

# ACHR

## e-news

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

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### NEPAL : RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY UPGRADING POSSIBILITIES

*On May 28, 2008, Nepal became the world's youngest democratic republic, when the newly-elected, Maoist-majority Constituent Assembly called its first meeting and gave two weeks notice to the country's deposed King Gyanendra to vacate the Narayanhiti Royal Palace in Kathmandu, so it can become a national museum. Through all the recent years of civil war and political upheaval that have led up to this historic moment in Nepal, the process of savings and credit, community upgrading, network building, toilet construction, and partnership building have continued without interruption in the slums and squatter settlements of Kathmandu and other Nepali cities, under the stewardship of the Women's Savings Federation, the National Federation of Squatter Communities, and with the ongoing support from the NGO Lumanti. Before the most recent election, Lumanti had already begun to develop a strong working relationship to the new Maoist government, and since the Maoists have won a majority in the new government, there is a lot of hope that there will be much more room for collaboration.*



*In 2007, Lumanti invited Somsook to Kathmandu and organized a meeting with the new Minister and Municipal Commissioner (both Maoists) who were planning a new project to redevelop the Bhagmati River that flows through the center of Kathmandu - much of which is lined with river-side squatter communities. Instead of evicting the communities, the Commissioner had the very strong intention to use the river revitalization to improve the housing, living conditions and land tenure of these communities. Here are some notes from Somsook on that river-side redevelopment process.*

**How to implement the river revitalization program? Supply-driven or demand-driven approach?** During my short visit to Kathmandu last year, I had some very good discussions with Lajana and with the man who was at that time the Kathmandu Municipal Commissioner. Has had been a guerilla fighter before, and now had a very strong intention to revive the country - *in the Nepali way* - starting with the Bhagmati River, which is the heart of Kathmandu. He wants to clean up the river and transform the environmental conditions in the communities and urban districts along the riverbanks, without evicting any of the poor squatter communities that line the river. This initiative shows the Maoist group's intention to "*make Nepal for the Nepalis*" - and I think that's a very nice and unusual idea! But when we asked him how they are going to do about doing that, he told us he will use the bureaucratic mechanism to implement the project - like in most socialist countries. This is the classic "supply-driven" approach, which almost always becomes extremely centralized, because it is the government system which plans and implements everything.

**Giving people the freedom to plan and manage the process in a demand-driven way, instead of the bureaucracy :**

But if we want people to have freedom, with good direction, we may be able to show them an alternative "demand-driven" approach, in which the communities themselves enjoy the freedom to plan and manage the riverside revitalization process. This is a new technique which our Maoist friends may not be familiar with, and may not be able to understand very well. The main new tool of this "demand-driven" approach is finance - finance that goes directly to people, not down through all the layers of the bureaucracy. This may be something that traditionalists may not believe in, but this may be the new idea we can offer in Nepal, from the Asian region's experience. Using money in a positive sense like this can bring a new freedom to people and allow them to break away from this old, conventional bureaucratic, supply-driven system. We proposed this idea, but I don't know how well the Commissioner could absorb it.

During that meeting, the idea was also proposed of organizing a regional workshop on riverside redevelopment, and inviting some of the key experts (both community leaders and professionals) from around Asia to share their experiences. Things have been put on hold as the government has formed and re-formed itself in recent months, but now that the elections are over and the new government is in place, we hope that the riverside upgrading project will fire up again and we will be able to link with the new Maoist government.

**Developing some fresh ideas on how to upgrade the river-side squatter communities :** In March 2008, ACHR sent a young Thai architect named Chawanad Luansang (Nad) to spend a couple of months in Nepal, working with Lumanti and the river-side squatter communities to help plan a community upgrading strategy for settlements along the Bhagmati River. Nad worked especially with the Sankhamool community to prepare a series of alternative upgrading plans for that squatter community, as a kind of pilot exploration of what kinds of redevelopment options are possible. Besides a straightforward upgrading of the community's houses and infrastructure, Nad helped the communities to develop several land sharing plans for Sankhamool, in which part of the land would be used for building new housing for the community, and part would be returned to the city for public parks, etc.



**ABOVE :** Sankhamool Community : **Before** (as it is now) and **After** (with one of Nad's land sharing idea)

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## THAILAND : NEW BOOK on COMMUNITY UPGRADING

A new book on the Baan Mankong Upgrading Program was produced and jointly published in April 2008 by ACHR and CODI (76 pages), "**CODI Update 5: 50 Community Upgrading Projects.**"

The Baan Mankong city-wide upgrading program, which was launched in January 2003, is now in its fifth year. 556 upgrading projects involving 1,108 poor communities are either finished or underway in 218 cities, in 68 of the country's 76 provinces, involving some 57,519 households. The budget approved so far for all these projects (all of which comes from the Thai Government) comes to 3.905 Billion Baht (US\$ 116.57 million), which includes :

- **Grant for infrastructure upgrading :** 1.798 Billion Baht **(US\$ 53.67 million)**
- **Loans for housing and land :** 2.107 Billion Baht **(US\$ 62.90 million)**



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You can download a PDF file of this new 76-page publication from the CODI website, or contact ACHR for a hard copy. When you get to the CODI website's home page, just click the British flag in the upper right hand corner and follow the links to the Baan Mankong section to find this and many other documents on this important community upgrading program.

## BURMA : CYCLONE NARGIS HITS MAY 2-3, 2008

For two days, May 2-3, 2008, Cyclone Nargis pounded Burma (Myanmar) with winds and rain that were powerful enough to create uproot trees, blow away houses and create tidal surges which subsequently flooded a good part of the country in a disaster on the same - or even greater - scale as the 2004 Asian tsunami. An estimated 140,000 people perished in the calamity, most in the Irrawady Delta area, Yangon District and the Kayin and Mon States, which bore the worst effects of the storm. Information coming from Yangon gradually began to reveal the severity of the storm, with homelessness, water shortages and sharply increasing food prices affecting a large majority of the country's population - a population already impoverished and vulnerable after years of economic instability and increasing inability to meet their basic needs.

Everybody knows already the story about how reluctant the generals in Burma's ruling junta were to let in any foreign aid, or how slow they were to respond to this enormous catastrophe with any kind of assistance for people. In the weeks that went by before the UN and foreign aid organizations were finally allowed in, the greatest source of help and support to the cyclone victims came from Burmese people themselves, and particularly from monks in the vast network of local Buddhist temples and monasteries around the country, which gave shelter to people who'd lost their homes, helped provide whatever food and health assistance they could, and helped organize cremation ceremonies for the dead.

ACHR hasn't been able to be involved in Burma directly yet, but we have been offering a little support to a very quiet, very well-established Thailand-based NGO called the **Spirit in Education Movement (SEM)**, which has been able to tap this network of Buddhist monks, monasteries and temples to begin channeling relief to the affected villages. SEM is ACHR's key partner in Burma, with several decades of experience working in Burma and the key organization that is now linking organizations both in Burma and in Thailand to help the affected communities. SEM is primarily a Buddhist spiritual and educational NGO and doesn't have a lot of experience with community-driven approach to disaster, but they ended up getting involved in relief work after the 2004 tsunami, which wasn't too bad in Burma. That experience turns out to have been a good dress rehearsal for this much larger disaster.



**Moo writes of SEM's approach :** *In its experience working with Burmese migrant workers in Southern Thailand after the December 2004 tsunami, SEM's approach to emergency relief work was not aimed solely at aid distribution. SEM also encouraged principles of participation and community organizing for empowerment in their work. Therefore, any initiatives involving support for those affected by such natural disasters, also goes hand-in-hand with encouraging them to organize together, to come up with their own plans as to how best meet their needs. This can become an important starting point of community organizing toward long-term self reliance and sustainability, rather than encouraging a dependency mindset that has become so prevalent in areas where relief aid is distributed.*

In both the tsunami and the cyclone, SEM's extensive and long-established network of monks, temples, monasteries, NGOs and grassroots groups around the country - and particularly in the Irrawady Delta area - have already been very useful in assessing needs directly with and through local grassroots partners and channeling relief and aid to the victims over a very large area. Burma's monks have been among the most active organizers and aid-givers in the cyclone relief work, and the monasteries and temples in almost every town and village and have opened up their space for affected community people to stay. To assist SEM, ACHR has so far :

**1. Helped prepare a funding proposal for SEM :** In the days after the cyclone, we helped prepare an emergency funding proposal to the Norwegian Government, but it is new and we have learned that they are also considering SEM directly, so no need for ACHR.

**2. Sent a tsunami "expert" team from Thailand to Burma to support SEM :** In July, ACHR supported the Burma process a little bit by sending a group of key people involved in the tsunami, to go to Burma and visit SEM's work and explore possibilities for how they could offer help from Thailand. The team included :

- **Mr. Maitree Jongkrajug** (community leader from Ban Nam Khem Village, Phang Nga Province - the seaside town most badly affected by the tsunami) Maitree is also the chairman of the Ban Naam Khem Community Bank, which was set up by poor and landless tsunami survivors.
- **Mr. Jamnong Thajitnirat** (a freelance community organizer who was one of the key people to help organize the survivors in Phangnga and Phuket provinces, in the chaotic hours and days after the tsunami, and helped set up the people-managed relief camp at Ban Nam Khem).

- **Organizers from the Chumchon Thai Foundation**, which had also been involved extensively in supporting the long-term community-driven rehabilitation of tsunami-hit villages in southern Thailand.

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## **FIJI ISLANDS : First ACHR trip to Fiji Islands, May 8 - 11, 2008**

Over the past two years, groups from Asia-Pacific island nation of Fiji have come to Thailand two or three times, each time with very good teams of community leaders and NGO supporters. As soon as they went back after the first visit, they started saving in a big way and linking the squatter communities together into a network - so far in only the capital city of Suva, where by now almost all the communities in the city are linked into the network. Their purpose in going on this first trip to Fiji (which is a very long one, with a stopover in Sydney...) was to share their experiences with this new network of squatter communities and several other key groups involved in issues of housing and urban poverty in Fiji - especially our experiences with savings and credit, networking, negotiating for secure land and settlement upgrading, to help the Fiji communities start similar initiatives. Here are some notes on the trip from Somsook.

**Who went?** The team included seven people: Nut (a young Thai architect), Prapaat (a Thai leader from Klong Bang Bua community in Bangkok), May Domingo (a Filipina Architect working in Iloilo), Sonia Fadrigo (community leader from the Homeless People's Federation Philippines in Iloilo), Kenneth Fernandez (from ACHR's Eviction Watch program, living now in Australia), Maurice (ACHR) and Somsook (ACHR and CODI).

**Squatter settlements all over the place in Suva :** In Fiji, poor migrants from rural areas are flowing into the cities in great number these days, just like in most other Asian countries, looking for opportunities and education and a better future than in their villages. But when they come, they have no choice but to squat on vacant land that belongs to somebody else. When you drive around Suva, you see squatter settlements everywhere - large and small collections of shacks built on swampy bits of land without any basic services. Most of the older poor communities in Suva and in other urban areas also have no proper land rights or security. Not all the people living in these communities are very poor, but what they do all have in common is land insecurity. And because they have no security on the land, most of them are understandably reluctant to invest in making any improvements to their housing or living conditions when they might be evicted any time - and evictions are happening in Fiji. More than 80% of the land in Fiji - including the land most poor communities occupy - falls under "customary" land ownership systems and is controlled by the various tribal chiefs, through a national native land committee. A big element in the country's politics right now is the struggle between the native groups and the changing society.



**Formal presentation with government officials :** On the first day, in a big, formal meeting with high-level government officials from various ministries and representatives of various development institutions in Fiji, we all made presentations about what we have been doing (in Thailand with CODI, upgrading, saving and network building and in Philippines with saving, upgrading and housing). The meeting was set up by our hosts, the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECEA), and the whole group was very enthusiastic to learn what is happening in other parts of Asia. The current government in Fiji is an interim government, appointed after last year's coup d'etat, and they are quite active. The Prime Minister's secretary made the opening speech, which indicated to us that ECEA and the new community network have been working very closely

with the government, and that's why there have been opportunities suddenly to demonstrate people-driven projects in Fiji and why our presentation was so well received by all the key organizations and groups there.

**Dialogue with the new Fiji Community Network :** On the second day, we had a much less formal dialogue with a big group of community leaders from the new network of squatter settlements in Suva. The response to the presentations made by the Thai and Filipina community leaders and there was a lot of lively discussion. The two architects, Nut and May, were trying to show how simple housing and very good settlement improvement designs *by people* are possible.

**Visit to first pilot housing and upgrading project in the Lagi Lagi community :** After the meeting, we visited one of the squatter communities where ECREA and the community network have managed to negotiate secure land tenure (by long-term lease), raise funds (partly from the government and partly from Misereor) and begun the process of planning the country's first community-managed, in-situ settlement upgrading project. This will be an important breakthrough project to demonstrate how these communities can be secured with a proper lease agreement and the housing and infrastructure upgraded, as a kind of pilot initiative. But it is still in the planning stage.



### Follow-up plans for Fiji :

- **Sending Thai community architects to work with the people.** During the visit, we all agreed that for this first demonstration project, it is very important that the form the project takes should show a layout design by people that is beautiful and lively and human scale. The task of facilitating a good community design process to bring out these qualities in a community housing project is no easy thing, and is certainly not something architects learn to do in school. So we also agreed to send two of the most experienced young Thai community architects (Nad and Ter) back to Fiji sometime soon (perhaps late October 2008) to work with the community people, ECREA and perhaps some local architects to develop a new plan for this pilot community.
- **Fine-tuning the savings process with an exposure trip to Philippines :** All the squatter settlements in Suva now have very active savings groups, and they are doing quite well, taking the saving process as something very important. The problem is that so far, these groups are just saving - they haven't begun to give loans yet. And so the savings is a kind of *one-way* process, which is becoming a burden for the poorer community members. So we all proposed that they start giving loans, to use the money they have been saving for various other activities, especially income generation. Since they're all still a little nervous about taking this step, we discussed the idea of sending a group of community leaders to visit the Philippines and spend some time learning about the Homeless People's Federation's savings and loan process.
- **Exposing Fiji's key government figures to community-driven savings and upgrading models in Thailand :** We are also in the process of setting up an exposure visit to Thailand for a group of government officers, from the ministry level down to the high-ranking bureaucrats, where they will meet their counterparts in the Thai government and visit community upgrading projects under a variety of innovative tenure arrangements in Bangkok and other cities. This Ministerial visit is now being arranged and will happen soon.
- **Exploring possible funding support in a precarious political situation :** In this trip, we met some representatives from the New Zealand government's overseas funding department, which has supported the work of ECREA in the past. Because of the recent coup d'etat in Fiji and the uncertain political situation, many donors have slowed down their support in the country, or turned off the tap entirely, and this has created a bit of a crisis for foreign-funded development work in Fiji. After discussing the situation with the New Zealand donor and ECREA, and explaining a little about ACHR's work and the possibilities for ACHR's future support to the Fiji process. Ken Fernandez proposed that if such an arrangement becomes absolutely necessary, one possibility is that ACHR could make the funding proposal to New Zealand on behalf of the Fiji groups, but it is up to ECREA and our friends in Fiji to take the lead on this and give us the signal, and all the content of the proposal should come from Fiji, as much as possible, not ACHR.



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## CAMBODIA : UPDF 10th Anniversary Celebration, May 26 - 28, 2008

The **Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF)** marked its tenth anniversary in May, with a big celebration of community savings, community funds, settlement-upgrading and strategies for securing long-term land tenure in Phnom Penh and other Cambodian cities, through partnership with local government at various levels. The 3-day event, which was jointly organized by UPDF, the Municipality of Phnom Penh, ACHR and SDI included seminars on savings and upgrading, site visits to self-managed community upgrading projects around the city, and a very big meeting and public exhibition of community initiatives and four full-size house models held in the Wat Phnom Park, in central Phnom Penh. The event at Wat Phnom drew a crowd of about 14,000 community people from around the city and from 23 smaller towns and cities around Cambodia, as well as the participants from other Asian countries and South Africa. The crowd was so big that all the streets around the park had to be closed off for the whole morning.



The Urban Poor Development Fund was set up in March, 1998, as a joint venture of Phnom Penh's network of community savings groups, the Municipality of Phnom Penh and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights. The idea was to create a revolving fund to provide soft loans to poor communities for their housing and income generation initiatives, through their savings groups, and to use the fund to pool efforts in partnership and development in the city. The UPDF remains the only ongoing support system for the urban poor in Phnom Penh, and it is also playing the role of "big sister" to poor community networks and spin-off development funds in a growing number of provincial cities around the country. The extremely modest loans and grants that UPDF provides to poor communities work like an incentive to get people to start doing savings activities, and through their collective savings to start carrying out other activities like settlement upgrading, welfare, income generation, community enterprise and environmental improvement - whatever they decide is important. In this way, the fund supports a development process that starts from people.

### Highlights of the UPDF 10th Anniversary event :

**"Here is proof that city development can happen without making the poor get poorer."** (Mr. Mann Chhoeurn, Vice Governor of Phnom Penh and Chairman of UPDF)

**"This is like a very big school here in Phnom Penh, and lots and lots of poor people from around the country - and around Asia - are coming to this big school to learn."** (Somsook Boonyabancha, describing the big exhibition)



**1. Secure tenure for 10 communities in Phnom Penh :** In front of 14,000 people at Wat Phnom Park, Mr. Kep Chuk Tema, the Governor of Phnom Penh, granted collective tenure to the first batch of ten poor communities in the city - all of which have planned and carried out their own upgrading projects with UPDF support. Symbolic certificates of secure tenure were also given to representatives of some of the communities that have already received land title, in the various resettlement and land-sharing projects around the city.

**2. Expansion of UPDF and the community upgrading program to provincial cities :** Plans to expand the UPDF's activities and the community upgrading program beyond the municipal limits of Phnom Penh (to include at least 23 provincial cities and districts around Cambodia) were

given a blessing by the Government of Cambodia, through the Governor of Phnom Penh and Mr. Seng Limneou, the Undersecretary of State of the Council of Ministers and deputy of the National Committee for Population and Development (which is now an important new government partner for UPDF in its process of transforming itself from a city-based to a national urban poor support institution).

**3. UPDF's first seed loans given to 8 provincial city community development funds :** The UPDF made its first official bulk "seed loans" to eight of the community development funds which have been set up in Cambodian provincial cities, as partnerships between the local community networks and local authorities in those cities. The giving of these loans was a further step in the process of expanding UPDF's support to these provincial cities.

- Total 8 CDFs (with 104 savings groups and 4,942 members)
- Total savings in these 8 cities : 176 million Riels (US\$ 44,210)
- Total seed fund loans : 175 million Riels (US\$ 43,750)

**4. Large-scale learning about upgrading, savings, funds and strategies for getting secure tenure :** The 3-day event in Phnom Penh brought together about 8,000 participants, including 900 people from 23 Cambodian provincial cities (community leaders and local government officials), about 7,000 community people and local officials from Phnom Penh, 30 UPDF staff and volunteers from Phnom Penh and about 90 participants from foreign countries (with large teams from Thailand, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and smaller teams from the Philippines, Nepal, India and South Africa). For all these participants, the work in Phnom Penh was like a living lesson in how community savings, upgrading, network-building and partnership-building with their local authorities can help poor communities to forge solutions to their problems of livelihood, living conditions and land tenure insecurity - even in a very tough country like Cambodia.

**5. Fine-grained discussions and exchange in upgraded communities :** UPDF-supported upgrading projects have now been completed in 122 poor settlements in Phnom Penh, affecting 13,984 families. The participants were divided into smaller groups and on two afternoons had a chance to visit and talk in more detail with people in some of the communities in Phnom Penh which have upgraded their housing and infrastructure with support from the UPDF, under the government's "100 Slums Upgrading Policy", which was launched five years ago as part of the UPDF's 5th anniversary celebrations with support from MISEREOR.



**6. Participants from provincial cities all stayed in the communities,** hosted by the Phnom Penh savings groups.

And the bus loads of people coming included not only community leaders, but ordinary savings members and local government officials, so everyone can learn and share with their peers in Phnom Penh. The visiting teams from Vietnam, Thailand and Lao PDR also traveled cheaply, overland to Cambodia by bus and van.

- **Get the full report!** A detailed report of this important event (with photos) was prepared by UPDF and ACHR in July and can be downloaded from the ACHR website, or e-mail Tom for a PDF copy.
- **New UPDF newsletter published in English and Khmer versions :** A brand new 20-page newsletter with updates on the work of the UPDF in Cambodia was also prepared and printed especially for this event. A PDF version of the English version can be downloaded from the ACHR and UPDF websites, or contact ACHR for a copy.

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**INDOCHINESE COMMUNITY NETWORK** launched, May 2008 :

During the UPDF's 10th Anniversary celebrations in Phnom Penh, there was an enthusiastic resolution between the four geographically and culturally close countries of Indochina (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Thailand) to increase the exchange visits between their respective poor community savings networks and supportive local government officials in the four neighboring countries and to strengthen and intensify their already-strong links of learning, sharing and mutual support - especially around savings, livelihood, upgrading, community funds and land tenure activities. (*Contact ACHR for more details*)

## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS in ASIA :

A new ACHR / IIED collaboration to document some of the good work being done by groups in the Asia region

A new project to gather stories about the interesting work groups in Asia are doing had its birth during a visit to Bangkok in early May by David Satterthwaite. Here are a few snippets from his discussion with Somsook and Tom:

**David :** Every time I visit Arif in Pakistan, or Sheela in India, or you here in Thailand, there is so much going on. Despite the fantastic documentation process here, there is always more innovation going on. Most of the time, I find myself visiting institutions that have all this money for documentation, and nothing going on. But you're the reverse over here.

**Tom: / know!** If we worked full time only on Thailand, there would still be MORE than enough stories and innovations and breakthroughs and new ideas to fill one journal after another! There is always so much going on that is new and fascinating: community planning, community welfare, local funds consolidation, rural Baan Mankong, etc. The Thais do very good documentation of all this stuff - they come out with books and books and videos and newsletters! - but it's all in Thai language, so it's inaccessible to outsiders.

**David :** What would help you to get more of this documented in English? Irish Aid has got an initiative to support the documentation of local initiatives. They realize that giving a grant to the government of Tanzania is not delivering. So there is this money for documenting local processes for development. The Swedish government is probably going to close their urban program, but Thomas Meleen shoved some money to us, saying this can be used for any documentation for urban poverty reduction. IIED just happens to have these two pots of money for documentation at the moment - *these are temporary pots*. But if you can think of things that would help you. For instance Tom was telling me about this UPDF 10th Anniversary event you are organizing in Phnom Penh - we can easily allocate some budget for that.

**Somsook :** That would be very good. Because we need some documentation from the process, and from the development in Cambodia. Because this whole UPDF process is poverty alleviation. It is the poor people's system in Cambodia.

**David :** In Pakistan, for example, Anwar Rashid in Karachi is now getting all the OPP partners to write down their stories. In the past, he was always too busy for documentation. Now he sees how important it is. For once, I can fund something that Anwar will find useful. So if we accept that there is a HUGE amount of local innovation going on in the Asian networks - *which there is* - there are lots of ways to get these stories :

**Somsook : What we need to be stronger in any documentation we do is the sense of POWER :** The sense of politics that how things have been changing. Most of the documentation is more technical - how to design, how to do this and that. And things are not moving like that. Things are moving by how the power is balanced, and how the power in relationships is balanced. That is something we need.

- **We can understand why the people's process is important only if we understand this power issue.** Otherwise, we look at the people's process in the most shallow way, only as people's participation in OUR program or how to make some ants work for you. But it's not that, it's power of people, power of human beings, how it can be strengthened and can shift the way the system is determining how things are. We want to shift that because it isn't working, it's a major problem.
- **There is a need to understand how this power shifts.** How it starts from very nice and sweet and smooth savings activities, and so on. This is the difference between savings activities and conventional micro-credit. Micro credit is a purely technical matter of how to make finance accessible to the very poor. It's no power shift at all in that. But with savings, it is a shift of power. These are two different things. So this is why if we understand development only on the technical aspects, we never understand the real substance of this change. I really want to get this. If we document these stories, we have to get this sense, and elaborate on it a little more.

**David :** Yes, and as you produce these very strong stories, there is also an analysis over the top which is very important for all of them. And that analysis will probably get read more than the case study - it depends on the audience: Students and young professionals and local communities will love the case studies. The suits in offices will read the synthesis and the analysis.



## What to document?

### 1. COMMUNITY DRIVEN DISASTER REHABILITATION SET :

1. **Tsunami in Sri Lanka : the work of three groups :** Women's Bank, Women's Development Bank Federation (WDBF) and CLAPNET (the new joint fund for tsunami reconstruction). All these three groups have been very active in launching more tsunami rebuilding projects and livelihood rebuilding initiatives through loans.
2. **Post Tsunami disaster work in Indonesia by Uplink / UPC:** Wardah can contribute some follow-up documentation about the completion of the project in Aceh, and about the subsequent community -driven disaster work they did after the Yogyakarta Earthquake, with the riverside communities in Surabaya and the strange mud-volcanoe at Porong.
3. **Responses to disasters and disaster prevention in Philippines:** Ruby Papeleras at the Homeless People's Federation Philippines and May Domingo will help with this. The Philippines Federation's focus on surveying and organizing communities in "High Risk" areas, as a strategy for preventing tragedy before it happens, and to deal with issues of land and relocation and building relationships with local governments through the process, in a proactive way.
4. **Floods and landslides and advance disaster planning in Thailand:** The community -driven disaster responses that have happened after the tsunami, and the processes which got their trial-run in the tsunami and have since been upgraded and scaled up in other disasters, particularly the floods and landslides in the north of Thailand in the past three years. We can include documentation of the work of the Community Network's Disaster Support Center. Also the waterways community network and their planning for floods in advance of the actual flooding.

### 2. URBAN POVERTY SET :

1. **Mongolia** – the work of the Urban Development Resource Center (UDRC) and its support for the growing community savings and upgrading movement in Ulaanbatar and 16 provincial towns in Mongolia. Documentation by UDRC with some editing support by ACHR.
2. **Vietnam (1) - the 8 provincial cities savings and community fund process**, with new linkage to the umbrella organization of the Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN). Documentation by Minh Chau and friends in Vietnam, with editing help from ACHR.
3. **Vietnam (2)** - the work of ENDA Vietnam.
4. **Lao PDR** : Women's savings network in 6 or 7 provinces now.
5. **Beijing, China** - the work of the Tibet Heritage Fund to try to save some of the last remaining "hutong" neighborhoods with traditional courtyard houses left in Beijing, with the poor families still inside (the others are being sold off to international millionaires...).
6. **The Urban Poor Development Fund in Cambodia.** Gabriela Sauter will work with Tom Kerr in preparing a profile, during and after the UPDF's Tenth Anniversary meeting. Emphasis will be on the anniversary event and the push to get secure land tenure to at least 10 slums in Phnom Penh, with some good documentation on the options for how to get secure land tenure to the urban poor.

### 3. RURAL POVERTY SET :

**CODI's support for rural work in Thailand :** CODI is involved in a great deal of innovative work in rural areas, but almost none of it is being documented in English. Tom, Somsook, Im and the Thai team at CODI can probably do this. This set might include the Rural Baan Mankong pilot projects in 200 rural sub districts, the Community Planning movement, rural savings and rural funds consolidation, the national community welfare program, rural issues and issue-based community networks and their work.

## PHILIPPINES : TYPHOON HITS ILOILO CITY

*On June 22, 2008, Typhoon Fengshen ("Frank") hit the Philippines, and 87,500 families in Iloilo City were badly affected. The Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP), which is very active in Iloilo, sent out a report on June 26 on the situation and on the work they are doing to help people whose homes were destroyed to relocate and rebuild their lives. The following excerpt is drawn from the HPFP's documentation :*

87,500 families (350,000 individuals), were reported affected by the typhoon Frank and an unexpected flashfloods that struck



the whole city last June 22-23, 2008 (Saturday and Sunday). Of these, at least 3,500 families were left homeless after the two-day-winds and heavy rainfall in the city. A majority of these affected families were living in urban poor settlements along the city's riverbanks and along the shoreline, where their houses were swept away. Business centers and other business districts and shopping malls were also damaged by the storm.

Almost 180 villages were totally submerged in water after this heavy typhoon and the flashfloods that followed. Of the six affected districts in the city, Jaro District was the most distressed. Affected families were transferred to gyms, churches, schools and barangay/community halls. Even shopping malls were made to serve as evacuation centers. Relief goods (rice, noodles, canned goods, used clothes, purified water) and medical assistance (medicines, anti-tetanus injections) from the local government, private sector and NGOs have been evident in these evacuation centers.



**Resettlement site :** Due to the influx of affected families in the evacuation centers, the city government, through the Iloilo City Urban Poor Affairs Office (ICUPAO), wanted to concentrate first on helping the worst-affected victims - especially those living in the riverbanks - by providing a safer resettlement area for these families to move. Considering the fact that the rainy season in the Philippines has just begun, and more typhoons are likely to come in September, getting these people out of these danger areas was considered crucial. The new site is located in San Isidro, Jaro, and has a total land area of 16.4 hectares. The site can accommodate 1,913 home plots for the affected families, with 60 square meters per family.

**The San Isidro Resettlement Site** is actually the resettlement area that was earlier allocated for families affected by the ongoing Iloilo Flood Control Project (IFCP), but because of this urgent need to relocate the typhoon victims, the city government has decided to use this resettlement site for the victims of typhoon Frank and subsequent flashfloods instead. Under the IFCP contract, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) will take care of the site development, and this work is expected to be fully finished in 2010. However, because of the urgent need to develop the site for immediate transfer of these typhoon victims, the city government is lobbying to fast-track the development of the site, minimum site development at least (e.g. macadam road, electricity and access to drinking water). Otherwise, the local government will urgently provide the basic site development.

Even still, the new relocation site cannot accommodate all affected families. So the ICUPAO and the Iloilo City Urban Poor Network (ICUPN), spearheaded by the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFPI), have been working to set priorities for who can avail of plots in the resettlement site first, according to the following criteria :

- Totally damaged or washed out house structures
- Partially damaged houses, but were not allowed to go back to their places because of continuing danger.
- Affected families who stay in the evacuation centers.

**The Homeless People's Federation's Intervention in the disaster :** Ongoing information and education campaign and social mobilization, including preparations such as encouraging victims to grab the opportunity to avail the immediate relocation site provided by the city government and also advocate not to return to their former houses in these danger zones.

- The Homeless People's Federation has able to use some of its collective savings (kept in their Urban Poor Development Fund) of one million Pesos (US\$ 22,000) for initial procurement of building construction materials for the affected families.
- This financial assistance will be extended to Federation member communities, with a maximum amount of P10,000 - 20,000 (US\$ 250- 500) per family.



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