



CAN

COMMUNITY ARCHITECTS NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

January 2015 



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Happy 2015!

This 2nd edition of the CAN newsletter starts with a special feature on Bangladesh, a country with a huge population and housing problem where the community architecture approach is still young but growing fast. Two big projects are now underway in the country, seeking to apply the principles of participatory upgrading across Bangladesh's low-income communities.

We also have some good examples of people and communities taking on an active role in maintaining and renovating their own houses, buildings and architectural and cultural heritage, in such different contexts as UNESCO heritage site George Town, the metropolis of Seoul, and the mountain city of Leh in Ladakh.

From Thailand, we received a piece on how to apply 'universal design' for people's needs into community upgrading, and a beautiful story on land planning reform from the bottom up in the hilly Mae Tha district.

We are launching our new section 'Beyond CAN' to hear inspiring stories of change from other parts of the world, with two stories from Chile, where progressive government policies and innovative young architects are changing the way cities are made.

We hope you'll enjoy reading these stories and we strongly invite everyone to contribute to the newsletter, to help make it become a space for exchange and learning across the network and beyond.



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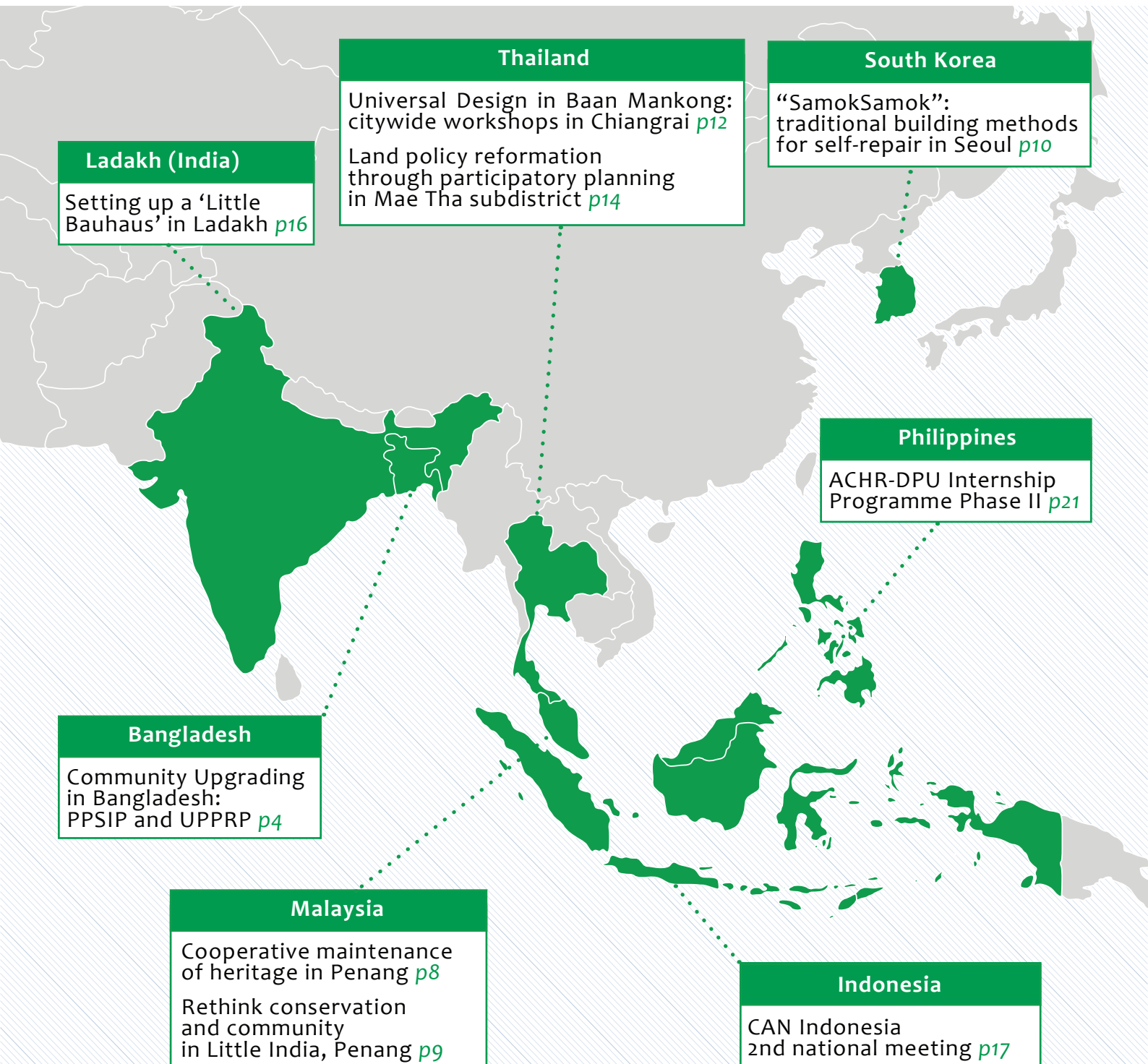
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For contributions, comments, or queries, write at communityarchitects.news@gmail.com

For more information about the network, visit the website: communityarchitectsnetwork.info

Thanks to all those who contributed their stories, pictures and experiences for this issue!

WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND ASIA:





Bangladesh

Community upgrading in Bangladesh: PPSIP and UPPRP

Two big projects are ongoing in Bangladesh, aiming at implementing a community driven upgrading for the first time at scale across this densely populated and still very poor country.

BRAC University, Manchester University, The National Housing Authority (NHA), Bangladesh World Bank, KMC, and JA Architects are working together on ‘**Pro-poor Slum Integration Project**’ (PPSIP), to develop city-wide community upgrading with/by/for low-income communities in urban areas of Bangladesh.

In parallel, the **Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Project** (UPPRP) is supported by UN-HABITAT in implementing the Community Housing Development programme, which is underway at Chittagong, Rajshahi and Shirajgonj districts. Working team includes Community Architects along with tenure advisor and urban planners.

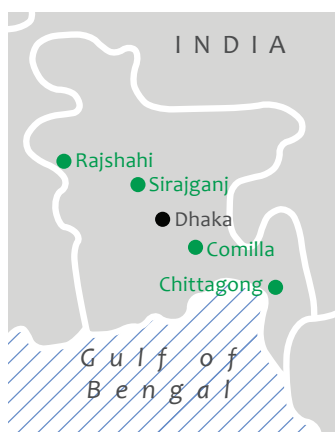
In December 2014, Community Architects from PPSIP shared their work done in Comilla so far and the Community Architects from UPPRP shared their work from around the country at a sharing session. The participants talked about the lack of community architects working on the ground and whether community-led processes could be carried out without big funding agencies and finding ways to make these processes sustainable after the funding agencies leave. It was asserted that it is very possible to work with limited and no fund at all, but there’s a critical need to involve more professionals and students in participatory processes.

Shubhopur Gangpar, Comilla Amader Bari Amader Moto: “Our Home Our Way”

Comilla, Sirajganj, Dinajpur, Barisal and Narayanganj districts have been prioritized for the **Pro-poor Slum Integration Project**, and Comilla selected as the pilot. An extensive surveying of settlements was followed by a detailed census to prioritize where the upgrading would happen first. Out of the five settlements prioritized, only Shubhopur Gangpar community expressed interest to take part in the project.

For communities to come together, they often need something to come together on... Shubhopur Gangpar is a lakeside settlement. The government started building a road around the edge of the lake, but stopped the project at Shubhopur Gangpar due to lack of funding. Because access into the settlement is difficult, the community came together to continue the lake side road into the settlement.

A team of Community Architects started the design process by mapping with members of the community. To ease the process, the settlement was divided into four



It is very possible in Bangladesh to work with limited and no fund at all, but there’s a critical need to involve more professionals and students in participatory processes



zones according to access. The four zones are not connected internally, and can only be accessed from the peripheral roads. Maps containing plot boundaries and existing structures were produced.

A series of “information maps” were also created that contained information about building typology, income, savings, interested-non interested ratio, owner-tenant ratio, membership in savings schemes, and aspiration maps containing information about what kind of intervention the people want on their houses. The architects digitized the community maps to make a Masterplan, including the new road, ghats, water purification systems, separate washing areas for females and males, play areas, and positioning of the new utilities (gas lines, water lines, electric poles and drains). Everyone in the community agreed to spare land for the new road along the lake.

In the following exercise community members were asked to draw their dream houses to scale on grid paper, and cost list the materials required for repairs or rebuilding. The community recorded whether individual households

wished to repair or rebuild their houses and the size of loan needed, followed by a list of all the materials required across the community, and located where the best price was. The Community Architects will use these drawings to work on the technical drawings for the community.

In early 2014, students from the housing studio at the Department of Architecture at BRAC University went to five communities in Comilla and carried out design exercises. The students spent time with the residents of the communities, talked about their aspirations and needs, and designed hypothetical solutions for them.

The Social and Community Architect have recently began working in two communities in Sirajganj, the second town to receive the PPSIP program after Comilla. | [Nazia Roushan](#)

For more information on the PPSIP in Bangladesh, contact [Nazia](#) at naziaroushan@gmail.com

◁ *Discussing about the infrastructure with the community.*

▽ *Mapping the community.*



Sirajganj | Chittagong | Rajshahi Community Housing Development

One night before going to sleep, while Mrs. Rokeya and her husband Mr. Tara were laying on the bed, Mr. Tara slowly told his wife, with a deep voice: “Rokeya, I had never thought, even in my dreams, that I’d be able to live in a good house such as this.” They had just moved in their new house, which they constructed with support from Sirajganj’s **Community Housing Development Fund** (CHDF) and **Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction**

One night before going to sleep, Mr. Tara told his wife, with a deep voice: “Rokeya, I had never thought, even in my dreams, that I’d be able to live in a good house such as this”



Project (UPPRP) – a UKAID-funded project executed by **UNDP** with technical support of **UN-Habitat**. With technical support from the UPPR Project poor people of Sirajganj have established a CHDF, a revolving fund for providing land tenure security and better housing for the urban poor.

Sirajganj CHDF has provided housing support for 35 families in 4 settlements in two wards in the municipality area. A total amount of 72000 USD has been distributed as

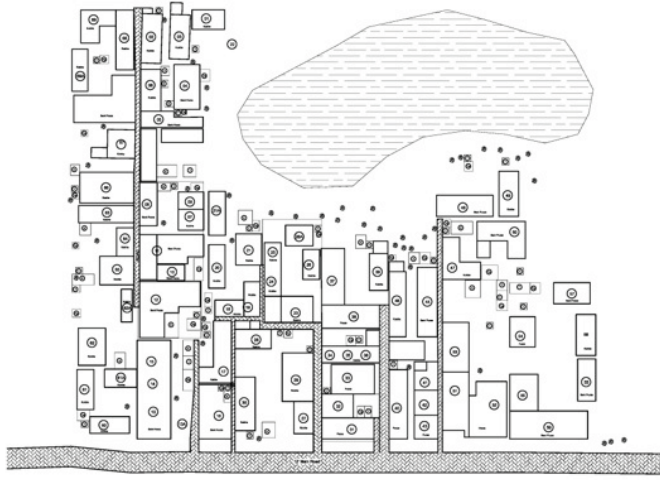
housing loans from the fund. CHDF has established a process for providing land tenure security and housing. Through a number of primary savings groups, CHDF is operating its financial activities.

Rokeya is living in one of the four settlements CHDF is working with in Sirajganj. She took a 200,000 BDT (2500 USD) loan, and like her nineteen more families have taken out a loan – from as low as 60,000 BDT (USD 750) up to 200,000 BDT (USD 2500) – and constructed their houses. ‘Rokeya settlement’, previously known as a slum, is now a well designed community housing.

Communities themselves select the most vulnerable community to start work, based on some preset indicators and with help from UPPRP. Then with the help of UPPRP team, which consists of Community Mobilization team, Urban Planners and Architects, community people prepare their own community map. After a series of consultation community people identify their own problems and come up with the solutions as well.

With a little help from the team of professionals, these community people have been building their own capacity to come together, work side by side to overcome any difficulty, any disaster, any misfortune they might face.

Collecting and correcting the housing request forms; and measuring the community’s narrow alleys for the map (here on the left).



Existing community map of Rokeya's Settlement

- Household No
- K Kitchen
- Existing Road
- T Toilet
- Tw Tubewell



Proposed community map of Rokeya's Settlement

- Household No
- K Kitchen
- Existing Road
- Proposed Road
- T Toilet
- Tw Tubewell
- Proposed Road



Relationship map of Uttar Goyla (Rokeya) Settlement, Ghurka



Preparing Community map

Another community impacted by UPPRP's work is **Jelepara**, a Hindu riverside community in Chittagong, the country's second most populous city. The primary occupation of men in the community is fishing, up to 6 months annually. Their income range is 125-180 \$ per month. Jelepara residents face many problems, such as income generation, poor land use, poor infrastructure and illiteracy, along with climatic vulnerability such as tidal-erosion with tidal-flooding. Due to a lack of proper knowledge beside these fundamental issues, livelihood standards have dropped. UN-HABITAT technical team, composed of a Community Architect and an Urban Planner, and the Community Housing Development Fund of

Participating to the new "idea" is what impacts the community the most, and indeed this aspiration uplifts their livelihood standard

Chittagong (CHDF) with direct participation from the Community Development Committee is playing a vital role for resolving or minimizing these weaknesses.

Problems were identified based on a survey and community consultation in groups. Intense mapping of present and future developments with the community members drove the household development programme, which resulted in a comprehensive, community-led Settlement Improvement Plan (SIP). The long-term plan also includes income generation strategies, for the development of a better life-standard in the future. For now, 13 households have started house construction, with an approved fund of 1250-2500\$ for each from the CHDF.



On the other end of the country, in Rajshahi city, UPPRP is working with **Koyerdara Christianpara** community, located on a plot that belongs to a local church. 34 families with extreme vulnerable housing condition were living with verbal agreement, but no legal contract, inside the church's land; another 9 houses were located inside the Church's cemetery and suffered in fear, experiencing a serious eviction threat.

The Church was willing to lease some land to the very poor Christian community of Koyerdara, for them to secure land tenure in a planned way inside the housing area. After several meetings in 2014, with assistance from the Community Housing Development Fund CHDF Rajshahi and

► Incremental design for Koyerdara. 1st phase: Brick foundation for 2-story building. Complete a single storey and cover with tin. 2nd phase: Replace the tin with concrete roof,

construct 1st floor and shade with existing tins. 3rd phase: Remove the tin and complete 1st floor concrete roof. Temporary shade on roof if needed.

UN-HABITAT technical team, the community reached an agreement with the Church authority and signed a 50-year lease agreement for the land, for only 5 USD a year.

Mapping and housing design has already been completed by the community with Community Architects, and construction is due to start this month.

There is no actual conclusion for community development as the development itself may change due to contingency. But the people in the community, together with their future generation, could save themselves from natural and man-made disasters. Getting the chance to participate to the new "idea" is what impacts the community the most, and indeed this aspiration uplifts their livelihood standard. Financial limitations are a major issue here; nobody among us is beyond this. UPPRP along with CDC team is paving the road for these community people to overcome that, with time. | **Kh. M. Abdullah Lizu, Fatema Sharmin Sonia and Z. H. M. Monjur Murshed Turjo**

For more information on UPPRP's project in Sirajganj, and to see many more pictures, write to **Abdullah** at abdullahlizu@gmail.com or visit **Sirajganj CHDF fb page**. Contact **Sonia** for more information about Jelepara and Koyerdara at sonia.arch05.ku@gmail.com.





Malaysia

Cooperative heritage maintenance in Penang

The declaration of George Town, Penang, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008 has brought more tourism, with high maintenance costs for property owners, rising tenancy insecurity, and poor living conditions often experienced by tenants. ACHR and Think City are fund matching to open a space for cooperative physical improvements between tenants and property owners of ancient buildings in need of renovation. With an alternative channel for vulnerable communities to access formal financial system, they can leverage more sustainable tenancy agreements and resist expulsion while contributing to maintaining their environment.

Think City (a government group set up to catalyse urban regeneration between stakeholders) allotted a sum to CDF in early 2014 under a new grant mechanism, The Sustainable Housing Program, a repayable grant for cost-sharing of physical improvements on old buildings. They felt the trigger for such cooperation between property owner and tenant could only be found in a collective realization of shared issues around UNESCO heritage buildings, so in addition to accessing grant money, Think City acted as facilitator in the growth and development of a physical improvement cost-sharing model built on concerns from the bottom-up.

Many efforts have been made to introduce the CDF to communities: education and training events, videos, workshops. Malaysia's history of fraudulent money collectives meant communities were not willing to manage large funds through networks of local savings groups. However in the new scheme CDF was introduced under the legality of a third party, Think City, and able to finally take off.

Pilot Project no. 1: The Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple Affordable Housing Project

This is the first pilot project between tenants and property owners under the Sustainable Housing Programme starting in 2012. The tenants were hesitant, however united by their tenancy insecurity they agreed to go along with the fund-matching mechanism. Think City, the owners and the tenants eventually agreed on 10-year tenancy with no rental increase, that the board of trustees would be responsible for the repair of the roof of the shophouses using a TC loan, and the tenants were responsible to contribute to the repair of the façade through the ACCA fund.

The initial engagement process involving needs identification is crucial for both parties to come into mutual understanding and agreement. It was an important first step in repairing an already strained relationship between the trustees of the temple and the tenants, which is not an uncommon scenario in George Town.

The repairing of the façade had many disputes, and the tenants wanted to drop out before the work began, but felt committed to honour their promise to one of the temple trustees, Mr Khoo Kay Hean, who had helped push for their long-term tenancy agreement.

The upgrading of a UNESCO heritage site is subject to complicated conservation guidelines, hampering interest

With an alternative access to finance, vulnerable communities can resist high rate of expulsion while contributing to maintaining their environment





Before and after façade treatment.

and enthusiasm of tenants and owners. A technical team was formed to improve dialogue between tenants and owners, by sharing technical knowledge on technique and regulations the decision making process between property owners, tenants, and architects was made easier.

The Trustees of Hock Teik Cheng Sin Temple are now keen to introduce the temple to the public through an information centre, encouraging the tenants to share their pride in becoming part of the temple community.

Pilot Project no.2: Façade treatment at Queen Street

In 2014 three shophouses on Queen Street, Little India, owned by the Toishan clan like many other properties in town in need of restoration, were identified for façade treatment. The community in Little India are mainly traders and shop owners, sharing resources such as water and electricity, and in most cases subletting from the main tenants. The main tenants get a low rental rate and neglect repair to the building, while subletting at a higher rate.

The façade treatment is merely a catalyst for intervention; the ultimate goal is to engage the subletters, tenants, and property owners in identifying issues together, and participate in a decision making process on how to fairly split the costs of maintenance between parties. All parties were aware of the needs to adhere to strict conservation guidelines when in the core zone of World Heritage Site, however they were not clear about the rationale behind the requirements, particularly signage size, and installation of additional structures such as awnings, air-conditioner etc. In response the technical team was involved to facilitate the decision making process. | **Hooi Seam Ng**

For more information, contact **Ng** at ngnhi@gmail.com

Malaysia Rethink conservation and community in Little India, Penang

The Masters of Architecture program at **Taylor's University** in Penang has opened a module on Culture and Community Design. Professor Dr. **Nikhil Joshi** challenges his students to consider how built heritage can matter to communities, and how community engagement can inform the architectural design process?

Since 2008 UNESCO has designated many areas of Penang built under British Colonial rule as World Heritage, including the enclave for labourers and traders from Sri Lanka and India, subsequently called Little India. The studio aimed to highlight the vulnerability induced by pressures of UNESCO heritage in Little India within the context of a weak planning authority and rapid urban growth and globalization, with the belief that any conservation and development of the historic urban landscape must start with engaging local communities.

Heritage means more than just mere identity, continuity and accumulated layers of memories. We want to encourage students to understand that vernacular heritage is not only about preserving the past, but that such practices of heritage preservation can be a tool for communities to come together as one in the neighbourhoods revitalization, economic growth, and sustainability, helping people cope with pressures of urban society, and secure their future.

The architects took on the role of a socially responsible facilitator, initiating various participatory acts over the course of the module. Following a series of consultations with various stakeholders such as the community, business owners, the Hindu Endowment board, Mariamman Temple Committee, the students presented their work to George Town World Heritage Incorporated, Penang Heritage Trust, the local council and state planning department at the office of ThinkCity. | **Nikhil Joshi**

For more information, contact professor **Nikhil** at abhivyakti13@hotmail.com.





South Korea

“SamokSamok”: traditional building methods for self-repair in Seoul

CAN Korea is made of architects engaged in the ACCA program, working either with communities in Seoul, or with community organisers promoting the use of vernacular architecture. The network was launched after the 2012 workshop with vinyl house communities in Seoul.

Its latest activity was a 10-day architectural workshop, “Samoksamok Learning by doing: lifelong skills of repairing houses”, held in November 2014. Toad Housing, an architectural social enterprise in Seoul and a member of CAN Korea organised the workshop with the support from the Seoul Metropolitan Government. SamokSamok translates to “little by little” in Korean dialect. The workshop aim was to promote people-centred and tenure-protecting housing upgrading and urban regeneration as an alternative to conventional tearing down and building anew redevelopment approaches. If people can be trained and supported in repairing their own homes and *maeul* (village



The workshop was designed to promote people-centred and tenure-protecting urban regeneration as an alternative to bulldozing redevelopment approaches

community), the city can be improved and regenerated by and for the people who live in it.

The participatory workshop facilitated the knowledge sharing of traditional building techniques for individuals and communities to repair their houses and upgrade their

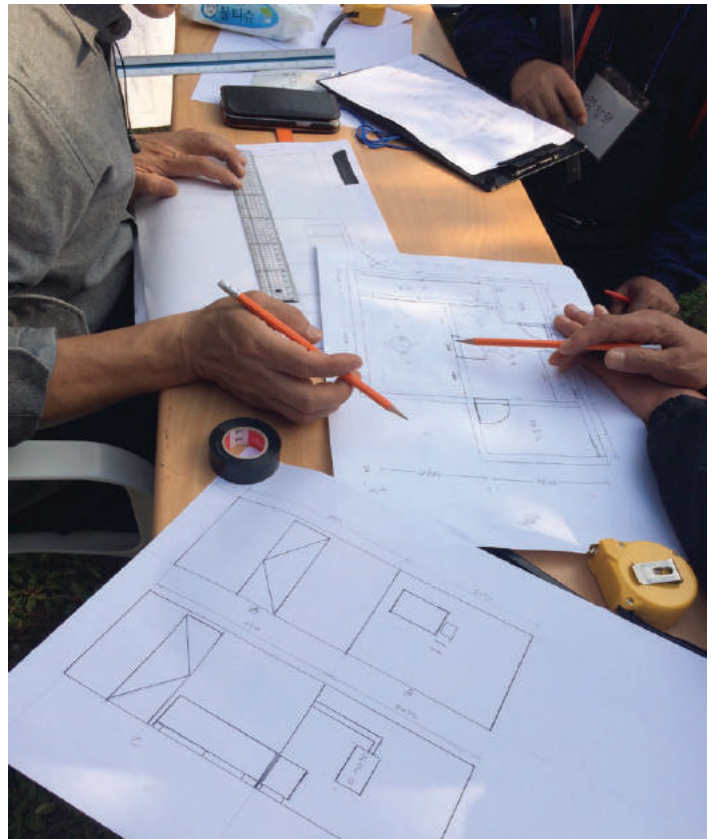
neighbourhoods themselves. It developed skills in drawing and measuring, insulation, soilplastering walls, tiling, anti-sweating and painting to build a healthy, pleasant and energysaving home. The traditional art of plastering walls using a mix of dried rice straw and soil as insulating material was most appreciated by the participants.

20 participants enjoyed the workshop, and in teams of six practiced their newly learned skills at an uninhabited house in Eunpyeonggu district in the city. This was the fifth workshop facilitated by Toad Housing with the theme “repairing”, targeting individuals with a keen interest in repairing their homes, and/or in need of repairing their old dilapidated homes suffering financial difficulties. However unlike the previous four workshops, participants in this one could learn by doing; planning, drawing and practicing in a team. The other CAN Korea members provided strong support in organising and conducting this design workshop. Upon completion, CAN Korea hopes that the participants can repair and upgrade their neighbourhoods with their communities. | [CAN Korea](#)

You can get a glimpse of [CAN Korea’s](#) activities on their [website](#) (although the page is still only in Korean) or contact them at cankorea.info@gmail.com.

▽ The participants are practising flooring work.

▷ The participants are learning how to draw architectural plans by practising themselves. A participant is presenting her own drawing to others.



Tar-Saeng Studio is a community architecture studio using ‘Universal Design’ at different scales, from product design to interior design to architecture. Recently Tar-Saeng Studio ran a workshop and training series with ten Baan Mankong communities in Chiangrai, in northern Thailand on the topic of ‘**Universal Design in Baan Mankong**’.

Baan Mankong, Thailand’s national programme for community-driven slum upgrading, has been running for more than 10 years, so while several communities have already accomplished their goal of securing housing and land, some communities are still in the building phase and others still in the planning stage. The aim of the workshop was to use Universal Design knowledge as a tool to encourage residents to continuously improve their living conditions following successful securing of land and housing – the first stage of Baan Mankong, already achieved by many communities all over Thailand.

The studio aimed to try to create a learning ground with the BM members starting from the network of Chiangrai in order to bring together and share experiences of living conditions, pros and cons, obstacles, risks based on the physical, social and financial aspects. Many BM members are aware that during the design stage, securing land is the first priority, either for the community, the individual or as a building envelope; however in overlooking the importance of architecture in the design phase, houses are often missing ‘qualities for future of living’ as they fail to consider essential housing details, such as:

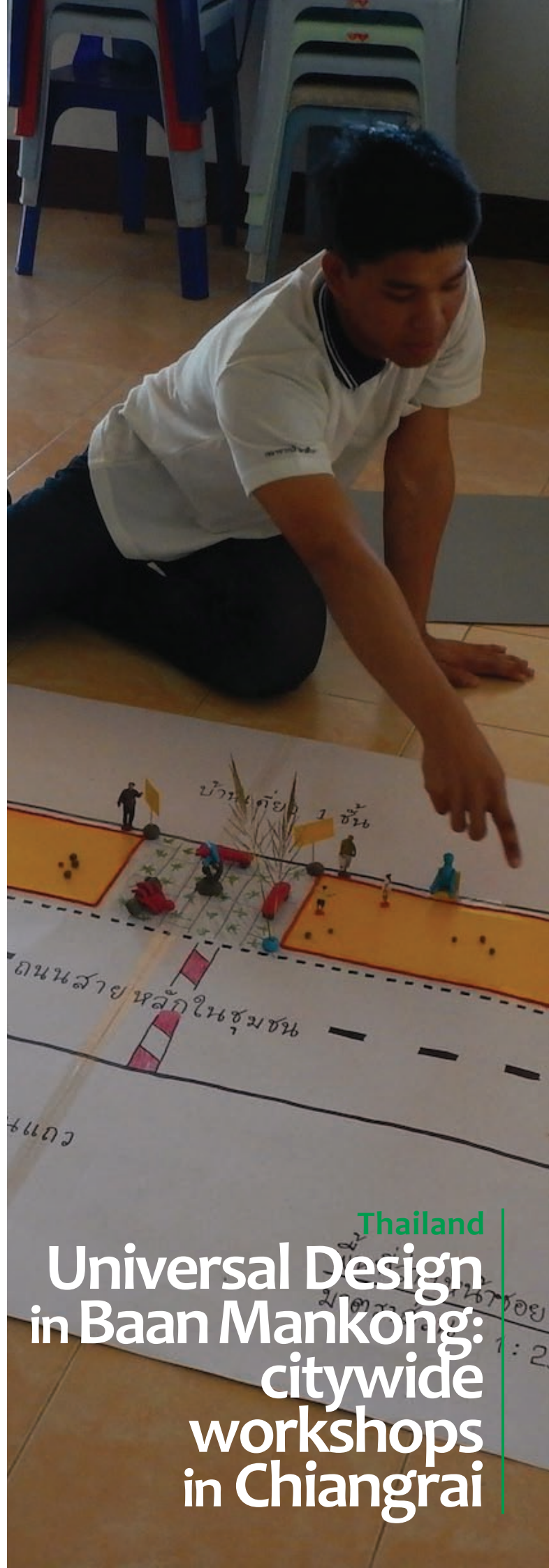
1. Second floor usage. If house owners are older, they may use the 2nd floor only for storage, rather than regularly as a bedroom. Without planning for it the first floor becomes mixed-use, between grocery stores, bedroom and storage.

2. Injuries. If house owners are parents, and did not plan for special floor tiles in the bathroom, the tiles can become slippery, and the children prone to accidents and injuries due to slipping.

3. Parking. Some communities are having a ‘car issue’, as parking was overlooked during the first planning stage. Some residents use their parking area for housing, and build their houses to the outside edge of their plots. With no choice but to park the car on the street, this may block traffic flow in case of emergency.

4. Void space. Most communities did not plan any appropriate functions for their ‘empty green space’, both physically and financially. In many cases communities

In the design stage, securing land is the first priority; by overlooking the importance of architecture in this phase, houses are often missing ‘qualities for future of living’



Thailand
Universal Design
in Baan Mankong:
citywide
workshops
in Chiangrai

ended up abandoning them, or using them as additional storage areas, in some cases storing construction materials becoming particularly dangerous for small children.

TS studio created a series of workshops and training based on 5 different activities originating from the lived experience:

1. Sharing both on individual houses and communal space,
2. Community mapping making,
3. Understanding 7 important rules of Universal Design and how it is related to the present living conditions in Baan Mankong communities of Chiangrai
4. Making design guidelines on tested areas
5. Construction skills sharing and ideas gathering on how to push the tool of Universal Design forward to other BM sites and networks.

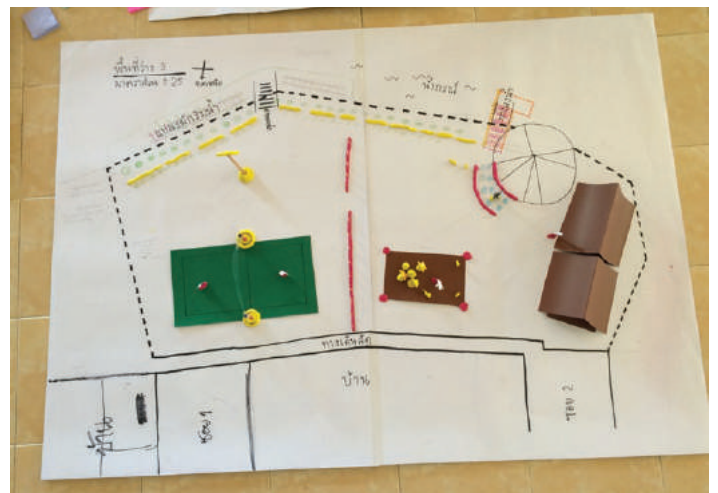
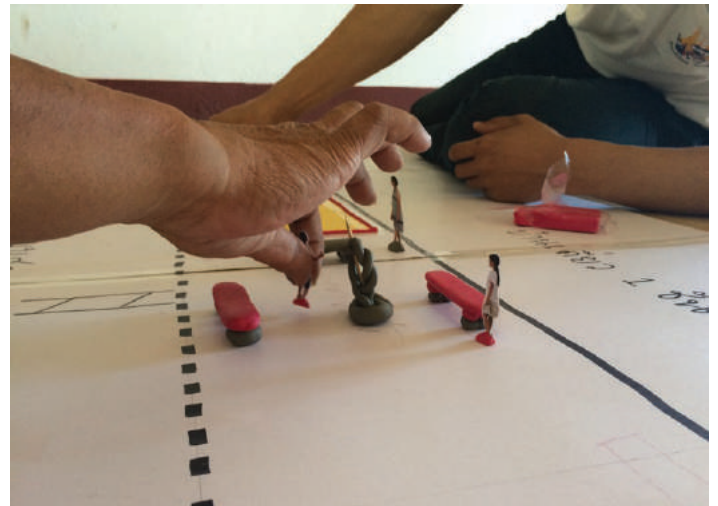
Three communities agreed to use some money to improve communal open spaces for use by 'everyone' especially elderly, children and disabled

The result of the workshop and training series was that the Chiangrai Baan Mankong network began to understand the longer term risks of short term planning on their communities. In addition the new communities ready to enter the planning phase are interested in using

Universal Design rules and putting more focus on house design and proper planning of communal open spaces, but such a change in focus possibly requires readjusting the future financial plan of their BM project.

Three communities who have already secured their land and housing, agreed to dig out some of their unplanned money left over from the construction budget, and use in combination with their landscape improvement budget to make 3 pilot improvement projects: improving the 'green' communal open spaces in appropriate ways for use by 'everyone' especially elderly, children and disabled in their own community. The design process will take place in the beginning of 2015 for 3 months. The construction will depend on the preparedness of each community's construction team. | [Ploy Yamtree](#)

For more information, write to [Ploy](#) at pyamtree@gmail.com



► Images from Ta Nam Kon community, where people chose for spots (empty plots or under-utilized sites) in their settlement, and re-designed them based on universal design principles. In the last picture, you can see the new community garden by the river for elderly and children. This project is currently being developed more in detail and will be built after more design workshops with Tar-Saeng, with funds from the community itself.



Thailand

Land policy reformation through participatory planning in Mae Tha subdistrict

A decade ago traditional Thai farmers were being subjected to mass relocation off of National Forest Department land. To advocate the right to live on their ancestors land, the ‘Union of Northern Farmers’ was formed. The Union fought for a Communal Land Forest Act and used open-access technology such as GIS to demarcate boundaries. Today Thailand’s native forests and traditional rural agriculture practices are under a different threat as corporate food industries are forcing farmers and landscapes into contract farming and mono-cropping. Advocacy around The Communal Land Forest Act has reawakened, but the National Forest Department declared that “a Community Forest can not be approved by the national institution because the government doesn’t believe that people and communities can manage/protect the national forest”.

A community architects group, together with Mae-Tha subdistrict, have initiated a project involving local villages to show how protection of the national forest can be performed simultaneously with management and preservation of agricultural practices

The “Tambon” (sub-district) was established

in 1999 as the foundational unit of the decentralized government, overseeing sub-district planning. Mae-Tha sub-district in Northern Thailand is populated by farmers, however land-use regulations informed by provincial level land-use maps remain entirely green, a forest zone, with a small yellow dot representing village. The Tambon Administrative Office (TAO) coordinates the input of land ordinance by local people, but to date it has not been proactive in land-use planning, and practices of participatory ordinance have not been used to aid issues of land insecurity.



KonJaiBaan Studio, a group of community architects based in northern Thailand, together with the Mae-Tha Tambon Administrative Organisation (TAO) in Chiang Mai province have initiated ‘The Livelihood Plan, and Tambon District Planning of Mae-Tha subdistrict’, involving local people from seven villages to show how protection of the national forest can be performed simultaneously with management and preservation of agricultural practices.

Local ordinance is a means to control, conserve, and direct future land use, but planners can never know how to confidently control people’s lives. National forest land is also people’s everyday lived space. Sub-district participatory natural resource management provides a democratic space for rural people to leverage their agricultural activities in the management of their indigenous land in the preserved forest zone. As a collaborative process between planners, administrators, and local people, it lets communities become agents of their own future and protectors of the environment.

The project integrates GIS data collected by the



Tibet/Ladakh Setting up a ‘Little Bauhaus’ in Ladakh

The **Tibet Heritage Fund (THF)** is setting up a ‘little Bauhaus’ in Ladakh: **Artisans, Artist and Architects Guild (AAAG)** in Leh Old Town. This project aims to set up a platform where the local skills, traditional knowledge and wisdom on Himalayan crafts and architecture can be gathered, promoted and sustain.

The AAAG aims to take the role of ‘exchange platform’ not only at regional but also at national and international level, for people who shares a common interest on leaning about traditional building techniques and materials, promoting about living heritage and community based conservation approach. THF believes that people who have skills and knowledge of craftsmanship are the resources who can create the future and bring shapes into the reality with they own hands and locally available materials.

THF’s local affiliate **Leh Old Town Initiative (LOTI)** has trained a team of local artisans to working in the conservation of Leh Old Town over a decade. Their experience and knowledge will be contributed to the sustainability of the building crafts and they will play a important role in the AAA guild.

Generally, due to the long winters, the artisans can only work on construction 6 to 7 months in a year and need to

look for another job in the rest of the time. The AAAG will create opportunities to sustain their profession through the long winter season, by creating crafts, organizing workshop, producing goods and items, which will bring income to sustain their lives and the guild.



The AAAG will be located in a traditional Ladakhi house in the old town. THF/ LOTI has two houses in mind and the negotiation with the houses owners for long term use of the building are in progress. One house is the Rupshu Goba located below the Leh palace and the other is the Demo Tashi house in the lower part of the old town. Building condition surveys were made and plans for the repair are in progress.

With the support of **Perween Rahman Fellowship 2014**, THF/LOTI began to work on two rural historic buildings in Ladakh. Stanzin Tandup is the community architect, team leader and project coordinator, leading a group of architecture students to survey the house of traditional healers, and the temple of Chumathang village community. Based on the collected data, architectural drawings were processed and the building condition study was made. In Chumathang, under the supervision of Stanzin Tundup, THF/LOTI’s artisan team repaired the roof and secured the historic wall painting from the further damage. Both local communities have been involved to provide construction materials and logistic assistance. The project will continue for the 2015 season.

| **Yutaka Hirako and Pimpim De Azevedo**

The Artisans, Artist and Architects Guild is a platform where the local skills and traditional knowledge on Himalayan crafts and architecture can be gathered and promoted

For more information you can visit **THF website** or contact **Yutaka** at pingzifeng@hotmail.com

CAN Indonesia 2nd national meeting in Yogyakarta

In December, **Arkompjokja** hosted the 2nd national meeting of Indonesia's community architects network in Yogya. Students, professionals, local government representatives and community members who help ACCA projects in Indonesia were invited to learn from each other and share their knowledge to strengthen the network and bring dignity to community architects in Indonesia. Representatives from the movement in Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, Surabaya, Jakarta, Bandung and Makassar met together in Jokja, and found the same spirit across the cities.

We heard inspiring stories from our seniors Antonio Ismael, Marco Kusumawijaya and others as well as the chairman of the Institute of Architecture of Indonesia (IAI). Though its role is to bring together all architects' activities in Indonesia, until now IAI has stayed away from pro-poor dialogue and doesn't have a scheme to integrate settlement upgrading. The hope was IAI would give a statement expressing the importance of community architecture in urban development, while recognising the position of community architect as a professional under IAI regulation so that young professionals and students can choose community architecture as a career.

Half of the 40 participants were students. Students of architecture in Indonesia learn the technical aspects rather than social aspects of building, or the real situation of urban poor and people-led approaches to slum upgrading. So it's crucial to introduce community architecture, community organising and the greater issues of housing for the poor to the upcoming generation of architects, and give them an opportunity to get involved hands-on in slum upgrading.

Since the river settlement planning workshop hosted by Arkompjokja in Yogya last May, some University lecturers have become curious in the approach of community architecture, and have brought students to get involved in various ACCA projects. We discussed how to build on this growing interest, and strengthen our young network. On behalf of Indonesia's 'older brothers' Philippines and Thailand, where the movement is more mature, Vhal and Ploy shared valuable insights on CAN's growth. Compared with the 1st national meeting 3 years ago everyone is more aware of the critical need to involve young professionals in settlement upgrading in Indonesia, and more optimistic that the Indonesian network will continue to grow. | **Yuli Kusworo**

Everyone is aware of the need to involve young professionals in settlement upgrading, and optimistic that the Indonesian network will continue to grow



Chile

Reconstruye: building back integrated cities

Earthquakes cause distress and uncertainty, however such unexpected events can also wake-up and trigger unpredicted social processes which otherwise remain hidden, creating opportunities for positive change.

In February 2010, one of the biggest earthquakes and tsunamis in history (Richter 8.8), hit the most populated region of Chile affecting most of the population, destroying infrastructure, houses and in some cases complete villages. Following the earthquake, solidarity and support networks emerged at different levels, including a mixed group of professionals and students organised under the name of **Reconstruye** (“Rebuild”), offering technical and political support to some affected areas.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Reconstruye team and the affected communities we were working with recognised that if people are not able to respond well to a diversity of possible threats, not only natural but social as well, such as evictions, social and economic networks risk being constantly fragmented, increasing people’s vulnerability.

We started working with a specific group of neighbours affected by the earthquake who used to live in a central area of the city of Talca, but didn’t own their houses. The “committee of the landless” is a network of mostly woman, renting or sharing houses, who knew that despite having access to special post-earthquake subsidies, the compensation wouldn’t be enough to allow them to stay in their home area, as the land value had become too high, and inevitably be pushed to the periphery of the city.

In this context, Reconstruye started working with this committee, other NGOs, communities and local authorities on a housing project for 20 affected families part of the “committee of the landless”. Working together, we developed a proposal for a “Mixed-Income Housing project” called Los Maitenes, a 4-storey building with 20 units for the affected families, plus 18 commercial units for middle class families from the area. By combining diverse sources of finance and pooling subsidies, including a cross subsidy from the commercial units, the funds for the project were noticeably higher than the basic housing subsidy, enough to buy the land and allow the affected families to stay in the city centre, and integrate with different social groups.

By combining diverse sources of finance and subsidies, Reconstruye supported a low-income earthquake-affected community to stay in the city centre, and integrate with different social groups



To reconcile living in a different housing typology, it was important to build a relationship of trust with the affected people. Obtaining the land, required a technical perspective and agreement between the affected families

The result was more than sharing land, but feeling power as a community in their commitment and capacity to shape their future and their city

and the investors for the commercial units. Official government standards constrained the unit design, however the affected families participated in the overall planning process: the committee organised a system to assign the units in a just and collaborative way,

and to set the rules for future coexistence. The result was more than sharing land, but feeling power as a community in their commitment and capacity to shape their future and their city. In exchanging their experiences with other affected areas, the Los Maitenes story became an innovative solution for different social groups to share the benefits of well-located land. | [Camila Cociña](#)

To learn more about [Reconstruye](#) and their projects, visit their [website](#) or write an email to [Camila](#), at camila.cocina@gmail.com



Chile I love my neighbourhood

Chile's Ministry of Housing (MINVU) has a Neighbourhood Recovery Programme called [Quiero Mi Barrio](#) ("I Love My Neighbourhood"). It originates from the belief that inequitable conditions in cities can be reversed through virtuous improvement processes within and with the community, interventions that, while still from the state, accumulate as a series of small-scale interventions. The programme has been running since 2006 throughout Chile, and has been implemented in over 500 neighbourhoods, benefiting more than 1,200,000 people.

The Recovery Neighbourhood Master Plan (RNMP) integrates physical urban projects with social actions, using direct and effective participation of the inhabitants of the territory in making the strategic decisions. Micro urban interventions produced at scale transform both the institutional framework, the structure of the city, and the behaviour of its inhabitants.

Areas with the highest concentration of poverty are selected for the 'Recovery' program. The local municipality together with the community then choose themselves which specific neighbourhoods within the polygon are most in need of benefiting from the program, and request

themselves for funding for the program from the Ministry of Housing.

The programme understands that working in neighbourhoods can only be done from within the community. A municipal multidisciplinary team opens an office in the approved area, to share the everyday with the people, grasp the neighbourhood reality and calibrate the construction of the improvement process and the master plan with participation of local residents. The process spans 3-years over 3 phases: diagnosis, involving long analysis of how people live day-to-day, to try to grasp the reality of the place, and preparation of the master plan (eight months), implementation of the master plan (two years) and a process evaluation (4 months).

The masterplan is imagined for 10 or 15 years in the future, implying that the remaining tasks are to be carried out

The programme originates from the belief that inequitable cities can be improved acting within and with communities. In 8 years, it benefitted 500 neighbourhoods, more than 1,200,000 people

by the neighbours. One key aspect of the masterplan is the transformation of public space to encourage the encounters, and relink the inhabitants, with a longer term goal of generating inclusion and identity within the community. Collaborative work between public and private institutions is key to strengthening and expanding the possibilities of

improvement interventions, particularly challenges of longevity and maintenance faced after the programme is already complete.

The “Neighbourhood Development Council” is a counterpart to the recovery program. The council is open to everyone, and acts as a space of critical dialogue, sharing and learning for leaders, and decision makers to incorporate new practices. The success of the program really depends on the NDC’s effectiveness.

To date participatory design tools had never been

Participatory design had never been used systematically in Chile’s public policies: the culture of participation was lacking, a direct legacy of the dictatorship



used systematically in Chile within public policies: the culture of participation was lacking, a direct legacy of the military dictatorship.

This design methodology is essential to encourage participation within the neighbourhoods and represents an important step in the coproduction of cities because it involves asking residents what they want but also transform them into co-designers of the projects. This tool has generated a good level of involvement of neighbourhood processes both in execution and subsequent use and care of the works, so it is certainly one of the keys of the program. It has also been a learning space for professionals, who generally are used to managing all decision making.

Local municipalities are given an opportunity to get engaged in the real reality of neighbourhoods, and builds on existing potentials and capabilities within the neighbourhood, generating links that help the neighbourhood face challenges themselves in the future. Participatory methods are now recognized as one of the keys to the programs success, and essential in bringing participation into the redevelopment of vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Policy makers in Chile are more aware now of the critical need for participation in the regeneration of neighbourhoods, what’s needed next is to expand and extend the reshaping of practices and spaces of interaction

in the deeper democratization of cities, understanding that it is these spaces where the crises are expressed (Harvey, 2009); but also where we can start to overcome them.

| Sebastiàn Troncoso

To learn more about the **QMB**, you can visit Chile’s Ministry of Housing **website**, (in Spanish). You may also contact **Sebastiàn**, author of this article, at **Stroncosos@gmail.com**

△ Upgraded housing in La Pradera, in Quilicura district, on the outskirts of Santiago, which was involved in the program.

▽ La Pradera’s Neighbourhood Development Council.



Tibet/Ladakh

Tibet Heritage Fund's new book, "The traditional Lhasa house" underway

Tibet Heritage Fund's new publication is on the way: "The traditional Lhasa house", a book by **André Alexander**, and the second volume of Tibet Heritage Fund conservation inventory from Lhasa. Pimpim, Ken and Matthew are working on the layout, editing, indexing and preparing the book for publication as André would have wished. The book contains many valuable architectural drawings, photos and detailed descriptions of historic houses in Lhasa, and also lots of memories of THF struggling for the conservation of beautiful Lhasa Old City. It shows André's effort and spirit to preserve Lhasa, which has been inspiring many people to follow their dream.

For further information, visit **THF's website** or contact **Pimpim** at pemamarpo@yahoo.com.hk



United Kingdom | Philippines DPU students projects for Valenzuela communities

The students of the module **Critical Urbanism Studio** – run by Giorgio Talocci in the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development at **DPU** – have just begun, for the second year in a row, to work on the case studies of Libis and Del Rosario communities in Valenzuela City (MetroManila, Philippines). The outcome of last year studio have been shared with CAN, PACSII, TAMPEI and HPFPI, and hopefully will contribute to the restless effort toward a people-driven city-wide upgrading put forward by communities and community architects. The MSc BUDD team wishes to thank May Domingo and Villa Mae Libutaque, along with the community leaders, for the help and support. More information can be found [here](#).



Philippines

ACHR-DPU Internship Programme Phase II to be launched in January

ACHR, the **Bartlett Development Planning Unit** (UCL, UK) and **Community Architects Network** will be launching Phase II of the **Junior Professional Internship Programme** in the Philippines this month. Born out of a long-standing partnership between the three institutions, the programme will see DPU alumni Laura Hirst, Jessica Mamo and Mariangela Veronesi participate in a six month internship in three different locations in order to support and learn from community-driven processes across the country. Laura, Jessica and Mariangela have different academic and professional backgrounds that include architecture, participatory design, environmental and social planning. They will be involved in the development of methodologies and tools for community-driven processes, while taking part in a mutual learning experience, which aims to enhance collective know-how and achieve sustainable and feasible solutions to local issues. The work will concentrate in Metro Manila, Davao and Mandaue and will involve different aspects such as mapping, developing plans and sustainability strategies, assessing feasibility, developing design options, etc. This programme will draw from the learning of interns from the first phase of the programme in 2013, and will aim to increase the overall body of knowledge and shared experience of community-driven planning and upgrading.

To learn more about the programme you can download **Grounding Knowledge: reflections on community-driven development in South-East Asia**, the booklet documenting the learning of the first phase, or contact **Barbara** at b.lipietz@ucl.ac.uk.

Media

The **Asian Coalition for Community Action 5-years report** has been published in December by **ACHR**, as the programme completes its fifth year with projects underway in 215 cities across Asia.

Hunnarshala is a coalition of artisans and craftsmen bringing back traditional home building systems of earth construction, started in response to the 2001 earthquake in Kutch. A piece featured in **Architecture+Design Magazine** on their **Innovative Traditional Systems** and the first volume of their quarterly newsletter is available [here](#).

Studio Magazine just published **The (in)operative Power: Architecture and the Reclaim of Social Relevance**, an article by Camillo Boano and Giorgio Talocci where they reflect on the Community Architects Network as a practice able to create new political subjects – putting the urban poor at the centre of the transformation process, and reinventing the role of the architect as agent of social change. To get a copy, email Giorgio at giorgio.talocci.11@ucl.ac.uk



In the **Guardian**, journalist Kalpana Sharma writes about the key role of women in the city's informal settlements, talking to people from Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation in **If you want to clean Mumbai, give us women the responsibility**.

Our friends from Thailand suggest to watch **Symphony of the Soil**, a documentary that explores the miraculous substance soil and of the elaborate relationships between soil, water, the atmosphere, plants and animals. The film also examines our human relationship with soil, the use and misuse of soil in agriculture, deforestation and development, and the latest scientific research on soil's key role in ameliorating the most challenging environmental issues of our time. It can be interesting for all those of us that work with farmers, indigenous people, and in programs of environmental preservation or rehabilitation. We can think about how to include this understanding in the context of the urban poor.

Events

ACHR will hold its international meeting in Bangkok on January 23-25th, to share about the progress made among members of the network. Talks will also cover CAN activities and the ACCA program performance.

*Indra Regent Hotel,
120/126 Ratchaprarop Road
Bangkok 20400, Thailand*

The MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (DPU) announces the 2nd edition of the workshop **“Cambodia: Transformation in a Time of Transition”**, to be held in Phnom Penh and other provinces, 4-16 May 2015. The workshop is organised in collaboration with **ACHR**, the **Community Development Foundation**, **CAN** and **CAN-Cam**, along with local authorities, universities and young practitioners. It will focus on strategies of people-driven upgrading. The members of the MSc BUDD team wish to express their gratitude to all the people who are making this

possible. The outcomes of last year workshop can be downloaded [here](#).



Opportunities

Hunnarshala Foundation, based in Bhuj, in Gujarat (India), is recruiting! Check out their requirements [here](#).



160 scholarships for a fully funded, 4-year PhD are available at the **European University Institute** in Florence, Italy. Most fellowship are for EU citizens, however the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs offers **grants** to citizens from Northern Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The deadline is January 31.

EU-sponsored **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees** programme is giving out scholarships for masters in many European universities, some of which may be of interest for community architects. Grants are available for citizens of Asian countries, too. Deadlines vary.

Participation is not only a mental or intellectual event, but physical as well, nourished from human warmth. As such exchange intensifies – and wears thin, becomes sharper, gets layered – the interaction gets more and more stimulating and its outcomes can't be foreseen anymore, because they depend on the interlocutors, who always vary, thus making the process-project they're taking part in unique each time. That's why there's no recipe for participation. As participants and the reasons for which they met change, so does participation: we have to invent and experiment with it, everytime anew.

- Giancarlo De Carlo