ACHR Regional Meeting

This is a report on the four-day gathering, at the Menam Riverside Hotel in Bangkok, which brought together 130 community leaders, activists, NGO workers, government officials, architects, academics and professionals who are part of the ACHR network in Asia. Besides being a chance to catch up on who's doing what in the region and what's happening where, the meeting was an occasion for reflecting on the first two years' implementation of ACHR's ACCA Program (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights) and for setting plans for future work in the region - both with the ACCA Program and with ACHR in general.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights

Contents :

> "This is a meeting of serious doers who are working with communities, on the ground, to bring about change in their countries."

The ACHR Regional meeting began on the first day with a thunderous welcome in the form of a drum performance, by the youth group from the Bang Bua canal-side community network in Bangkok. After the country teams introduced themselves (there were about 130 partcipants in the meeting, with teams of community leaders, NGO people, academics, architects and government officials from 16 Asian and 2 African countries, as well as about 12 friends from international agencies), Somsook gave the following welcoming remarks :

One thing I'm sure about: this is going to be a very active meeting, because it is a meeting of serious "doers" from all around Asia - a meeting of people who are working on the ground, with communities, to bring about change in their countries. This isn't like a lot of ordinary international meetings, where you listen to polished presentations by professionals who want to teach. We know all about those kinds of meetings. But now it's our turn: we are working on the ground, we are making a lot of change, and we want to tell our stories to our friends. So the presentations we'll be seeing in the next few days are about the real things that are happening, not only theories! And this meeting will be a very good opportunity for all of us active people - many already good friends - to meet, to tell about the things that are happening, to learn from each others' good experiences, to draw inspiration and fresh energy from those other experiences, and to see how we can support each other to move forward and make that work stronger, more effective and more directed towards making structural change.

This ACHR network is now in its 22nd year. ACHR is like an Asian family, a coalition of Asian groups, and we are trying to make change according to the particular realities of our Asian cultures, our Asian politics, our Asian ways of thinking. This is important because many of the development theories that determine what happens in our field are mainly coming from somewhere else. And even though we may not be able to understand those theories very well, we are often obliged to follow them. Here is our chance to see how people in the Asia region are working, within the context of our own cultures and political processes, and here is our chance to share, to learn and to understand the broader global forces affecting Asia at the same time. In the past 22 years, we have undertaken a lot of initiatives within the ACHR network, including housing rights campaigns and fact-finding missions, training and advisory programs, exchange visits, workshops, promotion of community savings and community development funds, city-wide upgrading - many kinds of activities to help make change in the region.

Now the coalition's work has come to a new stage of action, through the ACCA Program (Asian Coalition for Community Action), which brings together many of these elements and all these 22 years of experience. The ACCA Program is supporting groups in 15 Asian countries so far, to take action in different ways, to show visible change by people, to show that people themselves can make this change, and to show this change happening at scale, in many cities in these countries - in some countries ACCA is being implemented in more than 15 cities. And after two years, the ACCA process is taking place on quite a big scale around the region. But we shouldn't just congratulate ourselves on the good work we are doing - we should take this meeting as a chance to look critically at our work and how it relates to the larger changes that are taking place both within our societies and within the larger global structures we are all part of now. How can we move forward, and how can we make our change more effective, to keep up with the other changes taking place?

Maurice's slide-show-with-music came next: "20 years of ACHR in 12 minutes"

"What I have learned in 34 years"

Denis Murphy *(introducing Father Jorge Anzorena) My job today is to introduce Father Jorge, and I'd like to do that by speaking about the day I hired him as my employee, in the Office of Human Development of the Catholic Bishops of Asia. Jorge came and asked if he could work with us, and of course we hired him. He'd just finished his doctorate in architecture in Japan, and he was willing to work with us in all the poor countries of Asia, on housing. That was thirty-four years ago. And my advice to you is that if you ever have to hire someone, you should look for someone like Father Jorge. Why? I'll give you four reasons :*

- *We asked Father Jorge to begin work in 1976, and he has never stopped. We've never asked him to stop and he keeps on going. He's long past the retirement age of 65 and he's still working.*

- *And Father Jorge has done a terrific job. For the work he has done in Asia, for all of us, he has received the Magsaysay Award in 1994. And what higher recommendation could there be of your work than that prize?*

- *Anyone who is capable, effective or has a strong personality can't help but alienate some people, no matter how good-humored he is. But as far as I know, Jorge has no enemies and no critics. That's the kind of employee you want, because you will avoid all kinds of trouble.*

- *And Father Jorge works for nothing - seriously! We never gave him anything, not even his room and board. And on top of that, he will bring you money! Jorge has brought millions and millions of dollars into Asia, into housing work. And that money has reached all corners of the poorest countries in Asia.*

Father Jorge : There are one billion slum dwellers in the world, and 600 million of them are in Asia. This is the situation that has moved many people to do something - activists, professionals, community leaders, architects, planners. And a large part of the work I have done over the last 34 years has been to find these people who want to do something, in all the places, and try to support them by visiting their work, writing about their work, teaching about it, perhaps finding a little money to help them continue, and introducing them to others working in other places. I have learned a lot from all of you, over the last 34 years. Here are some of the things that have really impressed me and changed me - and some things that I feel are very good for the future, and for the future of the people . . .

Father Jorge then profiles a long list of projects he's learned from and been inspired by over the years. A full transcript of his presentation, with photos from his powerpoint slides, can be downloaded from the ACHR website.

Panel discussion with five people

"The situation is indeed very tough, but everywhere we look, there are signs of hope in poor communities. And we need to see these signs of hope with eyes of respect, to support them, to link them, to make them strong, and to see what new can be done." *(Perween Rahman)*

Kirtee Shah moderated this presentation by five panelists, who were asked to talk briefly about what is happening in their contexts and what possibilities they see for the work in the coming years. Here are a few excerpts :

1 **Perween Rahman** *(Orangi Pilot Project Research and Training Institute in Karachi, Pakistan)* When Father Jorge was in Pakistan two years ago, at the end of his long tour of projects all over the country, our team asked him, "What did you see?" And he said something very powerful which we all still remember: "No matter what problems Pakistan experiences - the Taliban, the bombs, the violence, the disasters - there are still signs of hope everywhere. And everywhere the poor are faced with problems of housing, infrastructure and eviction, they are trying to solve them in their own ways." That statement was very important for us, and we see our work in that context. The situation in Pakistan is indeed very tough, yet everywhere we look, there are signs of hope, and we need to see these signs of hope with eyes of respect, to support them, to link them, to make them strong, and to see what new can be done. The links that we make with each other are a powerful way to do that.

2 **Gregor Meerpohl** *(Senior community development advisor from Germany)* A couple of years ago, a certain person in USA was saying, "We can change!" and then the whole country was shouting back, "Yes, we can change!" Our crowd here at this meeting may be a little smaller, but that doesn't mean that we can't make change too. And I think what Barak Obama has realized is that if you want to make structural change, it's heavy work and a heavy burden, and it takes time. You can't do it from one moment to the next. I think all of us here who are doing practical work on the ground know that. There are so many opportunities where we can interfere and try to change the world to improve the situation of the people, especially those who are being neglected by our societies. But it's heavy work, and I would like to encourage everybody here to continue, continue, continue to do the work! Because *we can change the world, we can change the region!*

3 **May Domingo** *(Community architect from the Philippines)* Back in the late 1980s, when we were volunteering as architecture students in the Tondo squatter settlement in Manila, we felt we were just young people getting lost, not really knowing what we were doing in the community, and making a lot of mistakes with the people! But looking back 20 years later, I understand that we were being molded by the communities themselves, beginning to understand the situation in the community and what kind of solutions can be possible. This was my first major learning experience as a community architect. Then later, the big theme was trying to develop the tools to create space for community in the technical process of designing and constructing houses and drainage, so that it is really the people who are deciding on the plans and managing the construction. I think the biggest challenge for professionals like us is to see how to ensure that this kind of housing design process gives opportunities for community builders, community leaders and community youth to gain the kinds of skills to become community architects themselves, so they can plan things by themselves, and share those skills with other communities.

4 **Fr. Norberto Carcellar** *(PACSII NGO in the Philippines)* My task is to give a brief profile of another network of urban poor groups. Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) is a trans-national network of urban poor groups in Asia, Africa and Latin America. SDI seeks pro-poor, inclusive cities by catalyzing and strengthening associations of urban poor communities to define and implement their own development agenda. The core methodologies of SDI groups (savings, enumerations, exchanges, precedent setting, partnerships with government and other actors) help empower and mobilize the urban poor, develop their financial and negotiation skills, build leadership and facilitate learning. The Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI), which was set up in 2007, is SDI's international finance facility. It provides loans (through member national urban poor funds) to local savings groups for housing and other improvement projects. UPFI loans allow federations to negotiate with potential implementing partners and leverage resources from the public and private sector.

5 **John D. Liu** *(Environmentalist and film-maker from USA and China)* All over the world we are seeing flooding, mud-slides, droughts and famines. These may seem like natural disasters, but in many cases, they are unnatural disasters which are caused because human beings have changed the ecological conditions over time. When you understand this, it suggests a strategy which could lead to a sustainable future for humanity. Because the future of humanity and the future of natural ecosystems is intimately intertwined, and the relationship between human beings and the natural environment is the determinant for a future without poverty and hunger. This is what I study, and I have built a methodology of using media to communicate this around the world. This information has helped to raise the consciousness of hundreds of millions of Chinese about environmental information, and it is having an effect on global policy and on different countries' methods of interacting with some of their problems.

"We are the force that can solve these problems"

Paa Chan *(community leader from Klong Lumnoon, in Bangkok)* As a community leader, I would like to share some thoughts with all the doctors up on the stage. In Thailand, our communities are linked into networks in most cities now, and those city networks are linked with each other all over the country. As a member of that national network, I want to tell you that the urban poor in Thailand are rising up, we are capable and we do everything ourselves now: saving, surveying, land negotiations, community planning, housing construction, infrastructure, welfare, income generation, managing funds. I think it is very important for the urban poor in all our countries and all over Asia to link together, because we are the key force that can solve the big, big problems all of you are talking about. And we have many things to share. So how can organizations like ACHR and professionals like you support the poor to be the main actors and the main force to make change in a big way? Ask the community people in the room! Are you ready to do that? In many other countries, the government and the professionals are not ready to do that yet. But I have to tell you that poor people like me are ready, and we can make a big change!

Asian Coalition for Community Action Program

Update on the ACCA Program

ACCA Budget :

Total budget approved for the ACCA Program (2009 - 2011) :

- Original approval in Nov. 2008 : **US$ 7 Million** *(for Nov. 2008 - Oct. 2011)*
- Additional approval in Nov. '09 : **US$ 4 million** *(for Nov. 2009 - Oct. 2011)*
- Total ACCA Budget : **US$ 11 million**

ACCA Targets :

200 cities in 3 years (2009-2011), with these elements :

- 750 small upgrading projects (@ about $3,000 each)
- 100 big housing projects (@ max $40,000 each)
- at least 100 city-based community development funds
- community savings
- city-wide survey and information
- city-wide upgrading action plans
- community networks
- partnership with these cities
- understanding Asian cities
- community-led disaster rehab.

ACCA Budget received :

ACCA is funded by IIED, which received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The ACCA budget is transferred to ACHR from IIED every 6 months, after submitting six-monthly financial reports. A total of five budget transfers were made to ACHR between November 2008 and November 2010, bringing the total amount transferred to ACHR to US$ 5,209,370.03.

The most recent ACCA Committee Meeting was held in Bangkok, on January 26, 2011, just before this big ACHR Regional Meeting. Besides approving a new round of projects, the committee agreed on several points, which we report on in these next six pages, along with an update on the progress of the ACCA Program so far.

The Asian Coalition for Community Action Program is a three-year program of ACHR which is supporting a process of city-wide upgrading in 200 Asian cities. Community people are the primary doers in planning and implementing projects in which they tackle problems of land, infrastructure and housing at scale in their cities, in partnership with their local governments and other stakeholders. The ACCA Program didn't come out of the blue, but is built on the initiatives that have already developed in most countries in the region, by community organizations and their supporting groups. The program belongs to all these active groups in the Asia region, and it works as a support system for what they are already doing and a tool to help them grow and to make their work stronger in many ways.

ACCA Program Update : *(Cumulative figures, as of February 1, 2011, after the Bangkok meeting)*

- **ACCA activities approved in 120 cities** / towns / districts, in 15 countries.
- **68 big housing projects approved** (Total big project budget approved: US$ 2,351,067, which includes two projects from the new ACCA regional loan fund).
- **591 small upgrading projects approved** (Total small project budget approved US$ 1,515,000).
- **17 Community-driven disaster** rehabilitation projects approved in 6 countries : Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam, Pakistan and Indonesia.
- **National surveys in 6 countries**, finished or in pro-

The ACCA Program has now completed its second year. The program has supported activities in about 120 cities, in 15 countries, so far. There are enough activities underway now (or even finished) and enough strength, scale and momentum to allow us to see how the program actually works and what it can do. There is now *some meat on the bones* of the ideas that inspired the program. It has taken a little time to warm up, because we are trying something new with ACCA. And this warming up has involved lots of meetings, lots of discussions and lots of organizing in each country, so groups can bridge this new thing with the things they were already doing.

The key aspects of the ACCA program : To help groups in Asia to make change in their countries - change that is driven by the real demands in that place and not by priorities set by some outside agenda; to work at city-wide scale with city-wide action and city-wide information (not just isolated projects!); to make poor communities the key actors in activating, strengthening, organizing and networking; to make concrete change with concrete action by communities on the ground, as soon as possible (not just talk or big concepts!); to make more space for people to decide what to do and to have the power to do it; to spread out the opportunities the program offers by using small project ceilings in order to work at scale and make a national impact; to build partnerships and alliances; to make policy change; to build community finance systems in these cities which include community savings and city development funds; to build stronger negotiation power for the poor.

More than just projects : ACCA's core activities are the implementation of small upgrading and larger housing projects. But the program offers more than just projects. To make all these projects possible, the groups in all these cities need to establish - or strengthen - several levels of committees, and to build a structure of linkages, collaboration and mutual support along the way that will carry the process forward, after the projects have been completed, and lead to longer-term change. To do this, the program is supporting a process of collaboration at four levels *(although not all countries have been able to reach all four levels yet)* : the city-wide community network, the joint city development committee, the national joint committee and the regional ACCA committee.

City-wide and national surveys : The ACCA process often starts in a city with a city-wide survey, to link all the communities in the city into an active process of looking at their city, understanding who lives where and under what kind of tenure situations, and inviting all of the poor communities into an active process, from the very beginning, as much as possible. In six countries so far, the community networks have also conducted national surveys.

ACCA total budget elements (2008 - 2011) *(all figures in US$)*

ACCA Project elements	1st contract (US$)	2nd contract (US$)	Total budget (US$)	% of total project budget	
1. Small projects	1,500,000	1,000,000	2.5 million	22.7%	59.1%
2. Big projects	2,000,000	2,000,000	4 million	36.4%	
3. Community savings and funds	400,000	0	0.4 million	3.6%	10.8%
4. Understanding cities	300,000	0	0.3 million	2.7%	
5. Disaster rehabilitation	300,000	200,000	0.5 million	4.5%	
6. City and national processes	1,150,000	700,000	1.85 million	16.8%	21.3%
7. Regional strengthening	500,000	0	0.5 millio	4.5%	
8. ACHR admin and coordination	500,000	50,000	0.55 million	5 %	
9. International coordination (IIED)	350,000	50,000	0.4 million	3.6%	
TOTAL	**7,000,000**	**4,000,000**	**11 million**	**100%**	
Total budget managed by ACHR	6,650,000	3,950,000	10.6 million	96%	

BIG ACCA PROJECTS

By the end of the ACCA Progam's second year, a total of 64 big housing projects (in 64 cities in 15 countries) had been approved. In different ways, these projects are demonstrating new, comprehensive and people-driven housing alternatives, and people are the owners of the projects and the key actors in their planning and implementation, as much as possible. The idea is not to make one perfect pilot project in these cities, but to use these big projects to build a strong city-wide process which will produce many, many more projects.

Status of the big projects : 31% of these projects are now finished (20 projects). Most of these finished projects were implemented very quickly, in the second year, and they make a good argument for the speed and effectiveness of delivery by people. Another 50% of the projects are now well under way (11 projects more than 50% done, and 18 projects less than 50% done), which means 81% of the 64 projects are either finished or well underway. Another 24% of the projects (15 projects) have not started yet, mostly because of difficulties with sorting out the land tenure.

Types of the big projects : Only 22% of the big projects (7 projects) so far involve the relocation of whole communities, while more than 51% (33 projects) have been able to upgrade or reconstruct in the same place. This is extremely important, because it shows that city-wide slum upgrading doesn't mean all the existing communities have to move. If groups in these cities can start their negotiations today, at city-wide scale, with each community negotiating for land and secure housing, it is likely that at least 51% of those communities will be able to stay and upgrade in the same place, with a little adjustment. (In Thailand's Baan Mankong Upgrading Program, more than 60% of slums have been able to stay and upgrade in the same place, and another 20% have been able to relocate to land that is very close by - within 2 kms.) 16% of the projects (10 projects) follow different models, with loans to secure or insecure households for housing improvements, and another 11% (7 projects) are creating new communities of scattered squatters on new land.

Who gave the land? In 54% of the big projects so far , the land has been provided by the government (35 projects). This shows that if we can find the right way to negotiate, it is very often possible to get land from the government, on lease or for sale at nominal rates - or sometimes even for free! The truth is that governments almost always have a lot of land, despite the complaints they invariably offer: *"There's no land left!"* or *"This land is too expensive for the people!"* For housing the poor, the public land strategy should be the rule of the game, as much as possible. But there are also some big projects where people have had to purchase the land. This is not an ideal solution, but sometimes the communities have no other option. In Myanmar, for example, if the communities waited for the government to give them land, there would be no housing projects in their lifetimes! So stategically, they decided to invest in buying some land now, show this new possibility by the people, and then later go to the government to negotiate for more land for other communities.

Land tenure in the big projects : Most of the big projects are implemented in settlements which are facing the immediate or potential threat of eviction, and so it's no surprise that communities have opted for the relatively new option of collective tenure (leasehold or ownership) in only 27% of the big projects.

BIG ACCA Projects :
(as of December 30, 2010)

Total number of big projects approved in the first year :
64 projects
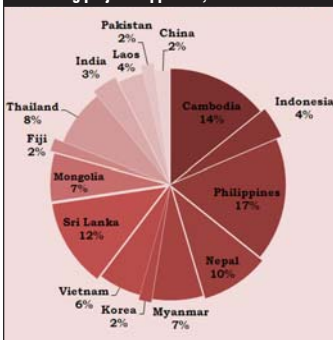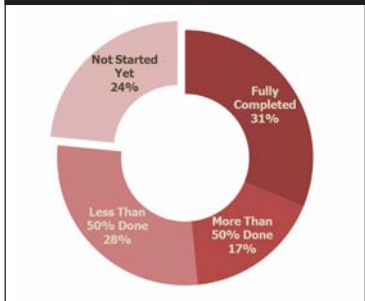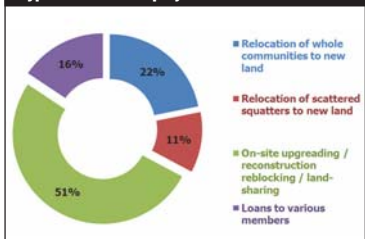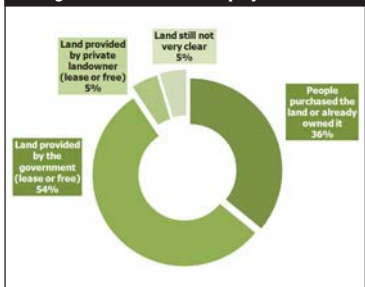
Total big project budget approved
US$ 2,261,067

Number of households who benefit from these projects :
- **7,604 households** *(directly)*
- **19,413 households** *(indirectly)*

Status of the big projects :
- Fully completed (20 projects)
- More than 50% done (11 projects)
- Less than 50% done (18 projects)
- Not started yet (15 projects)

ACCA Big projects approved, to Jan 2011

Big Project STRATEGY :

The big project should be identified with the agreement of other communities in the city, so they can learn and feel like it's their pilot project too. That way, the project acts as a training course for the whole city. This is a way of convincing people that they can do it together, and of guiding them through all the steps. The power of implementation is with the people on the ground, but it is also important to get the other power bases in the city to agree and to be part of that achievement, so they can feel proud and can change along with the people. All this negotiation is in itself a changing of relationships, a change of power equations.

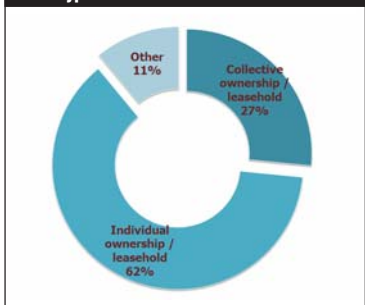What is the status of the BIG projects?

Types of ACCA BIG projects

Who gave the land in the BIG projects?

What type of land tenure?

LAND TENURE : Collective or individual? In about 62% of the projects, the communities have chosen individual tenure (leasehold or ownership). Individual ownership is the de-facto tenure arrangement, but it can create serious problems in poor communities in the longer term. Once any slum gets developed and a squatter in that slum gets secure tenure, suddenly the price of that house and land will go up, the market will come to the area, and stronger economic forces will come and start trying to buy off that poor squatter. Some may not feel there's anything wrong with a poor family deciding to sell off its rights and move back to another slum - at least they'll have a little money in their pockets. But collective land tenure is a way to ensure that housing project for the poor continues to be a vital and sustaining support system - *a real community* - for its members, who don't necessarily stop being poor and vulnerable once they get land and a house. Once the land is collective, it becomes much easier for those living within that collective to discuss, to agree, to set their systems and support each other.

SMALL ACCA PROJECTS

By the end of December 2010, a total of 549 small upgrading projects in 549 communities in 102 cities in 15 countries have been approved, and about half of them are finished now. These small projects are all being planned and carried out by community people themselves, with a large number of both direct and indirect beneficiaries. These projects get community people into an active, collective process, in which they are changing from being the ones who wait for someone else to bring them development, to the ones who do things themselves, determine their own needs and resolve them right away. So besides solving problems and getting the much-needed improvements, the communities wake up and get into the active mode through the projects.

The "spread-out" effect : All too often, development interventions pick up one project here and another there, and forget about the rest! The small projects are a way to NOT forget about all those other communities in the city, and allow a lot of them to start and to do something very concrete. This brings another layer of scale. Cambodia is one of the best examples of using this "spread out effect," where by lowering the grant amounts considerably and giving upgrading grants to many more communities, they have been able to reach more communities in the ACCA cities - *in one case in all 17 communities in the city!*

Small projects as negotiations : Once communities pave a road or lay a new water supply system, they often organize a festival and invite the mayor to come cut the ribbon, see the people's achievement and talk. In this way, these small projects are like chess pieces in a community's game of negotiation: *"Now we have a very good walkway, what about municipal water supply? What about land?"*

A lot of roads : It's interesting to see that in more than a quarter of the small projects, people have decided to do roads. Why so many roads? A road not only provides access, but it functions as a playground, meeting point, market, workshop and festival venue in crowded communities. A good paved road is also a potent symbol of legitimacy, since it physically and symbolically connects a slum with the formal world.

ACCA Small projects approved, to Jan 2011

What have people built?
(some projects have several parts)

- 126 road-building projects
- 68 drainage projects
- 103 water supply projects
- 30 electricity and street lights
- 98 toilet building projects
- 13 bridge-building projects
- 46 community centers
- 48 playgrounds and parks
- 1 community market
- 9 rice bank projects
- 2 clinics and health centers
- 4 children's library projects
- 1 fire protection project
- 4 tree planting projects
- 8 solid waste and composting
- 10 retaining wall projects
- 5 mosque and temple repairs

SMALL ACCA Projects :
(as of December 30, 2010)

Total number of projects approved in the first two years : 549 projects
- Number of projects completed : 253 projects *(46%)*
- Number of projects in process : 143 projects *(26%)*
- Number of projects not started : 153 projects *(28%)*

Total small project budget approved US$ 1,438,000

Number of households who directly benefit from these projects : 185,000 households

---

ACCA ASSESSMENT

A striking part of the ACCA Program's second year has been the assessment process, in which we are trying to build a new, intense and horizontal system for comparing, assessing, learning from and refining the ACCA projects in different countries. All the participants in these assessment visits are actively involved in their own ACCA projects, and they come with all kinds of questions, doubts, problems and ideas. Suddenly they're in another country, seeing other poor community people doing projects also - some similar, some different. Some things they see they may be critical about, and other things they will learn from and be inspired by. In these ways, besides helping adjust and correct problems in the processes in various cities, the assessment trips open up a big new space for learning and sharing across Asia, and help expand the range of what community people see is possible. This is not an assessment process that comes only at the end of projects, but happens constantly, and most of the projects being visited are all still messily *in process!* The objective is not to assess the neatly finished project, but to bring a rich element of communal learning and communal adjusting and sharing into the process of implementation.

Five assessment trips have been organized so far: To the Philippines (January 24 - 29, 2010), Viet Nam (April 2-6, 2010), Mongolia (July 24-29, 2010), Cambodia (September 14-17, 2010) and Nepal (November 22-25, 2010). The sixth assessment trip will be to Sri Lanka, and will take place at the end of April, 2011.

> *"By seeing and sharing like this, we are not just assessing the projects of our peers in other places, but we are assessing ourselves in the process."*

Two-way assessment : In the prevailing world of development, projects are usually assessed by high-level professionals or academics from outside, who are hired to fly in for a couple of days, put you through their x-ray to measure the worthiness of the work you are doing, according to all the prevailing development theories. Then they pronounce judgment on that work from the Olympian heights, and then fly home. Most of the time, that kind of external assessment of an internal process ends up missing most of the real substance and the quality of a complex, community-driven process, which these high-flyers usually can't understand.

We're trying to change that model of assessment, and make it a more horizontal process, in which it is community people and their partner NGOs and professionals (all of whom are actively implementing projects) who assess the work of their peers in the region. As they visit each other, see each other's projects, talk together and travel together, they advise each other, learn from each other's mistakes and breakthroughs and help each other to make their process stronger. And in the process of assessing others, these active groups assess themselves, so the assessment process is two-way, with lots of learning on both sides..

"The storm caused a lot of suffering and loss, of course, but it also brought us together as a community, gave us reason to work with each other like never before and to do many things together. I feel so much pride in what we have done to rebuild our village." (a community member in Kunchankone Township)

"These are the forms of finance that start growing from the ground, from people's own resources, which they manage and control themselves."

DISASTER REHABILITATION PROJECTS

Of all the poor and vulnerable groups in Asian cities, those hit by disasters are often the poorest and most vulnerable of all. Besides losing family members, houses and belongings, many also lose their livelihoods and find themselves facing eviction. As the frequency and severity of storms, floods, fires, land-slides and earthquakes increase, the numbers of poor communities facing these disasters increases also. Community networks in several countries are finding more and more of their member communities facing disasters and are using ACCA support to try to turn these calamities into development opportunities. By the end of December 2010, a total of 17 community-driven disaster rehabilitation projects had been approved, in 6 countries: Cambodia (1 project), Burma (3 projects), Philippines (7 projects), Vietnam (3 projects), Pakistan (1 project) and Indonesia (2 projects).

EXAMPLE : Myanmar. After Cyclone Nargis, many of the big aid agencies sent in specialists to design a standard typhoon-resistant house model - simple box-like things of about 15 square meters, with 6 posts and a tin-sheet roof - which they reproduced by the hundreds and gave to people all over the country. In two of the ACCA projects in Myanmar, the funds went directly into the hands of the villagers, who built over 700 houses for the same amount the international experts built only 100! And these people-built houses were all different, all beautiful, all full of whimsy and innovation. And because this housing process brought people together, instead of isolating them, it led communities naturally to do many other things together.

COMMUNITY FINANCE IN ACCA

Making community finance systems work - finance systems that are friendly to the poor and are actually managed by them - is one of the key objectives of the ACCA Program. The small, flexible finance from ACCA helps do this by allowing things in a city to start right away, without much fuss or bureaucracy. If communities and their support organizations manage those small funds wisely, they can not only fund the first round of upgrading projects but can also seed a new alternative financial system in their cities: a financial system which belongs to the poor and can go on to finance more projects and become a magnet for funds from other sources. These alternative financial systems may start small, but they're visible, they're dynamic and they're showing real results.

In the first year of ACCA, most groups concentrated more on their needs and the implementation of their first projects. But as that implementation has gotten stronger, more groups are beginning to think more seriously and more clearly about their systems of finance, so that the community-driven development process in their cities can continue and can keep growing. Some of the countries have started with national funds (like UPDF in Cambodia, CLAF-Net in Sri Lanka and CODI in Thailand), some have started with city funds, some have started from strong savings groups on the ground, and some have not even started savings yet.
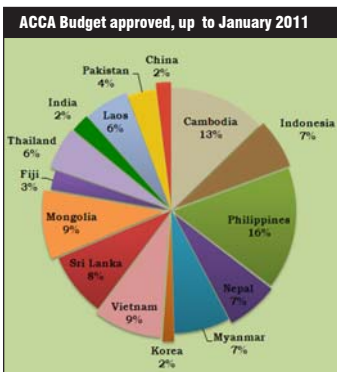
But many city-based development funds are now emerging, and they are linking the community savings groups with the ACCA finance - and other sources of finance - in new and creative ways, with the national, city and community levels interacting in different ways. In some cases, some funds stay in the city and some revolve back into the national fund, so other non-ACCA cities can also take part (as in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, HPFP and Mongolia). And in some cases, all the funds stay in the city and revolve in the city fund, where the ACCA funds are being used to strengthen the community process, the city process, the city fund's role, the city savings process and city partnerships (as in Vietnam and Nepal).

COMMUNITY FINANCE (January 2011) Summary of community savings and community funds in ACCA cities *(all figures in US$)*

| | # ACCA cities | SAVINGS | | | COMMUNITY FUNDS | | | | | |
		# savings groups	# savings members	Total savings	# city funds	Funds from ACCA	Funds from communities	Funds from government	Funds from other sources	Total capital in funds
1. CAMBODIA	15	265	8,905	314,850	15 funds	320,000	152,000	32,500	25,000	530,000
2. INDONESIA	6	128	1,607	9,666	1 fund	3,100	4,500	0	0	7,600
3. NEPAL	6	199	3,785	257,084	2 funds	80,000	0	83,429	11,429	174,858
4. BURMA	6	53	3,419	37,533	3 funds	80,000	0	0	10,000	90,000
5. KOREA	1	4	54	5,000	0 funds	0	0	0	0	0
6. PHILIPPINES	16	1,235	22,909	201,413	9 funds	189,988	35,138	10,000	71,076	306,172
7. VIETNAM	10	1,228	29,138	1,443,680	6 funds	116,022	0	32,500	241,676	390,198
8. SRI LANKA	7	589	5,951	615,437	6 funds	280,000	605,169	25,200	128,655	1,039,024
9. MONGOLIA	12	162	1,770	39,391	10 funds	4,000	5,120	1,438	1,752	12,400
10. FIJI	3	144	18,500	92,888	0 funds	0	0	0	0	0
11. THAILAND	8	86	14,773	1,687,120	7 funds	116,000	838,843	13,833	0	968,676
12. INDIA	2	20	323	7,825	0 funds	0	0	0	0	0
13. LAO PDR	11	487	102,204	10,762,965	11 funds	95,000	101,115	0	7,625	203,740
14. PAKISTAN	2	0	0	0	0 funds	0	0	0	0	0
15. CHINA	2	0	0	0	0 funds	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	107 cities	4,600 groups	213,365 members	$15,474,852 total savings	70 funds	$1,284,110	$1,742,475	$198,900	$497,183	$3,722,688

ACCA BUDGET UPDATE

The diagram to the right shows how the ACCA Program budget has been spent, with more than 70% of the budget going directly into the hands of poor people, to enable them to do real projects on the ground. Another 20% of the budget goes to capacity-building activities, and only 9% goes to administration and coordination (5% for ACHR's regional and 4% for IIED's international admin. and coordination). These figures are in sharp contrast to the budgets of most expensive and top-heavy international development projects, where management and overhead costs eat up 30% or 40% of project budgets, and only a pittance actually makes its way into the hands of the poor. We have maintained these proportions throughout the implementation of the first two years, and intend to continue.
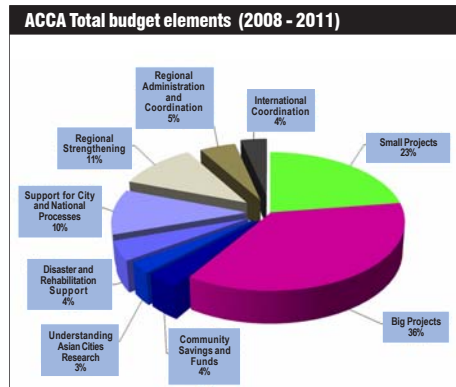

ACCA Total budget elements (2008 - 2011)

"More than 70% of the ACCA budget goes directly into the hands of people in poor communities, and enables them to do real projects on the ground which resolve their immediate needs."

ACCA Budget approved, up to January 2011

Total ACCA approvals and expenses (Nov 2008 - Jan 2011)

ACCA Project elements	Budget approved (US$)	Budget actually disbursed (US$)	Budget still available (US$)
1. Small projects (540 projects approved so far)	1,438,000	877,436	1,062,000
2. Big projects (64 projects approved so far)	2,261,067	1,485,787	1,783,933
3. Support for community savings and funds	135,739	135,739	264,261
4. Support for understanding cities	143,500	67,904	156,500
5. Support for disaster rehabilitation	343,410	343,410	156,590
6. Support for city and national processes	135,739	135,739	895,419
7. Regional strengthening	715,393	715,393	
8. ACHR admin. and coordination	393,946	393,946	156,504
TOTAL	**6,170,243** *(58.2% of the total ACCA budget)*	**4,758,803** *(77% of the approved budget)*	**4,429,757** *(41.8% of the total ACCA budget)*

The diagram to the left shows how the ACCA budget has been used in different countries. You can see that energetic groups in some countries clearly know how to incorporate the tools the ACCA Program offers into their active change process and are taking full and swift advantage of the program, with lots of projects. Others are slower to start. It all depends on the abilities of groups in these different countries, and the degree of their readiness to recognize the program's opportunities and to make use of them in their own creative ways. The program has been open to groups in the whole Asia region from day one: any groups which understand how to make use of the program can propose activities to ACCA and move ahead.

Summary of ACCA projects approved (as of Jan 20, 2011)   *(all figures in US$)*

Country	Cities	Big Projects Total budget	#	Small Projects Total budget	#	City Support Total budget	#	Disaster Projects Total budget	#	National Support Total budget	#	Other city and national processes	TOTAL
1. Cambodia	15	320,000	8	230,000	136	42,000	14	5,000	1	30,000	3	30,000	657,000
2. Indonesia	6	100,000	3	97,000	30	12,000	4	37,000	2	22,000	2	71,497	339,497
3. Nepal	6	217,300	6	75,000	26	15,000	5	0		20,000	2	26,100	353,400
4. Myanmar	6	160,000	4	97,000	30	12,000	4	92,800	4	10,000	1	7,000	378,800
5. Korea	1	40,000	1	15,000	5	3,000	1	0		20,000	2	0	78,000
6. Philippines	16	390,000	10	209,000	67	46,000	15	108,000	7	22,000	2	50,000	825,000
7. Viet Nam	10	135,000	4	120,000	41	30,000	9	36,990	3	22,000	2	125,303	469,293
8. Sri Lanka	7	280,000	7	115,000	36	21,000	7	0		17,500	2	0	433,500
9. Mongolia	12	150,767	5	187,000	74	38,000	12	0		20,000	2	72,990	468,757
10. Fiji	3	40,000	1	45,000	15	9,000	3	0		20,000	2	15,000	129,000
11. Thailand	8	180,000	8	50,000	19	19,000	8	0		20,000	2	20,000	289,000
12. India	2	80,000	2	30,000	12	6,000	2	0		0		10,000	126,000
13. Lao PDR	11	80,000	2	109,000	41	17,000	11	0		34,000	3	61,570	301,570
14. Pakistan	2	40,000	1	20,000	10	0		25,000	1	10,000	1	100,600	195,600
15. China	2	48,000	2	39,000	7	11,000	2	0		0		5,000	103,000
Totals	107	2,261,067	64	1,438,000	549	281,000	97	304,790	18	267,500	26	595,060	5,147,417

ACCA PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR - AND BEYOND

1 **Extending the ACCA Program :** In the most recent ACCA / ACHR committee meeting in Bangkok, on January 26, 2011, the committee reviewed the program's progress so far and discussed several aspects of it, including whether or not to continue, once the current three-year period of funding expires. The committee was unanimous and enthusiastic in its agreement to continue the ACCA Program in two ways :

- **By extending the existing program for an additional six months :** The existing ACCA Program is scheduled to end in October 2011. But since 42% of the project budget remains unspent at the end of two years, we will propose to IIED to extend the program by an extra six months, so it will end in May 2012 and we needn't be too rushed to spend the remaining money.

- **By drafting a new 3-year funding proposal**, to continue the program and implement a second phase of ACCA (2012 - 2015). Instead of waiting for the money to finish, we should start drafting a new program proposal right away. Maybe three more years, to make a total of six years of implementation. In this second proposal, some elements may continue and some new ones can be added.

"The ACCA committee meetings, which are held in different countries each time and are often attached to assessment trips or other events, are like portable classrooms which make space for another layer of regional learning."

2 **Reformulating the ACCA / ACHR Committee :** When the current ACCA/ACHR committee was formed, according to a structure that was discussed and agreed upon by the larger regional network (in the last ACHR regional meeting in January 2009), it was agreed that the committee would function for a year or two, and then we'd review and see if it should be changed. The question in this committee meeting, two years later, was shall we reformulate the committee or leave it as it is? After some discussion, the following new ACCA / ACHR committee structure was agreed upon by the committee and then presented in the big ACHR Regional Meeting on January 29 for agreement by the larger coalition. It was also decided that the representatives on this new 13-member ACCA / ACHR committee will be determined by the groups in each sub-region, and the representatives will not be fixed, but will rotate, according to a system for rotation each sub-region collectively determines.

- **2 representatives from South Asian countries**
- **2 representatives from East Asian countries**
- **3 representatives from Southeast Asian countries**
- **2 senior people**
- **3 community representatives**
- **1 representative from the ACHR secretariat**

3 **Planning for ACCA in 2011 :** *The committee also agreed to the following plan for implementing ACCA in the coming year, which will end in December 2012 (unless we are able to extend the program by the extra six months, in which case the year will end in May 2012).*

- **Support city-wide community upgrading processes in 70-80 more cities**, with these elements :
  - **Big projects:** The total remaining big project budget of US$ 1,738,933 should be enough to support about 35 more housing and land projects, at a maximum of $40,000 for each project.
  - **Regional revolving loan fund:** The new ACCA regional revolving loan fund has $400,000 in lending capital (taken from the big project budget) to provide housing and land loans of up to $50,000 per project, at 4% annual interest, repayable in 5 years in 6-monthly installments to ACHR, with repayment pegged to the local currency at the time of disbursement. This new regional fund is an experiment and should support about ten projects by giving loans to urgent housing projects, providing a guarantee fund to unlock other local finance sources, leveraging joint funding or any other possibilities - it's up to the creativity of the groups.
  - **Small projects:** The total remaining small project budget of US$ 1,062,000 should support at least 350 more small projects, in 70 more cities (with max. $15,000 per city and $3,000 per project). It's not enough to solve all the problems, of course, but it's enough to start the engine, if we use the principal of insufficiency!
  - **City development process and coordination:** For surveys, mapping, networking, savings, city funds, information, workshops, meetings, joint committees and coordination, with max. support of $3,000 per city.

- **Support disaster rehabilitation in affected communities** (Total remaining budget $156,590) This is only enough for a few more projects, but this budget can be combined with small and big projects in disaster areas.

- **Support for community savings and city development funds,** according to the proposals from groups.

- **Support for research studies in the area of understanding Asian cities**, according to proposals.

- **Support for national processes :** For in-country exchanges, national workshops, national committees, policy change-making and coordination, with a total of about $12,000 per country.

- **Support for regional workshops, meetings and exchanges,** including these already-planned events :
  - Advisory trip to Fiji with SDI and community architects (March, 2011)
  - Assessment trip to visit ACCA projects in Sri Lanka (April, 2011)
  - Workshop during the Asia Pacific Urban Forum in Bangkok (June, 2011) *(more details on page 25)*
  - Regional workshop on community-based disaster rehabilitation (date not set yet)
  - Regional workshop on community finance and community funds (date not yet set)

As is almost always the case in these big regional gatherings, the reports from various countries made for the richest and most exciting part of the meeting, filled as they were with details about real projects and real breakthroughs on the ground - and all of them beautifully illustrated with technicolor Powerpoint slides. This time, the focus was a little more on the ACCA process, since many of the groups which presented are now very busy implementing ACCA projects in their countries. We present here just a few bits from the presentations on the ACCA process in these countries. This is just a teaser, though - a much more thorough and detailed second year report on the ACCA Program is now in the works and should be finished in April 2011.

CAMBODIA

Before and After : *The old riverside Monorom slum in Serey Sophoan, and the new houses on free government land.*

ACCA in CAMBODIA :

- ACCA projects in 15 cities
- 136 small projects in 15 cities
- 9 big projects approved
- 1 disaster project in Phnom Penh
- National slum survey in 27 cities
- All the ACCA projects are being implemented by the national Community Savings Network and it's partner UPDF.

(Presentation by Mr. Mann Chhoeurn, Chairman of the Urban Poor Development Fund in Phnom Penh) The ACCA Program came at a difficult time in Cambodia, with lots of development and lots of evictions happening. But the ACCA Program has made it possible to work in 15 cities, and to make a new community-driven movement, as an alternative to eviction, in which the communities and the local authorities work together to survey the slums in the city, find possible pieces of empty land, and negotiate to upgrade the communities that don't need to move, and relocate those who do need to move to free land from the government. All this is being shown as something practical and possible through the ACCA projects. And now this process is being institutionalized, as the Prime Minister has already agreed to sign the "Circular 03" Policy, which formalizes this process.

Although the ACCA Program in Cambodia has only been implemented for two years, we have already come very close to achieving our three-year target of demonstrating this city-wide and people-driven community development model in 15 cities, with activities which include community savings and funds, city-wide surveys and information gathering, city-wide upgrading action plans (including small and big projects), strengthening community networks and building partnerships. In 2009, at the start of the ACCA program, we conducted a national survey of poor and informal settlements in 26 towns and cities around the country (counting 132,396 households in 831 settlements), and this survey has opened the way for many new cities to join the ACCA process and the national savings network.

The spread-out effect : Cambodia is the country which has pushed the "spread out effect" the farthest. By giving smaller grants to larger numbers of communities, they have been able to stretch the $15,000 small project budget ceiling to allow as many communities as possible in each city to join the process, to get active, to start planning and so start implementing their own small upgrading projects. In the town of Banlung, for example, all 17 communities in the city are implementing small projects!

Free land from the government : After implementing ACCA projects in Cambodia for two years, we find that the ACCA program works like a bridge between the local authorities and the poor communities in the city. The program has helped change the position of those local authorities: before, they said no, there is no land for the poor! But after beginning to implement a few ACCA big projects, local authorities around the country are now helping to give land for housing the poor - in most cities! In five of the nine big housing projects approved so far, the government has provided the land for people's housing for free, and negotiations are now on for free land in three more projects. Another interesting aspect of the Cambodian big projects is that they have blended resources from ACCA and from UPDF to make larger, more city-wide and longer-term housing plans. In Preah Sihanouk, a difficult coastal city where private-sector high-rise developments are going up all over the place, and evictions used to be the rule, the community network has used ACCA support to pave roads, put in drains and water supply systems, and by demonstrating a people-driven and on-site upgrading alternative to eviction, they have managed to secure the tenure on the land they already occupy.

LAO PDR

Lao's first on-site slum upgrading project, at Nong Duang Thung in Vientiane.

ACCA in LAO PDR :

- ACCA projects in 22 cities/districts
- 85 small projects in 22 districts
- 2 big projects approved
- All the ACCA projects are being implemented by the national net-work of women's savings groups, with support from the Lao Women's Union and the WCEP NGO.

(Presentation by Sommay Vongnakhone, senior community leader and member of the Women and Community Empowering Project NGO) After 13 years of savings in Lao, we now have 532 savings groups in 22 cities and districts around the country, with 104,000 members and savings of US$ 13 million! Besides savings and credit, these savings groups work together on environmental and agricultural projects, community enterprises in traditional crafts and mushroom growing. We also run our own welfare funds at the community level. These savings and development activities have strengthened the role of women in Lao society, and gotten poor women to pool their resources, work together, encourage each other and develop skills in financial management. Before, the government thought that savings was just women's work! But when the ACCA program came and people started to build roads and toilets and new housing projects, the government began to see the real role of women, and now it is we women who are showing the government how to develop our country!

The ACCA process is now active in all 22 of the cities and districts that are part of our women's savings movement, and it is bringing the new aspect of community upgrading and housing into our work and helping to strengthen our networks at community and city levels. The big housing project in the Nong Duang Thung squatter community, in Vientiane, is the country's first community-driven on-site slum upgrading project. The layout of the 84 houses is being slightly adjusted, to align the roads and lay pavings and proper drains. Some of the families who had to shift their houses are rebuilding them using loans from ACCA, and re-using old materials, so they can build the houses for maximum $600. The government, which earlier had plans to evict the community, has agreed to give the land to the people, on long-term lease, with the possibility of purchasing the land outright, in the future. There are also many small projects being implemented with ACCA support, including wells and hand pumps in rural areas (built at a cost that is much lower cost than those installed by other organizations), communal toilets, improving roads, flood prevention and community savings centers.

MYANMAR

The women of the Pan Thakhin savings group, in Hlaing Tar Yar Township, develop the layout and house designs for their new community - Burma's first community managed housing project - in a workshop organized by Nad and Tee.

ACCA in MYANMAR :

- ACCA projects in 6 cities
- 25 small projects in 5 cities
- 4 big projects approved
- 3 disaster projects, Cyclone Nargis
- The ACCA projects are being implemented by 4 local groups.

(Presentation by Gaw Lu Htoi Ra, from the Aungzabu Foundation in Yangon) The development process in Myanmar, which is still very young, got a very big boost through the intense process of relief and rehabilitation after Cyclone Nargis ripped across Burma in May 2008, killing 140,000 people and affecting a majority of the country's already-poor, already-traumatized population. The ACCA projects in Burma are being implemented by four small, local groups who were all active in the post-cyclone relief activities: Women for the World, the Aungzabu Foundation, the Bedar Group and the Buddhist Youth Group. Four of the five ACCA project townships are in the Yangon region, and all were badly affected by the cyclone. These townships all have their own activities, but they all have active savings and credit groups and set up rice banks as primary communal and self-sustaining projects. And they are all showing how simple, fast and efficient the disaster rehabilitation process can be when communities work together and manage the funds - *even very small funds!* - themselves.

In Khawmu Township, a network of 18 villages used ACCA funds to rebuild their destroyed villages. They started by using big project funds to rebuild and repair some 800 houses, through a collective construction process that was managed by the village savings groups. They used small project funds to repair roads and drains, rebuild community halls, restore water ponds and build bridges. They also set up a special fund for education and the elderly, and planted vegetable gardens, as part of a longer-term sustainable development program.

In the big ACCA housing project in Hlaing Tar Yar Township (21 households, initially), one of the women's savings groups on the outskirts of Yangon used ACCA big project funds to collectively purchase a piece of inexpensive land and to construct simple "starter" houses for themselves there. This small housing project, which is being supported by the Yangon-based NGO Women for the World and by the ACHR community architects, is Burma's first-ever community-planned and community-built urban poor housing project, so it's a real milestone. The project demonstrates a new model of collective secure housing for the poorest landless squatters in Yangon's peripheral slums - where no solution exists yet. Besides the community members, the site planning and house design workshops that Nad and Tee organized were attended by community representatives from other slums and villages in Yangon, some local architects and engineers, and some support professionals from other NGOs working with poor and cyclone-affected communities in Burma. The group worked in collaboration with the government's Housing Cooperative Department, which means this cooperative will be able to provide a proper legal status to the cooperative these 50 households set up, to buy their land and develop their housing collectively. The ACCA funds were channeled through the women's saving groups. Loans of about $800 per family (for land and house) will be repaid in 5 years, in monthly installments of about $15 per month, to the new city-wide fund.

VIET NAM

Before and After : *The old collective housing at Cua Nam Ward in Vinh, and the same place after the people rebuilt.*

ACCA in VIET NAM :

- ACCA projects in 10 cities
- 45 small projects in 8 cities
- 5 big projects approved
- 3 typhoon disaster projects
- All the ACCA projects are being implemented as a collaboration of ACVN, the national CDF network, the National Women's Union and ENDA-Vietnam.

(Presentation by Le Dieu Anh, Director of ENDA-Vietnam, in Ho Chi Minh City) Vietnam faces many of the same problem of fast urban growth and increasing numbers of urban poor households as other Asian countries. While the government has many projects and programs in poverty reduction, the ACCA approach provides an alternative and more comprehensive program of community-driven slum redevelopment in urban areas. The funding from ACCA leverages community savings through big and small projects, and in turn community savings in CDFs can leverage other sources of finance, particularly from the local governments, which have contributed upwards of 40% of the cost of the 45 small ACCA projects in the country, most of which are already finished. The ACCA Program has given a big boost to the national community savings and CDF process in Vietnam, helping add more cities to the network, supporting national savings and fund workshop, supporting community architect workshops and young professional activities, a Habitat Day event in Vinh, and a community forum in December 2010.

Showing an alternative redevelopment process : The big ACCA housing project (an on-site reblocking) in Vinh has set an important new precedent in Vietnam. This is the first case in the country where urban poor people living in collective housing have won the right to design and rebuild their own affordable housing on the same site. It is an important breakthrough, because in cities all over Vietnam, municipal governments keen on modernizing their cities are now on the warpath to demolish and redevelop their stock of run-down collective housing. Research shows that in conventional projects to redevelop such old collective housing, 40% of the households have to be evicted, and of the 60% households who remain, only two-thirds can actually afford to stay and build new houses. But in community-managed upgrading of socialized housing developments, like the big ACCA project in Vinh at Cua Nam Ward, every single family remained on site and everyone got a new house. The cost of the housing and infrastructure was much lower than the contractor-driven alternative, also, even though the quality of construction is just as high. And because nobody is displaced, the social support systems in the community are maintained and the municipality wastes no money on compensation pay-outs or purchasing alternative land.

The process in Vietnam has led to real and perceivable changes already. In the communities, people have more confidence in their ability to solve problems, manage their own development and negotiate with their local government agencies for resources and support. The city and provincial authorities in ACCA cities have opened up planning information and investment plans to communities affected by them. The government authorities are also more appreciative of community people's capacity to solve serious urban infrastructure problems and redevelop their own communities, more willing to partner with communities and contribute funds to their projects, more able to listen to the needs of communities and to alter the planning and building regulations to make them more flexible and more appropriate to the realities of the urban poor. There is still room, however, to strengthen the community savings process, which is sometimes considered by community members as a kind of membership fee to get loans.

PHILIPPINES

▲ *The big housing project at LTHAI in Mandaue, is being built with compressed earth blocks the people make themselves.*

▲ *Constructing new "starter" houses in a portion of the sprawling Baseco slum in Manila, after a fire destroyed the area.*

ACCA in PHILIPPINES :

- ACCA projects in 16 cities
- 67 small projects in 14 cities
- 12 big projects approved
- 7 disaster projects
- The ACCA projects are being
- implemented by 5 groups (HPFP, UPA, FDUP, TAO, SMMI)

(First presentation by Ruby Papeleras, from the Homeless People's Federation) The Homeless People's Federation is more mature now, because of ACCA. We think not only of our savings groups now, but of city-wide community federations in the cities where we work. And the decision-making processes that we have developed for selecting and implementing small and big ACCA projects has made our communities and our federation stronger. All the elements of the program's implementation have been agreed upon by communities (how to repay the loans, how to set up the city funds, etc.) and really work. This all may have taken a bit of time, and we may seem to be moving very slowly to outsiders, but this kind of development takes time, and then it will be sustained. So we are building not only physical changes with the ACCA Program, but social changes among our federation members.

Many of the federation's small upgrading projects have been completed or are well underway, to construct paved walkways, develop water supply systems, drainage lines, seafront embankments and communal toilets. We are also implementing several big projects, including two in Mandaue (one using ACCA big project funds, and one using a pioneering loan from the new ACCA Regional Revolving Loan Fund) on the 9.2 hectare land that has been given free by the local government to the communities who were squatting on it. These projects in Mandaue are important breakthroughs, not only for the free land (in a country where the poor get nothing for free!), but for the way the HPFP has negotiated loans and grants to support these projects from many different sources.

In the HPFP's Typhoon Ketsana project, we give the house repair loans only to communities, not to individuals. The communities survey the affected households and determine who needs what and then they buy the materials together, in bulk, and manage the construction somewhat collectively, and then manage the loan repayment to the federation's special ketsana house repair loan fund. These small loans have been repaid so quickly that the funds have revolved three times already, so that original $20,000 from ACCA has allowed 351 households to received house repair loans totalling US$ 52,725 in the three worst-hit areas (Quezon City, Muntinlupa and Bulacan).

All these ACCA projects have motivated other communities to start saving, by showing them real physical and social results, and they also have helped open doors for partnership with the local governments in several cities. There are still problems, though. Communities who don't save can't appreciate the process of getting loans and paying for projects, and they're still demanding that the government solve their problems, like drainage, and then just wait and wait, when the government hasn't any funds and nothing happens. On the other side, local governments in some cities are not always ready to understand a community-led process.

(Second presentation by Denis Murphy, from the Urban Poor Associates NGO in Manila) ACCA projects are also underway in four other cities, with both small and big projects, where the ACCA funds have attracted matching funds from other sources. In Quezon City, for example, the UP-All Coalition's Social Housing Fund, which was seeded by $ 49,000 from ACCA, has been topped up with another US$ 47,000 from DFID, and the members are using 25% of the interest earned on housing loans from the fund to establish a sustainability fund. The communities also participated in the presidential election campaign, which led to the appointment of reform-minded people to government positions, and a special inter-agency committee was created to attend to informal settlers. For the first time, the poor have a written agreement with the new president. In Manila, there are 34 people's organizations in KOSMA which regularly meet with the mayor, and the mayor usually acts on the problems raised in these meetings.

INDONESIA

In this kampung in Surabaya, part of the Stren Kali Network, the people have moved their houses back away from the river edge and made a landscaped public walkway along the riverbank.

ACCA in INDONESIA :

- ACCA projects in 6 cities
- 30 small projects in 6 cities
- 3 big projects approved
- 2 disaster projects (Mt. Merapi)
- All the ACCA projects are being implemented by 2 groups (Uplink-UPA and the YP group in Yogyakarta)

(Presentation by Marco Kusumawijaya, Architect from the Rujak Center for Urban Studies in Jakarta) The ACCA process is demonstrating a more community-driven and on-site model in a country still addicted to top-down and developer-driven eviction and relocation of urban slums. In Jakarta, small projects to pave lanes and build community centers and communal toilets have helped vulnerable communities to organize themselves and solve immediate problems. In Yogyakarta, a group of young architects is helping slum communities to map their settlements and implement small projects to pave lanes, lay drains and build low-cost bamboo community centers.

In Surabaya, the Stren Kali network of riverside squatter communities has used small and big ACCA projects to build embankments, pave lanes, install street lights and move river-fronting houses back to create space for beautiful landscaped riverside walkways, as part of their long campaign to win the right to upgrade their settlements *in-situ*. They have also used a special grant from ACCA to organize a high-profile architectural competition to boost the national community architects process, to showcase a variety of settlement upgrading options, and to lobby with the government for on-site upgrading and secure land tenure, which is still only provisionally assured.

The ACCA process in Makassar began with a political contract to support the needs and initiatives of the urban poor, between the new mayor and the urban poor network who mobilized 65,000 urban poor votes to get him elected. Despite this breakthrough, the ACCA process has been slow getting started, but in recent months several community centers have been built, using ACCA small project funds as loans to the community, to be repaid into revolving loan funds which stay in the community. And a big project is now underway at Kampung Pisang, in which 40 poor households were threatened with eviction from the 3.7 hectares of private land they were squatting on. After mediation by the mayor, a land-sharing agreement has been reached in which the people will rebuild their community on 7,000m2 of the land and give the rest back to the land owner. The ACCA big project will provide housing loans and the municipality will provide the infrastructure, with all community labor.

In a country stricken with all kinds of disasters, two ACCA disaster projects are being implemented in areas affected by the Nov 2010 Mount Merapi volcano eruption. Both these projects are supporting communities who have decided to return and rebuild their devastated villages in their own way, despite government bans on rebuilding.

THAILAND

(Presentation by representatives from the Baan Mankong Urban Communities Network) The ACCA projects in Thailand are using ACCA funds a little differently, to support the setting up and strengthening of some of Thailand's first city-based development funds. These city funds are managed and owned by poor community networks in those cities, in collaboration with their local governments and other local development stakeholders. The growth of these city-based funds is a very important development for the urban poor movement in Thailand, because the presence of a large, national government fund for the urban poor (CODI) has hindered the building of strong, independent local finance mechanisms that the poor in each city control, to support their own development initiatives and strengthen their local collaborations. As progressive as CODI may be, it is still a government institution and still vulnerable to all the political whims as any public sector agency, as recent budget shortfalls and board changes have shown.

So ACCA has passed the funds directly to city-based community networks, to seed their own city funds, from which communities can then take loans to address a variety of needs and finance a variety of projects which CODI may not support. These new city funds are not only providing housing loans, but are also being used to support livelihood, welfare and disaster projects and to support stateless persons. The city funds are also helping to strengthen the relationship and collaboration between the people and the local authorities, leading to a more city-wide, locally-driven, partnership-based and longer term process of solving problems of urban poverty in these cities. As one of the community leaders put it, "These funds make us more independent, more strong. The government can't reject our proposals, because they are being financed by our own funds!"

In Chum Phae, for example, the network added $52,709 of their own savings to the $30,000 from ACCA to start their fund, which gives loans primarily for land and house construction and repair, and can be used as bridge financing by communities waiting for CODI loans. They charge 4% interest on the loans, of which 1% goes into their network welfare fund, 1% is used to cover management costs, and 2% goes back into the fund capital. The first loan of $52,000 went to a squatter community of 293 households to buy new land. The fund also gave grants to subsidize the housing of extremely poor families, to enable them to join Baan Mankong upgrading projects in their communities.

(Paa Chan, community leader from Bangkok adds) If we use our little money to come together and join forces, it is making our links among community people very strong. This strength that we have when we come together is a kind of freedom, it opens our minds together. Today in Thailand, it's not only one place or the other cities, it's 250 cities and all 71 provinces, that we have these links with each other, and we have these funds as a tool to make these links visible and to work together. This is such a huge link across the country, no government can stop us! We can make the government go in whatever possible way, as benefits the poor. So I urge all my brothers and sisters in other countries to look into this aspect: how to find a way that the poor are linking together. And the small finance is a very good tool to link us together, to think together, to work together, and build our power together. In this way, the government will come and work with us. It's not like we are a small part of the government.

▲ *Besides loans for land and housing, the community network in Chum Phae has used their new ACCA-supported city fund to give grants to help three of the poorest families to build houses (above).*

ACCA in THAILAND :

- ACCA projects in 8 cities
- 19 small projects in 8 cities
- 8 big projects approved
- All the ACCA projects are being implemented by the community networks in those cities.

SRI LANKA

(Presentation by Nandasiri Gamage, from the Women's Co-op) The ACCA projects in Sri Lanka are being implemented by a country-wide network of women's savings groups (Women's Co-op), in close partnership with the NGO Sevanatha. They have used the ACCA resources to help create, test and standardize a city-wide slum upgrading procedure, which they call the Urban Settlement Upgrading Program (USUP), and which they are now replicating in all the ACCA cities. This USUP process has several clear steps, including surveying and mapping the city's slums, identifying potential vacant land, presenting the survey data to the municipality for approval, setting up savings groups, establishing a joint city development committee (usually chaired by the mayor), preparing city-wide upgrading action plans and then implementing actual upgrading and housing projects, as per the action plan.

Because Women's Co-op has 70,000 members, in 22 of the country's 25 districts, with collective savings of some US$ 14 million, this is an organization with the scale and clout to make this kind of community-driven and city-wide slum upgrading into a national process! The ACCA Program, in turn, has helped Women's Co-op to add the elements of housing, land tenure and settlement upgrading into their already very large and sophisticated programs for saving, livelihood, welfare, health, culture, disaster relief and skills training.

The funds from ACCA all go first to CLAF-Net, a national fund which was set up after the tsunami, with ACHR support, and is jointly managed by Sevanatha, Women's Co-op and several other groups. The funds are then passed to the city-level CDFs, which are managed by the local branches of the Women's Co-op, which then give the loans for housing (in big ACCA projects) and grants for small upgrading projects, according to the city's upgrading action plan. There have already been some striking breakthroughs as a result of this ACCA-supported process. In the city of Moratuwa, for example, 488 households in 8 poor settlements have been given freehold titles to their land.

(Rupa Manel, Women's Co-op national leader, adds) ACCA has helped us to reach out to new cities and into war-torn areas where we could never go before. More than 7,000 families have become part of our women's savings movement. Because of ACCA, we have stronger social recognition, stronger strength to bargain. We have made many more good links with local governments in the ACCA cities. The ACCA program has also helped us to build trust and good leadership among our members.

(Ranjith from Sevanatha adds) ACCA has helped us to broaden our NGO's approach from focusing on individual projects to thinking more city-wide. All city surveys and mapping are now done by communities, and the city accepts their figures and makes their data the city's official data. Then the prioritizing of which settlements to upgrade is done by the people, who now have a more city-wide understanding and city-wide networks.

"ACCA has persuaded us to lower our interest rates for housing loans and to relax our requirements so that women can get housing loans very soon after joining savings groups!" (Rupa)

ACCA in SRI LANKA :

- ACCA projects in 7 cities
- 36 small projects in 7 cities
- 7 big projects approved
- All the ACCA projects are being implemented by the Women's Co-op, in collaboration with Sevanatha and CLAF-net fund.

NEPAL

▲ *Before and after the upgrading project at Salyani, in Bharatpur.*

The ACCA process in Nepal is being built on an already very active national community savings and credit process, and is embedded in a well-established and close collaboration between two national people's federations (the National Women's Savings Cooperative Network and the National Federation of Squatter Communities) and the NGO Lumanti. These community federations are playing a lead role in managing the ACCA program. All the project funds are managed by the Women's Cooperatives (which link all the community savings groups in the city).

The ACCA process is being used to strengthen the collaboration between poor communities within the city, and between the communities and the local government, to create long-term systems in each city for solving problems of land, housing and poverty, long after the ACCA projects are finished. With the ACCA process, the relationship between the municipality, federations and the communities in several cities has dramatically improved over the last two years. Local governments in Bharatpur and Biratnagar have given free land for housing the poor (in both small and big project communities), and in Birgunj, Bharatpur and Kohalpur, the municipalities have allocated budget for a variety of infrastructure improvements (land filling, biogas plants, solid waste systems) in poor communities.

Several years before ACCA, the Kathmandu municipality donated $100,000 to set up the country's first Urban Community Support Fund (matched by another $100,000 from ACHR and SDI). After the ACCA projects began, three more cities have demonstrated their growing trust in poor communities with cash donations to set up similar community-managed development funds - in Bharatpur, Birgunj and Dharan.

Many of the communities in the Nepal ACCA process get the full small project ceiling of $3,000, or whatever amount is agreed to for each community. But then the communities are free to discuss what they need and what kind of projects they would like to do, and use that budget to do as much as they can. A lot of the communities are very thrifty with these funds and do several small projects for that amount - a drain and a community center and a market, for example, or a few communal toilets and a water tank and pipe distribution system. Many of these small projects have also led to successful negotiations for secure land tenure and other housing and infrastructural improvements.

The ACCA big project at the Salyani community is the first-ever community-led housing and settlement upgrading project in Bharatpur, and the city's first case of a squatter community being provided secure land rights to the public land they occupy. The project has been an important breakthrough and a learning opportunity for the whole city. In May 2009, Nad, a young Thai architect, spent a few weeks working with the people in Salyani, Lumanti and municipal staff to help develop low-cost plans to rebuild their 31 mud and thatch houses and upgrade the community infrastructure, in a series of workshops which included people from other communities who came to learn. The people were able to negotiate with the Forestry Department, which owns the land, to get subsidized timber, which many used to construct their new houses, and women were involved at every stage of the process. The project is now finished, is much visited by communities and municipal officers from other cities, and has inspired several similar housing projects in other cities.

INDIA (BHUJ + LEH)

▲ *The new hand-pump and concrete apron at Bapa Diyal Nagar slum, in Bhuj.*

▲ *The old town of Leh, in Ladakh.*

(First presentation by Vrunda Vaghela, from the Hunnarshala Foundation NGO in Bhuj) The ACCA project in the city of Bhuj, in the western edge of India (in the drought-prone desert region of Kutch), is being implemented in a city which was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake in 2001. 45% of the city's residents live in slums, most of which are very old, traditional settlements on land given to their castes by the king, but are now considered to be squatters on public land. The small and big projects are being implemented by *Sakhi Sangini* (*"Female friends together"*), a federation of women's savings and self-help groups in 30 slums around Bhuj (out of a total 60 slums in the city), in collaboration with the technical support NGO the Hunnarshala Foundation. After conducting a city-wide slum survey and setting up committees in many of these settlement clusters to discuss their problems and review the survey data, the women's federation identified drinking water supply and housing as the two most serious problems being faced by the city's poor communities. Five out of the six small ACCA projects being implemented in Bhuj involve developing or improving drinking water supply systems, many in collaboration with the municipality.

The women's federation has also formed a housing committee and worked with architects at Hunnarshala to develop inexpensive earthquake-resistant house designs which they can eventually build themselves, as part of their long-term settlement upgrading plans. Their plan is to use the big project funds from ACCA to seed a city-wide revolving loan fund for housing, to give low-interest housing loans to savings group members. Their idea, though, is not to use the fund simply to give loans to scattered members, but to use the housing fund strategically to strengthen the communities' negotiations for secure land tenure, and to leverage access to the various central government and local slum upgrading schemes - many of which are quite promising, but very difficult to access.

(Second presentation by Pimpim de Azevedo, from the Tibet Heritage Fund) The remote city of Leh, in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains, is the capital of India's Ladakh region. Because Leh was once part of Tibet, the city's inhabitants are mostly Tibetan Buddhists, with some Hindu migrants from other parts of India. Since 2003, the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF) group and its local partner LOTI have been working with communities in the thousand-year old town center of Leh to help restore some traditional Tibetan houses, neighborhoods and monasteries. Some of this upgrading work has been supported by ACCA, but after the flash floods in 2010 damaged or destroyed many houses in the old town, the THF has focused its ACCA-supported work on helping these residents rebuild their houses, especially by providing these affected households with access to some skilled workers and some housing materials, and then they do the repair work mostly themselves. An especially harsh winter, with lots of snow, has slowed things down, however. *(more details on THF's work in the China section, next page)*

CHINA

(Presentation by Pimpim de Azevedo, from the Tibet Heritage Fund) The Tibet Heritage Fund is an intrepid group of activists, historians, architects and Tibet-lovers who have been working in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China (and in culturally Tibetan areas of India and Mongolia) for nearly 20 years, to restore traditional Tibetan houses, neighborhoods, temples and monasteries. They use the restoration process to revive the traditional crafts and cultural practices which go into these beautiful buildings and which continue to be under serious threat in the context of China's control over the Tibet region. Although their work has focused on the physical restoration of historic structures, the group has always sought to find ways that the mostly poor families who live in and around these historic buildings and neighborhoods can stay and be part of the architectural and cultural revival, rather than be evicted to make way for tourist boutiques.

Two of the Tibet Heritage Fund's projects in Tibet - in Lhasa and Yushu - are getting support from ACCA. Both of these projects are using the historic building angle as an anti-eviction strategy in situations where these surviving Tibetan neighborhoods - and the ancient buildings, spaces and social cultures they contain - are under attack by Chinese development plans.

In the city of Yushu, a devastating earthquake in April 2010 is being used by the provincial Government as an opportunity to demolish this very old, traditional Tibetan town, and transform it into a "New Metropolis" of gleaming high-rises, shopping malls and vast new subdivisions of phoney, up-market "Tibetan style" villas. It's a boom for Chinese developers, but the low-income Tibetan families who have always lived in the old center of Yushu are facing the prospect of losing their land, houses, trades and ancient way of life and forced to relocate to cheap cinder block boxes far outside town. There is already, however, strong opposition to these government relocation and reconstruction plans. The THF is using the ACCA project to help several residents repair and earthquake-proof their slightly-damaged historic multi-family buildings in the town center. The project is being used to demonstrate an alternative redevelopment model in which the people stay in their old neighborhoods and in their traditional communal housing - instead of relocating to the government's individualistic standard housing units outside of town. The project is also an indirect strategy to secure people's ancestral properties, prevent their eviction and preserve the soul of the town, since the government is reluctant to demolish historic buildings that survived the earthquake. And it may succeed in modifying the official plans for redeveloping Yushu.

The ACCA project in Lhasa is helping to upgrade traditional houses and community facilities in four poor Tibetan communities still living in their ancient farming settlements on the outskirts of Lhasa, where the land is now being aggressively bought up by Chinese property developers, threatening eviction. The project is being explicitly used to build links between the community people, the local administration and the NGOs. These small ACCA projects to improve traditional dwellings and historic places of workshop are being implemented step-by-step and with the approval of the local government.

▲ *Using the process of restoring traditional Tibetan houses, and the crafts that go into them, as a strategy to preserve the soul of these old towns - and the people who live in them.*

ACCA in CHINA :

- ACCA projects in 2 cities
- 6 small projects in 2 cities
- 2 big projects approved
- Both projects are implemented by the Tibet Heritage Fund

PAKISTAN

(Presentation by Perween Rahman, from the Orangi Pilot Project Research and Training Institute) In Pakistan, 40% of the national budget goes into servicing its $97 billion debt, 40% goes to the military and 15% is used to run the government, leaving scarcely 5% of the budget for the whole country's physical and social development! It's no surprise that in a country where the government's contribution to development is almost invisible, self reliance is the default setting for the country's urban poor, who do everything themselves : land acquisition, town planning, housing, infrastructure, schools and clinics. The work of groups like OPP and its many spin-offs have helped poor communities in cities across the country to systematize this self sufficiency to the point where it has become almost national policy. Several of these groups are using the ACCA Program in unusual ways, to support the processes which nurture and assist these self-reliant and self-financed community development initiatives.

ACCA is supporting the modest organizational costs of OPP partner organizations in six cities, to replicate the OPP's "component-sharing" model in those cities, in which poor communities design, build and pay for their own low-cost sewers and toilets in their lanes, the partner organization provides technical and organizing assistance and the government provides the trunk sewers to drain the lane sewers. There is also a new ACCA project to support a team of young people from the Orangi settlement who are trained and have formed their own technical support institution (TTRC) to help communities map their settlements, plan their infrastructure and design low-cost houses.

The OPP-RTI has a new program, which is also getting support from ACCA, in the traditional "goth" settlements on the outskirts of Karachi. The pressures of development and global capital are putting these old settlements under threat of eviction, so we are helping them map the settlements, research the land ownership, set up savings groups, develop their infrastructure, improve their houses and advocate for secure tenure. We are in a stronger position than the government now, because the government has no information about these settlements, but we do! Plans are now on to propose ACCA big project funds to provide housing loans for the first 100 houses in four groups.

The terrible 2010 floods have driven 20 million already poor rural villagers into deeper poverty, when their houses, crops and cattle were destroyed. OPP-RTI's ACCA-supported project is helping families coming back to their ruined villages (most still living in donated tents on the rubble of their former houses) to build at least a one-room house with a good roof over it, so they have a sturdy place to live as they begin the long and arduous task of rebuilding their village. The funds are channeled through 22 of OPP's local partner organizations, to provide materials to help families to build roofs over the rooms they build themselves, using bricks salvaged from their ruined houses. This program has reached 4,000 families so far, and OPP-RTI has plans to expand the project to 7,000 more families. The program has also supported the distribution of medicines and the repairing of 500 damaged hand-pumps.

"Most donors want targets and outputs, and it is difficult to find funding to support processes. The ACCA Program has helped us to explore new ways of doing things, and gives us room to learn, with dignity and respect." (Perween)

ACCA in PAKISTAN :

- ACCA projects in 4 cities
- 10 small projects in 1 cities
- 1 big project (OPP floods)
- 1 flood disaster project
- 2 special research projects
- The ACCA projects are being implemented by 6 groups (OPP-RTI, TTRC, AHKMT, HAMET, Arif Hasan and Rabia Ezdi).

MONGOLIA

▲ *A cheerfully-painted gazebo being built by community people in one of the ger areas in Erdenet. Land isn't the problem in these ger areas, but acccess to basic services and infrastucture is.*

ACCA in MONGOLIA :

- ACCA projects in 12 cities
- 74 small projects in 12 cities
- 5 big projects approved
- The ACCA projects are being implemented by 2 groups (UDRC and CHRD)

(Presentation by Enhe Tsedendorj, from the Urban Development Resource Center in Ulaanbaatar) ACCA is so far being implemented in 12 cities and districts in Mongolia, and is bringing new resources and new energy to the country's still-young community-driven savings and upgrading process. The program is being facilitated by two NGOs based in Ulaanbaatar - the Urban Development Resource Center and the Center for Human Rights and Development. Since 2005, these organizations have been supporting the setting up of community savings and credit groups in ger areas in towns and cities around the country, with the idea of providing a financial resource within these communities that belongs to people themselves, that can pull people to work together to improve their living environments, make decisions and develop solutions to the various problems they face. The savings process has now spread to thirteen cities, with more than 1,900 savings members and collective savings of over $46,000, and CDFs have been established in ten cities. A country-wide network of these community savings groups came together for their first national meeting in November 2006, in the provincial city of Darkhan, and in June 2009, a national joint committee was set up to coordinate the country-wide ACCA program.

Mongolia is a country of only 2.7 million people - fewer people than are in many of the cities undertaking ACCA projects around Asia. With more than half of these people now living in informal ger areas in urban areas, the strategic question for ACCA has been how to link up all the different groups in the twelve cities in the program into some kind of unified force, so that the whole country's problems can be solved? Mongolia is a special country, because the scale of its problems are small enough to be actually *solvable*, and the ACCA program has a chance to make a significant impact in the country, rather than just starting lots of small projects which somehow don't add up to any significant change.

In Mongolia, there is a definite "theme" for the small projects, where parks and playgrounds dramatically outnumber other kinds of small projects (41 our of 74 small projects are playgrounds - 55%). But these playgrounds serve an important function: they link community members and bring them out from behind their fences, utilize under-used roads and garbage dumping areas, provide space for kids to play and old folks to gather and affect much larger areas than only the savings groups who make them.

The ACCA program has given a big boost to the savings groups, enabling them to plan and carry out both small and big projects which answer real needs in their ger areas. The small projects showcase what people can do, and now the government officials visit the ACCA projects in ger areas. Even the president of Mongolia visited the ger areas and made a resolution to scale up the kind of people-driven ger area improvement projects he saw there. There is increasing understanding and trust between community members within communities, and between communities and their local government officials within cities. The savings groups in Mongolia remain very small and scattered, though, and the challenge now is to expand these savings groups and link them across the city into community networks that are truly city-wide in their scale and in the vision of their upgrading activities.

SOUTH KOREA

ACCA in KOREA :

- ACCA project in 1 city
- 5 small projects in 1 city
- 1 big project approved
- The ACCA project is being implemented by Asian Bridge

(Presentation by Boram Kim, from the Asian Bridge NGO in Seoul) Growing numbers of people are being forced to make their own dwellings in informal squatter settlements, called in Korea "vinyl house" communities, named for the flimsy and highly flammable materials the houses are made from. Many vinyl house occupants are poor tenants who have been evicted from housing redevelopment areas and cannot afford even the most minimal housing in the formal sector. About 50,000 households are living in these informal communities in Korea (more than half of them in Seoul), built on leftover bits of public and private land, on low-lying and flood prone areas. Only 40% of the houses have toilets, and many are vulnerable to floods and fires and poorly protected against Korea's harsh winter.

The single ACCA project in Korea, which is being implemented by the Seoul-based NGO Asian Bridge, is being used to bring these informal vinyl house communities together, help them build a network, start savings, start undertaking small upgrading projects and use their "group power" to gradually begin to develop their own solutions to the serious land, housing and infrastructure problems they face.

Five of these vinyl house communities have used the $3,000 ACCA support to implement several small projects in their settlements: laying drains and water pipes, paving lanes, installing briquette boilers for heating, repairing flood-damaged houses and building community centers and recycling stations. The communities have also taken part in international exchange visits to other Asian countries, through the ACHR/ACCA process, where they have learned more about the importance of community savings, the potential for even the most poor and marginalized communities to bring about change in their lives. The dream is to eventually build their own housing, rather than move into the faceless high-rise blocks which are increasingly the form which both public and private housing in Korea takes. But the astronomical price of land is a major obstacle, and few want to move to remote sites far from the city, where land might be more affordable. In the mean time, the network is looking at the possibility of using the ACCA big project funds to set up a revolving loan fund to finance housing improvements where the people live now.

The network has already scored a considerable triumph in June 2009, when their 2-year court case against the government resulted in Supreme Court judgment which allows them to register their vinyl house communities as legal addresses - an important legal prerequisite for getting legal water and electricity connections and accessing public entitlements like education and health care. The network has also begun organizing dialogues with their local governments about the various problems they face and have been successful in negotiating government subsidies for flood relief and private-sector fuel and cash donations for vinyl house communities.

BANGLADESH

▲ *The Korail slum in Dhaka, with some 20,000 households - just one of many in a city with an estimated 10 million people living in squalor and insecurity in slums.*

(Presentation by Salma Awal Shafi, from the Center for Urban Studies in Dhaka) The ACCA process hasn't begun yet in Bangladesh, a country with some very serious housing problems. Half of the country's 160 million people live in cities and secondary towns, and half of those live in slums - most without access to clean water, toilets and sewage disposal, and many facing eviction. There are almost no government policies or programs to address these problems, but a number of NGOs and community organizations are helping communities through scattered housing, saving, water supply, sanitation, women's empowerment and micro credit projects. There is an urgent need for dialogue between the country's poor community organizations, civil society organizations and the government about how to address the problems of slums in a more comprehensive way. The hope is to implement ACCA projects in 10 to 15 cities to help show a community-driven model for upgrading slums. At the same time, advocacy work to change government policies and push for government support for urban poor housing will be carried out.

(Fattema Akhter, Community leader from the NDBUS CBO in Dhaka, adds) There is little support for the urban poor in Bangladesh, from either the government or development agencies, very few land and housing projects which show a way out of these old problems. We urban poor don't want to keep living this way, we want a chance to make change ourselves. We plan to propose two pilot housing projects in Bangladesh for support from ACCA.

JAPAN

▲ *The public open space the community at Kitashiba has created, where they organize a variety of community activities to bring the people together.*

(Presentation by Keisuke Ikegaya, community architect, Osaka) Japan is not receiving any ACCA funds, but we have an active network of community architects, though, many of whom are working with communities on ACCA-style projects to promote community development. Seiji and Inamoto, who are with us here in the meeting, are also community architects. They are teaching at university (Inamoto in Tokyo and Seiji at Kinke University in Osaka), trying to get a new generation of students involved in this kind of community development work.

The Kitashiba community in Osaka, where I live and work (with my three colleagues here: Miho, Nozomi and Yoshinobu), is a Buraku settlement, with 200 households. The Buraku are a formerly out-caste group of people who have been discriminated against for centuries in Japan, and forced to live in certain areas of the city. The Kitashiba community was very active in the 1960s in negotiating with the government for support to redevelop the community's run-down housing and to develop children's education programs. But in the past two decades, these activities have declined, young people have started leaving the community and those who remained have gotten older. A community organization was set up in Kitashiba in 2001 to revive the community's spirit in different ways. As part of the organization's work, which I've been supporting, a community caf has been opened, a communal open area has been developed in the middle of the community, where a variety of activities are organized, such as agriculture fairs and farmers markets, cooking classes, performances and festivals. These activities allow the community people to retain a community spirit and work together.

KENYA, SOUTH AFRICA, SDI

▲ *The Kenya federation's housing project at Kambimoto was one of the first in Africa to show a densely-packed housing solution with 2 and 3-story houses.*

▲ *One of the ISN-supported community upgrading projects in South Africa.*

KENYA : *(Juliet Mugure, Kenya Slum Dwellers Federation)* We have 78,000 members in our Mungano Slum Dwellers Federation in Kenya, all of whom practice daily savings. Besides savings and credit, we do enumeration, settlement mapping, vacant land mapping, housing and site layout planning, upgrading and advocacy. I live in Kambimoto, which is part of the Haruma slum in Nairobi, where we have built 100 houses. But before we built, we had a dream. Everyone has a dream, and if you lived in a slum like Haruma, you would dream of a good house, with a kitchen and a toilet. So at first we sat down together as a community and *dreamt*. Then after dreaming, we made drawings of what kind of a houses we would like to live in - everyone had his or her own drawing. With the help of the technical group, we put all these ideas together and came up with one house design, and built a full scale model of this design, for everyone to look at. Then we built the real houses, and we built them ourselves - women and men together, the whole community - we didn't hire any contractors. In Kambimoto, we built 100 houses, and 100 families are already living in these houses - including my family! We are now repaying our housing loans.

SOUTH AFRICA : *(Phumeza Tsibanto, Informal Settlements Network, South Africa)* We have a problem in South Africa: we expect everything for free from the government - land, houses, infrastructure. But in our network in South Africa, which links together several federations and individual communities, we mobilize people to stand up for themselves. Because if we wait for the government to give us a house, it will take almost 30 years! So we survey, start saving, negotiate for land and upgrade the infrastructure and houses ourselves, in partnership with our cities. We now have 55 community upgrading projects of various kinds going on in seven cities.

SDI : *(Ben Bradlow, SDI Secretariat, Cape Town)* SDI has established an Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI), which channels seed capital for projects (housing, infrastructure and land acquisition) and federation strengthening activities to the national urban poor funds which many of its 33 affiliate federations have set up in their countries. UPFI has supported about 100 projects so far, but these projects have catalyzed many spin-off projects. In South Africa, for example, the UPFI has funded one community upgrading project, but that project is part of a wider program to catalyze 55 planned upgrading projects. UPFI's aim is to support projects which demonstrate solutions that can be scaled up, can leverage funds and land from other sources (particularly the state) and which can impact policies. UPFI is now implementing a new three-year program to develop seven cities as "city-wide learning centers". The next step is to select seven cities where projects can truly go to scale, cities which already have strong city-wide networks and good links with the local government.

Community architects in the region

After years of hibernation, ACHR's regional program of support to young professionals has come back to life, thanks partly to an infusion of support from the Rockefeller Foundation and partly to the energy and enthusiasm of two young Thai architects, Nad and Tee, who are now helping to coordinate the involvement of community architects in the housing and upgrading projects being implemented around Asia - both under the ACCA Program and otherwise. The Rockefeller grant is now finished, but ACHR is negotiating another year's support from Rockefeller, and in the mean time, many of the regional community architects activities are being supported by ACCA. Here are some notes from the presentation Nad and Tee made during the meeting :

Technical support for a community-driven design process

▲ *During the housing design workshop in the Salyani community, in Bharatpur, Nepal, in May 2009.*

▲ *Planning the new community with the Pan Thakhin savings group in Yangon, Myanmar, in August 2010.*

▲ *The bamboo construction workshop in the Matina Crossing Community in Davao, Philippines, in January 2011.*

If we talk about city-wide slum upgrading in the whole Asia region, we need lots of architects, para-architects and community builders to work with people and to help them develop and implement their plans. We have been trying in different ways to find ways to link groups of young architects and professionals to work with communities, on both the ACCA-supported and other projects. Of the 15 Asian countries now active in ACCA, 12 now have active community architects processes now: Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, Fiji, Nepal, Mongolia, India and China. So far, we have focused our work on four activities :

1 **Building groups of local architects to work with people, in each country.** Many countries don't have groups of local community architects to work with the communities yet. So in some countries, we have assisted by organizing pilot community-upgrading and housing design workshops that are tied to actual projects, with support from the local NGOs (in Nepal, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Fiji). An important part of these projects is linking with faculties of architecture and young people in that place, and inviting them to participate in these projects and to learn how to work with communities. After that, we try to let the young people keep working with the communities. We have also supported fledgling community architect groups in different countries with small seed funds of $5,000 per country. So far, community architecture groups in nine countries have received this support. In some countries, these groups already existed (Philippines, Cambodia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam) and in some countries they are just getting started (Lao PDR, Myanmar, Fiji, Mongolia). These groups can include young architects, architecture students and professors, engineers, planners, etc.

2 **Organizing training seminars and lectures :** In several countries, we have given lectures at architecture faculties (in Vietnam, Mongolia, Lao PDR) and organized hands-on training seminars with students, young professionals and community people on how to work with communities to support a community-driven housing design process. This is not just to develop technical support skills, but to show these young people how to make the communities into the designers, and the technicians into the facilitators of a design process which belongs to people (Community design workshops in Vientiane and Phnom Penh, earth-block making workshop in Ulaanbaatar and bamboo construction workshop in Davao. We're now planning a mapping workshop in Karachi).

3 **Building a regional network of community architects in Asia,** to share their experiences, share their knowledge and assist each other in different ways. In June 2010, we organized a 5-day regional gathering of 100 community architects and community builders in Chiang Mai, which gave a chance for all these groups to meet, present their work, compare notes and begin to set joint plans as a regional network of community architects. Many of these groups also travel to join in the design workshops and training seminars in other countries.

4 **Sharing experiences :** We are also working to document the work of community architects and help disseminate their stories, experiences and ideas through various media, including publications (a book on community architecture work by key groups around the region and a community mapping handbook have already been published, and another handbook on community upgrading, as well as a special issue of the ACHR newsletter on community architects are now in process), documentary films about the work of community architects, and the setting up of a regional community architects blog / website.

Bringing community-led development to a wider audience

Community video, film and media projects

(Maurice reports) ACHR has released a new DVD compilation of new video films that were produced by groups in nine countries around Asia, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation. This compilation is an attempt to start a process of video production and dissemination about urban poor initiatives in Asia, for learning by communities, NGOs and professionals - and in many cases for public education, advocacy and showing on public media. Most of the films are about community upgrading - many looking at upgrading projects being supported by ACCA. While many of the principals behind these community-driven processes are common, the political and social contexts in the countries where they are being implemented are very different. And so communities have adapted their upgrading approach in different ways, and in these differences there is learning. The compilation includes the following films :

- **From South Korea :** A film called *"Vinyl House Communities"* by Se-Jin Kang at Asian Bridge NGO.
- **From Vietnam :** A film called *"Upgrading for the Poor"* by ACVN and VTV.
- **From Cambodia :** A film *"Shaping their own future"* by Peter Swan + Paijong Laisakul.
- **From Nepal :** A film called *"Together we can build"* by Bishal Shrestha, from Lumanti.
- **From India :** A film on slum upgrading in Pune, by Indu Agarwal, from SPARC.
- **From Pakistan :** A film called *"Why Upgrading?"* by Abid Hasan, from OPP and URC Karachi.
- **From Mongolia :** Four films about community-driven upgrading, by UDRC and Nomun Studio
- **From the Philippines :** Two films on community upgrading by the Homeless Peoples Federation.
- **From Thailand :** Three films about community upgrading projects by Chawanad Luansang and Pisut Srimhok.

Collaboration with international agencies

This panel discussion brought together representatives of several international and donor agencies - all of which are collaborating with ACHR in various ways. The panelists included representatives from the Selavip Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, UN Habitat, UN-ESCAP and CDIA. The panel was moderated by Diane Mitlin, from the International Institute for Environment and Urbanization (IIED) in London. The discussion began with each representative giving a brief description of the role of that organization and how it operates in the context of Asian urban development. Each panelist was also asked to discuss how ACHR and that particular organization could work together to achieve the same goals. The discussion ended with a lively question and answer session.

Panel discussion with five international organizations

"Change processes are a feature and a key aim of ACHR's work: especially changes in relationships between organized communities, local governments, central governments, development agencies and other groups. How can other agencies assist in achieving this change?" *(Diana Mitlin)*

1 **ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION :** Ashvin Dayal, from the Bangkok office of the Rockefeller Foundation, highlighted three key issues that the Foundation is now focusing it's work in Asia on: climate change, the role of the private sector and housing in India - the first two of which may be possible points of collaboration with ACHR.

Collaboration with ACHR : In the past two years, the Rockefeller Foundation has supported ACHR's regional community architecture and public media programs. It has also partially supported the national women's savings and credit process in Lao PDR. We are now discussing the possibility of continuing this partnership, especially to support the ongoing community architecture and public media work in the regional ACCA process.

2 **UN-ESCAP :** Natasha Wehmer from the UN-ESCAP also reiterated the fact that ACHR could incorporate environmental aspects into its projects, and offered up ESCAP's services as a kind of "matchmaker" between the grassroots groups which ACHR works with and government-level agencies, so that the government agencies gain more exposure to the grassroots approach and learn about a people-centered approach.

Collaboration with ACHR : ACHR has a long history of friendly collaboration with UN-ESCAP on several fronts. Most recently, ACHR has been working with ESCAP to help organize panel discussions, field visits and sub-group discussions on community-driven development during the upcoming Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF) in Bangkok, in June 2011. ACHR is also working with CODI and the Thai Government to bring a more community-driven and people-centered development perspective to the ministerial conference that will be organized along with the APUF meeting, by organizing field trips to Baan Mankong community upgrading projects in Bangkok and facilitating a dialogue between the ministers and the Thai community leaders.

3 **CDIA :** Laids Maid, from the Manila office of the Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA) introduced the organization, which addresses capacity gaps in Asian cities, in particular with regard to infrastructure. CDIA is working to ensure that city infrastructure projects are less damaging to the poor.

Collaboration with ACHR : ACHR is in the process of exploring the possibility of linking the ACCA Program with the ongoing CDIA-financed urban infrastructure projects in several cities in Asia, to help the CDIA program support the infrastructure needs of the very poor also, and to bring organized groups of the poor into those cities's larger infrastructure planning and development process, to make it more equitable and more city-wide. *(More details on this collaboration are given later in this report)*

4 **UN-HABITAT :** Mariko Sato, from the UN-HABITAT's Bangkok office, highlighted the need for improved partnership between the UN and ACHR, while acknowledging that HABITAT is hampered by rules and regulations. In the meantime, it can play a useful role in "talking to the money" which is investing in cities, and increasing their awareness of the need to work with the poor.

Collaboration with ACHR : ACHR is also in the process of developing a joint project with UN-HABITAT to scale up the ACCA program to 300 cities in Asia, with the added elements of seed capital for larger community development funds in each city and the status of the UN to boost the program's capacity to support projects and to bridge the informal people's process on the ground with the formal government system in those cities. *(More details about this joint venture are given later in this report)*

5 **SELAVIP FOUNDATION :** Joan MacDonald from the Selavip Foundation explained that her organization's approach was slightly different, in that Selavip is targeting the poorest of the poor, and rather than implementing programs, it prefers to fund projects which have an immediate effect in improving the shelter situation of the poor.

Collaboration with ACHR : The Selavip Foundation, which has a very long and close collaboration with ACHR, is funding several country-level projects with ACHR partner organizations, as well as co-funding the new regional "Decent Poor Program." *(More details on this program later in this report).*

QUESTIONS : Questions and comments from the meeting participants focused on the disastrous impacts of foreign loans and large-scale infrastructure projects on the urban poor. The panelists agreed that many of these large-scale projects do not do enough to take into account the impact that they have on the lives of the urban poor who are supposed beneficiaries of these improvements. Ashvin pointed out that inequalities are always a major barrier to change, and therefore successfully scaled-up community-driven programs like the ACCA program need to increase their profile, to demonstrate an alternative approach. International agencies can act as intermediaries between the grassroots and policy makers. ACHR and its partners can assist this process by producing good documentation to publicize the benefits and feasibility of the alternative approach.

The objective of this ACHR Regional Meeting was to assess the process of change and development in the region, as we've done in past meetings, but also to look forward, to discuss possible directions and activities that should be implemented together in the future and to draw up a plan of action for ACHR activities in next few years, to facilitate this change in communities, cities, countries and the region. So besides the reports and discussions about the processes in various countries, an important part of the meeting was making room for deeper and more detailed discussions of important emerging issues in the region, to see how we can jointly and strategically address those issues, as a regional coalition. After some discussion, five key issues were chosen as being the most crucial, and on January 29th, the meeting participants divided themselves into sub-groups to discuss them for most of the day. Here are brief summaries of those discussions and the activities that were proposed :

1. COMMUNITY FINANCE

Community finance will be a very important and strategic issue for the coming year, and we have to put a lot of effort to make it work in all the cities and countries. How to develop and strong community finance systems, which include strong community savings groups at the community level, and city development funds (CDFs) at the city level? How can the CDFs support city-wide upgrading, with real participation from communities, with support from other stakeholders and with sufficient capital? What support and development is needed from national, regional or international levels to help these savings activities and CDFs to become strong, viable and acceptable finance systems? And what particular support can ACCA offer?

"When we build our city fund, we are building a financial system for the future, for our families, for our children and for every poor person in the city. We are building a financial system to change our lives."

Thongsuk Phumsanguan ("Waad"), community leader from Chum Phae, Thailand

Points in the discussion about savings and CDFs :

- CDFs create a mechanism for linkages and collaboration in two ways: *horizontally* (between savings groups in a city, between cities in a country, and between countries) and *vertically* (between poor communities and their city and national governments).
- The city fund will become a very important tool to link up all the community people in the city into a more communal network process, in which everybody will be a part of that and everybody will benefit from it. *(Thai community leader)*
- The CDF should be managed by people in the communities as much as possible. The supporters and experts from outside are very good, but we people in the community have to understand and do it by ourselves, in our own way. *(Thai community leader)*
- We should be clear why we are creating these CDFs. As poor community people, we are the ones who cannot access formal loan funds. So besides doing our savings, to address smaller needs within our communities, we also need to contribute to our CDFs, which will help us address the larger needs our savings groups can't address, like land, housing and infrastructure. We have to understand the value added for us in this alternative finance system. *(Ruby)*
- We are not building these city funds just so that we can get access to some money. When we build our city development fund, we are building a financial system for the future, for our families, our children, and for every poor person in the city. We are building a financial system to change our lives. *(Thai community leader)*
- First we have our savings groups in the community, then the city fund in our city, then the national fund in our country, and then the regional fund. If we put together all these funds, we have a very strong solidarity, and everybody becomes part of this funding umbrella. *(Thai community leader)*

Proposed activities to support the community finance movement :

- All the community people need to start now, and this means starting to save - no need to wait and talk about tomorrow! I believe that community people are ready and they can do it. *(Paa Chan, Thai community leader)*
- Organize exchange visits specifically to address the savings and CDF management issues.
- Organize more workshops and training initiatives to share experiences and strengthen the mechanics of community finance.
- Support new and struggling CDFs with some external seed funds from ACHR (grants or loans).
- Work more on ways to make sure these community finance systems include the poorest of the poor.
- Publicize the good experiences, the lessons and the milestones of this community finance movement and make it better known to the government and to the larger public, through media, forums, government lobbying and publications which document ACCA activities and community finance stories (and if possible, translate into local languages so community people can read it!).
- Lobby to get more government funds into these CDFs and national funds. "Don't forget that government funds are people's money as well, and it must be possible to obtain some of this money to feed into our processes, without corrupting the system we are building and leaving the communities in control."
- Investigate the possibility of private sector donations into CDFs, by convincing private sector businesses and individuals to change their way of doing charity, from giving to the poor individually to cooperating with them collectively, through their CDFs, so that these donations have a wider impact.
- Every country could pool some portion of their funds (maybe through ACHR) to make a regional fund which starts with people's contributions, but could then be expanded with other funds.

2. COMMUNITY NETWORK BUILDING

Linking and strengthening community organizations and their networks at city, national and regional levels. How to link poor communities to work together more actively, at city and national level? How to support these community organizations and networks to become strong and to become active and accepted participants in the mainstream development process in their cities? How to link community networks more actively at the Asia regional level? And what kind of coordination mechanisms and support from the region (by ACHR or ACCA) can help to support this community network process, at city and national levels?

"People-to-people exchange continues to be one of the most immediate and most powerful tools for strengthening community networks, consolidating community learning and convincing poor people that change is possible."

Points in the discussion about community networks :

- It is so important that we wake up the people on the ground - the people who are on the "demand side". Otherwise, it is only the institutions on the "supply side" that dictate what people should do, where they should go, how they should conduct their lives. That is the vertical line, from top to bottom, which determines so much of people's lives in the prevailing development model! But now we have a new way of doing things, in which people themselves develop their strength and their agenda, through horizontal relationships between communities in each city, in each country and in the region. We want to wake up this sleeping tiger in a big way! *(Somsook)*

- Always work to create new leaders. When organizations scale up, the leaders need to change, need to play a new part. The role I played 22 years ago is now played by thousands of women. Roles are always changing, new people are always entering and taking the work to be done into their hands. When there is scaling up, the top leaders cannot exist if they forgot about those at the grassroots! *(Nandasiri)*

- Networks and scaling up: As community networks scale up, they might lose the communities along the way, so we need to make sure that the exchanges are around very focused issues, so that the leadership is prepared to advocate on the issues that come from going to scale. *(Ben, SDI, South Africa)*

Proposed activities to support community networking :

- NGOs which partner with community networks and federations can facilitate discussion on specific issues of the communities and give chances for communities to directly negotiate and be recognized by the local government.

- Support for network and federation building between poor communities at city, national and regional levels

- Support more exchanges : People-to-people exchange continues to be one of the most immediate and most powerful tools for strengthening community networks and consolidating communal learning, and so there were lots of suggestions to increase the support for national exchanges within countries and for more specific issue-based exchange learning - both within countries and between countries in the region.

- Support more meetings and forums : A busy schedule of meetings between communities within cities, within countries and within the Asia region is also another important tool for breaking isolation, building links between poor communities, building networks and disseminating new energy and ideas. So there were also suggestions to support more meetings and forums at city level (constantly), at national level (regular national gathering to bring together city networks) and at regional level (at least one large regional grassroots gathering each year).

- Support more regional community meetings on specific issues (like savings and credit, city fund management, land negotiations, community planning, house design, community welfare and alternative building technologies). These kinds of issue-based regional gatherings, which should include a majority of community leaders, should be organized at least once every three months, to keep up the momentum and create a vibration.

- Support the creation and functioning of issue-based community committees, as part of the network process, at local, national and regional levels - to work in a more sustained way on the kinds of issues mentioned above.

- Support more activities and joint projects at city level which bring communities and the other stakeholders to work together, as equal partners, to build the spirit of cooperation, to build trust, and to build a sense of pride in community-driven initiatives by other non-community stakeholders.

- Build better understanding of community issues and community initiatives in cities by supporting information and media projects, such as forums, publications, video films, press reports, community radio and TV programs.

The power of COMMUNITY NETWORKS in Lao PDR :

Sommay Vongnakhone is one of the senior community leaders in Lao PDR, and a tough fighter from back in the days of Lao's nationalist war. She now works with the Women and Community Empowerment NGO, which is the support organization to the national women's savings process in Lao. Sommay and the other women savings groups leaders joined this sub-group on community networks. "Twenty years ago," she said, "the government has not recognized community organizations that were outside the government structures. They called them illegal! But over the last thirteen years, we've started our savings groups, built our networks at village, district, province and national levels and started our own network funds. And the government has learned too. Now we can negotiate with the government for land, because we negotiate as a network, with the strength of our network's 100,000 savings members and the strength of our network's US$12 million in collective savings behind us. And we also negotiate with the strength of our partnership with the architects at the university behind us."

3. COMMUNITY ARCHITECTS

How to support and boost the involvement of community architects, professionals, "para" architects, community builders, students and universities in a community-driven process of settlement upgrading, housing and urban change? How to support these different kinds of technical supporters to work with people? And how can their work be supported, linked, strengthened and coordinated, at national and regional levels?

Points in the discussion about community architects :

- I get very confused, because architects are architects - what is a *community architect?* When we thought of developing a housing program in Orangi, it was 100,000 houses people were building! Were we going to find architects to design tiny little houses for all those families? Or would it be better to look at the houses that people are already building themselvse, and see what we can do to improve it, by developing low-cost techniques that can be widely adopted by the people, when they are constructing their own houses themselves? *(Perween)*

- Architects certainly have skills. But there are also carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians and laborers, who are continuously building houses in communities, and they have skills too. Can this program train those masons and craftspersons, train the young people within communities who want to grow to become "community architects," to work with people to map their settlements, help design their houses and their infrastructure? One archirtect can train hundreds to do that work. So instead of needing so many architects to design so many houses, you have just one or two who are training. *(Perween)*

- It is important to remember that architects are not the only professionals who can work with and assist poor communities - we also need planners, engineers, lawyers and others to join the ranks of "community profession-als." For architects, the focus may be on the physical aspects of shelter (house design, settlement planning, infrastructure), but when we talk about community upgrading in the most holistic sense, we are also dealing with economics, social and legal issues. *(Kirtee)*

Proposed activities to support the community architects movement :

- Continue to support the links and sharing between groups of community architects, professionals and community builders, both within countries and between countries in the region, through an active program of exchanges, workshops and joint projects.

- Continue to organize training opportunities of all sorts for community architects, young professionals, and students, to help them learn how to work with poor communities in a community-driven development process.

- Identify, nurture and train more community-based "para-architects" and community builders to be active support-ers in the community-driven upgrading process, and provide support for the formation and strengthening of networks of these community builders and para-architects, at city and national level.

- Nurture more links of collaboration with universities and architecture and engineering faculties, to bring more students into the community-driven upgrading process, to build fruitful partnerships between communities and their local academic institutions and to ignite the activist spirit in these young professionals.

- Support the flow of information about the work of community architects, professionals and community builders in Asia, through various media, including websites, blogs, video films, hand-books, newsletters and publications.

- Support start-up groups of young professionals, community architects and community builders with small seed-fund grants to help them link together, work together and initiate their first projects with poor communities.

- In disaster situations, it would be useful to have shortlists of community architects ready to go to the disaster area to help facilitate a process of reconstruction by the affected communities themselves, rather than the usual approach of aid agencies dropping in prefab shelters or getting contractors to build new housing.

"For us in Pakistan, a community architect is somwehere be-tween a skilled worker and a professional ar-chitect. And this community architect is someone who is continuously present within the community, helping people to map their settlements, design their houses and lay their infrastructure." *(Perween)*

4. COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DISASTER REHABILITATION

How to support communities to deal with the increasing number of both natural and man-made disasters in Asia, with better resilience and capacity? What is the right way to support affected communities after a disaster, and how can the problems of disasters be transformed into opportunities for a better community rehabilitation process, which leaves communities more secure and more mutually-supporting than before? And what form of efficient regional support would best assist this process?

Points in the discussion about community-driven disaster rehabilitation :

- We are certainly seeing more and more storms, floods, land-slides, tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanoes in Asian countries now. But we need to include man-made disasters too, like fires, famines, droughts and many of the floods that are caused by mismanagement of land and water resources. *(Kirtee)*

- Disasters certainly cause many terrible things to happen - loss of housing and means of livelihood, displacement, death, injuries. But a disaster can also be a vital opportunity to bring about change in the deeper, more structural problems and inequities the disaster suddenly reveals, but only where communities are at the front of the process.

> "A disaster can be a vital opportunity to bring about change in the deeper, more structural problems and inequities which the disaster opens up."

- Disasters are also an opportunity for the rebuilding of communities in more ways than only the physical. It is the local people and local volunteers who usually come out to provide the first and most immediate support to disaster victims, and the government and aid agencies come later.

Proposed activities to support community-driven disaster rehabilitation :

- Support intervention in the early relief stage, as an opportunity to gather scattered disaster survivors together and to get them actively involved in managing their own relief process, as soon as possible, as a first step to managing their own long-term rehabilitation also. Other early-stage interventions include setting up savings groups, materials and donation banks, welfare funds, community-based relief camp teams, etc.

- Support exchange visits between disaster-hit communities within a specific disaster site, and to visit communities that have redeveloped after similar disasters, in other cities or countries.

- Support the involvement of young people and professionals among the disaster victims to become leaders and organizers in a longer-term community-driven disaster rehabilitation process.

- Advocate for a more community-driven style of disaster rehabilitation support by organizing seminars and workshops which bring together disaster-affected communities, government agencies, relief agencies and donor organizations to give these communities a chance to tell their stories and to showcase their community-led rehabilitation experiences.

- Use video films, newsletters, hand-books, video films, TV documentaries and academic articles to document and disseminate the experiences of alternative people-driven disaster relief and rehabilitation and to make it a more main-stream and acceptable option.

5. PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICY CHANGE

How to translate real action in city-wide upgrading by communities on the ground into changes in policy? And how to bring about changes in the relationships between poor communities, their local governments and other local stakeholders, so the poor are equal partners in the city's larger development? How to build sustained national support for a people-driven community upgrading process, so that it becomes institutionalized, as part of a larger national and structural change process? How can financial support from the government and other sources be leveraged to finance this large scale, city-wide upgrading process by the poor? And how can ACCA and other organizations support this kind of change?

> "Sometimes the most effective and most immediate way to build partnerships and change policies is to bring communities and their city governments together to collaborate on real housing, land and infrastructure projects on the ground."

Proposed activities to build partnership and support policy change :

- Make action on the ground visible in a big way: It is important to make as visible as possible the successes of community-led change that have happened on the ground, reflecting the people's reality, so that government, donors, international agencies and other stakeholders can come to know that real change in the problems of housing for the poor, at scale, is possible and is achievable, when communities are the main doers.

- This can be done through documentation (newsletters, reports, academic papers, hand-books), media (producing documentary films, TV, internet sites and blogs, community radio) and forums (meetings, seminars, symposia, World Urban Forums, study tours of good projects).

- Open up as many opportunities as possible for communities and their organizations to speak for themselves, to present their ideas and their initiatives, in their own way, to other stakeholders. This is one way to bring "people's knowledge" to a wider audience. It doesn't always have to be the NGOs and professionals who speak to the ADB or the United Nations! The people on the ground can be their own champions and can showcase their work very well, through forums, seminars and project visits.

- ACHR and all members of its regional network can work on building relationships between poor community organizations, government agencies, universities, donor organizations, bilateral organizations, development institutions and other national and global stakeholders, to bridge the power-bases at all those levels, looking at all sorts of possibilities for collaboration, in order to get the top and bottom to meet in the middle.

- Support research projects which explore and open up the ground realities in the various cities and regions in the region, to dispel myths and shine the spotlight on important issues like land markets, land use, city planning, housing markets, infrastructure, housing finance, etc.

- Look at the pro-poor policies, laws and regulations which already exist in many of our countries (but are sitting on shelves somewhere or being ignored), make their existence known to communities through forums and open dialogue, and then find ways to put them into action.

- ACHR can also play a role in monitoring international policies and global commitments such as the MDGs, and hold governments to account for not reaching their targets.

- We shouldn't stay still and be happy only with doing lots of nice projects! We have to move beyond projects and see how this active community process ACCA has been supporting can link more with government processes, government policies, government institutions and with structural issues of access to land, access to infrastructure, housing and finance. *(Father Norberto)*

Regional "Decent Poor" Fund

Other ACHR programs and initiatives

"This should be one key principal for any housing project any-where in Asia, with ACCA or otherwise: to make sure everyone is included and everyone is in the boat."

In January 2011, the Selavip Foundation approved a grant of US$ 90,000 to ACHR, to create a special joint program to assist some of Asia's poorest community members and help make sure they can take part in the housing and upgrading projects being implemented by communities themselves, with support from the ACCA Program (and otherwise). The Selavip funds have been topped-up with another US$ 10,000 from ACCA to create a $100,000 regional funding source, which we are calling *"The Decent Poor Fund."*

The process started in Thailand : This new regional program began with an experiment in Thailand last year, which was also funded by a $60,000 grant from Selavip. That program, in which the community networks developed their own criteria and selected the beneficiaries, was a tool to strengthen their awareness of the needs of their own poorest community members and to build build systems by which the very poor are supported and protected by their own communities and networks. Many times in Thailand, when a community housing project is developed and the community takes a loan as a group to build new houses, the very poor get left out because they can't afford to repay the loans. And so the groups implementing the projects had to think hard about how to include everybody - even the super-poor! The project worked out very well, and the communities were very creative in how they used this small grant to help ensure the poorest can be part of the upgrading projects, and get decent houses also. Some groups used the $600 subsidy to build a house for a poor family on part of the land, or to pay off a family's debts. Because this small fund could only support 120 households around the county - just a tiny fraction of those in need! - these few families who did get the support became examples of how communities and community networks can think more clearly about their poorest members and can ensure they can be included in the process.

Now the "Decent Poor" program goes regional : In a similar way, this new regional-level Decent Poor Fund will be able to subsidize only a small number of households, but the idea of the program is to use this small money *strategically*, to get the whole national community movement in all these countries to look at the poorest people as the subject, and to see how these small funds can bring about a planning process which *includes everyone.*

How the program works : The Decent Poor Fund will provide grants to about 200 very poor households, in 9 countries, at the rate of US$ 500 per household, with a maximum of 20 households per country. The process of identifying and selecting the grant recipients - and how the grants will be used creatively - will be carried out by community organizations themselves, who will then propose candidates for selection by their community networks or their city joint committees. The proposed grant candidates from each city should then obtain final approval at the national level. The national committee should oversee and manage the program, with clear strategic objectives for change in community awareness, and in city and national policies regarding housing for poorest of the poor. After consideration by the national committee, the proposal can then be submitted to the ACCA Committee for final approval.

This is not a program to solve all the problems of poverty, which are far too great for this tiny intervention. The objective is not to simply identify the poorest and give them a little welfare hand-out, but to challenge the community networks and federations we work with to discuss this issue, survey and make themselves aware who are the poorest, and discuss and think about the solution together. In this way, the program becomes a kind of training, or a boosting of communities' awareness about the very poorest people as essential parts of their communities and housing projects. *(For more details on the Decent Poor Program, please contact ACHR)*

300 Cities Program, with UN-Habitat

300 CITIES
Proposed Budget :

- Revolving community develop-ment fund for each city :
  (US$ 100,000 x 300 cities)
  US$ 30 million

- Regional fund for technical and administrative support :
  US$ 10 million

- Support for small upgrading and big housing projects :
  US$ 10 million

TOTAL   US$ 50 million

Over the past year, ACHR has been working with UN-Habitat's regional office in Fukuoka to develop a joint initiative to support and scale up the kind of city-wide and community-driven slum upgrading (with savings and community finance as the main tools) that has begun in many cities, with support from ACCA, ACHR's partner organizations and UN-Habitat's projects. More than 500 Asian cities have started moving in this direction now. Having agreed that this is an important development direction for Asia, ACHR and Habitat have decided to initiate a collaborative project that is stronger than ACCA: a regional program of change which is large-scale, people-driven, demand-driven and partnership-oriented, to solve the slum issue at city-wide scale. We are calling this the "300 Cities Program."

One of the core ideas of this joint program is to provide much stronger support by seeding city development funds with about US$ 100,000 in each of these 300 cities, to give the communities in each city a tool and greater financial capacity for their city-wide upgrading program. There may also be funds in the program for some big housing projects and small upgrading projects also, along the lines of what we have been doing in the ACCA program. In this way, ACHR and ACCA will collaborate with UN-Habitat, but the main funds will remain with ACHR.

In this way, whatever we have already been doing in these cities - and in many new ones - will hopefully get the support and recognition by the government, with the added weight of the UN's status. This is one possible way to institutionalize the work we are already doing, into a system that is more embedded in the city-level and national-level structures in these countries. Habitat's role will be to work at city, national and international level to explain, to help soften the attitudes of reluctant governments and to help bring together the formal world and the informal process on the ground, which is so much ready to solve the problems. ACHR and Habitat have circulated a concept note on this program and received a lot of positive feedback from groups in the region. At this ACHR regional meeting, we agreed to translate the concept note into a proper funding proposal, to submit to some of the potential donor organizations as soon as possible. *(The "300 Cities" concept note can be downloaded from the ACHR website)*

New ACHR Proposal to Misereor

▲ *The Asian People's Dialogue in Seoul Korea, in 1988, which has been counted by many as the birthplace of ACHR, was organized to be the first major gathering of grassroots groups in Asia, with funding support from Misereor.*

In December, 2010, Somsook and Kirtee travelled to Aachen to discuss the possibility of continuing ACHR's work with Misereor, the German funding agency which has supported ACHR's work in the region for more than twenty years. This discussion included the possibility of preparing another 3-year proposal for Misereor, and extending the current 3-year project by six months. It was agreed in that meeting that we'd use this regional ACHR meeting as an opportunity to get the core ACHR groups to discuss what kind of key regional activities they would like to do in Asia over the next three years, partly with Misereor support. The ACHR secretariat is now drafting a new proposal to Misereor, based on these discussions from the meeting. The new proposal, has three main components :

- **Housing and land rights:** Support for activities and projects which allow communities and groups to develop innovative strategies to get land to the urban poor, and develop decent, secure housing.
- **Training, advisory and regional learning:** Training and advisory activities, advocacy, exchanges, meetings, workshops, enabling people to learn, to share and to develop their work, using the resources in the region.
- **Disasters:** Support for community-managed disaster relief and rehabilitation.

Citynet Workshop in Seoul, Korea

The secretariat of Citynet is now in Yokohama, and when that city's term ends in two years, the Seoul Municipality is keen to become the new secretariat. To win this honor, the city will want to present itself as a progressive, respectable and pro-poor city. But the reality is that Seoul is a city where massive evictions continue to happen in the name of Korea's contractor-driven style of urban redevelopment. So we see the Citynet link as a strategic opportunity to open up a dialogue on the issues of eviction, redevelopment and urban poor housing in this difficult city. As a first step, ACHR has been working with Citynet to plan a regional workshop, in which the Seoul Municipality, Citynet, ACHR and many groups from around the region can take part, to show alternatives, to link with the local Korean groups and communities on the ground, and to move this issue forward in a more proactive manner. We are calling this workshop *"Inclusive Cities: Developing Asia's Urban Future with People"*. The workshop will be organized some time in the later half of 2011.

Asia Pacific Forum in Bangkok

The Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF) is an important regional gathering being organized by UN-ESCAP in June 2011, in Bangkok, Thailand. ACHR is working with ESCAP to bring a more community-driven and people-centered development perpective to this meeting in two ways :

- ACHR will help organize a panel discussion, field visits and sub-group discussions on community-driven development during the upcoming Asia-Pacific Urban Forum.
- ACHR is also working with CODI and the Thai Government to bring a more community-driven and people-centered development perspective to the Ministerial Conference of Asian ministers that will be organized back-to-back with the APUF meeting, by organizing field trips for the ministers to Baan Mankong community upgrading projects in Bangkok and facilitating a dialogue between the ministers and the Thai community leaders on community-driven and city-wide slum upgrading. We hope that this event will inspire ministers from different Asian countries to support city-wide upgrading in their countries and to build a regional network of policy-makers on this issue. *(Contact ACHR for a concept note on this workshop)*

Collaboration with CDIA

"An important common point that CDIA and ACCA share is a focus on the city as the key development unit. It's no problem finding cities, but the question is how to collaborate?" *(Somsook)*

A group of German donor agencies (including GTZ, INWENT, KFW) has developed a joint program with ADB called Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA), which is financing infrastructure projects (in the range of US$ 10-20 million) in many Asian cities, through loans made directly to city governments which request them. Some felt that these big CDIA-financed projects had little to do with the poor, so they have opened a dialogue with ACHR over the past year about possible links between CDIA and the ACCA projects in several cities. On February 25, 2011, ACHR visited CDIA's Manila office to see how ACHR's ACCA Program and CDIA could collaborate in some cities where CDIA has projects and to explore possible ways of bringing the poor into the city's larger infrastructure planning and development process, to make it more equitable. We met for an hour with Emiel Wegelin, Mats Jarnhammar and Hajo Junge (from the CDIA team in Manila) and Mike Lindfield (who leads the Urban Development Section of ADB's Regional and Sustainable Development Department). Here are a few points from the discussion:

- **Possible collaboration in Ulaanbaatar, Naga City and Suva :** Mats says the government of Fiji is keen to do "micro upgrading" of informal settlements, and ACHR now has a formal MOU with the People's Community Network and the Ministry to expand the ACCA city-wide upgrading approach to 15 cities.
- **Idea : To organize a joint ACHR-CDIA workshop in 2011** to explore this more, before starting, and to plan for the next phase of CDIA (which starts in 2012) to see how to make that next phase more pro-poor and to explore the possibility to extend the CDIA program to also finance other urban development needs like poor people's housing. It was agreed that we will bring the meeting participants to visit several of the people-driven ACCA projects being implemented by the Homeless People's Federation around Metro Manila - in fact ADB and CDIA professional visitors can also link with the Homeless People's Federation to help organize exposure visits to community-driven slum upgrading projects in Metro Manila, and Ruby agrees.
- **Cities can also propose pro-poor initiatives to CDIA :** Mats noted that the cities working with CDIA can also propose support from CDIA for community upgrading - it is not necessary that the initiative come from CDIA.

During the course of this long regional meeting, the country groups were encouraged to find whatever bits of leftover time they could to discuss among themselves about what they were hearing, what they were learning and what new ideas and new energy they would like to bring from the meeting into their work back home. On the last day, just before the meeting ended, each of the country groups presented their plans for what they will do when they go back home - plans for both the immediate future and for the longer term. Here are some brief notes on each country's plans:

SRI LANKA *(Rupa from Women's Co-Op reports)*

- Expand the ACCA process to 15 cities in Sri Lanka, according to a five-year plan we develop to guide our work.
- Expand the activities of a special 100% people's group within Women's Co-op for disaster management.
- Establish our own Decent Poor Fund, using ACCA to start, esecially for the 50,000 war widows in Jaffna.
- Improve the capacity of the community architects to support the people's housing and upgrading projects in Sri Lanka.
- Organize more internal exchanges between active groups within the country.
- Work more to participate in making government policies more open to people-driven development and housing.

MONGOLIA *(Urna from CHRD reports)*

- Continue to expand and strengthen the savings and credit, community upgrading activities (more small projects).
- Work more on building links between the people's process and professionals and academic institutions.
- Work to engage the savings groups more with their local governments.
- Expand the savings networks to link scattered savings groups into stronger city-wide networks.
- Organize more study tours to other countries.
- Train communities in principals of democracy, transparency and human rights.

BANGLADESH *(Fattema Akhter, Community leader from Dhaka, reports)*

- Propose two pilot housing projects in Bangladesh for support from ACCA: (1) to develop a new housing project on the five acres of land that was promised by the government to rehabilitate people evicted in Dhaka, (2) to develop a housing project for resettling 350 evicted families to free land which has been promised in Gopalganj, outside Dhaka.
- Strengthen our national campaign for shelter by implementing *real projects* which provide secure land and houses in poor communities in Bangladesh - where there have been almost no such projects.
- Link together all the existing CBOs inside Dhaka and around Bangladesh into some kind of national federation.
- Strengthen our community savings schemes and expand the savings process to new communities and new cities.
- Bring together various advocacy and research organizations to communicate and coordinate with us in our programs.
- Coordinate more with our National Housing Research Institute and also with our local government agencies.
- We will disseminate our community program through the media - both inside and outside Bangladesh.

PAKISTAN *(Four organizations represented here: OPP-RTI, OCT, TTRC and URC)*

- Continue OPP-RTI's *Secure Housing Support Program* with advocacy and tenure rights.
- Explore the possibility of using some flexible support from ACCA to strengthen OPP-RTI's new cooperative housing savings and loan program in the vulnerable traditional villages ("goths") on the outskirst of Karachi.
- Explore the possibility of proposing some ACCA support for OCT's microfinance program in poor communities, and also to look look into possibilities for implementing the "Decent Poor" concept in the rural areas where it works.
- Continue using ACCA to support our partner organizations to implement their upgrading programs in 4 or 5 more cities.
- Continue OPP-RTI's support communities in the flood-hit Punjab and Sindh provinces, through our partner organizations, and extend our "one room + roof" shelter program to assist the poorest families within these destroyed villages.
- The URC will continue its work networking and information sharing between all the groups within Pakistan.

INDIA *(Vrunda from Hunnarshala Foundation and Kirtee from Ahnedabad report)*

- *(Bhuj)* Focus on implementing the ACCA big project, to support housing improvements in several poor settlements in one ward, as a strategy to strengthen their negotiations for land tenure and access to government subsidies.
- *(Bhuj)* Use the ACCA big project to demonstrate a more community-driven and city-wide model for implementing an important new national government slum upgrading subsidy program (the Rajiv Awas Yojna Scheme).
- *(Kirtee)* The government of India has now committed to do city-wide slum upgrading on a national scale. All slum dwellers in India will be given property rights, in the same place where they are staying now, within the next five years. We are trying to remind the government that they have made this promise. We are also trying to remind the government how to go about realizing this ambitious program.

SOUTH KOREA *(Boram Kim from Asian Bridge presents)*

- Build the capacities of the community members and leaders in Korea by organizing a training program.
- Strengthen the network between poor communities within the city, and between cities in several ways: by organizing a national meeting of poor community organizations; organizing more regular meetings, workshops and exchange visits between communities; planning more frequent organized visits to community upgrading projects, so people can see what others are doing and share problems and ideas and build solidarity.
- Organize a women's committee among residents of vinyl house communities.
- Do physical mapping and socio-economic surveys in all the vinyl house communities in Seoul and other cities.
- Organize horizontal assessment trips between communities implementing ACCA projects within Seoul.

PHILIPPINES *(Ruby from the Homeless People's Federation presents)*

- Organize a national 3-day meeting of all the organizations implementing ACCA in the Philippines, in Mandaue, February 2011 (HPFP, FDUP, UPA-Kabalaka, SMMI-Iligan and TAO) to update all the partners on this regional meeting, to reflect and plan on the 5 key issues discussed in this regional meeting, to share experiences and see how to strengthen our collaboration. Each ACCA partner group will have a preparatory meeting *before* this national meeting happens.

- HPFP will continue its work to prepare for a new joint slum upgrading program, involving Cities Alliance, the Philippines Government, SDI and the Homeless People's Federation. The World Bank and Cities Alliance consultants have already visited our office and discussed how the federation understands slum upgrading.

- We will continue to develop Decent Poor Fund proposals, as a collaboration between the Philippines ACCA groups.

- HPFP will organize and host a national disaster workshop, to reflect on the disaster projects we've already undertaken and develop our program and funding strategies to continue this work and to engage with more communities in high-risk areas to seek out alternatives before disasters actually happen.

- HPFP will organize a one-week training workshop in bamboo construction, for community leaders, community builders and architects, with support from ACCA. The workshop will take place in February 2011, in Davao, and will involve the construction of an actual bamboo bridge in a community facing eviction. This is part of the HPFP's ongoing search for alternative and cost-saving building technologies that poor communities can manage themselves.

- HPFP has already registered a new national finance facility - the Philippines Alliance for Slum Upgrading Facility Incorporated (PASUFI), and are now creating branches of this facility in the regions. This facility is linked with the establishment of community development funds in the cities where HPFP is active, some with ACCA support.

- HPFP will continue to strengthen the network of young professionals and community architects in the Philippines, to work more effectively within a strongly community-driven process.

- HPFP will organize a workshop to strengthen their community builders process: to identify potential community builders, improve skills (esp. in participatory mapping, and housing and settlement planning), build the team and the network and strengthen the mentoring process between experienced and new community builders.

- HPFP will organize a training workshop for community leaders in mapping, housing design, site-planning, materials procurement and construction management, to strengthen the communities to manage more and more aspects of the housing and upgrading planning and implementation themselves.

VIET NAM *(Anh from ENDA reports)*

- Strengthen and expand the national CDF process and network between cities, with more cities, stronger linkages and mutual support between cities in sub-regions within Viet Nam. Also strengthen the management of the CDFs in these cities, with more community participation and involvement of community people playing a key role.

- Strengthen the community savings and credit process in all the cities (there are still a lot of different types of savings groups in Vietnamese cities) and network them all together more. We have been inspired by the Women's Co-op in Sri Lanka to make sure the voice and participation of the poor is the strongest in this savings network, as the foundation for the CDF and the larger community development process.

- Strengthen the involvement of young professionals and community architects in the ongoing ACCA small and big projects. Viet Nam's community architects process is still very young, and we will ask for support from ACHR (from Nad and Tee) to share their experiences and help facilitate this.

- Strengthen the role of the community supporters network, made up of skilled community leaders who can help others, and build this into a new community network between cities, to support each other.

- At the national level, the ACVN will participate in the Ministry of Construction's Program for Housing for the Poor, and ACVN will advocate the ACCA-style community-driven and city-wide approach, in the implementation of that national program, and in the capacity-building programs for the local governments which are part of the ACVN network.

- Continue our advocacy for policy change, particularly to make planning and building standards more appropriate for low-income communities and to institutionalize the community-driven upgrading model as an alternative to the government's contractor-driven redevelopment policies which cause so much eviction and produce houses that people cannot afford.

- Conduct city-wide mapping and surveying of poor and informal settlements and run-down collective housing in all the 10 ACCA cities (the plan to do this came out of a March 2010 national workshop).

NEPAL *(Sama from Lumanti reports)*

- Organize more city-to-city exchanges and strengthen the national network of city federations.

- Strengthen the CDF process, and try to set up more CDFs in more cities, with partnership and funds from the Municipal governments, as in Bharatpur, Birgunj, Kathmandu and Dharan.

- Share the ACCA experience with city-wide upgrading in Nepal with a wider audience and in different forums : in the media, with the national Slum Upgrading Forum and with various departments of the national government.

- Policy level : Try to bring the ACCA-style city-wide and community-driven upgrading, in partnership with the city, into the government plans and policies, as much as possible.

- So far, our closest working links with government have been with municipal and ward-level governments, but we want to try to bring the national government more into the city-wide upgrading process being promoted by ACCA.

- We will also develop plans for piloting the Decent Poor Program in Nepal.

- Mobilize and train more community architects, to support the growing number of housing projects in Nepal.

CAMBODIA *(Mann Chhoeurn from UPDF reports)*

- Continue the process of searching for how to institutionalize the UPDF (perhaps making it into an independent non-profit foundation) to develop itself into a national pro-poor land management and urbanization institute, focusing on supporting urban poor community organizations, housing, infrastructure, livelihood, land and other facilities for the urban poor to be able to live in the city.
- Strengthen and expand the national community savings network.
- Strengthen the ongoing ACCA projects and the city and provincial-level CDFs.
- We plan to establish CDFs in 5 more cities (there are CDFs in 15 cities now).
- Set up a community vocational training center.
- Promote the involvement of community architects and the media in supporting the people-driven upgrading and housing process in all cities.
- Circular 3 Policy : This policy gives a framework for UPDF to strengthen and expand its activities. We will continue to make sure communities around the country understand this "Circular 3" policy and understand how it can help support our city-wide upgrading activities and make it more city-wide in scope. In the short term, we can use the policy to support the implementation of more on-site upgrading and relocation projects, with ACCA and ACHR support. In the middle term, we can use the policy to create a master plan for land for housing the poor in each city. And in the long term, we can use the policy to create a national housing and land for the poor policy and develop a national strategy for achieving secure land and housing for all in Cambodian cities.
- National land and housing policy : Will continue to work with ACHR and the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction to develop a housing and land policy for Cambodia.

INDONESIA *(Kiki from Germis NGO and Antonio from Bali present)*

- Evaluate the ACCA projects that have begun in three cities in Indonesia so far (Jakarta, Surabaya and Makassar)
- Organize a national meeting of community organizations.
- Strengthen the savings groups and people's networks in the ACCA cities, and in other cities.
- Negotiate with the Yogyakarta local government to support the ACCA small projects that are now going to be implemented there.
- Advocate for a community-driven disaster management policy in the Merapi area of Yogyakarta and in Central Java.
- Marco suggests setting up a community builders training school in the volcano-affected Mount Merapi area.
- Develop and submit a proposal for a new ACCA project in the city of Kandari
- Organize a national meeting of community architects groups in Indonesia, which are now too scattered and not well-linked (including the older groups, the younger groups and the students) to rethink and reinvigorate the community architects process in the country.
- Negotiate with Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to pilot Baan Mankong-style city-wide slum upgrading by communities in at least five cities (which we have already identified, with "crazy" and "intelligent" and pro-poor mayors!). This could possibly link with ACCA or the ACHR's new 300 Cities Program.
- Policy advocacy on two fronts : Advocate for land to be made available for the urban poor within cities, and to advocate for a "balanced development" housing policy, in which the urban development makes room for poor communities, without pushing them out of the city.
- There is not yet any Housing Resource Center in Indonesia. There is an Urban Resource Center, which is a government program, but we want to try to make this institution more independent and "multi-stakeholder" oriented.

MYANMAR *(Keh Zer, from Bedar Rural Development Program, presents)*

- Complete the already-approved ACCA small and big projects (*"Everything goes slowly in Burma!"*)
- Strengthen the community and village savings groups in all areas, and build stronger links and mutual support between the savings groups.
- Set up a common national fund which the savings groups can access for additional loan capital, and which can also provide a financial link to strengthen their collaboration and mutual support.
- Strengthen the links and networks between community groups in different areas.
- Advocate for land reform policy, since increasing numbers of rural people are becoming landless.

CHINA *(Pimpim from Tibet Heritage Fund presents)*

- Continue with ongoing ACCA projects in Lhasa, Yushu and Ladakh.
- In the project in Lhasa, it continues to be a very difficult situation, and work goes slowly!
- In the earthquake project in Yushu, continue to help residents in the old Tibetan town center to rebuild and repair their traditional houses and negotiate with the government, to counter the government's plans to evict all the Tibetans from central Yushu and redevelop it with shopping malls and expressways! *We have to show an alternative solution!*
- In the project in Ladakh, continue to focus on rehabilitation of the houses that were damaged or destroyed by last year's floods, especially by providing these affected households with access to some skilled workers and some housing materials, and then let them do the repair work mostly by themselves.
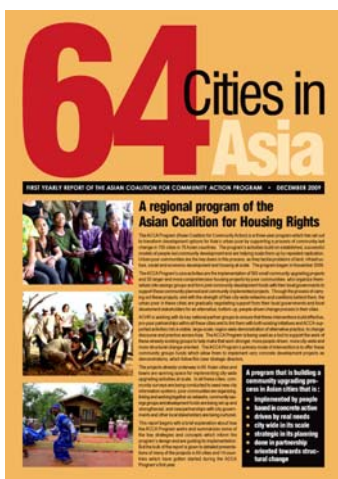
Plans for the near future for ACHR / ACCA

Schedule of upcoming activities in 2011

A street in Penang's historic Georgetown, where the World Heritage Status means these kinds of old shop-houses are likely to be preserved. But the people who live in them and the rich history and culture manifest in these streets and these buildings are in immediate danger of disappearing.

- **February - September 2011 : Implementation of the ACHR / Selavip Decent Poor Program.** Groups within countries will be getting together and discussing how to use the recourses from the new regional Decent Poor Fund to reach the poorest families, and prepare their joint proposals.

- **March 2011 : Fiji trip with SDI and community architects.** A team from ACHR and the Philippines will visit Fiji to support the PCN's expansion of savings and upgrading activities into new cities, in collaboration with the Minister for Housing and Urban Development. Hugo, Anna and Nad (community architects) will also travel to Fiji, a week before the rest of the team, and will hopefully be able to conduct a community planning workshop with the PCN on a big new piece of free land from the government, in Lautoka.

- **March or April 2011 : Heritage and People Workshop in Penang :** The upgrading of historic shop houses in Penang's World Heritage Site in Georgetown usually means only restoring the facades, and evicting the merchant families who rent those houses. The workshop we have been trying to organize with groups in Penang (as well as groups dealing with the heritage issue in other Asian cities) is likely to happen in March or April. And the idea of the workshop will be to see how the preservation of historic neighborhoods in Asian cities can include the people who live there, and not just the structures!

- **April 25 - 30, 2011 : ACCA assessment trip to Sri Lanka + ACCA Committee meeting.** This will be the 6th assessment trip to visit countries with active ACCA processes, and the Women's Co-op and Sevanatha are now working out a program of visits to three or four ACCA cities. An ACCA committee meeting will be organized at the end of the assessment trip.

- **June 2011 : Asia-Pacific Urban Forum with UN-ESCAP, in Bangkok, Thailand.** ACHR is working with UN-ESCAP to organize workshop discussions and field visits on community-driven city-wide upgrading during the Asia Pacific Urban Forum. ACHR is also working with the Thai government to organize field visits to community upgrading projects and community-minister dialogue on people-centered development during the ministerial conference that will be organized in parallel with the APUF.

- **June 2011 : Pro-poor urban development workshop in Seoul.** This workshop is being organized in collaboration with Citynet, as part of a large Citynet meeting. The Citynet secretariat will be moving from Yokohama to Seoul in a couple of years, and this workshop is being organized to open up a dialogue on the serious problems of eviction and displacement of poor and low-income neighborhoods in the city.

- **July and October 2011 : Two more ACCA Committee meetings,** to be organized in 2011. Possible venues are Seoul, Korea (to possibly coincide with the Citynet meeting?) and Karachi, Pakistan (to coincide with a long-postponed regional workshop on community mapping, to be hosted by OPP-RTI and URC).

- **Regional urban poor gathering? National urban poor gatherings?**

Documentation plans for 2011

- **Special issue of Environment and Urbanization on the ACCA Program.** A special issue of IIED's Journal E&U on ACCA (in collaboration with Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite at IIED), with scholarly articles on the program's ideas and performance, as well as articles about the city-wide upgrading processes in various countries - particularly Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Philippines, Pakistan and Myanmar.

- **Second-year report on the ACCA Program :** Detailed report on the program, to Dec 2010, now in process.

- **Third year report on the ACCA Program :** To include an overall summary report (prepared by ACHR with inputs from implementing groups) and also individual reports for each city and country, prepared by local groups, with a finer grain of details, stories, figures and program performance at the end of three years of implementation.

- **Press releases** for 2nd and 3rd year ACCA reports, nationally and internationally, with support from IIED.

- **Documentation on the ACCA peer assessment process in three ways:** a detailed report on the assessment trips so far and analysis of the methodology and outcomes; a more analytical, academic-style article on the assessment process for publication and ; a more accessible newsletter-style report on the assessment process, with small articles, boxes, photos and anecdotes, for publication and translation into local languages.

- **Issue-based studies :** Encourage academic professionals and architects to write and publish articles on issues of architecture, planning, engineering, economics, land markets and governance, with support from ACHR.

  Handbook on community-driven upgrading, to be prepared by the community architects team, in collaboration with YP groups around the region, with stories from the ACCA housing projects.

One of the things you're supposed to do at big meetings like this is to have a theme. We're always very scrupulous about observing these rituals, so we decided that the theme of this meeting would be "The world is changing - let people be the solution." But besides turning this theme into a logo, and printing that logo on the purple tote bags and recycled-paper notebooks (two more things you're supposed to do at big meetings), we didn't flog it too overtly. All the same, the changing world and the people's solutions hummed consistently under all the discussions and presentations. And our friend and working partner from IIED, Diana Mitlin, who is another scrupulous observer of such niceties, brought our theme right back to center stage at the end of the meeting, with these lovely words :

The world is changing and people should be the solution

"I think one of the key problems the world is facing is that people have not learned seriously enough from grounded experiences that are developing alternatives. And at its heart, ACCA is a learning process."

I have three ideas I want to briefly share with you. These three ideas relate to the core theme of this meeting: the theme that the world is changing and that people should be the solution.

1 Helping get finance to people on the ground : If we are going to be successful about changing the world, so people *can* be the solution, we have to make sure that finance helps that purpose. We have to make sure that people at the grassroots can spend the money, learning from their allocations and using external finance alongside their own. And we have to learn how to do this better. We have found ourselves, at IIED, in the role of facilitating the grant that is supporting ACCA, and we try to do this in a good way. The International Institute for Environment and Development is not a traditional NGO donor. IIED mostly tries to identify ideas that are important and facilitates groups in the south to publish and share their ideas with groups in the global north and other areas of the world. We also work on applied research and policy.

So why did we agree to be drawn into this ACCA process? We are conscious that much development assistance from charities and governments is wasted or counterproductive, despite the good intentions of the people who donate the money. Development assistance can be manipulated by governments, and delivery systems are often counterproductive. So we saw this as an opportunity to facilitate the flow of funds to a process in which the decisions about the money are made locally, conscious that we should not try to control or interfere with that finance in any way. We know that international agencies like IIED cannot judge what's best in any place - things have to be identified locally, tested locally and learned from locally. We see ourselves as a very small link in a very important chain to deliver useful finance to low-income communities that want to improve their lives.

2 Creating reflective communities : One of the key ACCA investments is creating communities that are consciously reflecting, improving their practice and building institutions to deliver inclusive and equitable development. I teach at the University of Manchester, and through my links with SDI, we brought in two community leaders from Zimbabwe to deliver one of our graduate courses. The students were absolutely enthralled to hear about development *from real people*. Much of the curriculum is abstract and theoretical, and it doesn't equip them to think about the challenges which we all face. Much professional training implicitly teaches professionals to have contempt for grassroots people

and to believe their own knowledge is superior to people's knowledge. When we try to build links between academic knowledge and community knowledge, and bridge all those theories and concepts with what is really going on in poor settlements, as I was trying to do with this course, we inculcate respect for grassroots struggles through and for the strength, knowledge and capacities which people marshal to survive.

But we cannot rely on individuals to make these links - we need strong organizations at the grassroots level which can interface with the professional world and challenge those who step out of line, articulate stories and be effective intermediaries. ACCA is an investment - building that kind of organizational capacity at the grassroots. The program is setting a direction that links this changing world with people being the solution - not *individualized* people, but *collective* people.

3 Nurturing scale and collaboration : We have to look for solutions relevant to the billion people who live in need in the world's cities. This is the challenge of scale. In addressing this challenge, I welcome the chance to interface with both ACHR and SDI. Both are families of people who are trying to create a world for the better. There are differences between their methodologies, just as there are differences between groups within SDI and ACHR. Those differences need to be respected, because people approach things in different ways, contexts are different, histories are different and possibilities are different. However, much of the world's development strategies reproduce inequalities and reproduce an individual engagement which weakens people making them vulnerable and insecure. The primary trajectories of global development are all about encouraging hierarchy, social stratification and the market. And I see both the ACHR and SDI families, with all their differences, as representing an alternative development process. Both families are looking forward to a world that is more inclusive, that does not exclude people just because they have low pay or because they belong to a category that has been treated as inferior. That may be a minority view just now, but if we don't make it a majority view, we will never address the global challenge.

So my third point is the importance of collaboration, and of working with other groups that seek to further the aim of people-led development. One of the key problems is that people have not learned seriously enough from grounded experiences that are developing alternatives. And at its heart, ACCA is a learning process. Most of the learning, of course, is happening in your localities, through exchanges. But every level has to learn, and I would like to end by thanking all of you for letting me learn from your process.

Who joined the meeting?

CAMBODIA
- Ms. Phon Sareth, Community leader from Prey Veng
- Ms. Kan Bolin, Community leader from Samrong
- Mr. Maling Chhan, Deputy Governor, Sen Monorom
- Mr. Touch Thach, Municipal Chief, Kampong Cham
- Mr. Beng Hong Socheat Khemaro, Ministry of Land Management
- Mr. Mann Chhoeurn, UPDF, **mannchhoeurnmpp@yahoo.com**
- Mr. Sok Visal, UPDF, **info@updfkh.net**
- Mr. Chhim Sophanaroat, UPDF
- Ms. Chou Lennylen, UPDF Media, **info@updfkh.net**

LAO PDR
- Ms. Vone Salika and Mr. Vannaseng Petphaxay, Community leaders
- Ms. Sirikit Boupha, Lao Women's Union, Dept of Development
- Ms. Sommay Vongnakhone, WCEP NGO, **mayinglao@yahoo.com**
- Mr. Phoungphanh Phommalath ("Pan"), WCEP NGO
- Ms. Maykham Sinthala, Community Architect, WCEP NGO

VIET NAM
- Ms. Chu Thuy Sung, Community leader from Lang Son
- Mr. Le Viet Hung, Community leader from Vinh
- Ms. Lu Thi Thanh, Chairperson of Lang Son City People's Council
- Mr. Pham Viet Hung, Vice Mayor of Viet Tri
- Dr. Nguyen Lan, Secretary General of ACVN, **acvn@fpt.vn**
- Mr. Bui Duc Thang, ACVN staff, **acvn@fpt.vn**
- Ms. Le Dieu Anh, Director of ENDA-Vietnam, **a.ledieu@gmail.com**

MYANMAR
- Ms. Own Myaing, community leader from North Ukkalapa Township
- Mr. Saw Plane, community savings leader from Dadey Township
- Mr. Kyaw Hein, community leader from Kawhmu Township
- Ms. Gaw Lu Htoi Ra ("Ah-bu"), Aungzabu NGO, **ghtoira@gmail.com**
- Mr. Saw Keh Zer, Bedar Rural Dev. Program, **kehzer@gmail.com**
- Ms. Zar Par Sung, Women for the World Myanmar NGO, Yangon

THAILAND
- Ms. Pasna Sisattha, community leader from Narathiwat
- Ms. Chan Kaupijit, community leader from Klong Lumnoon, Bangkok
- Ms. Boonlom Hogliam, community leader from Samut Songkram
- Ms. Thongsuk Phumsanguan, community leader from Chum Phae
- Mr. Pisut Simouk, video film maker with Openspace
- Mr. Nattawut Usasovitwong, Sripatum Univ. **nattawutu@gmail.com**
- Mr. Sakkarin Sapu ("Seng"), Khonkaen U. **sakkarin.sapu@gmail.com**
- Ms. Nutta Ratanachaichan, CODI, **nutta.ratanachaichan@gmail.com**
- Ms Jantana Benjasup ("Pui"), CODI staff, **jantana1968@gmail.com**
- Ms. Angkana Tarntarathong ("Jim"), CODI staff

PHILIPPINES
- Ms. Eliza Madidis, HPFP, Community leader from Kidapawan, Mindanao
- Ms. Ruby Papeleras, HPFP, **rhaddad67@yahoo.com**
- Father Norberto Carcellar, PACSII, **frnorberto@mac.com**
- Mr. Denis Murphy + Alice Murphy, UPA NGO, **upa@pldtdsl.net**
- Ms. Ana Oliveros, FDUP NGO, **ana_oliveros2@yahoo.com**
- Ms. May Domingo, Architect, **may_domingoprice@yahoo.co.uk**

INDONESIA
- Mr. Said, Community leader, Stren Kali Slum Network, Surabaya
- Mr. Marco Kusumawijaya, RCUS, **mkusumawijaya@gmail.com**
- Mr. Yuli Kusworo, architect in Yogyakarta, **yuli_kusworo@yahoo.com**
- Ms. Annye Meilani, Urban Poor Consortium, **upc@urbanpoor.or.id**
- Mr. Musadar, Vice-Mayor of Kendari
- Ms. Kiki Sriyanti, Germis NGO, Kendari
- Mr. Antonio H. Ismael, Architect, Bali, **antoniodesk2010@gmail.com**
- Mr. Kemal Taruc, UN-Habitat Country Representative for Indonesia

SRI LANKA
- Ms. Anoma Jayasingha, Women's Co-op, **lankawomenco@sltnet.lk**
- Ms. Rupa Manel, Women's Co-op, **lankawomenco@sltnet.lk**
- Ms. Randeni Karunawathie, Women's Co-op from Anuradhapura
- Mr. Nandasiri Gamage, Women's Co-op, **lankawomenco@sltnet.lk**
- Mr. K. A. Jayarathna, Sevanatha NGO, **jaya_kananke@yahoo.com**
- Mr. Ranjith Samarasingha, Sevanatha, **sevanata@sltnet.lk**
- Mr. Premakumara Jagath, **Kumar885@hotmail.com**

NEPAL
- Ms. Moomila Khatun, Community leader from Birgunj
- Mr. Chintamani Lamsal, National Squatters Federation, Bharatpur
- Mr. Ashok Nath Upreti, Dept of Urban Dev. & Building Construction
- Mr. Padma Lal Shrestha, Lumanti, **shelter@lumanti.wlink.com.np**
- Ms. Sama Vajra, Lumanti NGO, **urc@lumanti.wlink.com.np**
- Ms. Lumanti Joshi, Community architect, **lumantijoshi@gmail.com**

BANGLADESH
- Ms. Fattema Akhter, Community leader from NDBUS CBO in Dhaka
- Mr. Abdus Salam, Community leader from NBUS CBO in Dhaka
- Ms. Salma Awal Shafi, CUS in Dhaka, **cus@dhaka.net**
- Dr. Mohd. Mosharraf Hossain, Rural Health Development Society NGO
- Mr. Dibalok Singha, DSK NGO, **singha@dskbangladesh.org**

INDIA
- Ms. Hasina Aziz Roha, Community leader from Bhuj
- Ms. Vrunda Vaghela, Hunnarshala, Bhuj, **vrundavaghela@gmail.com**
- Mr. Kirtee Shah, Architect, ASAG in Ahmedabad, **kirtee@ksadps.com**
- Mr. Gurmit Tsewang, Tibet Heritage Fund, architect from Ladakh
- Ms. Stanzin Dolker, Tibet Heritage Fund, Ladakh

PAKISTAN
- Ms. Perween Rahman, OPP-RTI, **perween.r@gmail.com**
- Mr. Anwar Rashid, OCT, **opp@cyber.net.pk**
- Mr. Muhammad Younus, URC Karachi, **urc@cyber.net.pk**
- Mr. Rizwan Ul Haq, Urban Resource Center (URC), **urc@cyber.net.pk**
- Mr. Siraj Uddin, TTRC in Orangi, Karachi, **sirajttrc@yahoo.com**

MONGOLIA
- Ms. Shagdar Tserendolgor, Community leader, Ovorkhanghai Province
- Mr. Ganbold Khureltogoo, Community leader from Bayanchandmani
- Mr. Banzragch Bayarnemekh, Governor of Bayanchandmani District
- Mr. Osorkhuu Batjargal, Deputy Governor of Uvurkhangai Province
- Ms. Gombosuren Urantsooj ("Urna"), CHRD, **chrd@mongolnet.mn**
- Ms. Urantulkhuur Mandkhaitsetsen, CHRD, **chrd@mongolnet.mn**
- Ms. Gendensuren Solongo, CHRD, **chrd@mongolnet.mn**
- Ms. Tsedendorj Enkhbayar ("Enhe"), UDRC, **enkhbayar@mik.mn**
- Mr. Gongor Batdorj, Architect UDRC, **udrc@mobinet.mn**

SOUTH KOREA
- Mr. Seo Yang Seok, Vinyl house community network, Seoul
- Ms. Hong Seung Soon, Vinyl house community network, Seoul
- Mr. Son Ee Hun, Community leader, Daeyoun Ouam Community, Busan
- Mr. Na Hyo Woo, Asian Bridge NGO, **nahyowoo@gmail.com**
- Ms. Boram Kim, Asian Bridge NGO, **boram.kim.hur@gmail.com**

JAPAN
- Mr. Etsuzo Inamoto, Architect, Tokyo, **ietsuzo@blue.ocn.ne.jp**
- Mr. Yoshinobu Nakajima, Kitashiba Buraku Community, Osaka
- Ms. Miho Uzuhashi, Kitashiba Buraku Community, Osaka
- Ms. Nozomi Bando, Kitashiba Buraku Community, Osaka
- Mr Keisuke Ikegaya ("Keke"), Architect, **keke@case-jp.com**

CHINA
- Mr. Yutaka Hirako, Tibet Heritage Fund, **al-iskandar@gmx.net**
- Ms. Pimpim de Azevedo, THF, **pemamarpo@yahoo.com.hk**
- Mr. John Liu, EEMP, Beijing **johnliu@eemp.org**

AFRICA
- Ms. Wangui Juliet Mugure, Kenya Slum Dwellers Federation, Nairobi
- Mr. Omondi Bob Orega, Kenya Slum Dwellers Federation, Nairobi
- Ms. Nomahlubi Ncoyini, ISN, Cape Town, South Africa
- Mr. Phumeza Tsibanto, ISN, Western Cape Region, South Africa
- Ms. Rosie Mashimbye, Fed-Up, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Mr. Ben Bradlow, SDI Secretariat, Cape Town, **sdi@courc.co.za**

INTERNATIONAL GROUPS
- Mr. Gregor Meerphol, **gregor.meerpohl@googlemail.com**
- Mr. Mike Slingsby, UN Habitat in Delhi, **mikeslingsby@yahoo.co.uk**
- Ms. Diana Mitlin, IIED in UK, **diana.mitlin@iied.org**
- Father Jorge Anzorena, **anzorena2010@yahoo.com**
- Ms. Joan MacDonald, Selavip Foundation, **selavip@hogardecristo.cl**
- Ms. Natasha Wehmer, UN-ESCAP in Bangkok, **wehmer@un.org**
- Ms. Mariko Sato, UN Habitat in Bangkok, **satom@un.org**
- Mr. Lalith Lankatilleke, UN Hab. **l.lankatilleke@fukuoka.unhabitat.org**
- Mr. Jan Meeurwissen, UN Habitat Regional Office in Fukuoka
- Ms. Laids Maid, CDIA and UN Habitat in the Philippines
- Mr. Ashvin Dayal, Rockefeller Foundation, **adayal@rockfound.org**
- Ms. Anna Brown, Rockefeller Foundation, **ABrown@rockfound.org**

ACHR SECRETARIAT **achr@loxinfo.co.th**
- Ms. Somsook Boonyabancha
- Mr. Maurice Leonhardt
- Ms. Natvipa Chalitanon ("Nat"), Mr. Pakorn Chaliatanon ("Chai")
- Mr. Thomas Kerr, Ms. Diane Archer
- Ms. Ommas Rattaya-anan ("Orm")
- Mr. Chawanad Luansang ("Nad"), **chawanad@hotmail.com**
- Mr. Supawut Boonmahathanakorn ("Tee"), **supawut77@gmail.com**
- Mr. Wutipan Rattaanatharee, Community Organizer

People-driven solutions up close :

In a city that is so rich with community upgrading projects, there were, of course, some field visits organized during the meeting to projects being implemented by communities in Bangkok, with support from CODI's Baan Mankong upgrading program. This national upgrading process is now in it's 8th year of implementation, and it makes a powerful example of the kind of community-driven, city-wide upgrading process we're trying to build with ACCA. But this is a program that has gone to scale in a big way: so far, almost 100,000 poor households (in 862 projects in 273 towns and cities, involving 1,500 communities) have moved from squalor and uncertainty into new houses and new communities which they designed and built themselves, and hundreds more are in the pipeline.

On January 29, everyone was loaded on buses and taken to visit the upgrading project at the Suan Phlu Community, right in the heart of Bangkok's financial district. This project is an interesting case, because it gives us a chance to compare the government-built and people-built approach in one community. After a fire burned this large squatter settlement to the ground in 2004, some of the residents (558 households) decided to wait for ready-made flats in 5-story blocks that would be built by the National Housing Authority, under the *Baan Eua Arthorn Program*, and the rest (264 households) decided to design and build their own housing, with support from Baan Mankong. The final score in this people-built vs. government-built match? The beautiful 2 and 3-story row-houses on the Baan Mankong side have three times the living space and cost only two-thirds as much as the tiny flats on the NHA side.

After the site visit to Suan Phlu, the National Baan Mankong Community Network and CODI hosted a market-style dinner for the meeting participants in the garden at the CODI office.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights