



Jumlong Wit

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • JAN 2021

Jumlong Wit is an old community in the heart of Nakhon Sawan, where generations of “Likay” folk theater performers have lived and practiced their art. When a fire burned their houses to the ground in 2007, they used the crisis to transform their run-down and insecure living conditions into something better and more permanent. After forming a cooperative, they negotiated to lease the public land they had been squatting on and completely rebuilt their community in a new form. The project was the first of many in a citywide process of securing permanent, decent housing for all of the city’s poor citizens.

- Project Jumlong Wit Cooperative
- Location Nakhon Sawan, Thailand
- Size 81 households
- Finished 2010
- Type On-site reconstruction of an old wooden house community of folk performance artists, after a fire destroyed the community, with new houses and a collective land lease.

CONTEXT, PROCESS AND PARTNERS

The city:

Nakhon Sawan (which means "Heavenly City" in Thai) has always been an important center of transport and commerce in the country's central plains, located at the place where the rivers Ping and Nan converge to form the Chao Phraya River. For centuries, barges and steamboats carrying goods and people would come down those rivers from Chiang Mai and cities up north, and stop at Nakhon Sawan before continuing down to Ayutthaya, Bangkok and the Gulf of Siam. There is not much river traffic any more, but the city is now the meeting point for several major highways connecting north and central Thailand and is a bustling trading city and provincial capital, with a population of about 130,000.

Nakhon Sawan continues to be a magnet for poor migrants looking for work and opportunities. And they do find work, but what those migrants haven't always been able to find is affordable housing, so most have had no choice but to patch together their own shelters in squatter settlements on the vast tracts of vacant public land in the city. Twenty years ago, Nakhon Sawan was Thailand's most squatter-rich city, with about 40% of its residents living in tin sheet and bamboo shacks, on swampy bits of land that belong to someone else. It was a bad situation. Evictions were happening all the time, but there wasn't much the people or the local government could do about it.

The reasons for that have a lot to do with how land is managed. Centralized control of land, resources and building regulations in provincial cities like Nakhon Sawan is a big problem in Thailand. Despite legislation on devolution and a parade of progressive new constitutions, local governments and citizens still find themselves powerless to use vacant land in their cities to deal with urgent local development needs, since decisions about how that land is used are made in faraway Bangkok. A whopping 80% of Nakhon Sawan's municipal land area is under the control of central government agencies like the Treasury Department, the State Railway Authority and the Forestry Department. As a result, the local government has been unable to keep up with the city's growing needs for housing, so even in a city with such wealth and economic vitality, miserable housing conditions for the poor persist. This serious structural problem, which Nakhon Sawan illustrates very starkly, creates poverty and deepens inequality.

The community process in Nakhon Sawan

In 1996, the beleaguered informal communities in Nakhon Sawan came together and formed a network. They began by setting up community-based savings groups which gave small loans to members from their pooled savings for their livelihood and daily needs. Within three years, the network had mushroomed from eight to over 50 savings groups - all of them in squatter settlements and all strongly women-led. With support from the Municipality's Social Welfare Department, these women also began tackling a variety of other problems they faced with poor health, flooding and degraded environmental conditions. It was the constant threat of evictions which eventually pushed the network and the city to seriously examine the particular land-use problems that were behind those evictions. In early 1999, along with municipality, the National Housing Authority (NHA) and CODI, the community network embarked on a collaborative process in Nakhon Sawan to find a more comprehensive and more citywide solution to problems of housing the urban poor. Here's what they did:

Surveyed: The first step was to create a common understanding about the real slum situation in Nakhon Sawan. With support from the NHA and in collaboration with the municipality, the network surveyed and mapped all the city's squatter settlements in 2000. Besides counting each and every family, this first survey identified tenure conditions for each settlement and inventoried vacant land in the city as possible future housing sites. At a time when the municipality officially recognized only 19 settlements, the survey identified 53 informal communities around the city, with 10,030 households - more than half of them on public land.

Prepared citywide strategy: A big workshop was held in August 2000 involving all the community people and the full spectrum of local development actors: local government, CODI, NHA. The task was to find ways of using information from the survey and land inventory to draw up a citywide plan for providing secure housing for all the poor in Nakhon Sawan, so there would be no more squatting in insecure and squalid conditions. For everyone involved, this was a new thing: looking at all the communities in the city as a whole set, rather than individual projects, and planning for a solution which provides secure housing for all of them.

Determined who stays, who relocates: It was agreed in the workshop that people in settlements who could secure the land they already occupied would upgrade or reconstruct their housing *in-situ*, and people in settlements on flood-prone land, facing eviction from private land or in the path of development projects - or even people wanting to move out of over-crowded settlements - would relocate to public land they chose

themselves, where they would design and build their own new communities. Some over-crowded settlements could also de-densify, with some families staying and reblocking and others moving to the new land and making new projects there. For both *in-situ* and relocated housing development, the NHA would provide infrastructure, CODI would provide soft housing loans, the central government would provide land, the city would provide secure tenure and trunk infrastructure, and communities themselves would plan and build the houses and manage the whole process.

Found land: During their survey, the network had spotted a big 16-hectare tract of public land on the western side of town, under Treasury Department ownership, reserved in the development plan for a prison. The idea was hatched of using that land as a tool to deal with different land conflicts in the city and to accommodate poor families who couldn't stay where they were. In their negotiations to use that land for housing, they took advantage of a regulation which opens for other uses any public land that has been left vacant for 20 years. Those land negotiations were led by Nakhon Sawan's mayor - a very practical businessman who liked big ideas and wanted to solve his city's slum problems. He quickly grasped the power of a community-led process and became a solid supporter of the citywide housing development process and a capable bridge between the city and the central government.

Seizing opportunities: There are opportunities to be found in every situation, but they take many different forms, and when they come, it's important to be ready to recognize them, grab them and run. In Nakhon Sawan, it was evictions that opened up the land issue and set things rolling. The city's small size meant that there were fewer groups to complicate things and everybody knew each other, so it was easier to do things. There was also a solid community network in place, with strong women's leadership and very good savings. There was a good provincial governor, an enlightened mayor, a good social development officer in the municipality and good provincial officials.

Nakhon Sawan became Thailand's first test-case for the idea of citywide, as a strategy for addressing poverty and land and housing - not as a set of scattered activities and projects, but as a whole city process that aims to solve the whole city's housing problems comprehensively. Since that time 20 years ago, the housing development in Nakhon Sawan has moved forward according to that citywide concept, and the changes in the city have more-less followed the ideas that were originally proposed in that 1999 seminar.

Little by little, the community upgrading and housing projects have been implemented in the city - most on the same land, and some on new public land. At the same time, more poor migrants have moved into the city, creating new informal settlements and expanding existing ones. The community network and its supporters have carried out more citywide surveys and continued to adjust the citywide housing plans to bring these new urban poor households into the process. A collaborative city committee was set up to manage and support the process (with the Mayor as chairman), and an MoU was signed with the city and the Treasury Department to facilitate the leasing of public land for upgrading communities on public land (both *in-situ* and relocation). By January 2019, 30 of the city's 52 informal communities (including about 60% of the city's urban poor) had solved their housing problems and were living in fully upgraded communities, with secure land, good housing and full infrastructure:

- On-site upgrading and house repair: 24 projects (5,429 households)
- On-site reconstruction: 5 projects (752 households)
- Resettlement to new land: 1 project (419 households, in 2 phases)
- TOTAL: 30 projects (6,600 households)

The community:

This is the story of the pioneering community that unexpectedly kicked off Nakhon Sawan's citywide housing development process. Jumlong Wit had resisted the idea of rebuilding or making any big changes to their very old, very run-down settlement in the heart of the city. But then a catastrophic fire, which burned the entire community to the ground, created an unplanned opportunity to completely reconstruct their 80 houses on the same site, with support from CODI's Baan Mankong program. That project showed the city a new form of upgrading, with beautiful houses, good infrastructure and a nice environment - and that was the beginning of the citywide housing process in Nakhon Sawan. The project also gave a big boost to the development of the community network in the city.

Jumlong Wit is an old residential area right in the middle of Nakhon Sawan, near Paradise Park, which surrounds Nong Somboon - the meandering lake which also functions as the municipal reservoir. The wooden houses in the community were dilapidated and crowded close together, and because the land was low-lying and swampy, there were problems of flooding, water-logging and waste year round. Despite the

squalid conditions though, Jumlong Wit was a vibrant community that was renowned for the folk theater performers who had lived there for generations.

Likay is a very old and beloved form of folk theater in Thailand, in which the actors perform raucous and improvisational folk tales in extravagantly bejeweled costumes. Likay troupes perform at temple fairs, in villages and at private events. But as cinema, TV and the internet have changed forever Thailand's cultural landscape, Likay's popularity and relevance have declined, and troupes like the one living in Jumlong Wit found their opportunities to perform dwindling. By 2007, Jumlong Wit (which is known locally as *Trok Likay*, or "*Likay Alley*") was one of only ten surviving Likay communities in Thailand.

Part of the Jumlong Wit community is on privately-owned land, and part is on public land, where some of the households had been paying a small land rent of about 500 baht (US\$ 17) per year, on individual, three-year leases, to the Treasury Department, while others were technically squatters. With support from the community network in Nakhon Sawan, the community registered itself with the municipality in 2004 and began discussing how to solve the problems of flooding and access they had faced for a long time. The community members were reluctant to change their settlement layout or houses, but in 2006, after starting a savings group, they developed a plan to upgrade their infrastructure and proposed it for support from CODI's Baan Mankong program.

Initiating the project:

The fire in December 2007, however, put an end to those plans. Because the fire trucks couldn't penetrate the densely-crowded settlement, the flames spread quickly and destroyed more than 100 houses - mostly on the public land portion of the Jumlong Wit community. Under Thai law, land leases and occupation rights on public land cease to be valid after a fire - which is every informal community's greatest fear. And sure enough, after the fire in Jumlong Wit, the land was declared a fire zone, and notices were posted forbidding the community people to re-occupy the land. Besides losing everything they owned, the residents found themselves homeless and camping out in temporary shelters around the nearby Nong Somboon lake.

The people were not alone though. With support from the community network, CODI and the Municipal government, they immediately set to work holding meetings, surveying the affected families and beginning to develop plans to fully reconstruct their community, on the same land. With their survey data as evidence, they were able to petition the central government for permission to stay on the land, on the condition that they submit a plan for the new community, which followed all the planning codes, within fifteen days. That wasn't much time, but with the support of a team of young community architects from CODI, the people were able to develop and submit a full housing redevelopment plan for Jumlong Wit, by the deadline.

The next step was to speed up their savings for housing and to register themselves with the government as a housing cooperative, which is a requirement for accessing support from CODI's Baan Mankong housing program. Once they had the legal status as a registered housing cooperative, the community was able to negotiate a long-term land lease with the Treasury Department. And once they had the land secure, the cooperative could then apply to CODI for housing loans and infrastructure subsidies.

After that, the rebuilding of Jumlong Wit began in earnest. The filling of the land to above-flood levels began in 2008 and took almost a year. While the land was being filled, the community people planned their reconstruction process, which began in March 2009. The house construction took about eight months, and by early 2010, all 81 houses were finished.

Support groups and partners in the project:

- **Nakhon Sawan Community Network** was formed in 1995 by members of the women's saving groups that had begun before that, with support from the Urban Community Development Office (which later became CODI). The community network has partnered with CODI's Baan Mankong program since 2005.
- **CODI (Community Organizations Development Institute)** is an independent public organization under the Thai Government's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. CODI's mission is to support the strengthening of communities and their organizations - in both urban and rural areas - as key agents of change and as central actors in development which affects their lives and communities. Besides budget from the government which supports many of its ongoing programs, CODI's chief financial tool is the CODI revolving fund, which provides soft loans to community cooperatives and community networks to undertake a variety of development initiatives they plan and implement themselves.
- **Baan Mankong Program** is one of CODI's main development programs, and was launched in 2003 to address the housing problems of the country's poorest citizens. The program channels government funds, in the form of infrastructure subsidies and soft housing loans, directly to poor communities, which

plan and carry out improvements to their housing, environment, basic services and tenure security and manage the budget themselves. Instead of delivering housing units to individual poor families, the Baan Mankong Program (which means "Secure housing" in Thai) puts Thailand's informal communities (and their networks) at the center of a people-driven and citywide process of developing long-term, comprehensive solutions to problems of land and housing in Thai cities. By November 2019, the Baan Mankong program had spread to 405 cities, in 76 out of the country's 77 provinces, where community housing cooperatives had designed and built 1,035 housing projects which provide decent, secure, permanent housing to 105,739 urban poor families.

- **Technical support** for the participatory layout planning and housing designs in Jumlong Wit came from the Nakhon Sawan municipality's engineer and two CODI community architects - Ms. Hathaiwan Ruengyot and Mr. Chaiwat Rak-Au.
- **The Nakhon Sawan Municipality** has supported the urban poor community network in Nakhon Sawan municipality in many aspects, including advocating for the communities with national land-owning agencies, integrating the community plans for infrastructure improvements into its annual fiscal plan and facilitating the community upgrading and housing processes through the City Development Committee.
- **Cooperative Promotion Department**, under the Thai Government's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, helps communities like Sawan Muang Mai to set up and operate their housing cooperatives, through its city-level branches all over the country.
- **City Development Committee** is a mechanism that was set up at the city level to facilitate the Baan Mankong and other community projects by integrating all relevant stakeholders into this committee, such as public landowners, electricity and water supply, officials from ministry of social development and human security, academics, community network. The mayor is the head of this committee.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

Land tenure:

Before the reconstruction, there were more than 100 households living on the 0.9 hectare portion of the Jumlong Wit community land that is under Treasury Department ownership. Some of those households had individual, short-term (3-year) land-lease contracts with the Treasury Department, and were paying about 400 - 500 baht (US\$ 13 - 17) per year for their land. The rest of the families paid no land rent and were technically squatters. To make things even more complicated, some of those 100 households (in both squatter and land-rent houses) were tenants of the structure owners, some of whom lived in the community and some lived outside. These complex blends of different tenure arrangements and degrees of formality are typical in Thailand's informal communities.

The way the Jumlong Wit community members collectively decided how to deal with that mess, and who would have rights to houses in the newly rebuilt - and newly legal and secure - community is an interesting part of the story. First, they decided that any family who had lived in the community for generations would be eligible for one house. If the family was large, with more than five members, they could have two houses, as long as they could afford to pay for them. Community members who had extra houses or rooms they were renting out to others would have the same rights as everyone else, to only one house - or two if their family was large. Tenants who had been staying in the community for at least five years would also be eligible for one house in the new community, as long as they got a community member to vouch for them, attended all the meetings and took active part in the cooperative activities.

Finally, some families who couldn't participate in the process or were able to access other housing schemes withdrew, and 81 out of the original 100 households on the Treasury Department Land "selected themselves" to become members of the new housing cooperative, which they officially named *Jumlong Wit Pattana Co., Ltd.* Once they had registered, the cooperative was able to negotiate a collective long-term (30 years) renewable lease to the 9,112 square meters (2,278 square wah) land with the Treasury Department, paying a nominal rent of about 2.75 baht per square meter per year, which works out to about 25,000 baht (US\$ 780) per year, for the whole land.

This cooperative's collective leasehold of the land is very important. CODI's Baan Mankong housing program allows communities to negotiate their own land-tenure (by purchasing land, leasing it or negotiating user rights), but requires that communities form registered housing cooperatives, which own or lease the land collectively - at least until the CODI loans are repaid, when people can decide to stay as a cooperative or individualize the tenure. But in most cases, individualizing is difficult, because plot sizes may be sub-standard. This collective land tenure by the housing cooperative is a crucial bulwark against a particularly rapacious land and housing market in Thai cities like Nakhon Sawan, protecting low-income families from

those market forces and making sure they can keep their houses, even when crises (like illness or lost jobs) happen and they might be tempted to sell their house to raise funds to manage during the crisis.

Government support:

The community-driven housing reconstruction in Jumlong Wit received good support from government agencies. The Nakhon Sawan Municipal government supported the community (and many others) at every stage of its housing planning and construction, including supporting the community survey process, providing some of the common infrastructure within the project, providing access to off-site public utilities like water and electricity, integrating the community's proposed housing plans into its annual administrative and fiscal plan, and helping negotiate an MoU agreement with the Treasury Department which paved the way for Jumlong Wit and other communities developing housing on public land to get 30-year collective leases to their land.

Representatives from the municipal government also took active part in the joint city-level development committee that was set up in Nakhon Sawan to oversee the citywide community development and housing process. (see diagram below) This collaborative committee brings together representatives from the community network and from the various government and civil society stakeholders in the city working on housing development. For many years, this collaborative city committee has supported the Baan Mankong projects in Nakhon Sawan - beginning with Jumlong Wit. CODI, which is a 100% government-funded public agency, provided housing loans and infrastructure subsidies to the Jumlong Wit housing project.



PROJECT FINANCES

Project costs and who paid for what:

1. Land costs: The Jumlong Wit housing cooperative rents the 9,112 square meter (0.9 hectare) land from the Treasury Department, on a collective, long-term 30-year lease (renewable), which was originally set at a nominal rate of about 2.75 baht per square meter per year, which works out to about 25,000 baht (US\$ 780) per year, for the whole land, including house plots, roads and shared open spaces. The 81 cooperative members divide the land rent equally, which means each cooperative member has to pay just 309 baht (US\$ 10) per year. As part of the agreement, the Treasury Department can increase the rent slightly, every five years, so the community is now paying 27,000 baht (US\$ 900) per year in land rent, which works out to 333 baht (US\$ 11) per year per member.

2. Site development costs: The cost of filling the land to above-flood levels (about 1.9 million baht) and partly laying the internal paved lanes (about 1 million baht) came to a total cost of 2.835 million baht (US\$ 88,595). This amount was covered by the infrastructure subsidy from CODI's Baan Mankong program, which is given to cooperatives in a lump sum, but calculated (in 2008) at the rate 35,000 Baht (US\$ 1,100) per household x 81 households = total 2.835 million baht (US\$ 88,595).

3. Infrastructure costs:

- The municipality also subsidized the construction of the main internal road, with a public water access line, at a cost of approximately 2 million baht (US\$ 62,500).
- The electric poles and lines inside the community were installed by the Provincial Electric Authority and paid for by the municipal government, at a cost of 75,000 baht (US\$ 2,345).
- The community's cooperative office building was built at a cost of 250,000 Baht (US\$ 7,815), which came as a subsidy from the *Village and Community Capacity Development Program*, under the Ministry of Interior.
- Each household paid for its own individual utility connections at the rate of 1,500 Baht (US\$ 47) for an electricity connection and 4,500 Baht (US\$ 140) for a water meter and water connection.

3. House construction costs:

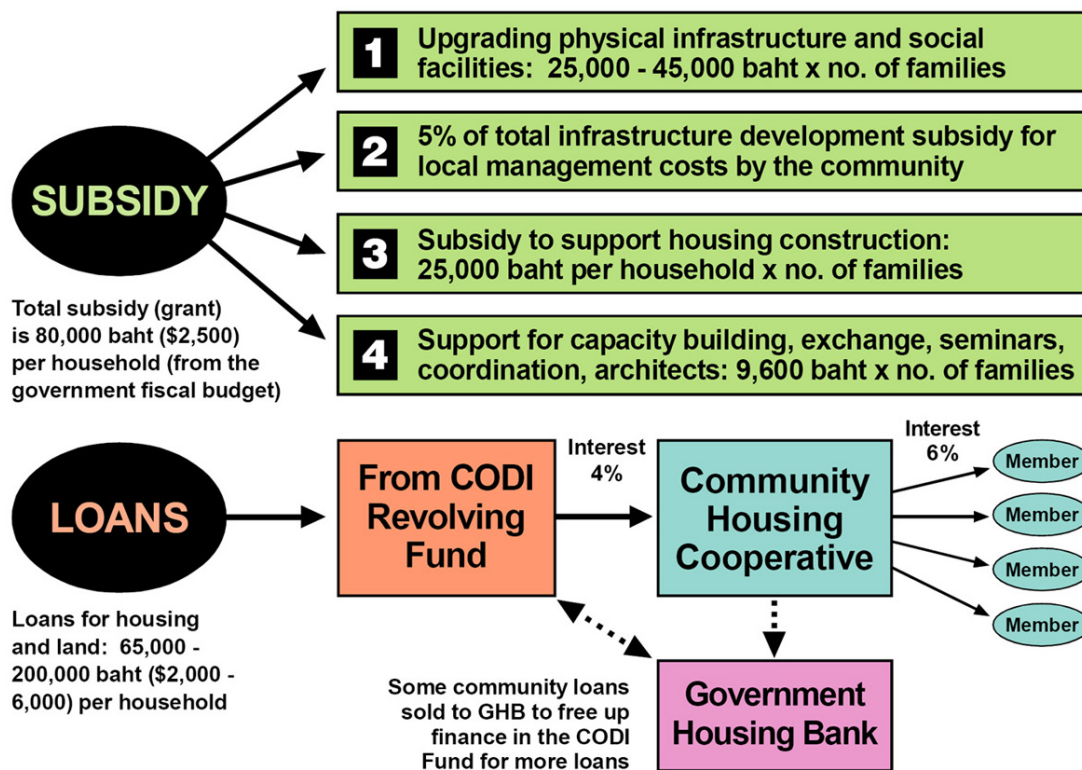
The cost of building the new houses was between 240,000 baht (US\$ 7,500) and 270,000 baht (US\$ 8,450) per house, depending on which of the seven house models the family chose, and this was financed by:

- **Subsidy:** 25,000 Baht (US\$ 781) per house as a housing construction subsidy from CODI.
- **Loan:** 13 Million Baht (US\$ 406,250) as a collective housing loan from CODI to the cooperative, which works out to an average per-household loan of 160,500 baht (US\$ 5,000). The loan was given to the cooperative at 4% annual interest rate (repayable in 15 years), which on-lent to the members at 6%, with the margin being used by the cooperative to cover late payments and finance cooperative activities. The loan repayments work out to about 2,000 baht (US\$ 63) per month per member, which is cheaper than the cost of a typical rental room in the city. By November 2020, the cooperative had repaid all but about 2 million baht (US\$ 62,500) of their CODI housing loan.
- **Savings:** Another condition of the CODI loan was that each cooperative member had to save 10% of the housing loan amount, as collateral. Any special materials, interior finishes or built-ins that were not part of the basic house designs were also paid for by the individual families.

4. Process support costs: The costs for capacity building, exchange learning and project coordination were also covered by CODI, with a subsidy which in 2008 was calculated at the rate of 9,600 Baht (US\$ 300) per household x 81 households = 777,600 baht (US\$ 24,300), but given in a lump sum.

Below: diagram showing how the CODI flexible finance system works:

Flexible housing finance from CODI for citywide housing development by communities



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Design process:

After the fire burned down all the houses, everyone knew there was a danger that their land would be taken back by the central government and used for other purposes. So they wasted no time in surveying the affected families and formally requesting permission to rebuild their houses on the same land. With negotiation help from CODI and the mayor, the central government's Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (in faraway Bangkok) agreed, but on the condition that the community submit its redevelopment plan and obtain a construction permit within two weeks. Despite the rushed schedule and a turbo-charged participatory design process, the Jumlong Wit community did it. With technical support from the city's municipal engineer and a pair of community architects from CODI, the people quickly developed a layout plan of house plots and open spaces, and developed seven house models for families to choose from.

House design and layout plans:

To facilitate a complex community design process quickly, the community members divided themselves into nine subgroups of nine or ten families each, comprising groups of friends or relatives or former neighbors who wanted to live together in the new community. Each subgroup designed its own cluster of houses and then negotiated with the other groups when it came time to fit the clusters together, like puzzle pieces, into a full layout plan, making sure to follow the building regulations which required that 30% of the land be kept for internal lanes and common open spaces.

In the course of this lively design process, which involved maps, sketches, aerial photos and cardboard models, the people made some important collective layout decisions. In the cramped old community before the fire, some families had large pieces of land, while others were squeezed onto tiny plots. Those kinds of land inequities are typical in informal settlements. But after some considerable - and sometimes difficult - discussions, the people decided that in the new layout for Jumlong Wit, everyone would have the same sized plot, and there would be no fences between the houses. They also decided that the house plots fronting onto the main road would be given to the Likay troupe members, who needed a shop frontage to run their business. Their new community layout plan also included a community center, a children's playground and spaces for community activities like festivals, merit-making ceremonies and parties.

"Housing projects like this one in Jumlong Wit are a way of addressing micro-level inequities in existing slums, where people have unequal land, unequal housing tenure, different incomes, different status and different degrees of poverty. The power structure that exists in informal communities is likewise never equal. These deep inequities are not something that can be solved simply by some technical housing design. The idea of the Baan Mankong process is to transform those communities, so they emerge in a new, more equal form, where everyone has security, everyone has a place and everyone has a say in the community. This is the real transformation, the real upgrading." (Somsook Boonyabancha, CODI)

The community planning workshops also allowed the community members to think in detail about their housing needs and to design a set of seven house types which could accommodate the different family sizes, different budgets and different preferences within the community. The seven house types they finally developed include row-houses, semi-detached and free-standing houses, with one and two stories - and even one type with a second floor mezzanine for big families. To keep building costs as low as possible, the houses were built using the most standard systems and most easily-available materials, with reinforced concrete frames, brick walls, timber doors and window frames and gable roofs with inexpensive cement tiles.

Construction process:

The cooperative was responsible for managing the entire construction process, including collective purchasing and keeping track of all the building materials and supervising all the work. To keep costs as low as possible, the cooperative decided to do a lot of the construction work themselves and hire a local contractor to do only those heavy structural tasks that the people couldn't handle. Some out-of-work community members who had construction skills were hired by the contractor to work on the project and could earn a little extra income.

For the people-built part of the work, a "community builders" team was organized, with three or four people (both skilled and unskilled) from each of the nine sub-groups. Before starting work, that team took part in a construction training program organized by CODI, in which community-based builders from other cities showed them how to lay bricks, bend reinforcing bars, put up formwork and set doors and windows. Besides doing a lot of the work on the new houses, alongside the contractor, this community builders team monitored the everyday construction process and worked with the architects to fix problems when they came up. Once the construction was finished, it was each house owner's responsibility to carefully examine the

construction, with the community builders team, and only when everyone was happy with the quality was the house officially handed over to the owner.

After the project was finished and everyone had moved into their new houses, the community members continued to work together to plant trees and flowers, look after the environment and keep the community tidy. The subgroups which designed and built together now live together, and continue to work together to keep the community clean and healthy in various ways.

Project timeline:

- **2000:** First citywide slum survey in Nakhon Sawan, by community network, includes Jumlong Wit.
- **2004:** Community registers as a community with city government. Savings group starts.
- **2006:** Jumlong Wit's proposal for subsidy to upgrade infrastructure is approved by CODI.
- **2007:** Fire destroys 100 houses. People survey affected families, negotiate permission to rebuild.
- **2008:** Jumlong Wit registers as a housing cooperative. Reconstruction planning begins. Land filling and site development begins.
- **2009:** Construction of 81 houses begins, takes 8 months to finish.
- **2010:** House construction is finished. All 81 cooperative members move into their new houses.
- **2012:** New cooperative office and community center is constructed.

IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

Jumlong Wit was the first Baan Mankong project in Nakhon Sawan, and it was the first to show that tangible change and real transformation in the lives and living conditions of the urban poor can be brought about by the poor themselves. Jumlong Wit was the city's first proof that a people-driven process works, when that process is supported by the city and by other development actors, like CODI. The project gave a big boost to the community network in Nakhon Sawan - and to the relationship between the community network and the municipal government - and has led to dozens of other projects in the coming years.

The project was also important because it showed that housing can be just the first step in a more comprehensive process of development in urban poor communities. The project at Jumlong Wit has become a proud showcase for the community network in Nakhon Sawan and is much visited, much studied, much learned-from, by visitors from other communities, other cities, other governments, other countries. But the crisp, pale-green houses and neatly-swept lanes are only the physical manifestation of the transformation that has taken place there. The people in Jumlong Wit have used the confidence, organizational strength and collective action they built during the housing reconstruction to go on to address many other needs, like setting up waste-management systems, planting trees and community vegetable gardens, boosting incomes with livelihood development projects, setting up youth groups and elderly groups and managing their own community welfare program.

Now the city of Nakhon Sawan has been involved in an ongoing process of solving poverty and housing problems, at citywide scale, for over 20 years. And the relationship between the city government and the community network is very close, so when some social need or issue comes up, the city now calls the network, and they will address that need together, in partnership. As Aramsri Chansuksi, one of the senior community network leaders put it, *"The strength of the poor here is that we are able to link all these communities together - every single one of them! - into a network, and work together very strongly. The municipal government is a good partner to the people's movement here."*

Stories from community members:



Mr. Ronkorn Pranglert, who used to lead a Likay troupe, tells a story about the conditions in the community before the fire in 2007. Most of the houses were like slum houses, he said. When there were heavy rains and floods, the water would bring all kinds of garbage into the community and trap it under the houses. After many years of this, the whole community became filled with trash. But after doing the housing project, conditions in the community got much better and much healthier. There are no diseases now. We have our own waste management system and a common area for the community to organize Children's Day activities or hold merit making ceremonies for the elderly on Songkran (the Thai New Year).

Mr. Lertchai Yutprasert is chairman of Jumlong Wit Cooperative. Before the reconstruction, he says, this was one of the city's slums, located near the Somboon lake, and the whole community was in a floodplain. Whenever floods happened - which was often - the community would get little support from the local authority, partly because of our image as an informal settlement, with no status in the municipality. After the transformation of the community through this collective housing project, the quality of life of the people in the community has improved. But also Jumlong Wit is now recognized by the local authorities, and by the wider public in Nakhon Sawan. That makes us feel proud and feel that we are part of the city.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

This case study was written by Ms. Supreeya Wungpatcharapon ("Noot"), from Kasetsart University, Bangkok, in January 2021.

For more about housing projects supported by CODI's Baan Mankong Program, visit the CODI website:
<https://en.codi.or.th/baan-mankong-housing/baan-mankong-rural/>

And a short video film about the Nakhon Sawan community network's Covid-19 relief work:
<https://vimeo.com/urbanknow/nakhonsawan-covid19-response>

For more information about the Jumlong Wit project, please contact:

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PHOTOS



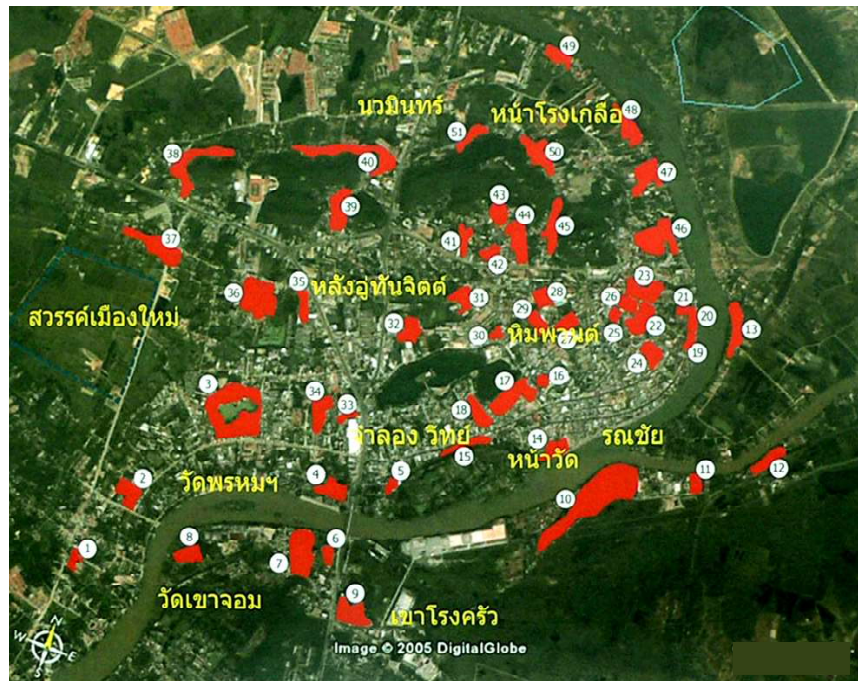
It was the terrible evictions that kept happening in the city that brought the communities and the city together to find a better way.



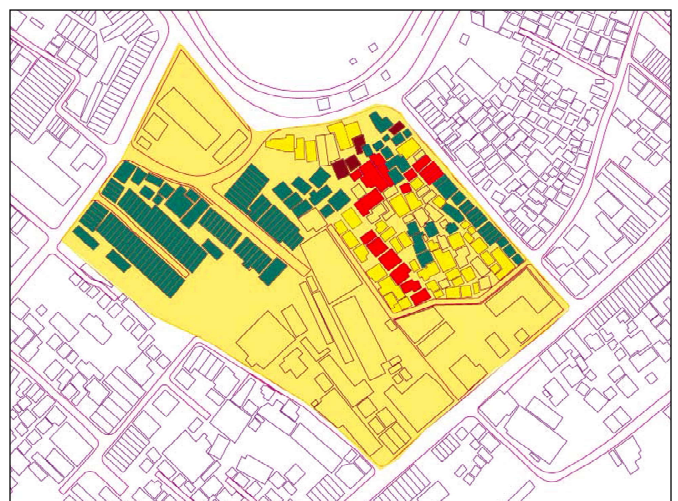
Here the community volunteers prepare for carrying out the first citywide survey of informal communities in Nakhon Sawan in 2000.



During the course of the first citywide survey in 2000, the community network and its partners found that some 10,030 poor families were living in 53 informal settlements around the city.



Aerial photo of the entire Jumlong Wit community (in yellow), with the part that is on Treasury Department land (in red).



This map marks renters (in red), house owners (in yellow), extended families (in brown), and those wanting to upgrade (in green).



The Jumlong Wit community has for many years been famous for the traditional "Likay" folk theater performers who live and work there.



But these were the conditions those Likay performers and their backstage production teams were living in before the reconstruction, with dilapidated old wooden houses, frequent flooding, trapped garbage and water-logging.





▲ In December 2007, a fire destroyed more than 100 houses in the community, most of them on the land belonging to the Treasury Department.



▲ This is an aerial photo of Jumlong Wit in February 2008, showing the devastation after the fire.

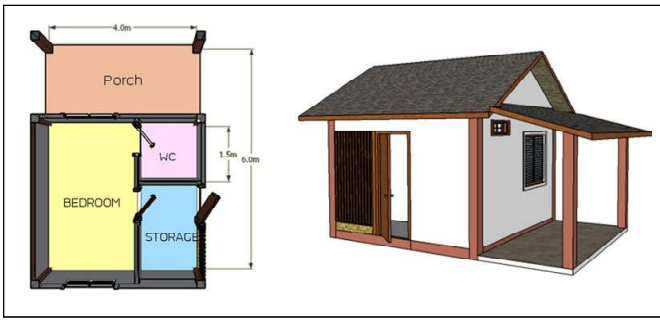


▲ The people were not alone after the fire, though. With help from their community network and their allies in the municipal government and CODI, the people began to discuss (in many, many meetings!) how they could secure their tenure and build a new community on the public land which had for so long been their home.

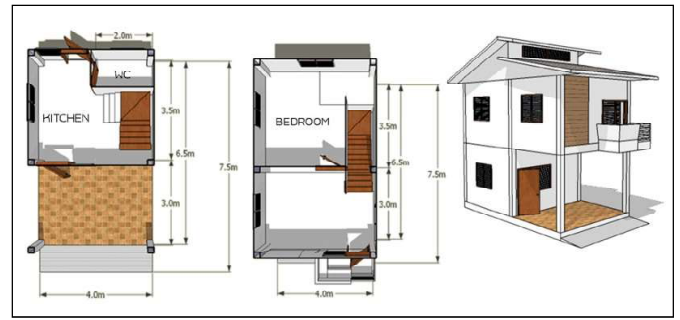


▶ With help from two young community architects at CODI, the community people in Jumlong Wit gradually designed their new houses (7 different models) and the layout of their newly-rebuilt community.

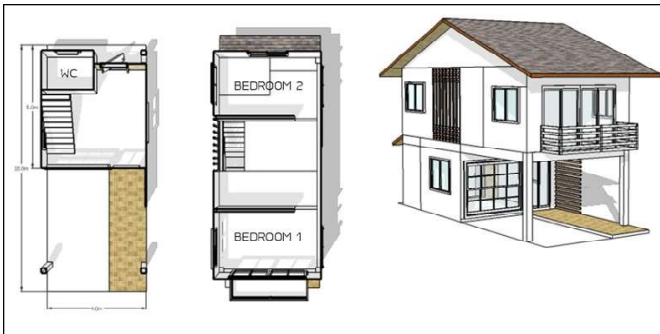




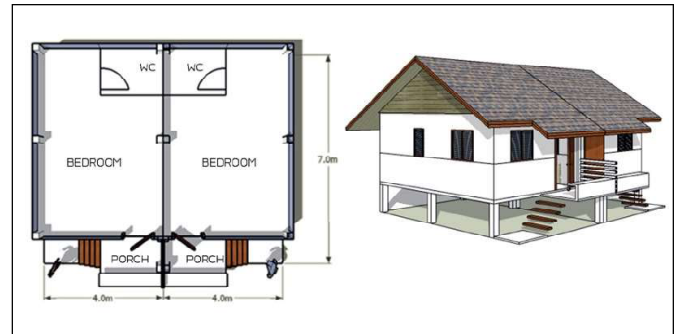
UNIT 1: Single-story detached house with one room (24m²). There is one of these units in the community, designed for a poor elderly widow.



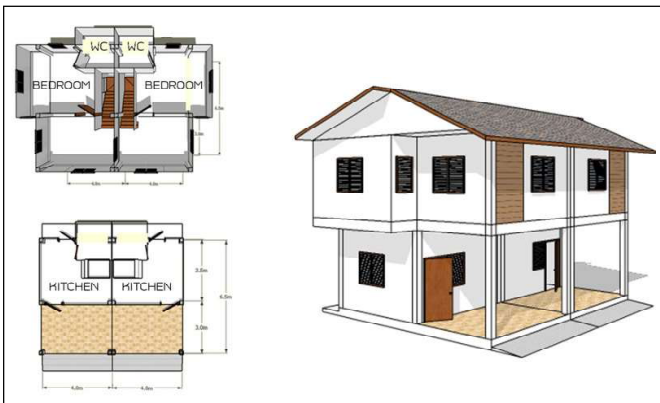
UNIT 2: Smaller two-story detached house with half finished ground floor (60m²). There are seven of these units in the community.



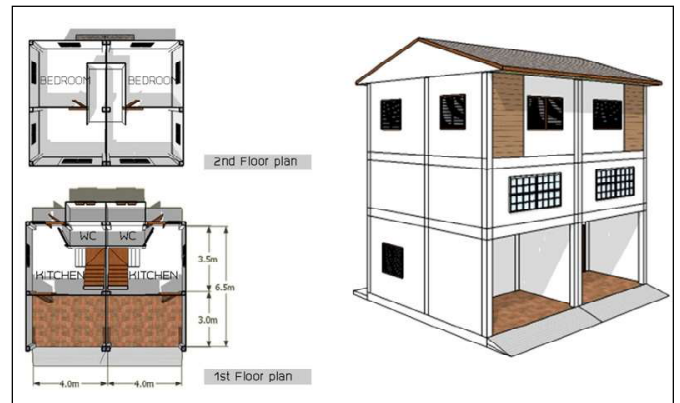
UNIT 3: Larger two-story detached house with half-finished ground floor (80m²). There is one of these units in the community.



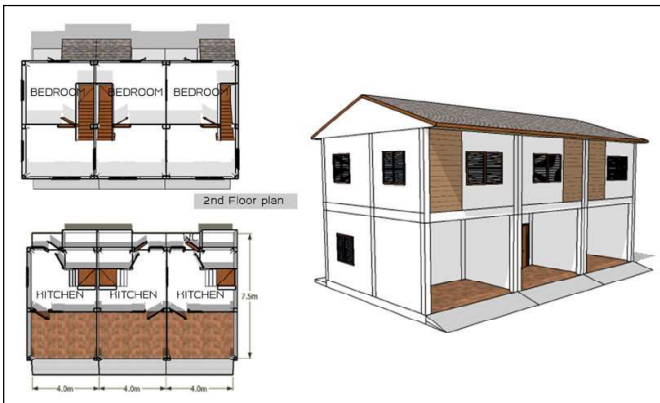
UNIT 4: Small one-room single-story semi-detached house on low stilts (28m²). There are two of these units in the community.



UNIT 5: Two-story semi-detached house with half-finished ground floor (52m²). There are 36 of these units in the community.



UNIT 6: Two-story semi-detached house with tall ground floor for a shop (52m²). There are 26 of these units in the community.



UNIT 7: Two-story row house with half-finished lower floor (60m²). There are ten of these units in the community.



▲ These photos were taken in 2008, after the community's housing cooperative had negotiated a long-term collective lease to the land and filled the site to above-flooding levels, and was ready to begin construction of the houses and infrastructure.



▲ To keep costs low, the cooperative members decided to hire a contractor only for the heavy structural parts of the houses, and do most of the less-skilled construction work themselves.



▲ The new housing at Jumlong Wit is much visited and much learned from by communities and architects and community supporters from around Thailand and around Asia.



▲ These photos are from a visit in 2010 by the regional Community Architects Network (CAN), on their way to a meeting in Chiang Mai.



▲ The community people keep this model of their new community in a glass case, in the community center, and bring it out often for visitors.



▲ In this photo you can see two of the semi-detached "Type 5" house models, with 52m² of space, and were the most popular type.



▲ The paved roads, drains and infrastructure services were paid for partly by the municipal government and partly by subsidies from CODI.



▲ This visit by the CAN Network was in 2010, right after the construction was finished. Since then, the community has gotten much, much greener, as the trees, flowers and small vegetable gardens community members have planted in and around their houses and on the public spaces in the community.

