

AUGUST 2011

- ACHR visit communities affected by the eruption of Mt Merapi, near Yogyakarta, INDONESIA
- More natural disasters and evictions for "Vinyl House" communities in SOUTH KOREA
- Upcoming ACCA Committee Meeting in Penang, MALAYSIA
- Community architects workshop on "Heritage for People" in historic Georgetown, MALAYSIA
- Good news from ACCA : Unlocking \$35 million in GOVERNMENT LAND for people's housing

Upcoming events:

- ACCA Committee meeting, in Georgetown, Penang (17-18 September)
- Heritage by People workshop in Georgetown, Penang (19-21 September)

MOUNT MERAPI COMMUNITIES REBUILD AFTER ERUPTION



In late October and early November 2010, Mount Merapi, the world's most active volcano, erupted, sending flows of hot ash and boiling hot air into the surrounding regions. Over 300,000 people were evacuated from within a 10 kilometre radius of the volcano, though 353 people lost their lives, mainly due to the blasts of hot air. Many villages were wiped out by the initial eruption, as well as by the flows of ash, sand and rocks which followed, engulfing homes.

Following this disaster, the villagers who lost their houses are living in government shelters a couple of kilometers from their villages, where they may remain for two years. Many villagers plan to return to their homes, especially those whose houses were not too badly destroyed. However, the government wants villagers to relocate, as these villages are in a danger zone at risk of further eruptions. The government is willing to give

100 square metres at a yet to be decided relocation site, only 1-2km from the old villages. The state would also provide construction materials, and a house design to follow for a 36 square metre house. Many of the affected villagers are reluctant to accept this relocation offer – not only is 100 square metres significantly less than their previous farms which were between 0.5 to 1 hectare, but they will also lose the right to their old plot, so this relocation project is a form of eviction. Many are willing to accept the risks of living near the volcano as they have done for so many years already, and it appears that the government relocation site would still be within the danger zone.

Yuli's group of young architects from Yogyakarta began working on the South side of the mountain, where about 3,000 families in 30 villages were affected by the 2010 eruption. Specifically, they are working with three villages who were not too badly damaged by the volcano, and yet they are also in the forced relocation zone. The villagers insist they will stay and have erected a sign outside their village listing 6 reasons why they will not relocate (including "this land is our heritage and our livelihood" and "Merapi and us can live together"), which they put up on the occasion of the Sultan's visit to the affected area. Many have already rebuilt their homes with the support of an NGO or with their own funds. ACCA funds are being used to support those still needing to rebuild their homes, through a big housing project, as well as two small community projects, one to rehabilitate the freshwater spring which supplies the three villages, and the other to build evacuation bridges for the villages in the case of further eruptions. The housing project is still at the stage of community planning, as they decide how funds should be allocated. *(The photo at right shows a sign put up by villagers in Kalitangah Lor Village: "6 REASONS WHY WE DON'T WANT TO RELOCATE")*



Meanwhile, on the West side of Mt Merapi, a different type of post-disaster rehabilitation project is taking place with ACCA support. Tanto is an enthusiastic artist who has been living in Mt Merapi area for many years, and his house is a performance space as well as a studio and museum. While his house and museum were not affected by Merapi's eruption, villages a few minutes' drive away were badly damaged by the sea of cold lava. However, there is no government relocation plan here, though some villages are too deeply engulfed in sand and ash to be livable anymore.

Tanto is a friend of Wardah's and after the Merapi eruption, he has used the ACCA project support (via UPC) to use the cultural process (which is very strong in the area) to deepen the affected villager's ties with each other and with their land and farms. He uses dance and performance techniques as a tool to get these affected villages to come together and perform together and become a network. He also brings some new critical and ethical issues into plays that



are based on traditional stories everyone knows. We were shown one performance of a traditional play about a king and his ugly brother, who actually wants to protect the king. But the king doesn't trust this ugly brother and in the traditional story, he kills him. But in Tanto's version of the story, when the king tries to kill the brother, all the people stand up and say, "You can't kill the brother! He is your protector, you benefactor! Why do you want to kill him?" He does this to boost the conscience of people in the village. For the area's children, drama and dance serves as a form of rehabilitation following the trauma of the eruption. When the disaster happened, Tanto already had a network of villagers through performance, and used this network to link people, for example through the sending of SMS messages in the case of an emergency.



This network of five communities has received ACCA funds for a big housing project. This money has been disbursed to the villages participating as a communal fund for housing rehabilitation, for each community to decide how it should be managed. Because bamboo is a cheap and abundant resource in this area, it will be used in housing reconstruction. Many of the villagers in the area are master stone carvers, and they have received income-generating loans, which in turn will create more jobs as these master carvers hire other community members to work for them.

Yuli and Tanto's projects in the Mt Merapi area highlight different responses to post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation, and how government policies may not always be very helpful to those affected, especially when they do not take into consideration people's wishes.

MORE TROUBLES FOR KOREA'S "VINYL HOUSE" COMMUNITIES :

The last issue of the e-news reported on a fire which destroyed a vinyl house community, Jaegeon village in Seoul, in June. As reported in that issue, community members wanted to rebuild their houses on site, while the government wanted families to move into public apartment buildings. Despite the government not allowing reconstruction on the burnt-down site, the community recently built 6 new houses. However, this new hope did not last long, as the on the night of Friday, 12th August, at 4:30am, 100 "Yongyeoks" (thugs hired by the government for the purpose of destroying illegal houses or shops of poor tenants) invaded the site and completely destroyed three of these rebuilt houses. The other three houses were partially destroyed. This forceful destruction of property demonstrates the continuing struggle of poor, squatter communities in South Korea, which has a history of forced evictions.

A video report of the destruction of the reconstructed houses is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf4Ws25GnDQ>

And another community was stricken by a landslide: Jeonwon Community, in the southeastern part of Seoul, was seriously affected by a large landslide caused by heavy rain on the morning of July 27th. As houses were washed away by the mudslide, many people were left homeless. However, the restoration process supported by volunteers and military forces is largely concentrated on the upper-class residential area, and so Jeonwon Community is still in need of much help.

About 80 households live in this "vinyl-house" settlement, where homes are made of greenhouses, which can be threatened by heavy rains. One person from the community was killed and four were seriously injured due to the landslide; one vinyl-house was

completely destroyed and five were either half-destroyed or flooded. As the residents do not have any land-use rights or building permits in this area, an effective restoration process is hampered.

Jeonwon community is involved in the ACCA program, after already having established a savings group and organized itself for various collective activities. In preparation for the ACCA proposal, the community began discussing possible small infrastructure projects: creating a sound drainage system, to respond to the vulnerability to floods, was a key plan, as well as securing a safe water supply. As the discussion went on and detailed plans came out, people began to envision a brighter future for themselves, and the fact that they were still reliant on unstable jobs and marginalized by the health care benefits no longer seemed to frustrate them.



Despite the poor infrastructure, the community was well maintained before the landslide.



A resident's house was badly damaged by the landslide.

However, the rain struck before any of these project ideas could be put into practice, dashing people's hopes. Jae-Hun Kim (33), a friend of the resident whose house was half-destroyed by the landslide, lamented the situation: "we cannot build an entirely new house as we're barely allowed to repair what is left. Furthermore, we cannot receive any compensation from the government as the house was built on public land." Man-Hee Park (71), whose house was completely destroyed, is now staying in her neighbor's house. She plans to camp in a tent on the site of her old house, as soon as the ruins are removed. Neither the local government nor the village came up with a detailed plan for compensation, yet finance will be a key issue for those who need to rebuild or repair their homes, but it seems that the ACCA project proposal will have to wait a while yet.

For further information, please contact Asian Bridge at asianbridge21@gmail.com

NEXT ACCA MEETING: SEPTEMBER 17-18 in PENANG, MALAYSIA

The last ACCA Committee meeting was held in Sri Lanka in April, in conjunction with the Sri Lanka ACCA Assessment trip. This September 17-18 meeting will be the third-to-last ACCA Committee meeting, with the remaining planned for November/December 2011 and February 2012, and these meetings will be the last opportunities to make proposals for ACCA projects.

The September meeting will also be an occasion for those countries participating in the SELAVIP/ACCA Decent Poor project to submit their proposed recipients. The Decent Poor project, introduced in January 2011, is a one-year program aimed to provide one-off grants of 500 USD to needy households or persons as identified by fellow community members.

Please send all your ACCA and Decent Poor proposals to Tom at achr@loxinfo.co.th by the 30th of August for consideration at the September meeting.



HERITAGE FOR PEOPLE : COMMUNITY ARCHITECTS WORKSHOP

"Heritage for People" Workshop in Georgetown, Malaysia, September 19-21, 2011 : The July 2011 issue of the ACHR E-news highlighted the activities which ACCA is supporting in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia, a World Heritage Site. The focus of the ACCA project in Georgetown is a row of six shop-houses on Armenian Street, some of which need renovation work, which will be carried out by the tenants inhabiting these shop-houses, with the support of their landlord, through a participatory process. This presents an ideal opportunity to hold a community architects workshop focusing on the issues of participatory heritage preservation. Around 60 people are expected to attend, including community architects and community representatives from cities with experience of heritage conservation, as well as local community persons and local NGOs and relevant organisations.



The objective of the three-day workshop is to create a platform for exchange and sharing of the use of the community-driven approach in heritage conservation, and to explore how a bottom up process can be applied within a World Heritage site.

September 19: The first day will focus on explaining and sharing the situation in Penang, as a World Heritage site, including field visits to local communities in Georgetown, so that participants understand the context.



September 20 : The second day's program will be internationally focused, with presentations of heritage case studies in various countries, including Nepal, Ladakh, Thailand and Japan, while exploring how communities can be involved in preservation projects while addressing their housing and living issues.

September 21 : The final day will wrap up with discussion and planning for how to continue learning and exchanges between countries on the issue of heritage preservation by and with people.



For those interested to know more about the workshop, please contact the two young Thai architects who are working with the Georgetown groups to organize the workshop :

Supawut (architect_once@hotmail.com) or Chawanad (chawanad@hotmail.com).

ACCA NEWS : UNLOCKING GOVERNMENT LAND FOR HOUSING

We are just now in the throes of putting the finishing touches on our big report about the first two years of the ACCA Program. As part of that process, we've been pestering all the groups to fill out all sorts of charts with detailed information about the small and big projects they've been implementing in their cities. And the figures those charts show us about government contributions to the big ACCA projects (especially in the form of land) are beyond question cause for celebration. Here is the super short-form of the good news. *(For more details, the report should be out in mid September, and will be downloadable from the ACHR website)*



GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTES 86% OF THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE ACCA BIG PROJECTS SO FAR : By the end of the second year of ACCA, 65 big ACCA projects had been approved, and most of them were already well underway - 14 projects had even been finished. When we got the information about the contributions of various stakeholders to these projects, the numbers were astonishing in several ways. First off, they show us how many resources (in the form of cash, land, materials, labor, etc.) the small investment from ACCA has unlocked in many of those cities - from governments, from other local actors and from communities themselves. But the greatest surprise of all is realizing how much the local governments are actually contributing to these big housing projects - mostly in the form of land, but also in infrastructure, materials and cash. Here is a table which summarizes all these contributions (so far) to the 65 projects.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACCA BIG PROJECTS (as of January 1, 2011)				(all figures in US\$)				
Country	Number of projects	# HH directly benefit from ACCA	# HH got secure land through the projects	Budget from ACCA	Budget from communities	Budget from government.	Budget from other actors	Total project budget
Cambodia	8 projects	499	600	320,000	47,700	2,464,625	130,320	2,962,645
Indonesia	3 projects	698	1,146	100,000	105,000	1,573,950	1,000,000	2,778,950
Nepal	6 projects	188	703	217,300	111,571	2,612,734	199,840	3,141,445
Burma	4 projects	827	55	170,000	0	0	0	180,000
Korea	1 Project	40	0	40,000	0	0	0	40,000
Philippines	10 projects	1,459	1,892	410,000	78,026	4,383,435	102,857	4,974,318
Vietnam	5 projects	160	98	160,000	579,459	4,396,400	0	5,135,859
Sri Lanka	7 projects	311	618	280,000	192,500	3,981,740	128,655	4,582,895
Mongolia	5 projects	151	78	150,767	49,947	115,280	32,900	348,894
Fiji	1 Project	42	1,500	40,000	5,000	\$1,900,000	0	\$1,945,000
Thai	8 Projects	532	597	120,000	609,569	3,566,746	0	4,286,325
India	2 projects	23	622	80,000	39,000	9,002,200	0	9,121,200
Lao PDR	2 projects	66	139	80,000	15,000	1,680,000	0	1,775,000
Pakistan	1 Project	1,835	0	40,000	20,000	0	0	60,000
China	2 projects	7	7	64,000	16,000	0	0	80,000
15 countries	TOTAL 65 projects	6,838 households	8,055 HH (in 45 projects)	\$ 2,272,067	\$ 1,878,772	\$ 35,677,110	\$ 1,594,572	\$ 41,422,521
				(5% of the total budget)	(5% of the total budget)	(86% of the total budget)	(4% of the total budget)	(100% of the total budget)

LAND FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN 37 PROJECTS : In 37 of the 65 big ACCA housing projects approved so far, the land has been provided by the government. These 37 projects are providing secure land to 7,381 poor households (1,948 of which are getting ACCA housing loans). 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 often even for free (in 25 of the projects!). 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!" Here is proof otherwise! For housing the poor, the public land strategy should be the rule of the game, as much as possible. So how are governments giving the land for these 37 projects? Here is a chart which summarizes the tenure terms :



ACCA PROJECTS ON GOVERNMENT LAND (as of January 1, 2011)				(all figures in US\$)		
Tenure terms	Projects	# HH got ACCA loans	# HH got secure land	Total value of land (US\$)	Other Gov. contributions	Total Gov. contribution
Free land with title (Collective)	4 projects	106	106	230,822	23,325	254,147
Free land with title (Individual)	7 projects	537	1,199	2,347,835	228,985	2,576,820
Free land with title (still negotiating)	2 projects	82	1,728	10,573,950	2,200	10,576,150
Long-term nominal lease (Collective)	5 projects	175	2,053	6,050,980	0	6,050,980
Long-term nominal lease (Individual)	1 project	30	30	874,500	0	874,500
Free land with long-term user rights	12 projects	427	1,212	10,663,658	3,357	10,667,015
People buy at below-market rates	6 projects	591	1,053	4,437,685	7,600	4,445,285
TOTAL	37 projects	1,948 HH	7,381 HH	\$ 35,279,430	\$ 256,467	\$ 35,444,897