore the shophouses. There are many old trees in this area, growing together with the old houses, and they are a part of the heritage and landscape. Some old houses were demolished, because the state government said they were too dilapidated and therefore dangerous, they didn't see that they could be restored back to the original state. People had to move out as the government was unwilling to restore the houses, so we are still fighting for this.

We wanted to address a few issues with the local authorities, but we couldn't get details of what they wanted to do. The lack of transparency is a big problem in Penang - and in Malaysia in general. They cut the water and electricity supply to some houses to force the tenants to move out.

Our next step is a *Heritage Impact Assessment*, a site analysis and survey, and a historical architecture and social analysis, to know the condition and how to restore it. Most important is community participation, as we want the original tenants to move back into this area, and this is only possible with an action plan. We have been looking at some case studies, in Japan, and in Singapore, and we can learn a lot from the projects presented in this workshop.



3. Saving Bangkok's historic Chinatown District from the wreckers ball

Mr. Sakkarin Sapu ("Seng")

Mr. Sakkarin Sapu ("Seng") is a practicing community architect and a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture at Mahasarakarm University, in Northeastern Thailand. In his presentation, he describes a project to regenerate Bangkok's historic Chinatown district (the area is also referred to as "Yaowarat" and "Sampeng" in Bangkok, named for two of the main shopping thoroughfares which goes through the district), which is being threatened by plans which call for the demolition of huge swathes of the district, to construct a new subway station.

Seng : I'd like to discuss the way we tried to re-approach the concept of conservation and development, and to overcome the distrust situation between each other, to create trust between community members and researchers.

Chinatown in Bangkok is a transportation hub, near the Chao Phraya River and Hualampong train station. This area has played an important role in the past for the distribution of agricultural products all around Thailand. Sampeng is now an area for wholesale and retail shops, such as souvenirs.

A Chinatown which still belongs to its residents : Chinatowns in many cities around the world are now more like Disneylands - like fake versions of what they once were, with Chinese restaurants. Most of them no longer meet the needs of the people who actually live in those areas. But our Chinatown in Bangkok still functions for the local people.



There is a big problem now, because the area is in the expansion plan for the subway system, and the government is in the process of removing the people for this. This land belongs to the Crown Property Bureau. This area has historic buildings, not at the national scale but locally, and there is also an area of buildings in deteriorating condition. Thirty years ago a private company rented a piece of land here to build cheap housing, and while the lease expired many years ago, the people are still living there without paying any rent or with any formal agreement.

With regard our approach to conservation and development - if you think about development, it is not the total destruction of the area - they can still conserve some areas in the site. Conservation and development can have the same meaning, but coming from different points of view. And the role of the architect or planner or urban designer is to transcend or translate this abstract view into something physical. The Arsomsilp Institute was involved and they tried to translate this conservation into images, showing the scale of conservation/development. Conservation need not be

keeping everything, but can mean developing some things to be better. Also, the compensation costs according to Thai law only pays for the physical loss, not the social, economic, historical and environmental costs - this should be the new way.

We found that there was no local residents' organization or forum for discussion about the issues arising from the new development plans.

The team also found that we faced much distrust from the local residents, who represent a mixture of social groups, and who feared that the team would use the community for their own benefit. How can architects transcend the situation of distrust into trust with the people? In Thailand, we have many people working with the urban poor, like Lek Sompop (*a senior community organizer who works with CODI*). But here, it is not only the urban poor. The first time we went to this community they asked us what our power was - were we just studying, would we just then leave the people and go away? Therefore, the team sought approval from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, to have the institutional status required to gain the trust of the local, mostly middle class, residents. Therefore, our tactic was to "*Look formal, but act informal*", because the middle class people have a different attitude when talking about the participatory process, they need us to have status.



In order to create the space for people to get involved in the process of development, we got people to talk about their own family history - not about the community history, the big picture, but only the household history, to give them pride, and give them trust to join us in this community process.



We also used an indirect way to run this process: If we only talked about problems, problem, problem, problem, we create an atmosphere of negativity. So we tried to think of fun activities, such as a children's participatory process. We sent the children to look for old shop signs, which also provided us with information not only but the shops, but also about relationships - which shops don't get on, who is respected in the community and so on. Another thing we learnt is that we need to learn about the different types of relationship of the people, because in this area there are many groups, with many dynamics: commercial, social, religious, neighborhood, and problem-based relationships.

With regard to our methods, we don't have any master plan, comprehensive plan. We move step-by-step. When we work in this area, we feel like we are walking into a dark room. We do

only small activities, and observe the movements of the people, and then design the next step. Maybe we fail - sometimes we don't know what we are doing, but that is a characteristic of this project. So our first step was to suggest a short term rent contract, to secure the sense of belonging of the people, for five years - if they fail, then probably they will all fail together, so this our challenge for our next years. We also plan to open a small community museum, and do some small scale upgrading of infrastructure. The architects have drawn up diagrams illustrating how the area could be revitalized. In one example of their schematic ideas, they have proposed turning a Chinese Opera building into a boutique hotel and opening up a walking street beside it, giving the locals ownership over the development of their area, without destroying the cultural and physical heritage.



Above: The government's idea for redeveloping Chinatown (left), and an alternative plan by architects (right)

Comment from Somsook (who has also been involved in the Chinatown project) : in Chinatown, with the construction of the new subway station, investors are seeing an opportunity to build apartment buildings, shopping complexes and other such commercial developments. So we need to negotiate a solution. We need to identify the subgroups within the larger Chinatown community. And part of doing this is *building trust*, since many of the local people might think that we are being sent in by contractors to persuade them not to oppose the project! The architects then draft a concept plan to show all parties the new possible directions for development. For example, a Chinese Opera building can become a boutique hotel, we can have a walking street - so that all parties start looking at a new possible direction for development. In order to help build the relationship between the local people and the other parties, they held a field trip to Shanghai and Beijing, to have a dialogue in a different setting and build their relationship of trust, whilst exploring projects there.

4. Participation and regeneration in the Kudeecheen Neighborhood in Bangkok

Ms. Niramon Kulsrisombat

Ms. Niramon Kulsrisombat is a lecturer in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. In her presentation, she describes a running project she has been involved with to use community participation in different ways to revive a historic riverside neighborhood, in Kudeecheen, in Bangkok.

Niramon : We all believe that community participation is one of the prerequisites of successful community upgrading. But there are some limitations, for example in a big city like Bangkok, the decreasing social capital makes it difficult to get participation. Also, the nature of participation is often quite problem-oriented, and pessimistic, and may involve only the people affected by the problem, so the proposals may not reflect the aspirations or needs of the overall community. We believe that art can be used to nurture the social capital, by encouraging friendship, and to allow exchange, so that we can understand the community's heritage. Also, the enjoyable nature of art makes people enjoy the activities, so that it is not really a political thing, so we can use art to start the community participation project.



Above : *The riverside Kudeecheen neighborhood in the 19th Century (left) and today (right)*

Our team decided to use the arts to expand community participation in Kudeecheen neighborhood, which is near the Chao Phraya river, opposite Rattanakosin Island. This neighborhood is very interesting, as it consists of 6 sub-communities, with three religions, dating from the Ayutthaya period. It has a traditional Thai urban structure, still centered around religious institutions, and still has high social cohesion, so we were lucky to be able to work with them.

Starting with mapping the area : Our project started in 2008, and we wanted to map the cultural heritage of the area, and to use this map as a learning platform for exchange and understanding of the area. We divided into two processes: mapping the cultural heritage, then using the map. This project was part of the Bangkok Waterway Cultural Mapping project, carried out under the Association of Siamese Architects. To map the heritage, we invited many people to join: the government's Fine Arts Department, architects, urbanists, and the local youth, to map not only the tangible but also the intangible, such as the area's history. Then we opened a public forum for data verification. In 2009 we made a cultural heritage map, and from this map we drew up conservation guidelines and plans. According to the map, religious places were ranked as having the highest cultural heritage value, and they are well maintained by the



local communities and the government. But in contrast, alleys are identified as less valuable, and they are in vulnerable condition. Also other problems emerged, like lack of good public space.

While we had quite good participation from the community, it was still mostly focused on the community leaders, so we decided to expand the participants from all strata of community, through two strategies:

- **We organized a design competition for the public space** which was identified as having high value in the cultural map. Anyone from the community could participate, but the team had to consist of a community member and one of our students. We got 11 design schemes from this activity. The winner was the "memories corridor" which we will be implementing soon.
- **We tried to make participation more fun by using art**, through the "Art in the alley" exhibition. We consulted the 6 communities about where to put the art, as we would be using their open space, so we needed their cooperation. Volunteers involved included artists, professionals and local amateurs, and community members. We lit up all the religious sites, and the alleys and the panels. On the first day, some people didn't really know what they were going to do, but on the second day, more people participated. For example, one boy is very good at drawing fish so he hung up his paintings on the wall of his house. Another group joined in by taking photos.



The end result was beautiful and very enjoyable. We found, by talking to people, that they got a better understanding of their cultural heritage, and they talked about making this a more permanent event to make their neighborhood more beautiful. The community decided to make this part of their local festival, so this will be revived in November with the Loy Krathong festival. Our next step is to materialize the results of the design contest, so now we are fund raising, with the temple and community at the core.

5. The conservation and revitalization of Wat Kutao, in Songkhla, Thailand

Mr. Thip Srichakulchairrak

Mr. Thip Srisakulchairrak is a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, in the Arsom Silp Institute, in Bangkok. His presentation describes the work of restoring the Wat Kutao - an ancient Buddhist temple in Songkhla, in southern Thailand.

Thip : This project started in May 2008, when the Arsomsilp institute went for a sightseeing trip in Songkhla, in Southern Thailand. We found this very beautiful temple, Wat Kutao, which is in decline. The abbot said he wanted to restore the temple, so we had a meeting with the abbot and the temple community about this. The community was not strong, as they lack ownership over the temple. So I felt a community participatory process should be applied, and Arsomsilp decided to start the conservation and revitalization project of Wat Kutao, starting by restoring one pavilion. We thought this would also be a good learning opportunity for our masters students, and over the year we went over ten times to the community. There were many steps:



1. **To investigate the possibility of a participatory process for conservation**, we went for five days to just be in the community, to live and learn from them. We talked and listened to their problems, their opinion of the project, and we did a family tree to find out about the old families. Then we shared our knowledge with the community. The conclusion was that the pavilion used to be a school, very popular in the provincial level, but the problem was that the community was not strong.

2. **To encourage and increase awareness of the local people**, we started with a photography project, displaying photos in the market. We also had children's art activities, and cleaning the pavilion, and an exhibition of our plans. We did people mapping, to share information and expose the good things about people. But in some things, the community were not interested.
3. **We shared with the community the issues of what to do with the pavilion once it was restored.** The community tried to raise funds by selling t-shirts. While it looked that the community people were increasingly participating, it turned out that people needed time to do their jobs and did not have time for meetings. There was also a very violent election campaign happening at that time, so we decided to pause the community process.
4. **We moved onto the building process, measuring and drafting the site plans**, then drawing up plans in the studio, with the help of a local architecture school to participate. We displayed the plans and some people were interested and wanted to join in the restoration process. When the local election finished, we resumed our work in the area, and made a brochure of the four options for the pavilion conservation. The temple made an appointment with the local community to attend a meeting, but no one turned out, which was very frustrating.
5. **Finally, we were able to have a group meeting**, but it was different to the past meetings - it was a dialogue, with direct sharing of problems and many issues. Here, they asked me to estimate the cost of repairing the pavilion, which I thought would be 500,000B, and then the local people donated in excess of that, totaling 600,000B.
6. **So we began the restoration, beginning with spiritual worship**, then repair works, cleaning and repairing the pavilion, sculptures, with the participation of the local community in all steps.
7. **In the end, the temple won a provincial level award for best temple**, and we also got financial support for this local level project. This is just a starting point now - the local people want to conserve another pavilion next.



QUESTION : How are sites selected for preservation?

- (Andre responds) In the Tibet Heritage Fund, we don't select heritage sites. Communities propose which buildings we should restore. It is quite convenient for us, because when a place is declared a heritage site, we face many government obstacles and regulations.
- (Surya responds) The local leaders and experts document the important sites of historical and cultural heritage. We visit the communities and prioritize the sites according to the willingness to participate of the community.

QUESTION : Does the government inspect your restoration work, to ensure you are within regulations, and whether your buildings are sustainable, earthquake resistant and so on?

- (Andre responds) One part of the process is that we have to do constant lobbying with the government. If they only come in once we're done, it's much too late. Also, in the countries where we work, there is much less of a regulatory framework than in Europe, for example.
- (Surya responds) In Pathan, we have archeological norms: anything over 100 years old cannot be changed or altered or destroyed. Sometimes, the communities want to replace old buildings with new structures, and our job is to convince them otherwise. For example, if they do this, they will not get government or municipal support, like improvement to infrastructure and drainage. So conservation is tied up with neighborhood improvement, and if you follow the rules, you get the government's participation.

COMMENT from Kirtee: The reality of the situation is that we can't fight markets and development.

- (Veronica Liew from Penang responds) Since the World Heritage Site status, Georgetown has become a goldmine. The word "heritage" is slapped on everything, from bike tours to maps, which means that the true heritage is diluted. In my job, we give grants to small time property owners, but even they are becoming gentrified, opening coffee shops and boutique hotels. So we try to raise awareness. It is a learning process, though we question whether the local government truly knows the meaning of heritage. They bring in experts to show how we should use what we have, but just because it worked in Edinburgh doesn't mean that it will work in Penang. The World Heritage Site application was very top down, there was no participation, and it was a 12 year process. So, many stakeholders need to first understand what heritage is - the marrying of the cultural, historical and commercial, but without destroying the soul of the city. All we see for now are boutique hotel plans.