

ACHR

e-news

News from groups around Asia about what's happening in the region . . .

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights

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MARCH - MAY 2012

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UPDATE on the ACCA PROGRAM

The ACCA Program has now crossed the three-years mark, and we are now on the home stretch for completing the program (which has been extended by six months) and will come to an end officially in July 2012. The latest ACCA (Asian Coalition for Community Action) committee meeting was held in Quezon City, in the Philippines, on March 17, right after the big program to launch the new Urban Poor Coalition Asia (UPCA). This was the second-to-last ACCA committee meeting to be held during this current 3.5 year stage of the ACCA program. We have some budget and some activities left, so this meeting was very important in terms of planning all the remaining important activities, and planning for the next stage of support to the people's process in Asia. There were proposals from 10 countries, including 16 new cities, seven big housing projects and 78 small upgrading projects, as well as several "understanding Asian cities" research projects and support for city and national processes. A total budget of US\$ 684,482 was approved.



In addition to considering new proposals, the committee also heard updates from Lajana about the eviction crisis in the Bagmati River settlements in Kathmandu, and strategized how to help as a regional coalition. There were also discussions about the seven papers being prepared for the forthcoming issue of IIED's journal, Environment and Urbanization, in which the ACCA program will be highlighted, and about the Decent Poor Program, which has now come to an end. Tee reported on recent activities of the community architects in the region. There was also some discussion about the ongoing collaboration between ACHR and the World Bank, in which Bob Buckley is helping prepare a paper on the Asian experience of alternative community finance systems and community development funds, which will be presented at the World Bank's forum on Housing Finance in late May 2012. The full report from this meeting is now being circulated. If you didn't get a copy, please contact ACHR. Here are some quick figures on the ACCA program's performance so far :

ACCA Program Update : *(Cumulative figures, as of April 1, 2012, after the Quezon City meeting)*

- ACCA activities approved in 162 cities / towns / districts, in 19 countries.
- 111 big housing projects approved (Total big project budget approved: US\$ 4,199,767 - which includes 5 projects from the ACCA regional revolving loan fund)
- 777 small upgrading projects approved (Total small project budget approved US\$ 1,978,000)
- 19 Community-driven disaster rehabilitation projects approved in 8 countries : Cambodia (1 project), Indonesia (2 projects), Burma (3 projects), Philippines (7 projects), Vietnam (3 projects), Sri Lanka (1 project), Pakistan (1 project), Japan (1 project).
- 5 loans from the Regional Fund, for a total of \$178,500, in 4 countries, including Cambodia (1 loan in Khemera Phouminh for \$50,000), Nepal (1 loan in Biratnagar for \$12,500), Philippines (1 loan for LTHAI in Mandaue for \$46,000), and Sri Lanka (2 loans : \$20,000 for Batticaloa and \$50,000 for CLAF-Net).

MEETING WITH THE NEW MAYOR OF SEOUL, KOREA

In October 2011, Seoul elected a progressive new mayor, Mr. Park Won Soon - a farmer's son and left-wing reformer with a background in human rights law. The new mayor has been very open about his focus on welfare reform, child care, healthcare, education and moving away from big engineering projects that have displaced hundreds of urban communities - both poor and not-so-poor. At a time when Korea's public rental housing policies are being questioned and growing numbers of people are having a hard time finding decent, affordable housing, the Seoul Metropolitan Government is searching for alternatives like community-based and participatory upgrading and neighborhood redevelopment. And the new mayor's beliefs and background present an important opportunity to make help steer Seoul's development in a more humane, more people-driven direction. So on May 7th, a team from ACHR paid a visit to Mayor Park to discuss these things. Here are some notes from Professor Hosaka, who was part of the team :

The mission included Somsook Boonyabancha (ACHR), Bernadia Irawati (CITYNET), Mitsuhiro Hosaka (Nihon Fukushi Univ.) and Hong-Gyu Jeon (Osaka City Univ.), and visited Seoul on 7-8 May 2012. The mission was hosted by the Seoul-based NGO Asian Bridge. The primary purpose of the mission was to call on Mayor Park to explore possibilities for international experience-sharing for inclusive city development, with a particular focus on housing for and by the urban poor, in view of the scheduled locational shift of the CITYNET executive office from Japan to Seoul in 2013. The meeting with the mayor was joined by Prof. Seong-Gyu Ha, Dr. Gyeng-Chul Kim, Seoul Municipality's Head of Housing Policy Department, Head of International Relations Department; Secretary to the Mayor, representatives of Korean Center for Housing Rights (KCHR), as well as Hyowoo Na and Boram Kim from Asian Bridge.



The mission informed the mayor that CITYNET, a network of city-to-city cooperation in Asia and the Pacific, has been working for last 25 years, gaining international recognition in the field of human settlement management, and has always emphasized creating platform between city governments and local civic organizations. The mission expressed that the leadership of mayor Park, having ample experience and sympathy with civic organizations and movements, is highly expected to show to other Asian cities how local governments should work for a more inclusive city development, in partnership with poor communities, NGOs and people's organizations. The mission offered that regional experiences already accumulated by ACHR, an active member of CITYNET right from its start, in the field of community-driven housing and city-wide inclusive development, are readily available if the mayor finds them useful in working out new city strategies.

The mayor Park agreed that he is pursuing the same mission, namely working for the urban poor and improving their housing situation, and mentioned that he considers the initiatives and roles of local communities most important. He advised the mission that suggestions for programs on housing rights and inclusive cities would be considered by the Seoul Municipality's working groups for concrete action. The mission proposed that a CITYNET and ACHR workshop be hosted by the Seoul Municipality and Asian Bridge in Seoul on inclusive city development, that a pilot project to explore good solutions for housing the poor be organized, and that a study to establish a city-wide community development fund accessible to the poor be initiated in Seoul. The mayor advised that a more detailed proposal be sent to the city's advisory committee on housing and city regeneration (chaired by Prof. Ha) for review. He stressed that he wished to see actual improvements in housing situation of poor communities in Seoul as soon as possible. The mission may assist Seoul City in undertaking a survey on appropriate policy options for low-income housing, community building and innovative funding in Seoul.



Before the meeting with the mayor, the mission had a chance to visit the Poidong 266 community - a 32-year old informal settlement of about 100 households which has experienced years of eviction threats and a devastating fire in 2011. We discussed with the people - particularly women community members - about their history and their recent, remarkable process to rebuild their houses together. The mission understood the hardship and difficulties people were experiencing, but also felt the strength of the community. It therefore observed that concrete alternative plans may be worked out and compared with official plans in public forums, while some tactical involvement of top decision makers in field activities could be thought of. Land sharing, land exchange and cooperative housing could also be a part of options. Community architects may be involved to crystallize people's desire. People should be supported to visualize more positive changes.



URBAN POOR COALITION ASIA is LAUNCHED IN the PHILIPPINES

(This report comes from Ruby Papeleras, from the Homeless People's Federation in the Philippines) We have just finished a very big, four-day event here in the Philippines (March 12-16), to launch the new Urban Poor Coalition Asia (UPCA), and I would like to share about what happened during those 4-days. On March 12, participants from 11 Asian countries arrived in Manila, along with about 1,000 local participants from the Philippines.

March 13-14: Field visits to 5 cities: All the international and local participants were divided into five groups, and each group traveled to different cities (Quezon City, Davao, Sorsorgon, Mandaue and Iloilo). In these cities, the visitors visited community-driven housing and upgrading projects, talked with the communities and local governments and exchanged ideas.

March 15: First day of the UPCA launch meeting, at the venue in Quezon City. This full-day meeting began with reports back about the field visits, with presentations afterwards about the community-driven development process in all of the 12 participating countries. We also discussed about the new Urban Poor Coalition Asia and elected a management committee to facilitate the UPCA process for the first one or two years (which will include community leaders from 5 countries: Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Cambodia). We also read out and refined our *"Declaration of Commitment and Action"*, which was to be signed by the government officials and community leaders the next day. We also discussed our new UPCA revolving loan fund, and agreed that during our launch we will start to collect contributions, to top up the contributions from community savings networks around Asia which have already been collected, as seed capital for the new fund.

March 16: Launch of the UPCA and signing of the UPCA declaration : For this main event where we officially launched our new regional coalition. We had invited the President of the Philippines, but finally he could not make it. But three key officials did come: Mayor of Quezon City, Jesse Robredo (Secretary for the Department of the Interior and Local Government), and Ana Oliveros (President of the Social Housing Finance Corporation), and they all pledged their commitment and signed our UPCA declaration, which was read out by Jose (the convener of the national urban poor alliance). For me, this was a very big and very successful event! For us community people who attended the event, we really felt afterwards that we really exist, as a coalition.

UPCA Revolving Loan Fund : After Celia counted all the contributions to the new fund so far, which we collected during the meeting and before hand in several countries, we have \$5,512. This may not be a huge amount of money, but it is symbolic because this first seed capital for our new fund comes entirely from the pockets of poor people around Asia - not from any donor organization or any government.

Way forward for UPCA : We have agreed that in the coming six months, all of us will go back and inform the communities in all our countries about this new coalition and about the UPCA fund. We also decided that we would organize this kind of regional UPCA gatherings every one or two years, in different countries.



"We, the urban poor communities of Asia, want to declare today that we are ready and able to make change to our lives. We want to be active actors and participants, not just recipients, in all development relating to our lives. We want to be active partners in all development activities of government and development agencies."
(from the UPCA Declaration)

UPCA FUND : A NEW FINANCE WINDOW FOR ASIA'S URBAN POOR

The total funds mobilized for the new UPCA Revolving Loan fund during the UPCA launch was \$5,512. In addition, the ACCA committee approved on April 17th the amount of \$100,000 (from the "Savings and Community Funds" budget line) to be added to the UPCA revolving fund. On top of this, the existing ACCA revolving fund has a capital of \$178,500, of which \$168,500 is already circulating in loans to 6 groups. This amount was also added to the UPCA revolving fund, so the total fund is around \$284,012.

After the big launch in the Philippines, the UPCA Committee held a meeting in Bangkok on April 16, to plan the management of this new UPCA Fund. The representatives from Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Nepal discussed this new fund and agreed to the following initial terms and conditions :

- 70% of the fund will be used for housing-related loans (including land loans), and 30% for non-housing loans.
- A maximum loan ceiling of US\$ 50,000 per country, depending on the existing loans in the country.
- Loans can be repaid over a period of up to three years (with the flexibility to extend to five years), at 4% per year.
- Loan proposals will be circulated to the UPCA members and approved by the UPCA Committee, which includes the five country members elected at the UPCA Launch (Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Philippines) and one ACHR secretariat representative.
- Loan applications should be submitted two weeks before UPCA committee meetings, which will be planned to go along with the ACCA Committee meetings (next one in June 2012). Loan applications should detail the management system for each loan, what each loan is for, and short city information. Approved loans will be transferred either to the national or city-based CDFs.
- For the time being, the initial capital will be kept in a US Dollar bank account in the Philippines, under the name of the Homeless Peoples Federation, but for the UPCA Revolving Fund only.



The UPCA Revolving Fund is now open for proposals! Please email your proposal to the UPCA Committee and cc ACHR.

DPU STUDENTS LEARN FROM THAI COMMUNITIES A SECOND TIME

For the second year in a row, a group of masters students from the Development Planning Unit (DPU) and the Bartlett School of University College London (UCL) came to Bangkok to carry out field work for their course, over a two week period (April – May 2012). Their program in Thailand was hosted by CODI, the Thai Community Networks and the Community Architects Network (CAN) in Thailand. After the success of last year's field course, in which another 50 post-grad students came to learn about community-driven planning in Thailand and to work closely with local communities, Thailand was again chosen as the case study site for another 51 students. The students attended lectures to learn about community processes in Thailand and about CODI's *Baan Mankong* slum upgrading program, listened to panel discussions with government and community representatives, and spent several days in six case study communities in Bangkok, Samut Prakan and Pattaya. This year, some 20 young architects from Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Lao PDR and Thailand also participated and learned from the communities alongside the DPU students.



The DPU students who participated in this course come from all over the world - Colombia, Ghana, Sudan, Nigeria, Korea, China, Pakistan, England, USA and Germany. This type of on-site workshop and exposure to a people-driven slum upgrading process is extremely valuable, because many of these students will become key professionals and government officers back home in their own countries. If they can gain a true understanding of what people-driven development is, that kind of understanding in those kinds of people can potentially impact future policies in many countries around the world. When in the field, the students will work with local communities to answer some key research questions regarding urban transformation processes as driven by urban low-income communities. This also involves questioning the processes of participatory planning, people's finance systems and changing power



relations between the grassroots groups and government organizations. The workshop is an important part of the students' coursework and they will share their results with the participants once their reports are complete.

DECENT POOR PROGRAM in ASIA WRAPS UP

In January 2011, the Decent Poor Program, with funding support from Selavip, was approved to implement among member countries of ACHR. The aim of the Decent Poor Program is to ensure that the poorest members of any community and city are included in development processes, as they can also be important actors, and to ensure that they are able to participate in housing improvement projects. The emphasis of the project was on the identification and selection of beneficiaries through a community-driven process, as this can strengthen the bonds within the community, by ensuring that those with financial and other difficulties are included in community activities and assisted when problems arise. The selected beneficiaries should be active participants in the community themselves. The project ended in December 2011. During this time, 189 households across 10 countries were selected to receive grants for housing improvement activities. Each beneficiary household would receive a grant of US\$ 500, and maximum 20 households per country. The identified recipients were often single mothers or elderly widows, or families facing particular hardship due to illness or unemployment. Each of the 189 households in 10 countries directly benefit from a grant of US\$ 500. The grant is to be used for housing purposes, and most of the chosen beneficiaries have extremely difficult housing situations: poor quality housing, lack of shelter altogether or otherwise living in unsafe, temporary or inadequate housing.

The beneficiaries of the Decent Poor grant were identified by their fellow community members, according to certain criteria which meant they were more in need of financial support than others. Each country was to decide their own selection process. In general, there are 2 approaches, one is to let each city select one or two recipients. In this process the communities are encouraged to discuss and decide which family is eligible for grants. The other approach is for the working team and the national community network to decide which city to carry out the project, and to develop a set of criteria for selection. The proposed recipients are then selected based on this set of criteria. The finalists were approved at ACCA meetings in September and December 2011, as shown in the table below:



DECENT POOR GRANTS (as of March 2012 - Maximum 20 grants per country @ \$500 per grant per household)

Country	Implementing organization	# households supported	Total budget approved (US\$)
1. India	Hunnarshala Foundation, in Bhuj	10	5,000
	Tibet Heritage Foundation, in Ladakh	10	5,000
2. Mongolia	Urban Development Resource Center	9	4,500
	Center for Human Rights Development	10	5,000
3. Indonesia	Urban Poor Consortium	20	10,000
4. Cambodia	National Community Savings Network / UPDF	20	10,000
5. Sri Lanka	Women's Bank and Sevanatha	20	10,000
6. Nepal	Lumanti	20	10,000
7. Philippines	Homeless Peoples Federation	20	10,000
8. Myanmar	Women of the World Myanmar	10	5,000
	Bedar Rural Development Program	10	5,000
	Aungzabu Foundation	10	5,000
9. Vietnam	CDF Network / ACVN	10	5,000
10. Lao PDR	National Lao Women's Savings Network	10	5,000
TOTAL	14 organizations	189 households	US\$ 94,500

The implementation was not without challenges. It took a bit of time for developing criteria as well as community discussion. It was also difficult to identify the most needy households while the involved communities are already poor. On top of that, the number of grants were limited, and required to be used most effectively for housing purposes. However the emphasis of the Decent Poor community-driven selection and implementation process is that the community should increase their awareness of the needs and problems of their fellow community members, and work collectively to find solutions to ensure that all members of the community are adequately housed. The implementation of the project also encourages communities to explore solutions to housing improvement activities by opening up to participation/contribution from other sectors, and attracting attention from the local authorities which may lead to other community housing initiatives.



VIDEO AND MEDIA WORKSHOP HELD in BANGKOK, APRIL 24-26

A three-day workshop was organized in April on video and media, as an opportunity for groups to share their videos and media strategies in relation to the ACCA program. There were participants from Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Korea, Lao PDR and Cambodia, with a mix of media professionals (such as Abid Hasan, a TV journalist from Pakistan), film-makers (such as Turmunkh Dorjkhand from Mongolia), as well as community architects and other NGO representatives who also have experience in producing



films. The workshop also benefited from the presence of Brenda Kelly and Trisha Connolly from Uncommon Media, who are film professionals with experience making TV programs on development issues from around the world, who have previously worked with ACHR and attended the last media workshop two years ago.

On the first day of the workshop, participants from each country showed the films or other media that they had already produced, and received feedback from the others. There was a mix of short film clips and raw footage, as well as longer documentaries and clips that are already on YouTube. We learnt that in Vietnam, there is a TV show called *For the Poor*, which regularly highlights projects and activities in poor communities, including the ACCA housing project in Vinh – so this is a useful avenue for sharing urban poor community activities to a wider, national audience. In Mongolia there are also regular TV programs about urban poor activities. The Cambodian film documented the two-year process of an ACCA-supported housing project, from start to finish, and included entertaining clips of an entire wooden house being moved in one piece. The Philippines team showed an animated clip that is being used for fund-raising, while a Korean film documented a long struggle of one community to obtain secure tenure, while facing opposition and fires. That film is also being used to raise funds for reconstruction.

"We built this" On the second day, the participants shared tips and tricks, and discussed possible future projects - one of which is a series of short films highlighting ACCA activities across Asia, entitled *"We Built This"*, with each film being watchable as a stand-alone film or as part of the series. Brenda explained that an advantage within the ACHR network is that we are all insiders to the process, and can thus highlight the key issues much better than an outside documentary-maker can. One way to do this, she said, is through "character-led" films, in which a lively person tells the story, so that we can see it through their eyes. Those interested in making a short film for "We Built This" can send their proposed film project to Maurice and Brenda, and Uncommon Media will work on editing the clips to create a unified series. Another possible film project would be a series of films about the Decent Poor projects, following the case of one recipient per country, and documenting the changes arising as a result of receiving the housing grant.

STRATEGIES TO GET URBAN POOR ISSUES ON TV : *(from Abid Hasan, TV journalist in Pakistan)*

- Make friends in the media and get them to produce a report, which will be more likely to get aired than if you give them a finished product.
- Media is always present when a politician visits a site. A politician is news – you can also hold the politician accountable if he makes pronouncements on TV.
- NGOs can create a journalist award –a yearly award for the journalist who does the most to raise the issue of the urban poor in public media, for example.
- Bring in faces on your films – e.g. politicians, academics. Will be easier to get things on TV if their faces are on the film.
- Owners of TV Channels are often influential. Approach these people and make them part of your report. Otherwise they are not really interested in advocating. So you need something to force them to air it – for example because a politician has said this or that, so you can air it.

We also discussed other tips and tricks with regards to making and editing films, and these will be compiled by Brenda and Trish in a manual for the participants. Discussions also focused on how to share films, and we agreed that having either an ACHR channel on YouTube, or a video page on the upcoming community architects' website (or both) would be a good way to gather together all the films. In particular, it is useful to share films about technical tools relating to upgrading – such as the simple solar light technology using a soda bottle (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJ9LL8d2UJI&feature=related>). There are many such technical videos already on YouTube, and gathering them together on an ACHR channel would be a useful resource. We also discussed the use of other forms of social media, like Twitter and Facebook, and possibilities of connecting to local film schools to learn more technical tools with regard to film production. On the third and final day of the workshop, participants discussed in country groups their future plans and how they wish to proceed with media activities. A steering committee was established, consisting of the representatives from ACHR Sec, Uncommon Media and urban poor activists in Asian countries.

MEETING WITH THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK in MARCH 2012

During the course of the UPCA launch program in the Philippines, participants had meetings with some key international agencies in Manila, to introduce this new regional urban poor coalition and open a dialogue. One of these meetings was at the ADB, where the team met with Lainie Thomas, who is the "Social Development Specialist in Civil Society and Participation" for Southeast Asia. Also present was Priya, from the Urban Development section. The meeting focused on the various ways that community groups and the civil society can contact ADB and share their concerns, particularly through the ADB website.

The meeting began with Ruby introducing UPCA and Lainie outlining her role in connecting civil society groups with the appropriate staff within the ADB. Each country has its own ADB civil society cooperation representative, and a full list of these representatives is available at this website : <http://www.adb.org/site/ngos/contacts/cso-cooperation-network>

Lainie showed how the ADB can serve as a useful resource for community groups who need more information about a particular project, or who want to register a complaint about the project. She demonstrated the "advance project search" tool on the website, which allows searches by country, sector, and project name. Once the project has been identified on the site, all the relevant documents related to the project will be shown. The project proposal will also list the names of all ADB staff involved with the project, and their contact details. Project details can be found at: <http://www2.adb.org/Projects/>

When any person or group registers a complaint about an ADB-funded project, Lainie said, these complaints are taken very seriously. There are two types of complaints: problems of non-compliance with ADB procedures, or problems experienced by people who have been - or will be - adversely affected by the projects. Most of the complaints coming from civil society groups are the second type. In order to file a complaint, there must be at least two affected persons, and they first must have sought to address the issue by contacting the relevant program officers as listed in the project documents. If this step has not led to a satisfactory resolution, then a complaint can be filed, either by the affected people or by an NGO, attorney, or organization. The relevant documents for filing a complaint can be found here: <http://beta.adb.org/site/accountability-mechanism/main>

There are various complaints mechanisms available to civil society groups

CONSULTATION PHASE	COMPLIANCE REVIEW PHASE	ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM REVIEW
<p>The consultation phase aims to actively respond to the concerns of people affected by ADB-assisted projects through fair, transparent, and consensus-based problem solving.</p> <p>Filing a Complaint Complaints Letters Complaints Registry Office of the Special Facilitator FAQs</p>	<p>People who are directly, materially and adversely affected by an ADB-assisted project during formulation, processing, or implementation can file a request for compliance review to the independent Compliance Review Panel which investigate compliance with ADB's operational policies and procedures.</p> <p>Compliance Review Panel Filing a Request for Compliance Review Sample Request Letters Registry of Requests Office of the Compliance Review Panel Brochures</p>	<p>In 2011, ADB undertook a review of its Accountability Mechanism. The review included an extensive public consultation process.</p> <p>Accountability Mechanism Review Website</p>

Civil society groups can also play a role in the ADB's policy reviews, which occur on a five yearly basis. When these reviews take place, civil society organizations are invited to contribute their opinions. More information on how civil society can participate in the ADB is available here: <http://www.adb.org/site/ngos/civil-society-participation>

Priya informed the group that the Urban Development section has a new "Urban Operation Plan", which is currently under consideration by the ADB board. This plan includes the concept of inclusive cities, and the need to take a holistic view of urban development, and to include all the relevant actors. So community-based organizations and civil society need to be brought into the process at the planning stage, not later. It is likely that this plan will be approved and then put into practice before the end of 2012.

ACHR SAYS GOODBYE TO DIANE ARCHER : After working with the ACHR secretariat for two years, Diane Archer will be moving to London at the end of May, to take up a new job on a climate change project with IIED. But it's a soft goodbye, since Diane will be working with our close friends at IIED, and since her new job will involve some traveling back to Asia.



PAIBOON WATTANASIRITHAM, March 24, 1941 - April 9, 2012

(from a note sent out by ACHR to regional contacts on Tuesday April 10, 2012) We have some sad news to report from Thailand, where Khun Paiboon Wattanasiritham has passed away after a long battle with pancreatic cancer, at the age of 71. Khun Paiboon was a distinguished economist and senior civil servant who helped develop the concept of finance *for* poor communities and finance *by* poor communities in Thailand, and played a key role in the setting up of UCDO (in 1992) and CODI (in 2000). All his work was informed by a deep faith in people-driven development processes and an unwavering belief that communities should be the key actors in making change. He was also a firm believer in collaboration - that every stakeholder should be part of the development process, with people. His beliefs, his expertise in finance and his management style have all had a great influence on the working culture of CODI (and UCDO before it), and helped to shape CODI into a modern kind of development institution, using the tools and strength of finance, community networks and collaboration. Although he is now gone, the work and the ideas he helped to develop in CODI still continue, at a national scale.

Many of you who may have met Khun Paiboon during visits to Thailand over the years will remember his tranquil, dignified presence. And those who worked with him will never forget his extraordinary capacity to see the good in every person and in every situation: his was the kind of genuine optimism which has become a very rare commodity in our cynical age.

In November, 2007, when Khun Paiboon was Deputy Prime Minister, ACHR organized a regional workshop on community savings and funds in Bangkok, and Khun Paiboon invited all 130 participants to the Government House for a lively discussion (*the attached photo is from that meeting*). Here are his closing words from that meeting :

"I would like to say how happy I am to have listened to many accounts of what you have all done in different countries. The essential feature that I would like to repeat is that all people, no matter how poor they are, do have strength. And it is on that strength that people can develop. And the amazing thing is that it can be done, it has been done, and it is being done now in so many countries. That is a joyful revelation. And I hope that that progress will continue with learning, with working and with liberty. Especially learning together, working together and living together. I think these can be the way that we can move forward. And I wish all of you the best of the opportunity to be able to learn more and succeed more. Let's hope that from now on, the people's movement will be a global movement."

Paiboon Wattanasiritham (March 24, 1941 - April 9, 2012) Ex-Deputy PM Paiboon dies at 71 *(From the Bangkok Post, Tuesday April 10, 2012)*

Former social development and human security minister Paiboon Wattanasiritham died yesterday of pancreatic cancer. He was 71. Paiboon passed away at 1:43 PM at Chulalongkorn Hospital. The funeral service will be held at Wat That Thong for seven days - tomorrow, Wednesday and April 16-20. Royal bathing water will be provided.

Paiboon was known for his dedication to development work throughout his life. After graduating in economics from Hull University in the United Kingdom in 1967, Paiboon worked for the Bank of Thailand for a decade. He was the Stock Exchange of Thailand president during 1980-1982 before dedicating his life to rural development as director of the Thai Rural Reconstruction Movement, Thailand's first non-governmental organization established by Puey Ungphakorn, a distinguished economist.

In 2006, Paiboon was appointed as social development and human security minister during the Surayud Chulanont administration and later served as a deputy prime minister. Paiboon, a native of Ayutthaya, was born on March 24, 1941. He is survived by his wife, Khunying Jada, former Siam Commercial Bank president, and two children, Picha and Chompan.

