Introducing :
Baan Mankong

A new housing program which puts poor communities in the driver's seat in a national process of forging comprehensive solutions to problems of housing, land tenure and basic services in Thai cities . . .

In January 2003, the Thai government announced an important policy to address the housing problems of the country's urban poor citizens which aims to provide secure housing to *one million poor households* within five years. This ambitious target will be met through two distinct programs. In the first, the *Baan Ua Arthorn Program* (*"We care"* in Thai), the National Housing Authority will design, construct and sell ready-to-occupy flats and houses at subsidized rates to lower-income applicants who can afford the monthly "rent-to-own" payments of 1,000 - 1,500 Baht (US$ 25 - 37).

The second *Baan Mankong Program* channels government funds, in the form of infrastructure subsidies and soft housing loans, directly to poor communities, which plan and carry out improvements to their housing, environment and basic services and manage the budget themselves. Instead of delivering housing units to individual poor families, the *Baan Mankong* Program (*"Secure housing"* in Thai) puts Thailand's existing slum communities - and their networks - at the center of a process of developing long-term, comprehensive solutions to problems of land and housing in Thai cities.

As part of this unconventional program, which is being implemented by the Community Organizations Development Institute, those poor communities are working in close collaboration with their local governments, professionals, universities and NGOs to survey all the communities in their cites and then plan an upgrading process which attempts to improve *all the communities in that city*, over the next four years. Once these city-wide plans are finalized, CODI channels the budget (both infrastructure subsidies and housing loans) from the central government directly to communities.

Why now? Why Thailand?

Since the first Habitat meeting in Vancouver in 1976, groups around the world have looked for new ways to deal with the serious problems of housing in cities. Over the years, the experiences of this communal search have sharpened our understanding and produced many different kinds of solutions - by government, by people, by NGOs. But twenty years later, the problems of housing and living conditions for the urban poor are bigger than ever. The big question remains how can we make the housing needs and the involvement of the poor an integral part of the larger urban development process?

This housing experiment in Thailand is the result of a process which has been developing over the past ten years, starting with the building of large-scale community savings and credit activities, then moving to the formation and strengthening of large-scale networks of poor communities, and finally to using the managerial skills from the savings and the linkages from the networks to deal with housing problems at a much larger scale. But Baan Mankong is only possible with the additional factors of increasing democratic space, a drive towards decentralization, in which local governments and local groups have become stronger than in the past, and a commitment on the part of the central government to allow people to be the core actors and to decentralize the solution-finding process to cities.

CODIupdate

1 The Baan Mankong Program makes the urban poor the owners of a national housing upgrading process

Instead of obliging them to be passive recipients of welfare-style giveaways or someone else's idea of what they need, the *Baan Mankong* program allows poor communities to study the physical problems in their settlements, develop their own plans for resolving those problems and then implement those plans themselves, collectively, using infrastructure subsidies and low-interest housing loans which they manage themselves. This strategy of making communities - and community networks - the key actors in resolving the serious problems of housing in Thai cities represents an important milestone for the process of decentralization in Thailand.

2 The program makes physical upgrading a first step in a larger and more holistic community building process

People-driven upgrading can be a powerful means of bringing structural change to poor communities - change that goes beyond a few physical improvements or secure tenure. The Baan Mankong Program uses the upgrading activities to kick off a broader, more holistic and more integrated process of building people's ability to collectively manage their own needs such as housing, communal finance, credit, environment, income generation and welfare. Upgrading can mobilize people to look at all these things, because it touches the lives of every single person in a community, not only the leaders or the savers, and gets everyone involved.

3 The program puts city-wide housing on the list of structural issues which can be resolved through partnership

By creating space for poor communities, municipalities, professionals and NGOs to look together at *all* the housing problems in their city, Baan Mankong is bringing about an important change in how the issue of low-income housing is dealt with: no longer as a piecemeal welfare process or a civic embarrassment to be swept under the carpet, but as an important structural issue which relates to the whole city and which *can be resolved*. The community upgrading program is helping to create local partnerships which can integrate poor community housing needs into the larger city's development and resolve future housing problems as a matter of course.

4 The program makes room for poor communities to reawaken the lost art of citizen involvement in Thai cities

When community people do the upgrading themselves and their work is accepted by all the city stakeholders, upgrading becomes a process which legitimizes their status in the city and showcases their capabilities as a partner in helping to manage serious problems which affect the whole city: not only housing, but environment, water management, solid waste disposal and social welfare. In Thai cities, where top-down systems of governance and globalization have left most urban citizens feeling they have little say in their own environment, this is a vital way of reactivating citizen involvement in city development, and it comes from the *bottom-up*.

1

Big housing problems give the upgrading option a second life

Thailand's urban poor

Total poor communities in Thai cities *(as of 2000)*
5,500 communities
(7.75 million people, 1.5 million households)

Poor communities with no serious tenure problems
1,750 communities
(1.62 million people, 0.36 million households)

Low-income communities with tenure problems:
3,750 communities
(5.13 million people, 1.14 million households)
- 1,360 communities on **public** land (36%)
- 1,400 communities on **private** land (37%)
- 990 communities on **mixed** land (26%)

Poor people living **outside** established communities
(laborers, room-renters, homeless, temple-dwellers)
1.5 million people, 0.37 million households

Total Urban Poor :
8.25 million people in 1.87 million households
(that's about 37% of Thailand's total urban
population of 22.3 million people)

Housing problems

Communities facing some kind of eviction threat
445 communities (0.2 million people)

Squatter communities with no legal tenure
692 communities (0.18 million people)

Communities under land rental contracts
1,041 communities (0.34 million people)

Communities mixing land rental and squatters
2,019 communities (0.67 million people)

Poor people living scattered outside communities
0.37 million people

Housing expenses

Before the Asian economic crisis in 1997, about **56%**
of the working members in Thailand's urban poor com-
munities earned less than 10,000 Baht/mo. After the
crisis, this figure went up to about **62%**.

26% of people living in urban poor communities pay
nothing at all for their housing, and those who do pay
for their housing pay an average of **12%** of their
monthly income.

Ability of the urban poor to pay for housing :
- 30% can afford to pay 2,000 Baht/mo. or more
- 36% can afford to pay 1,500 Baht/mo. or more
- 54% can afford to pay 1,000 Baht/mo. or more

**(Accessing the lowest level of private-sector
housing options costs at least 2,000 Baht/mo.)**

Over the past few decades, Thailand has been transformed with astonishing speed into a modern, industrial country. This transformation is most visible in Thai cities, where formal planning and policy making have been unable to keep up with the exploding urban growth. This has led to serious problems of environmental degradation, over-crowding and the propagation of slums in most of Thailand's cities. Today, over a third of Thailand's urban population lives in informal communities, some as land-renters, but increasing numbers as squatters with no security at all. Of the 5,500 informal settlements in Thai cities and towns, over two-thirds are under insecure tenure situations.

But though their physical conditions may be grubby and their tenure security tenuous, these communities represent an enormous social asset. They provide a large, vital and flexible stock of affordable, centrally-located and socially-support-ive housing to the people whose hard work and entrepreneurial spirit has been such an important ingredient in the country's growing prosperity, but whose human needs are too often overlooked.

This is a housing stock which neither the govern-ment nor the private sector nor the poor them-selves can afford to replace easily. For many, the idea of upgrading these settlements and turning them into clean, healthy, green and secure neigh-borhoods - instead of evicting or relocating them - is a radical new idea. But increasing numbers of cities and government agencies are realizing that when it comes to housing for the poor, improving on what's already there makes a lot of sense - economically, socially, politically and morally.

What is **CODI**?

In October 2000, the Urban Community Devel-opment Office (UCDO) was officially merged with the Rural Development Fund to become the Community Organizations Development In-stitute. The royal decree which brought CODI into existence allowed UCDO's development activities to continue, but greatly expanded the organization's scope, and paved the way for big changes in how it works and how it relates to the poor community organizations it supports. By making CODI an autonomous legal entity, with the status of a public organization (under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security) the decree provides greater possibili-ties and greater freedom than a conventional government institution. Here are a few brief words on how CODI works and the directions it's moving, drawn from a conversation with its di-rector, Somsook Boonyabancha:

I think it's important that CODI came into being at the start of the new millennium, because this is an institution that is trying to offer a new way of doing things and to promote large scale change - *by people.* CODI's focus is not only on poverty, but ways in which communities can be the key actors - in whatever development they want. We have a system of working in CODI in which we try not to make too many decisions by ourselves. Instead, we try to create space for communities (in a very large scale) to make the decisions, so that CODI can truly be a public institution that is owned and jointly-managed by people, as much as possible.

In CODI's first two years, we concentrated on building linkages between communities and com-munity networks (rural and urban) and promot-ing provincial and issue-based mechanisms for resolving problems these networks identified. In the third year, we focused on linking this newly-strengthened national people's process to various government policies. As a result, sev-eral programs have been set up and are demon-strating the great potential of people's involve-ment in tackling problems of poverty and devel-opment in Thailand. Baan Mankong is just one of these. Others include community planning, community-based welfare, area and province-based networking, community-based natural resource management, and poverty alleviation.

Since 2000, about half of all urban and rural communities in the country have become linked to the CODI process in some way. These link-ages provide an automatic learning mechanism that is country-wide, and in which lots of possi-bilities are on offer to communities.

An important ingredient in CODI's ability to sup-port all these initiatives and to respond quickly to needs and opportunities which arise from these networks is the CODI fund. If we were just another development agency, without our own fund, we would have a lot of serious problems. The CODI fund now has about 2.8 Billion Baht (US$ 70 million), which is ready to make four kinds of loans to community organizations :

- loans for housing and land
- loans for community enterprises
- loans to networks for holistic development
- flexible revolving fund loans to savings groups or networks.

As of May 2004, about 1.9 Billion Baht (US$ 47.5 million) has been given in loans, directly in people's hands.

CODI support for housing : Since 1992, CODI has supported community organizations with housing loans to 47 housing construction projects (on the same or alternative land) ben-efiting 6,400 households around Thailand. CODI (with the Chumchon Thai Foundation) has also channeled grants to communities for improve-ments in infrastructure and living conditions in 301 environmental improvement projects, ben-efiting 68,208 families in 796 communities.

Housing delivery options in Thailand :

What kind of housing develop-ment models are out there to deal with housing problems like these?

1 **Public Housing :** In this more socialist style housing system, ready-built housing units (mostly in the form of blocks of flats or small row-houses) have been developed by the state and rented out to people, usually on a subsidized basis, making the government a supplier of housing. In Asia we find this housing delivery system mainly in Singapore (where 95% of the housing stock is state-built!) and Hong Kong (where the proportion of public housing stock is fast diminishing). Thailand's stock of public rental housing, developed by the National Housing Authority, between the 1950s and 1980s, amounts to only between 4% and 7% of the total number of formal housing units in urban areas.

2 **Market sector housing :** In this housing delivery system, private entrepreneurs design and develop housing projects (in many forms, ranging from individual houses to condos to blocks of flats) and sell or rent those units at rates which allow them to meet their development costs and turn a profit. This system, which looks at housing not as an essential human need, but as a commodity, is the predominant housing delivery today in Thailand, as in most Asian countries, where the prevailing pro-business systems of finance and governance offer many incentives to develop these kinds of profit-making projects. But despite publicity to the contrary, this sector has been unable to reach the poorest 30% of Asia's urbanites.
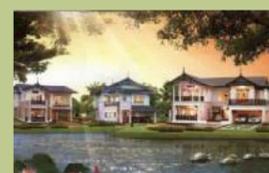
3 **People sector housing :** In this housing delivery system, which is becoming rarer and rarer these days, individual families construct their own housing, on land which they've bought themselves or been granted, instead of buying it ready-made from the real estate developers. A few decades ago, between 60% and 70% of the houses in Bangkok were built by the families which occupied them. Building your own wooden house (or hiring a good carpenter to build it for you) was for centuries the "Thai way" when it came to housing, and it produced an astonishing richness and variety in the country's built environment.

4 **Community housing :** Housing which is planned, financed and developed by groups of people is not just for the poor! In countries like Denmark, you still find highly sophisticated cooperative housing projects being developed by groups of urban families who decide against living in isolated houses or apartments, and choose instead to join with others to plan a new community and to develop their new housing as a group. This housing delivery system works best in situations where there are financial arrangements to finance them, legal instruments to give some legal status to the groups which develop them, and some tradition of communal organization to support the process. Most of the housing projects which CODI has financed during the 1990s and early 2000s have been developed along these lines, by registered community cooperatives.

5 **"Community and city" housing :** This brand new housing delivery system is having its debut in the Baan Mankong Program. In this system, communities within a given constituency link together, survey their housing problems as a group, and then enter into a collaborative process with their municipal governments and with other concerned organizations in the city to jointly develop a plan which resolves those problems and which allows all those communities to be developed, with government finance and support. The form that development takes in each individual community is flexible, and could involve *in situ* upgrading, shifting to nearby land, land sharing or reblocking. More important than the form is the fact that the housing plan covers *all the settlements*, and comes out of a process in which all the local stakeholders look at the situation and plan *together*.

A short history of
community upgrading in Thailand . . .

During the 1960s and 1970s, when urban renewal generally meant demolishing all the old wooden houses and building multi-story concrete buildings, eviction was just about the only option on the list of solutions to problems of slums in Thai cities. Towards the end of the 1970s, relocation to "sites and services" schemes or to blocks of subsidized rental flats was added to the list. It was also in the late 1970s that the concept of upgrading existing slums first appeared in Thailand.

Back then, urbanization was still something very new and very bewildering to everyone in Thailand. And because cities didn't know how to deal locally with the problems of land and housing this explosive growth was bringing with it, the central government set up the *National Housing Authority (NHA)* in 1973 to tackle the housing issue on a national scale. In its first years, there was a lot of new thinking about the problems of slums within the NHA, and many good processes were launched. The NHA's *Community Upgrading Program* began in 1977 and was the Thai government's first attempt to bring basic services and infrastructural improvements to existing poor settlements, regardless of their tenure status. In the first decade the program operated mostly in Bangkok, where the problems were most acute, and only later in the provincial cities. It was a considerable breakthrough, because it signaled increasing acceptance of the idea that letting people stay where they were already living was a viable alternative to eviction, if improvements could be made to those settlements.

1 **Cost-recovery model :** The NHA's first community upgrading projects followed the World Bank's *cost-recovery* model, which stipulated that engineers design the improvements, contractors build them and communities pay for them. But when people were told they'd have to pay hefty fees for their self-built wooden walkways to be ripped out and replaced with expensive concrete ones, they said no way, and a strong, unified veto of such projects helped nix the cost-recovery model early on.

2 **Subsidy model :** The NHA then changed gears and adopted a subsidy system in which government paid the bill for infrastructural improvements, not communities. The first subsidies in the late 70s were 5,000 Baht per household, and have since climbed to about 18,000 Baht. But expensive engineering, standardized procedures and standardized designs for walkways and drains meant that only tendered contractors could do the work, and communities had very little say in how these projects were carried out. 128,000 households have benefited from NHA's subsidized community improvements (but no tenure security) to date. Thailand's first wave of upgrading was short-lived, though. By the late 80s, economic boom and private sector real estate investment were creating new land conflicts in which poor communities were almost always the losers.

3 **NHA / Municipality upgrading model :** In the 1990s, the NHA began devoting more of its energies to developing rental flats or serviced relocation sites (some for sale, others on rental contracts) to accommodate all the people being evicted from inner city settlements. At the same time, there was considerable debate within the NHA about whether it made sense for a national agency based in Bangkok to be making decisions and managing infrastructure construction projects in cities hundreds of kilometers away. As a result of these discussions, the NHA began passing on its community upgrading budgets to municipalities, which increasingly took on the role of identifying communities for upgrading and managing the projects themselves, using local contractors. This decentralizing of the NHA's upgrading program to municipalities lasted until the Asian economic crisis hit in 1997.

4 **Community-driven environment activities :** The new frontier in the post-crisis years has been community involvement in delivering infrastructure to the poor. The *Urban Community Environment Activities Project (UCEA)* operated on a limited scale for six years, but gave a big push to the notion that poor communities can plan, construct and even help pay for their own environmental improvements, which turn out to be cheaper, more varied, more appropriate and better maintained than the government's improvements. The UCEA channeled small grants of less than 100,000 Baht directly to urban poor communities to improve the infrastructure and common amenities in their settlements, according to plans they developed and implemented themselves. Because grants from UCEA came through city-based networks, after an extensive process of collective prioritizing within each city, in partnership with other city stakeholders, the program was an important partnership builder and community-linker. In UCEA's first phase (1996 -98), 196 infrastructure and environmental improvement projects were constructed, benefiting 40,500 households in 220 communities around the country.

5 **Community savings group based model :** At the same time that first wave of upgrading was slowing down in the late 1980s, the urban community savings movement was taking off in Thailand. Through savings groups, people in poor communities were coming together, developing managerial capacities and exploring collective ways of dealing with problems they faced. The UCDO (CODI's maiden name) was set in 1992 to support this collective process and to provide community savings groups with finance that could assist their initiatives but allow them full freedom to develop their own activities. From working initially with scattered community savings groups, CODI gradually moved towards helping these groups come together and form networks, as a means of learning from each other and multiplying their activities themselves.

The emergence of community networks - at various levels and scales - in Thailand has been one of the most important developments of these past turbulent years. As a structure which allows individual poor communities to move from isolation and powerlessness into collective strength, the community network has become a powerful development mechanism in the country - a mechanism which belongs entirely to people. Besides providing a means of idea-sharing, asset-pooling and mutual support, networks have opened channels for communities to talk to their local governments and national agencies, and to undertake collaborative development activities of many sorts, of which housing and community upgrading are only two. Through this new collective process, communities have began delivering housing and community improvement projects by themselves, with loans from CODI.

This kind of expensive, top-down approach to delivering basic services to the poor, in which a single government organization does all the work, hasn't yet come even close to meeting the scale of need. Yet, despite its failure in one country after another, development agencies and national governments continue to promote this model, with little or no people's involvement.

Another take on community-driven upgrading . . .

The prevailing economic orthodoxy holds that if the market is allowed to do so, it will initiate projects which resolve whatever needs arise, and that the government's role is not to regulate this mechanism but to support it with finance and a supportive policy climate. But when it comes to low-income housing, leaving poor people out of this model has left a big gap between need and supply. In the new approach towards housing being experimented with in Baan Mankong, the model is similar: people develop whatever projects they like, to resolve their housing needs, and the government interferes as little as possible, but supports those projects with finance and a supportive policy climate. The difference is that here, the work has a considerable social aspect, and it's happening *collectively*, making ample use of this well-established culture of doing things together.
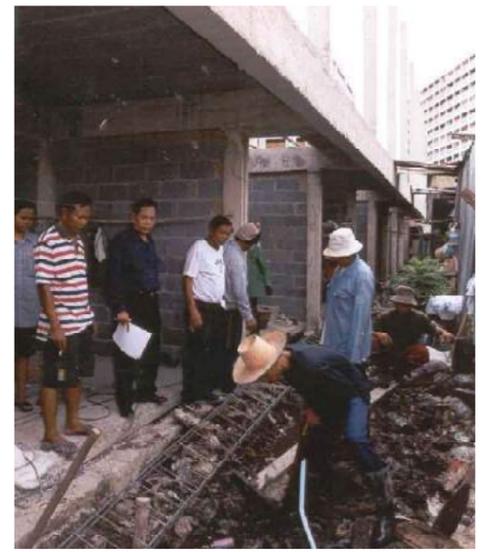
Capturing that energy

Putting all that organizing, saving, preparing and network-building to work in upgrading **ALL** of Thailand's poor communities . . .

Undertaking an upgrading program on the scale of Baan Mankong is something that is only possible because many Thai cities already have large, active community networks and people who are ready to make good use of the opportunities the program offers. The upgrading program represents a scaling-up and formalizing of the hard work Thailand's poor communities have been doing over the past ten years, building their networks, collecting and analyzing information about their lives and settlements, managing resources and carrying out a broad variety of development activities in the areas of savings and credit, welfare, income-generation, community enterprise, housing, land-tenure and environmental improvement.

In many of these cities, networks have developed close working relationships with municipal governments and other stakeholders and have undertaken joint development projects to resolve city-wide problems of land, housing and environment. These initiatives have established the poor as viable development partners and underscored the enormous developmental power and expertise which is contained in poor communities.

The Baan Mankong upgrading program offers a chance to capture and harness this energy and to make poor communities the agents of change, not just the passive beneficiaries of development. The program brings together several important and very current development trends in participation, decentralization, partnership and good governance, and links them with this growing strength in Thailand's national community process.

This upgrading program gets the people to do the doing . . .

A handbook for cities :

16 steps to help cities collectively solve housing problems through the Baan Mankong process . . .

Baan Mankong has a target to improve the housing, living conditions and tenure security of 300,000 households, in 2,000 poor communities, in 200 Thai cities within five years. That's a staggering task, but the program is imposing as few conditions as possible to give communities, networks and stakeholders in each city the freedom to set the program's course and to craft upgrading solutions tailor-made to their context. The big challenge is how to ensure that communities lead the process, that local cooperation between stakeholders becomes the key strategy for implementing the upgrading, and that housing for the poor becomes an issue which belongs to the city as a whole. Here's a brief summary of the steps in this collective problem-solving process, drawn from CODI's recent "Cities Handbook".

1 Identify the stakeholders and introduce program. Whether initiated by an existing community network, a regional community committee or by CODI, the process begins by coordinating with all the various stakeholders who will be involved in solving the city's housing problems, particularly the municipality, and explaining the opportunities Baan Mankong offers, in order to establish an initial basis for cooperation. Inviting these stakeholders to visit other cities where the process has already started can give a big boost to the process at the outset.

2 Organize network meetings. Community networks play a major role in implementing the Baan Mankong program in each city, so it is important that their ideas and understanding be worked into the project's formulation, through city meetings of community and network leaders. Representatives from community organizations in other towns in the province can also join these meetings to exchange ideas, extend the process horizontally and broaden possibilities.

3 Organize community meetings. The networks then organize meetings in each of the city's poor communities (with municipality if possible) to explain the upgrading program and help communities begin preparing for the improvements they'll plan and implement themselves.

4 Establish a joint committee. A joint committee to oversee the program's implementation in each city will then be set up. The composition of this committee isn't fixed, but should include community and network leaders and the municipality, as well as local academics and NGOs and other local development partners. The idea of these stake-holders working together in a joint committee is to build new relationships of cooperation, integrate housing into the city's

overall development and create an on-going mechanism for resolving future housing problems.

5 Conduct a city meeting. The joint committee's first task is to organize a city-wide meeting of representatives from all the poor communities, to inform everyone about the steps involved in implementing the Baan Mankong program, and to launch the survey and preparation process in the communities.

6 Survey the communities. The network and joint committee will then gather detailed information about all the poor communities in the city (or update existing data). Information about households, housing security, land ownership, infrastructure problems, community organizations, savings activities and existing development initiatives will be collected. Besides gathering data directly required for the upgrading program, the survey provides opportunities for community people around the city to meet, learn about each other's problems and establish links which will assist their collective planning later on.

7 Plan to develop the whole city. The survey data will help establish priorities in the city-wide upgrading program and inform the process of planning housing and infrastructure improvements in individual communities. During this process, community leaders will begin drawing on other local resources (land, expertise and budget) to localize the upgrading process, to expand the circle of helpers and collaborators, and to dissolve local barriers to the program's success.

8 Promote community savings as an important means of mobilizing internal resources, strengthening the self-help spirit and building the collective management skills poor communities will need to implement their upgrading plans effectively. Most cities already have savings activities, but these must be deepened and expanded.

9 Select pilot projects. A city's joint committee may opt to select a few pilot communities for upgrading in the first year to provide *"learning by doing"* for the whole city. Pilots may be chosen based on their readiness, the urgency of their housing problems or the learning possibilities they present for other communities in the city.

10 Prepare development plans in the pilot communities. The next step is for the pilot communities to plan their housing and infrastructure improvements, with community architects or helpers from the local authority or university. This planning should be *comprehensive*, covering not only physical improvements, housing and detailed project management, but also so-

cial aspects such as welfare and the creation of greater economic space for the poor.

11 Approve the pilot projects. The pilot communities have to present their upgrading plans to the joint committee for discussion and approval, before being sent on to Bangkok for final approval, which by then is more-less ensured.

12 Start construction. Once a community's plans are ready, the budget is released and the people can begin constructing their new housing and infrastructure, using either local contractors or community labor, according to their plans.

13 Use the pilots as learning centers. These pilots can function as learning centers for other communities and project stakeholders in this and other cities, so the city should plan how to maximize the transfer of knowledge, skills, ideas and mutual help in these projects to community leaders and local development organizations.

14 Extend the improvement process. Experience from these pilots should inform the subsequent upgrading of the city's remaining poor communities, to be completed in three years. This city-wide housing planning should also cover vulnerable families living outside established communities, homeless people and itinerant workers, and should consider potential future problems from in-migration and swelling populations.

15 Integrate upgrading plans into the city's urban development. It is important that the collaborative problem-solving processes established in the earlier steps be integrated into the larger process of planning the city's development. This may involve coordinating with public and private land-owners to provide secure tenure or alternative land for resettlement, integrating community infrastructure with the larger utility grids, and incorporating the upgrading process into other city development programs, such as the national *"Livable Cities Program"*.

16 Build broader civic networks. Community networks are strongly established in less than half of the 200 target cities. So it is important that communities within the "new" cities link together and form networks around any vital development issue: common land-ownership, shared construction, cooperative enterprise, community welfare, collective maintenance of canals, recycling and solid waste disposal.

17 Exchange. A program of constant exchange visits between projects, cities and regions, involving community people, local authorities, architects, NGOs and various stakeholders involved in the upgrading process is one of the most important strategies for transferring and scaling up the program's concepts and practices.

More than just physical upgrading...

As each community prepares its upgrading plans under the Baan Mankong Program, it is important that people consider how to develop their settlement and their lives in ways that go well beyond simply improving their housing and physical conditions. Because the program is working to promote a much more comprehensive and holistic kind of community development, which brings about improvements to all aspects of people's lives, each community is required to take into consideration - and budget for - all of the following four aspects of comprehensive upgrading in their plans :

1 Infrastructure development plans communities prepare might include such things as land filling, paved lanes and roads, water supply and electricity systems, storm and sewage drains, solid waste disposal, at household and community levels.

2 Environmental development plans might include tree-planting and greenery, house painting, canal cleaning, community gardening, waste-water and trash recycling, alternative energy systems, playgrounds, recreational areas, etc.

3 Social development plans for the community might include establishing a central welfare centers, youth and day-care centers, clinics, hostels for poor or elderly members, community centers, cooperative offices, multi-purpose pavilions, communication system, fire-fighting facilities, etc.

4 Economic development plans for the community might include developing markets or community stores, establishing conservation or tourism areas, enhancing people's earning through community enterprises, loans for small businesses, support for household workshops, or vocational training.

What budget tools does the program offer?

1 Infrastructure subsidies : The program provides subsidies which allow communities to upgrade their infrastructure and environment, according to priorities they set, using budgets they manage themselves and using technical assistance they select themselves. The size of each community's subsidy is calculated by multiplying the number of households by per-family infrastructure subsidies, for different kinds of upgrading. (A community of 200 houses, for example, which is upgrading on the same site, will have a total upgrading budget of 5 million Baht (US$ 125,000) to work with.)

- **25,000 Baht** (US$ 625) per family for communities **upgrading** settlements *in-situ*.
- **45,000 Baht** (US$ 1,125) per family for communities **reblocking** their settlements or rebuilding on part of the land they now occupy under a **land-sharing** agreement.
- **65,000 Baht** (US$ 1,625) per family for communities **relocating** to different land.

2 Low-interest housing loans : Soft loans will be made available to families wishing to improve their houses or build new ones after upgrading or relocating - some via CODI, some directly from national banks - with interest rates subsidized by the government so loans go to people 2%. In this way, the program is also exploring ways of using an interest subsidy to help make financial institutions more accessible to communities, so CODI can play a greater role as a bridge between poor communities and the banks.

3 Administrative support grants : A grant equal to 5% of the total infrastructure subsidy will be made available under the program to whatever organization the community - or community network - selects to assist and support their local upgrading process under Baan Mankong. This could be an NGO, another community network, a local university, a group of architects, or a local government agency.

> The Baan Mankong upgrading program is experimenting in a number of ways with participation, partnership, the control of money, and how state finance is used as a tool - not only to improve living conditions in a certain number of slums, but to create locally-based mechanisms for resolving housing problems in the future, as a matter of course.

Experiments in Baan Mankong :

Ten ways this national upgrading program is tearing up all the old rules about how the government deals with the housing needs of the urban poor

1. Makes communities and their networks the core actors.
Most conventional housing programs for the poor run into trouble because they stimulate a government agency - and not people themselves - to do all the work. And in most cases, that agency just can't keep up with the scale of need. The Baan Mankong's strategy of using communities - and city-based partnerships in which communities take the lead - to solve the problem of housing Thailand's urban poor represents an important milestone for the process of decentralization in Thailand, and a concrete way of developing local capacities to resolve local housing problems. By tapping the energy of community involvement and participation to upgrade so many settlements, the program is building stronger community organizations and boosting people's capacities to manage their own development.

2. Is "demand-driven" rather than "supply driven".
Because the Baan Mankong program allows communities that are ready to implement the improvement projects themselves, according to needs and priorities they identify through an extensive process of surveying, discussion and horizontal-sharing, the program creates a *"demand driven"* approach to community upgrading. This is something very different from the more conventional *"supply-driven"* approach to solving urban housing problems, in which the state constructs housing units, resettlement sites or standard infrastructural facilities - all according plans, selection criteria and development methods set by the government.

3. Lets people control the money.
Perhaps the most radical innovation in the program is that the money (and it's a big chunk of money, with a five-year total budget of about *20 billion Baht - US$ 500 million!)* actually goes right down to communities to manage, once they've developed their upgrading plans and negotiated their land tenure status. By placing the money directly into people's hands, the program puts communities in control of the upgrading process, instead of a government agency or an NGO. The people themselves decide how to use the per-household subsidies. A community may decide, for example, to set up a special fund to buy building materials cheaply in bulk, or to cut corners on land-filling in order to have enough money left to build a creche. The program's flexible financial management process allows communities to make these decisions themselves, and to manage their construction in ways that match the realities of their lives, while its multi-party participation provides transparency and self-assessment at every step of the process.

4. Makes more efficient use of state resources for the poor.
Because this upgrading model makes communities the implementers and gives them control over the finances, it gives them the opportunity to make much more efficient use of precious state resources. When the money usually spent to construct the conventional government improvements is passed directly to communities, instead of to contractors, they can build those same improvements for a fraction of the cost, and then have loads of money left over for other things. When community people sit and plan and decide together how to use the budget, they get very thrifty and very creative: a thousand variations and innovations occur naturally, bringing out all the untapped resourcefulness, thrift and creativity which exists in poor communities. If a community of 200 families, for example, has a five million Baht subsidy for infrastructure, they could use it to make improvements which answer many more of their needs than the old standard upgrading, which would have swallowed up the whole budget in little more than drains and walkways. Besides improving their roads, drains and water supply systems, they could build a community center, or paint all their houses with coordinating colors, plant trees, lay out organic kitchen-gardens, anything the whole community identifies as priorities.

5. Allows people to choose their own helpers.
Another important aspect of the program is that communities and the local actors - not the government and not CODI - have the freedom to select whatever persons, NGOs, architects, institutions or universities they would like to assist them in the process of developing their community improvement plans. The group they select to assist them will then receive an administrative support subsidy to cover their expenses. The total amount each city receives for administrative support is 5% of the total upgrading budget. In many cities, partnerships between communities, local governments and other organizations have been established and have opted to use this support subsidy more flexibly as a communal budget for all aspects of the program's management.

6. Promotes a broader concept of upgrading.
The Baan Mankong Program uses finance to promote a much broader, more holistic and more integrated process of community improvement. The program aims well beyond physical improvements and tenure security, to improve people's social, environmental and economic well-being as well. Because physical change is something immediately tangible, it can be a potent means to bring about other deeper, but less tangible changes to social structures, managerial systems and confidence within poor communities.

7. Promotes variation rather than standard solutions.
In the past, when existing communities were upgraded, or new relocation sites were developed, the process followed a rigid set of design standards and engineering norms, all in the name of *efficiency*. As a result, all their improvements and all their layouts looked exactly the same, regardless of where they were or who lived there. Who said that planned communities have to look like a machine-made grid of streets, without beauty or any sense of community? In fact it is possible to upgrade old communities - or to design new ones - in ways which follow the spatial patterns which can often bring such charm and delight to informal settlements: winding lanes, houses built in clusters around quiet culs-de-sac, shady places to gather and sit, places for markets and temples, playgrounds, etc. When communities plan their own improvements under the Baan Mankong program, they will work together to identify the social and spatial features they want to preserve in their settlements and build their new lanes and drainage lines around them.

8. Works to develop communities as an integrated part of the city.
In the upgrading process under Baan Mankong, communities do not plan and implement their improvements in isolation, but as part of a comprehensive, collaborative process of finding lasting solutions to the city's problems of housing for the poor. This involves surveying the settlements in the city, and then preparing upgrading plans which attempt to resolve the tenure, housing and infrastructure problems of all these communities, as much as possible, within a few years. No one is left out. This is a way to link the housing problems of the city's poorer citizens with the larger town planning process. This is very different than the conventional project-by-project approach, in which a few scattered communities may be improved, but because they are neither linked with each other, nor linked to the other development processes in the city, they have no strength. Nice little projects in nice little communities may bring benefits to people living in those places, but seldom do they transform the lives of the poor or bring change at any significant scale. In the longer term, the upgrading process can also trigger transformations in the city's larger development process, in which communities are increasingly accepted not only as legitimate citizens, but as valuable partners in solving problems of the *whole city*.

9. Changes dramatically government's role.
In the most conventional housing programs, the government takes the role of planner, implementer and construction manager, leaving communities with little room for participation, and almost no role but as passive *beneficiaries* of solutions someone else designs. This housing process, which focuses on *delivery*, leaves no space for communities to grow or learn, no opportunity to change relationships, no scope for other social developments to be sparked off by the process. In the Baan Mankong program, because it is communities - and community networks - that make all the decisions and do all the work, the government is finally able to take the role of *facilitator* and *supporter* to communities, which now take on the role of delivering housing. And with such a small coordinating staff to facilitate this enormous process, CODI couldn't control the program centrally even if it wanted to.
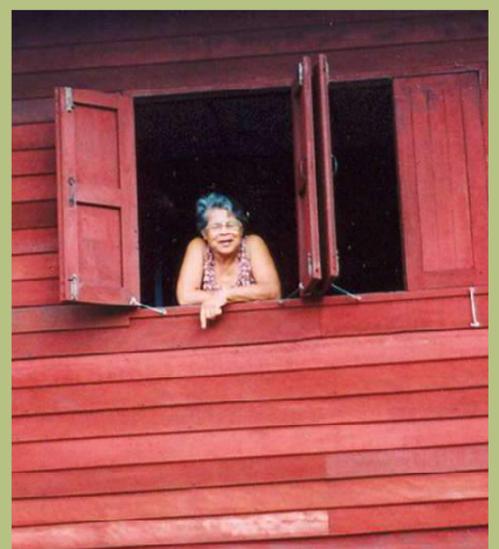
10. Secure tenure :
Another important aspect of the Baan Mankong program is its broadening the scope of upgrading to cover not only physical conditions but secure land tenure as well, which is seen as the foundation of secure, sustainable communities. Because the program deals with the issue of land, it also deals with the pattern of how people are settled on that land.

It is up to the communities to negotiate their own tenure arrangements, as a precondition to participating in the upgrading program, through such strategies as cooperative land purchase, long-term lease contracts, land-swapping or user rights. These negotiation can be made individually by communities or collectively by larger networks, but the main emphasis is on obtaining collective rather than individual land tenure. CODI assists in these negotiations only where necessary, or where they involve high-level negotiations with state land-owning agencies.

Using the first ten pilot projects to "nationalize" the learning

During the first year of the *Baan Mankong* program (2003), a group of ten carefully-selected urban poor communities in several Thai cities were chosen to be upgraded as pilot projects. The implementation of these first ten pilots is intended to create a set of tangible models which showcase a variety of strategies for introducing housing security and community improvements in poor communities.

The pilot projects are just the very first step in a process of assembling a whole range of sustainable solutions to the country's housing problems - through practice. The pilot projects are also intended to provide an opportunity to explore new approaches, generate ideas and disseminate experiences in solving the problem of housing security for the poor in cities with very different structures and problems.

Learning by doing . . .

There are plenty of big concepts at work behind the Baan Mankong program and the larger structural issues of poverty and land the upgrading process touches. But as the actual upgrading work takes off and expands in cities around the country, the ideological discussions tend to get drowned out by the hammering of nails and the kershlugging of cement mixers. One big difference between this program and the more typical strategies for "empowering" communities is that this is emphatically a "doing" movement.

The program's focus on **doing** has begun with these first pilot projects, which were undertaken very soon after the program was launched. The idea was to make these projects into learning centers, where people from around the country could come have a look, pitch in if they like, while they gather ideas about upgrading possibilities and procedures that come not out of any lofty concepts, but out of what they see other people actually doing - *with their hands.*

This is a way of opening up the upgrading process so everybody can be a part of it, so everyone can see that it's actually possible. The construction work on these project sites is going on under many, many eyes: the volume of visitors to these projects is heavy, but so far nobody is complaining about the steady stream of community people, NGO workers, government officials, visiting dignitaries, foreign architects and university classes who are parading through these ten work sites by the busload!

One of the important ideas of these pilots is to show that community upgrading doesn't mean any one particular thing, and can take many different forms - some of which haven't even been invented yet!

The Government has approved a budget of 126.6 million Baht to support the implementation of the first ten pilot projects. This amount includes a per-household subsidy which will pay for the development of community infrastructure and environmental improvements, a grant to cover the management and administration costs and a subsidy on house-building or house-improvement loans (from commercial banks) so that families who take loans to improve their houses or construct new ones will pay only 2% annual interest.

The ten pilot communities were selected through a national process from a long list of communities facing a variety of housing security problems. The chosen communities have experienced varying housing problems and all are clearly home to the program's target group of very poor households with monthly incomes of less than 10,000 Baht. All have organized themselves to some degree through savings and credit or other development activities over the past several years, with the assistance of various NGOs and government agencies, and all of them have some history of working with other organizations.

All but two of the ten projects are located on state-owned land - a tenure situation which offers the advantages of being easier to implement, less likely to get stuck in the working out of tenure arrangements and more likely to become a good examples for other communities on state owned land of various sorts. The details of the budget for these first ten pilot projects is outlined in the table below.

What kind of upgrading is possible?

Instead of promoting a single development model for obtaining secure land tenure and improving housing and living conditions, a range of options are being tried and tested by communities. As the work spreads out and scales up, these strategies are being expanded, refined and adapted to suit the particular needs, aspirations and conditions in each city and each community. The five broad strategies listed below are by no means the final word on what's possible, but they make a good starting list of options for communities under the Baan Mankong Program :

1 Upgrading : Slum upgrading is a way of improving the physical environment and basic services in existing communities, while preserving their location, character and social structures. Besides improving the physical conditions and quality of life in these poor communities, the physical improvements made under an upgrading process can act as a springboard for other kinds of development among their members, like income generation, welfare, etc.

2 Reblocking : Reblocking is a more systematic way of improving the infrastructure and physical conditions in existing communities by making adjustments to the layout to install sewers, drains, walkways and roads, but doing so in ways which ensure the continuity of the community. Communities can then develop their housing gradually, at their own pace. When communities opt for reblocking, some houses may have to be moved and partially or entirely reconstructed to improve access, or some lanes may have to be re-aligned to enable drainage lines, water supply systems or sewers to be constructed. Reblocking is often undertaken in cases where communities have negotiated to buy or obtain long-term leases for the land they already occupy. In both cases, the process of reblocking is an important step in the progress towards land tenure security and improved housing.

3 Land sharing : Land-sharing is a housing and settlement improvement strategy which allows both the land-owner and the community people living on that land to benefit by dividing the land and allowing the community to buy or rent a portion of the land for their housing, in exchange for agreeing to return a portion of the land to the landowner to develop commercially. In land sharing, the community gets secure tenure via land-ownership or long term leasehold, and the people can then work together to design and construct their own new housing on their portion of the site.

4 Reconstruction : In this strategy, existing communities are totally rebuilt on the same land, or on land that is nearby, within the same general area, either under long-term lease or outright land purchase. The security of land tenure at the new site provides community people with a very strong incentive to invest in their housing, through rebuilding or new construction. Although the reconstruction option involves making considerable physical changes within the community and requires some adaptations to a new environment, the strategy allows people to continue living in the same area and to remain close to their places of work and this continuity is a crucial compensation for the expense and difficulty reconstruction involves.

5 Relocation : The greatest advantage of the relocation strategy is that it usually comes with housing security, through land use rights, outright ownership or some kind of long-term land lease. But relocation sites are often far from existing communities, job opportunities, support structures and schools. Community members who want to keep their old jobs or attend the same schools must bear the burden of additional traveling time and expense and must adapt themselves to a new environment. In cases of relocation, communities face the cost of reconstructing their houses at the new site, and in some cases the additional burden of land purchase payments. But tenure security tends to be a big incentive to invest in housing and environmental development at the new community.

10 Pilots at a glance

Total budget to cover all ten pilot projects :

- Infrastructure subsidy — **61.9 million Baht** (US$ 1.55 million)
- Housing loan interest rate subsidy — **61.63 million Baht** (US$ 1.54 million)
- Budget for management and administration — **3.1 million Baht** (US$ 77,500)

Total government subsidy	**126.63 million Baht**	**(US$ 3.17 million)**

(All figures given in Thai Baht. Exchange rate as of May 2004 : US$ 1 = 40 Thai Baht)

	Community	City	Land owned by (after project)	Number of households	Terms of land tenure after the project	Infrastructure costs	House costs (average unit cost)	Total loans for housing (from CODI)
1.	**Charoenchai Nimitmai**	Bangkok	Community Co-op	89	Cooperative ownership	2.45 million	50,000	0 *(used savings)*
2.	**Bonkai**	Bangkok	Crown Property Bureau	202	Long-term lease to co-op	8.9 million	200,000	35.36 million
3.	**Klong Toey Block 7-12**	Bangkok	Port Authority	114	Short-term lease	10.5 million	216,000	26.18 million
4.	**Kao Pattana**	Bangkok	Crown Property Bureau	29	Long-term lease	794,094	150,000	3.32 million
5.	**Ruam Samakkee**	Bangkok	Crown Property Bureau	124	Long-term lease	2.7 million	180,000	17.15 million
6.	**Klong Lumnoon**	Bangkok	Community Co-op	49	Cooperative ownership	3.48 million	172,200	4.85 million
7.	**Boon Kook**	Uttaradit	Municipality	124	Long-term lease	0 *(from NHA)*	99,000	15 million
8.	**Laem Rung Reung**	Rayong	Treasury Department	67	Long-term lease	1.34 million	50,000	912,500
9.	**Kaoseng**	Songkhla	Treasury Department	480	Long-term lease	9.6 million	50,000	21.12 million
10.	**Kolok Village**	Narathiwat	State Railways	310	Long-term lease	31 million	225,000	62.79 million
	TOTAL			**1,588 units**		**70.81 million**		**186.68 million**

1 Pilot Project : Land purchase and reblocking at **Charoenchai Nimitmai**

The Charoenchai Nimitmai community occupies 4.9 hectares of land in Bangkok's Chatuchak District, bound on one side by the railway tracks, on another by a roaring expressway and on the third by a drainage canal. The community's 41 families, many railway employees, had been renting their land from a private land owner for over 50 years, at 10 Baht per month. In 1998, threatened with eviction, the people negotiated to buy the land themselves, haggling the selling price down to 7,500 Baht/ s.m - a fraction of the market value of 30,000 Baht/ s.m. After establishing a cooperative, they took a loan from CODI to buy the land. To bring down the per-family land costs, they made room in their reblocking plan for an additional 48 vulnerable families squatting on land nearby.

After becoming owners of their land, the people decided to improve conditions using reblocking techniques. In the process of designing the new layout, the community went through 18 different plan layouts, with help from a young architect. The plan which everyone finally agreed on has 4-meter wide internal lanes, a community center, and varying plot sizes (according to affordability), with half meter planting strips along the street edges.

As part of the upgrading process, the community coordinated with all the different municipal departments to get individual electric and water meters installed, and to deal with building permits - which wasn't easy! As one leader put it, *"When the local officials are too strong, we know how to soften them up, and when they are already soft, we do whatever we like!"* They used a contractor for the infrastructure work that involved heavy machinery, like land-filling, but handled the other work themselves, using paid community labor for things like pouring concrete (150 - 200 Baht /person/day). Using community labor shaved 30% off the cost of development.

▼ **BEFORE** Reblocking
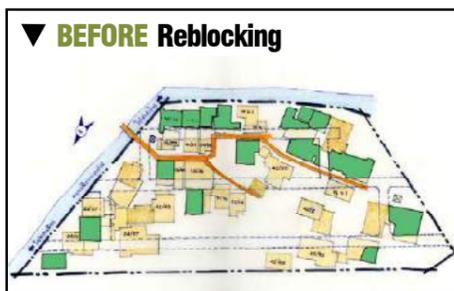
▼ **AFTER** Reblocking

After reblocking, all but 15 of the houses had to be moved to new locations, to make way for the new roads and plot layout. Some families have built entirely new houses on their new plots, but many have rebuilt their old houses, using recycled materials, and can upgrade them gradually.
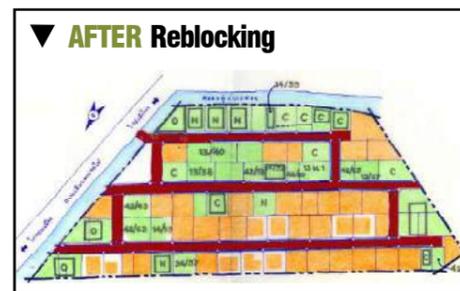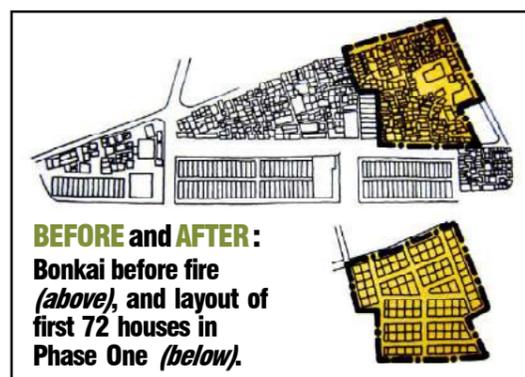

Project Details :

Households :	89
Land-owner :	Private
Tenure terms :	Cooperative ownership
Type of upgrading :	on-site reblocking
Infrastructure cost :	1.78 million Baht (US$ 44,500)
Housing costs :	4.01 million Baht (US$ 100,250) (aver. 50,000 Baht/ unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	23.79 million Baht (US$ 594,750)

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2 Pilot Project : Reconstruction after fire, with long-term lease at **Bonkai**

Bonkai is a 26-year old squatter community of 566 households, living in extremely crowded conditions in the Klong Toey area of central Bangkok, on land belonging to the Crown Property Bureau (CPB). In December 2001, a fire destroyed 200 houses in one area of the settlement, and the community used the crisis to negotiate a more secure future for themselves. After forming a cooperative, they entered into lengthy negotiations with CPB and eventually got a 30-year (renewable) lease on the land.

Thailand's first "Community Lease" : In the past, most state agencies lease land to poor families individually, which makes it easy for communities to be manipulated by outside interests. Bonkai is the first case of a land lease contract being made to a community cooperative, on a nominal rent of 150 Baht per month per household, paid by the community cooperative in one big monthly payment. Collective land tenure arrangements can be a powerful tool for bringing community members together and one of the best safeguards against speculation and gentrification in inner-city communities like Bonkai.

The community's complete reconstruction has been planned in three phases, which allow the new housing to be built without anyone ever having to leave the site. In the first phase, 72 houses are being built to accommodate the worst-effected fire victims, who lived in tents between the rows of new houses during construction. 288 units will be built in the 2nd phase; 42 in the third.

BEFORE and AFTER :
Bonkai before fire *(above)*, and layout of first 72 houses in Phase One *(below)*.

"Expandable" row houses : *In order to squeeze so many families into such small land, the community worked with young architects to draft an extremely efficient layout plan with narrow lanes and compact 3-story row-houses built on tiny plots of only 24 square meters. To keep the new houses as cheap as possible, they designed an extra-tall upper floor with a half-loft, which can later be made into a full third floor. These fully-finished houses cost 200,000 Baht. The community opted to use a contractor to build the first phase houses, but to reduce house costs, the second and third phase houses will be built by community members themselves.*

Project Details :

Households :	202
Land-owner :	Crown Property Bureau
Tenure terms :	Long-term cooperative lease
Type of upgrading :	on-site reconstruction
Infrastructure cost :	NHA provides.
Housing costs :	29.99 million Baht (US$ 749,750) (165,000 Baht/ unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	39.6 million Baht (US$ 990,000)

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3 Pilot Project : Relocation to nearby land at **Klong Toey Block 7-12**

"Block 7-12" was an informal community of nearly 400 families (mostly port workers, daily laborers and small traders) who'd been squatting for over 50 years on land belonging to the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT), in the sprawling informal settlement of Klong Toey. Over the years, the community experienced fires, chemical explosions and innumerable attempts by the Port to evict them for its various projects. Some families took compensation and moved away, some shifted to NHA-built flats or to remote resettlement colonies, some just disappeared. After 20 years of struggle, the remaining 49 families (the real fighters!) negotiated a deal with the Port which allows them to redevelop their community on PAT-owned land in the same area, one kilometer away, on a 30-year lease contract.

The community has now prepared its relocation plan, which includes some "Block 7-12" families who were old renters or had already been evicted. The new community, which is now under construction, is laid out in a simple grid of small lanes, with a community center and a wider central road which can double as public open space for meetings and markets. The new land used to be a container storage area and is completely covered with 15 cm thick concrete, which has been covered over with 80 cm of soil, to prevent flooding, and pierced in 800 places to sink deep concrete piles for the houses. The construction committee hired one contractor to fill the land, another to dig the piles and lay the drains and roads. The 114 row-houses are being built in small groups by the people themselves, on 30 and 60 square meter plots, depending on family size.

The project is having a big impact on other informal communities in the Klong Toey area, where there are still lots of housing conflicts and tenure insecurity, and many neighboring groups are now applying for similar long-term lease contracts to develop their housing in the same place.

"I like the word slum. It means freedom, it means community, it means you can build according to your needs, not according to any official rules. Whatever suits you! Your house becomes organic, it grows with your family, it is lively. Our houses here in Klong Toey may look bad from the outside, but inside they are filled with life! And the houses in our new settlement will also be filled with life."

Nitiya Promphochuenbun, community leader at Block 7-11
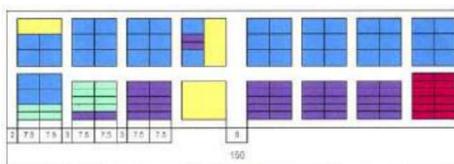
Project Details :

Households :	115
Land-owner :	Port Authority of Thailand
Tenure terms :	Long-term (30 yr) lease
Type of upgrading :	Nearby relocation
Infrastructure cost :	11.5 Million Baht (US$ 287,500)
Housing costs :	22.36 million Baht (US$ 559,000) (216,000 Baht / unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	41.58 million Baht (US$ 1,039,500)

4 Pilot Project : Relocation to nearby land with long-term lease at **Kao Pattana**

The Kao Pattana Community is a tiny squatter settlement of 34 families living on land under Crown Property Bureau ownership, in the intensely busy area of Bangkok's Ramkhamhaeng Soi 31. The community covers an area of about 0.8 hectare, with wooden and concrete block houses and walkways built on stilts over land which is so low-lying that it is more like a stagnant pond than a piece of land. Most people here earn their living as daily wage laborers, vendors, market stall holders and artisans, earning between 5,000 and 8,000 Baht per month.

Initially, the community was determined to stay in the same place. After beginning their negotiations for a lease contract with the Crown Property Bureau, they set to work preparing plans to completely reconstruct their community on the same site, which involved replacing their existing houses with 2.5 story townhouses. Unfortu-

nately, in the process of preparing their plans, the people learned that making their existing land "buildable" would have involved filling the land by several meters, and would involve so much expense it would have eaten up all their infrastructure subsidy under Baan Mankong, leaving little for building other amenities and basic services.

Meanwhile the larger seven-community master plan process in Ramkhamhaeng had begun (*see box below*). As part of that plan, an agreement has been reached in which the people from Kao Pattana will build a slightly altered version of their town house community plan on another piece of CPB land in the same area, where their cooperative will be given a collective long-term lease.

Project Details :

Households :	29
Land-owner :	Crown Property Bureau
Tenure terms :	Long term lease (30 yr)
Type of upgrading :	Nearby relocation
Infrastructure cost :	580,000 Baht (US$ 14,500)
Housing costs :	3.92 million Baht (US$ 98,000) (aver. 150,000 Baht/unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	5.78 million Baht (US$ 144,500)

## 5 Pilot Project : On-site reconstruction at **Ruam Samakkee**

These pilot projects are already scaling up . . .

The pilot upgrading projects at Ruam Samakkee and Kao Pattana have sparked off a larger development process which includes seven informal communities under Crown Property Bureau (CPB) ownership in the Ramkhamhaeng area, involving about 40 hectares of land and over 1,000 families.

Instead of redeveloping each in isolation, these seven communities are now working together to develop a master housing redevelopment plan which provides housing and secure land tenure for all of them as a group - in the same area. In April 2004, CODI signed an M.O.U. with the CPB to assist in developing this master redevelopment plan for all seven settlements, which will create new residential areas which are linked to markets and parks, and will involve reblocking in some areas and nearby relocation in others. But the idea is that everyone will remain in the area, on CPB land, for which they will get long-term lease contracts through their community cooperatives.

Ruam Samakkee is a larger squatter community of 124 families occupying 0.8 hectares of CPB land in Ramkhamhaeng Soi 39, not too far from Kao Pattana. The community's original idea was to regularize their tenure status by negotiating a long-term lease for the land they now occupy. They have completed their cooperative registration (which provides the legal status to obtain a collective lease agreement with the CPB).

In May 2003, the people worked with young architects to develop a new layout plan and to design 2-story town houses which will cost 180,000, involving monthly repayments of between 1,000 and 1,300 Baht for 15 years. In the three months that followed, they demolished all the old houses and laid the new infrastructure. By December 2003, they had completed construction of the first 31 houses. The construction in Ruam Samakkee has been suspended, though, while the people work on the development of this larger 7-community plan.
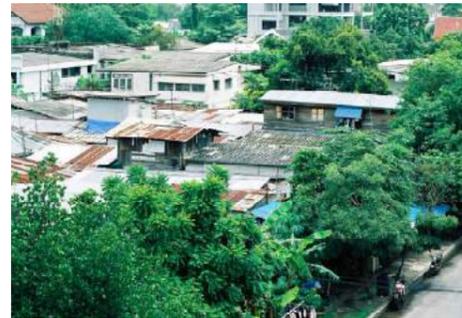
Project Details :

Households :	124
Land-owner :	Crown Property Bureau
Tenure terms :	Long term lease (30 yr)
Type of upgrading :	On-site reconstruction
Infrastructure cost :	1.8 million Baht (US$ 45,000)
Housing costs :	14.58 million Baht (US$ 364,500) (aver. 180,000 Baht/unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	21.13 million Baht (US$ 528,250)

6 Pilot Project : Land sharing at **Klong Lumnoon**

The small, canal-side community of Klong Lumnoon in suburban Bangkok was far from everything when the people first moved there 20 years ago. But by 1997, the area was gentrifying and the land-owner decided to evict them and develop the land commercially.

Some residents accepted the cash compensation the landlord offered and moved away. But 49 families who worked nearby and had nowhere else to live held on. In 2000, the eviction struggle got very hot: two community members were thrown in jail and the others filed a court case against the land-owner, which they lost. The battle raged on, but the people remained.

Eventually, Klong Lumnoon residents linked with Bangkok's large network of canal-side communities, who showed them how to organize themselves, how to deal with the district canal authorities and helped them to form a savings and credit group. Meanwhile, the eviction struggle continued. Eventually, some senior community leaders from the network helped to negotiate a compromise solution, in which the land-owner agreed to sell the people a small portion of the land for their housing, in exchange for their returning the rest.

With the District Office acting as mediator, the people even managed to haggle the land-owner down to a below-market selling price of just 750 Baht per square meter for their part of the site. After registering as a cooperative, the community took a loan from CODI at 1% to buy the land, which the cooperative on-lends to individual families at 3%, using the 2% margin for coordination, social activities, hosting visitors and religious ceremonies.

An extraordinary thing about Klong Lumnoon is that at the end of this long and bitter struggle to resolve the conflicting needs of community and land-owner, these two adversaries have ended up friends. The land-owner even agreed to contribute 200,000 Baht to build a new concrete walkway into the settlement.

Community **BEFORE**

AFTER Land sharing
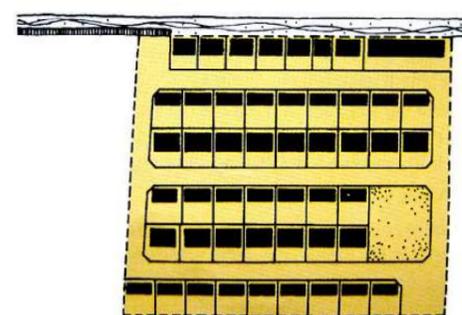
The people at Klong Lumnoon worked with young architects from CODI to design an efficient layout for the 49 houses and to develop four low-cost house models for the 38 families who will have to rebuild their own houses in the new area. The first three models were designed with rooms which can be finished later, after the families have paid off their land and housing loans and have some cash or building materials to spare. The people have also reserved four plots in the new layout for a community center, which the people designed in close collaboration with the young architects, using a series of beautiful models and drawings. The center, which the people will build themselves, will also have a day-care center.

Project Details :

|	
Households :	49
Land-owner :	Private
Tenure terms :	Collective land ownership
Type of upgrading :	Land sharing reconstruction
Infrastructure cost :	4.9 million Baht (US$ 122,500)
Housing costs :	7.59 million Baht (US$ 189,750) (aver. 172,200 Baht/unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	15.17 million Baht (US$ 379,250)

7 Pilot Project : Relocation of mini-squatters with long-term lease at **Boon Kook**

The housing project at Boon Kook, in the northern city of Uttaradit, does not involve a single established community, as the other pilot projects do, but represents a highly collaborative strategy for resolving the housing problems of the most vulnerable poor families living in scattered "mini squatter settlements" around the city.

To resettle these families, identified by the Community Network in their city-wide survey, the municipality agreed to purchase 1.6 hectares of land (which the network had identified) in the centrally-located Boon Kook area, which will be given on long-term lease to the new community. Many of these families were part of savings groups at their old squatter sites, which have now been pulled together into one, to strengthen the new community.

The new community at Boon Kook, which accommodates 124 families, is just a start. There are still many families around Uttaradit with tenure security problems, and as part of the Baan Mankong process, the community network in Uttaradit is working out ways to accommodate them in the next round of projects. But the project at Boon Kook represents a fertile cooperation between the community network and the Uttaradit Municipality (led by its energetic mayor) to solve the problems of poor people without secure housing in the city.

An interesting part of the Boon Kook story is the development of the site plan. As part of the planning process, the people worked with a young Bangkok architect to develop a beautiful layout plan in which the houses were arranged in clusters, so people could continue to live near

▼ **The people's CLUSTER layout plan**

▼ **The NHA's GRID layout plan**
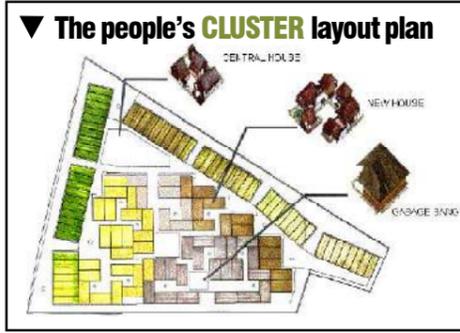
their old neighbors. The plan also included a big shed ("*Baan Garbage*") for sorting recyclable waste, since many of the relocatees are informal waste-pickers, and a communal "*Central House*" for housing poor, elderly or needy community members. Attempts to persuade the NHA (which was subsidizing the site development) to approve this cluster plan failed, however, and a more conventional grid of cross streets was substituted, which the NHA argued would minimize infrastructure costs.

Since the NHA's agreement to develop the Boon Kook site had been arranged before the Baan Mankong program began, the community was obliged to go along with the grid. They did, however, manage to persuade the NHA to include big community spaces for their recycling activities within the grid layout, and to allow people to select housing plots near their neighbors. People will also
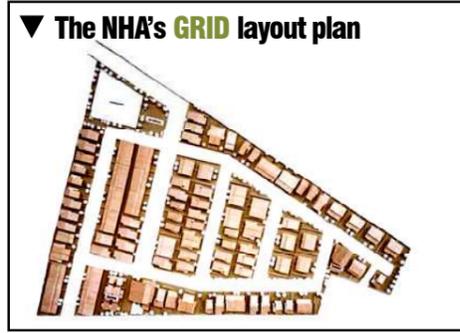
build their own houses in their chosen neighbor groups, to take advantage of bulk materials discounts and the greater efficiency of building together. Only those who want will take CODI housing loans. (*more details on page 12*)

Project Details :

Households :	124
Land-owner :	Municipality
Tenure terms :	Long term lease (30 yrs)
Type of upgrading :	Relocation
Infrastructure cost :	11 million Baht (from NHA) (US$ 275,000)
Housing costs :	24.1 million Baht (US$ 602,500) (aver. 90,000 Baht/ unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	31.82 million Baht (US$ 795,500)

8 Pilot Project : Reblocking at **Laem Rung Reung**

Laem Rung Reung is an old community of 67 households - mostly very poor fisher folk - located on a sandy peninsula which stretches out into the Gulf of Thailand from the port city of Rayong. Since tidal waters separate this beautiful area from the mainland for most of the day, Laem Rung Reung is practically an island.

The houses are loosely scattered and constructed mostly of coconut palm thatch and salvaged planks and tin sheets. Only a few houses are built of concrete blocks. The community has no water supply, drains, toilets or municipal electricity, and so for years, community people have had to use batteries to power their radios and lights, buy their drinking water and make do with well water for bathing. Besides plans to reconstruct their houses and lay basic infrastructure in the community, Laem Rung Reung's redevelopment plans will involve some reposi-

tioning of houses to make way for the infrastructure lines. The community's plans also include a major tree-planting campaign on the peninsula and the creation of a public park for the whole city to enjoy.

The land at Laem Rung Reung belongs to the Ministry of Interior, but the people have stayed here for decades without any formal lease contract. There are many communities around Thailand on land under Interior Ministry ownership, with whom CODI has signed an M.O.U. to work together within the Baan Mankong Program to obtain long-term leases for all the informal communities located on Interior Ministry land. But the tenure arrangements are decided only on a project-by-project basis, and in some cases where the ministry wants the land for other purposes, they're giving only three or five -year leases. The lease contract in Laem Rung Reung is still

being negotiated. Rayong's former mayor, Suraphong Putaniapibul, was for eight years a key supporter of the community network's involvement in resolving Rayong's low income housing problems, and was instrumental in launching the improvement process at Laem Rung Reung. Since he lost the election earlier this year, the momentum of the redevelopment process has slowed a bit.

▲ **The community BEFORE**

▲ **The community AFTER reblocking**

Project Details :

Households :	67
Land-owner :	Treasury Department
Tenure terms :	Long term lease (30 yrs)
Type of upgrading :	Reblocking on same site.
Infrastructure cost :	1.34 million Baht (US$ 33,500)
Housing costs :	3.01 million Baht (US$ 75,250) (aver. 50,000 Baht/ unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	5.39 million Baht (US$ 134,750)

9 Pilot Project : Upgrading on site with long-term lease at **Kaoseng**
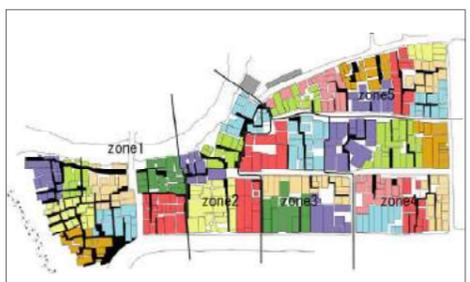
The upgrading of the lively beach-front community at Kaoseng, in the southern city of Songkhla, is the largest and most complex of the ten pilot projects. Besides being home to 480 households of mixed ethnicity and religion, with widely divergent occupations and income levels (from very poor fishermen to very prosperous traders), the community has a long history of displacement and tenure uncertainty. In the early 1960s, Kaoseng was the official relocation site for people evicted from a large settlement on the cape in northern Songkhla.

Although they were given no formal leases, the people have occupied this new land in peace ever since, and the settlement has grown into a thriving and colorful neighborhood, with a mosque at the center and an afternoon fresh market. Then in 2000, the municipality unveiled plans to redevelop Kaoseng as a tourist beach and announced that the community would have to move again.

However, negotiations between the community and the provincial government were successful in slowing this project down, and transforming an eviction threat into plans to redevelop their community as a thriving, beachside community. The Treasury Department, which owns the land, has agreed in principle to lease the land to the people, but the details of the contract haven't yet been finalized.

With help from four young architects, the community divided its five zones into 33 working groups of 10 - 20 households each. Using models, drawings and plastic transparencies laid over enlarged aerial photos of the community, each group analyzed its problems and developed plans to improve their micro area's environment and

housing, trying to preserve as much as possible the lively and informal charm of the existing settlement. This intense and highly decentralized planning process involved everyone, in innumerable meetings held around the clock.

It took three months for all 33 groups to finalize their plans, which were then combined to make five zone plans, which in turn were put together into a full community plan, making adjustments for widening and paving roads and lanes, laying drains, planting trees, planning solid waste disposal points, adding street lighting and developing "*pocket parks*" on unused land. Students from the local technical university helped survey the settlement.

Now the architects are working with the people to develop affordable house designs, and work on the infrastructure improvements has begun. To stretch their infrastructure subsidy as far as possible, the community people will do all the work themselves.

Project Details :

Households :	480
Land-owner :	Treasury Department
Tenure terms :	Long term lease (30 yrs)
Type of upgrading :	Upgrading on same site.
Infrastructure cost :	9 million Baht (US$ 225,000)
Housing costs :	20.25 million Baht (US$ 506,250) (aver. 50,000 Baht/ unit)
Total cost of land + housing + infrastructure :	36.18 million Baht (US$ 904,500)

4 This new tool empowers cities as the problem-solving unit . . .

An important condition to taking part in the Baan Mankong Program is that communities in each city must come together, think together, plan together and work together. But besides linking horizontally, communities and their networks must also come together with their municipal governments, NGOs, academics, architects and other local development actors to build a common understanding about the city's housing problems and to develop city-wide plans to resolve those problems as partners, drawing as much as possible on local resources such as land, technical expertise and finance.

Forging new working partnerships between these different groups is an important goal of the upgrading program and the key to establishing local mechanisms in all the 200 target cities to resolve housing problems in the future and ensure those cities can provide decent living conditions for all their citizens - rich and poor alike - long after the Baan Mankong program has officially closed down.

Once the community network, the municipality and the other stakeholders have come together and formed a committee to oversee the upgrading process, the first step is to jointly gather and understand information about all the poor communities in their city. After gathering their helpers and sitting down with all this information, they begin planning an upgrading process which covers *all the communities in the city*, as much as possible. Once this plan is finished, they put everything together in a proper document which includes maps, community layout plans, new housing designs, budget details and a city-wide working plan which explains how they're going to provide secure tenure, good infrastructure, better houses to all the poor communities in the city in three years. After the budget is released, the really big work of implementing their city-wide plan begins. But because the communities and the city are doing this work in collaboration, with the back-up of budget and support from the government, achieving this kind of city-wide target is actually possible.

Most cities don't believe they have the power to deal with their problems of land or housing for the poor. In fact, finding tenure solutions and upgrading all the settlements in the city is something that is actually highly possible.

> **The Baan Mankong Program represents a historic change in how the housing issue is dealt with in Thailand. Why? Because it operates not at the scale of isolated projects, but at the scale of the whole city.**

This gives a new dimension to the problem of informal settlements - a *structural* dimension which includes all the big urban planning issues like land use, land-ownership, environment, infrastructure and transport. When slum upgrading becomes a city-wide system, it changes the relationship between informal settlements and the city as a whole and makes housing a legitimate planning issue.

This is important, because poor people's housing has traditionally been seen not as a structural problem of the city, but as a question of welfare or the rights of a marginalized minority. As a result, evictions were dealt with on an ad-hoc basis, with a little upgrading here, a little relocation there.

When the lens that looks at the problems of individual settlements is widened to take in the whole city, we see the housing issue in a very different light. And by seeing it as a structural problem of the whole city, it makes these housing problems less threatening, somehow, and more manageable, more solvable. The upgrading program becomes a tool for cities to begin understanding and addressing the urban poor housing issue at this scale and as a group. And because poor communities are the driving force behind this collaborative upgrading program, the process legitimizes their status in the city as an important partner in resolving an issue which is everybody's business!

Making the sky bigger . . .

In most development projects, communities in a city have no links with each other, only with the NGOs or the agencies which support them. When people are scattered like this, they have no voice, no strength, no common direction.

Nice little housing projects in nice little communities may be satisfying to work on and may bring improvements to those isolated places, but rarely do they transform the lives of the poor or bring change at any significant scale.

But when poor communities link together across the city and begin to look collectively at the larger structural issues which create their problems - or make them worse - they begin seeing the micro-problems of their own settlements are not isolated, but related to those in other communities and to those of the city as a whole. This helps people to systematize those problems and to start understanding the differences between their various situations of poverty, little by little.

This more *"structural"* understanding of their city is the key to pulling people out of whatever problems they face individually- whether illegal tenure, or poverty or substandard living conditions. And that is important because it broadens the scope of their struggle into something larger and more important. *Suddenly the sky is bigger!*

Setting up an alternative system that is formal, but not too formal . . .

It often happens that when a group of well-intentioned people try to set up a formal structure to accomplish some new task, they'll almost inevitably fall into the trap of recreating all the conventional, top-down, hierarchical, centralized qualities of the formal systems they are familiar with. And before they know it, they've pulled the strings so tight they can't move and can't do anything new at all.

Progressive people go into the political system all the time with big ideas of reforming the system or doing something new, but most never get very far. There are just too many vested interests, too much institutionalizing of the old top-down, hierarchical structures, too many strings. That stuff is just in the air. With Baan Mankong, instead of trying to change the system from within, the program leaves the system more-less alone and creates a new platform for collaboration, in which a group of stakeholders, who normally have little to do with each other, are given room to work together, with a more equal position.

This platform the program creates has to be a little bit formal, *but not too formal*. The group has to agree on whatever upgrading system they set up in their city, but that system doesn't have to be fully a part of the city's governance system. It's important to maintain enough flexibility that all the partners feel free to express themselves, and to think and do things as a group. This kind of collaboration is something new to the political structure in cities here. Because it is not under any particular influence, more things are possible, and in a way, this is a kind of *back-door* way to reform the system.

How to reactiviate citizen involvement in Thai cities, from the **bottom up**

There's a lot of talk of decentralization in Thailand, but cities still don't have much power, even though they have inherited the habits of a centralized style of governance. But worse, a lot of us still believe that looking after the city we live in is the municipality's job - not yours or mine. Thus while more and more of us are living in cities, more and more of us are becoming *de-citizenized*.

But city governments don't need to be the doers all the time. The whole system needs to be opened up so that citizens in the city feel that this is their city, and that they are a part of the development, not just passive objects of that development, over which they have no control or ownership. The city doesn't have to maintain all its drainage canals, for example, when the communities living along many of Thailand's urban canals have shown that they can do it very well themselves - as a group - with a few modest resource.

This is just one example of how responsibility for one aspect of city management can be decentralized to a citizens' group. In the past ten years, besides taking care of canals and waterways, we've seen community people becoming important actors in the management of public parks and markets, of the collection and recycling of solid waste and the design and implementation of community-based welfare programs. Opening up more room for people to shake off their passivity and get involved in these ways is the new frontier in urban management - and that's real decentralization, to the smallest unit of civil society. Upgrad-

ing can be a very powerful tool to spark off this kind of decentralization, and the Baan Mankong program offers another - and much larger - way to activate the involvement of Thailand's poorest citizens in a range of city development processes, going well beyond their own housing.

There are nascent civic movements in some Thai cities, but none as focused on *doing* as what Thailand's urban community networks are doing with upgrading. When community people do the upgrading and their work is accepted by all the city actors, it becomes a process which enhances their status in the city, as key partners in solving city-scale problems like housing and environment and land. Change can only come from concrete activities like this.

"The success of the upgrading program in any city, no matter what size, depends on the success of the partnership, which means all the parties have to agree together and move in the same direction. All this requires the right time and the right steps to implement it successfully. But one thing is certain: poor people clearly understand that this concept is good and that they can start working on it by themselves right away."

(Lek Sompop, National Coordinator of the Baan Mankong Program)

Notes on the subtle art of
municipal matchmaking . . .

Lek Sompop, Baan Mankong's national co-ordinator, talks about collaboration between groups which haven't collaborated before and why "Here in Thailand it's the relationship that we are serious about."

An important part of CODI's role in the Baan Mankong process is helping to promote and balance the new relationships between all the different actors involved in the city upgrading process, so they can sit down with each other and work together, in ways which allow the people to take the lead. This is something very delicate, and often calls for the skills of a diplomat more than those of a organizer. For development workers trained in the old style of managing everything, these kind of "facilitating" skills have to be learned in practice. Here are some thoughts on the subtle art of nurturing this collaborative space which the program creates, drawn from discussions with Lek Sompop, CODI's national coordinator for the Baan Mankong Program:

A hundred years ago, it was considered the city's job to make all the decisions and do everything to meet everyone's needs. But cities then and cities now are very different! Cities are more complex now, and the quality of citizenship has also changed. Citizens today are much more independent, more stubborn and they have much higher expectations than a century ago. So it figures that the way cities are managed has to change. Unfortunately, the change in how cities are managed is moving much slower than the change in urban societies.

What we're trying to do with Baan Mankong is to create space for all these different actors in Thai cities to come together, look honestly and constructively at this new reality, and then figure out how to manage it together, with a positive feeling and a good mood. It's something like arranging a marriage! If we want these people to get together, we have to first introduce them and then organize a courtship, so they learn to like each other. The point of this collaborative space, which the upgrading program creates, is to get these actors to be happy enough working together that it isn't just a one-time date, but turns into a long-term marriage!

The people sitting in these committees might feel some uneasiness at coming together, especially at first. In many cases, city governments and the poor are old adversaries, with plenty of reasons to mistrust each other and not much history of cooperation! But in this upgrading program, we said no, that old relationship isn't working. We need to call a truce and create a collaborative space so that they can come together, in different ways, and start learning from each other.

It's surprising how few problems there have been with this collaboration in the dozens of cities where Baan Mankong is underway, or how often the different parties end up confessing that *this is not so bad after all!* As their respect for each other grows, they stop being adversaries and become a team, working on a common project, with a lot of excitement. Then everybody wants to do things and the differences between the actors becomes less and less, because the goal is bigger. So many cities have this quality now. Mayors in some cities, for example, are helping negotiate land for the people, and in other cases, the city has purchased or leased the land for housing on behalf of the people. In these ways, the city is being gently pushed into playing the support role it should be playing: facilitating the people's settlement process.

Some of these mayors may not be cooperating because they're fully committed to the idea, but because they understand the opportunities this upgrading program brings to their cities: good housing, good cooperation from the academics, good cooperation from the government, resources, support, good press - lots of good things for their cities. The important thing is that they do cooperate!

But sometimes, the municipality and the communities clash with each other, and in these cases, a third party in the committee (like a university professor or a local NGO) can help soften the differences and bring a mediating force to the committee dynamic. And sometimes, all these different actors - or even the poor communities themselves - can't agree what their own problems are. It is important that the CODI staff supporting this project in a city know these various actors and understand the local politics very well. But since it's not our job to identify the issues or set the agenda, one strategy we use is to pose a series of questions - very carefully-chosen questions - which set off discussions and which can eventually draw out all the problems.

The form this partnership takes in each city is different. We leave it very loose, so that the cities and the people feel free to set up whatever kind of committee they like. Some cities like Ayutthaya and Pitsanulok have made very legal structures and announced them formally in the gazettes, while in other cities, the collaboration is recognized but not so legally circumscribed. What's important is that people have their own ideas and choose their own direction - together.

Decentralization :

There are other good reasons to build stronger and more equitable working relationships in Thai cities. According to the government's policy on decentralization (which is part of the Thailand's 9th National Plan), since 2003, 22% of the national government budget has had to pass to municipalities to decide how to use. And from 2006, cities will receive 35% of the national budget.

Many people are asking how an organization as small as CODI can ever implement an upgrading program on such a huge scale as Baan Mankong? In fact, CODI can't do it - but people can. After 20 years of experience and linking into networks at national scale, the time has come where solutions are being developed by people and by communities at a very large scale. But shooting for such a big scale is also strategic: the big target (upgrading 300,000 units in 200 slums in five years!) gets everyone thinking big and mobilizing all the possible forces in their cities to deal with this common problem. Most Thai cities don't have this capacity yet and the program is being used to push them beyond that old project-by-project scale, and to build the capacity to resolve these housing problems at city scale and national scale. So what kind of techniques help scale up this upgrading process?

1 **Pilot projects :** Pilot upgrading projects are being organized in as many cities as possible, to get things going, to generate excitement and to demonstrate that community-driven upgrading can work. Pilots provide a set of much-visited examples of how upgrading can be done and provide opportunities for "learning by doing" through actual implementation. Once networks and cities learn from the pilot projects, they can take charge of teaching others to solve their problems in similar ways, so that after the program ends, the upgrading process can continue to grow.

2 **Learning centers :** Twelve cities around the country with very strong upgrading processes have been designated as *learning centers* for other towns and cities in their regions.

3 **Big events :** Now, whenever a big event is organized to launch an upgrading process in a city or to inaugurate a pilot project, people from neighboring cities are invited to see what's happening, participate, get inspired, feel excited to go home and start their own upgrading program. In these ways, other networks see and learn, and the ideas spread automatically, driven by people's own initiative and inspiration.

4 **Exchanges :** One of the most potent strategies for ensuring that learning about all aspects of the program is opened up is a constant stream of exchange visits - between communities, pilot projects, cities and regions - involving people, officials, NGOs, academics and technicians

5 **Subcontracting :** Instead of adding lots of staff, CODI's working model is to sub-contract most of the support and coordination work to partners in various cities. Once CODI and these partners have established a common understanding about the upgrading concepts and agreed on who does what in that city, then CODI's limited staff can concentrate on making balancing inputs when there are problems.

6 **Constant meetings :** As part of the process of promoting this very new and very unconventional housing process, meetings at all levels are being organized almost constantly: meetings of the 12 Baan Mankong staff are held every month, meetings of all the subcontract partners are held every three months and meetings for all the staff and all the concerned partners working on all the projects are held every six months (this is a big meeting, held in a different region each time).

Baan Mankong in Uttaradit

Making CITIES the problem-solving unit and PEOPLE the prime movers in those cities . . .

Before the Baan Mankong Program was launched, many community networks, such as those in Uttaradit, Ayutthaya and Chiang Mai had already been vitally involved in exploring city-wide strategies for solving the problems of housing in their cities as, a whole, rather than just in isolated communities. And many other urban networks have developed problem-solving strategies which involve linking with municipalities and developing city-wide development processes through partnership, which can tackle a wide range of problems, at city-scale.

In all these initiatives, the large scale and collective power these community networks bring to the process are crucial elements in developing a development mechanism that is truly local and in which people are the driving force. This new kind of local partnership process, which can work in small, medium or large cities (or in smaller constituencies within very large cities), can solve a number of different problems at the same time, and can build the component parts for a collective development process that is national in scale.

Years before Baan Mankong, the northern city of Uttaradit was pioneering collaborative, people-driven and city-wide strategies for providing secure land and decent housing for the 10% of the city's population who live in insecure and degraded environments. In 1999, CODI began working to expand the savings process to include the city's squatters whose serious housing problems were not being addressed. Besides setting up daily savings groups, they used the issue of saving for better housing to begin building a parallel community process in the city.

A survey of all the poor settlements in Uttaradit helped link the groups and began building a community network. As part of the survey process, the people mapped all the slums and small pockets of squatters, identified land owners, and indicated which slums could stay put and which needed to relocate. Two young architects helped, along with a group of supportive monks and the mayor, Prakaikeo Ratananaka, who became the network's enthusiastic and strategic ally.

To find sustainable solutions for the 1,000 families in the city with housing problems, they looked at the city as a whole and developed plans which made room for all those families, within the fabric of the city. To find that room, they used a range of planning techniques: land-sharing in one area, reblocking in another, *in-situ* upgrading here and relocation there. The city-wide housing plan which they developed has since become the basis for the city's upgrading program under Baan Mankong, and includes infrastructure improvements, urban regeneration, canal-cleaning, wasteland reclamation, park development, and the creation of amenities which could be enjoyed by the whole city.

Work began in the Jarerm Dham community, where eight river-side squatters negotiated to lease temple-owned land nearby and worked with the young architects to design and build solid 2-story row houses for themselves there, at the unheard-of cost of just 40,000 Baht each (with loan repayments of only 15 Baht a day!). This left space beside the river for the remaining house to reblock and develop kitchen gardens. CODI provided loans and the new houses were officially inaugurated in a seminar on "Livable Cities" which brought together government housing officials and community leaders from networks all over Thailand.

Boon Kook :
Uttaradit's first community-driven relocation . . .

The inauguration of Boon Kook on March 29, 2003, was the starting point for Baan Mankong project and makes a very good example of how collective housing can be developed when various local partners cooperate to solve serious problems of housing - in this case to resettle 124 of the city's most vulnerable squatter households, all in immediate danger of eviction. *(more details on Boon Kook on page 9)*

- **The community network** surveyed all the people with tenure problems in the city, selected the most vulnerable to move to Boon Kook and helped start daily savings groups among them. The network also helped raise funds to construct Boon Kook's *central house* for elderly, poor or handicapped community members, which is part of the community's plan.

- **The Municipality** worked with the network to identify good land and eventually bought the network's second choice land, for 6 million Baht, and gave it on long-term lease to the community cooperative, with support from the mayor.

- **CODI** provided housing loans to families who needed them.

- **The NHA** developed roads and infrastructure on the new site, to NHA standards, constructed by private contractors.

- **The new Boon Kook community** planned the layout of their new settlement and are building their own houses collectively, in their chosen neighbor groups, using house designs they developed themselves.

- **Community architects** helped organize the survey, and worked with the people to explore affordable house designs and community layout plans which allow them to live with their old neighbors and which include spaces for sorting recyclable waste, since many of the relocatees are waste-pickers.

Baan Mankong in Bangkok
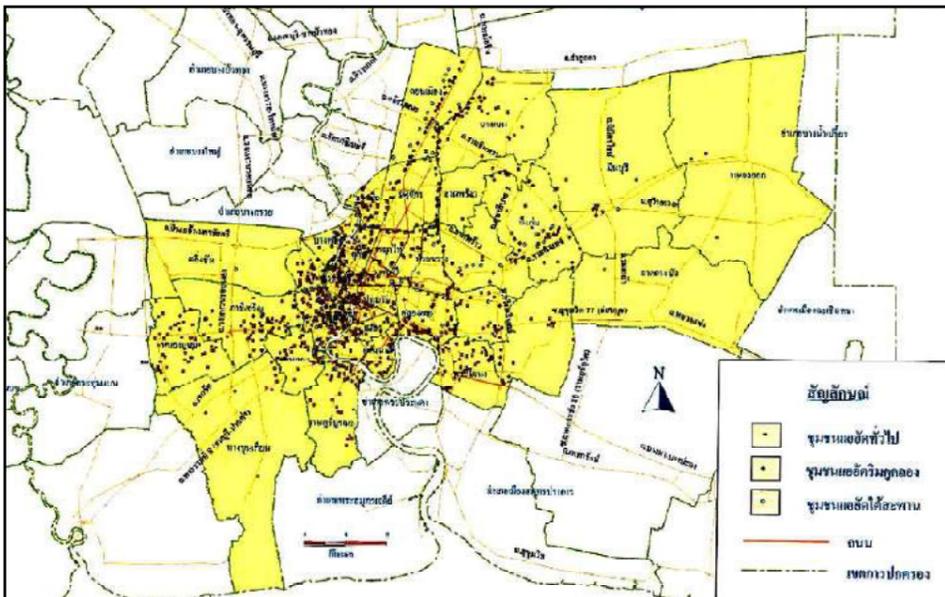
Both CODI and the myriad community networks which operate in Bangkok, Thailand's mega city of 11 million people, are having to adjust the Baan Mankong upgrading process for Bangkok, which is very, very big! The city's 1,200 settlements, which are home to almost a third of Thailand's urban poor, are spread across 50 *khets* (districts). Many of these *khets* are like an entire city, with many, many communities within their boundaries.

The first task is to figure out how to divide up this vast city into parts which are small enough to be manageable. For purposes of the Baan Mankong, it has been decided that each *khet* will be regarded as one city. First we will look at all the usual city components in each *khet*, and then we will bring all these *khets* together and look at the larger picture. So each *khet* will have to do their survey,

form their joint committee with all the key actors and develop their 3-year upgrading plan, just like all the other cities. The next step will be to use the momentum of the upgrading process to "break the wall" of the savings groups now working in each khet, which are still very limited and not touching many poor communities. So how to open up so all of them can join and work together.

On April 3, 2004, a big seminar was organized to discuss the Bangkok Metropolitan area's plan for Baan Mankong. Around 1,500 people were invited to the meeting, to share their experiences, learn together, express their problems and plan together how to solve Bangkok's serious housing problems. During the seminar, a target of solving the housing problems in 67 communities was set for 2004, under Baan Mankong.

As Lek Sompop from CODI says, "Bangkok is going to be very difficult! If it wasn't so difficult, the NHA would have been able to solve the city's housing problems already! But we believe that the situation is ripe now, the other factors are favorable, so it's a good time to start in Bangkok."

Bangkok is also a key target for the government's new *poverty reduction* policy (which has involved a controversial nation-wide program of "registering" poor people), and the Baan Mankong upgrading program is included in this policy, as one strategy to reduce poverty. As part of this policy, a center for poverty reduction has been set up in Bangkok, which CODI has agreed to be part of.

Lots of land bargaining . . .

Khun Sangwan is a community leader from Bonkai, one of the first ten Baan Mankong pilot communities, in the heart of Bangkok. At the seminar, he spoke about how many communities in Bangkok under various landlords are now in the process of negotiating long-term lease contracts or land purchases. Secure tenure is one of the most important parts of the new housing program, and communities have to work this out before they can access the housing loans and infrastructure subsidies under the program. All this bargaining for land is being done by people, by themselves, with only a little support from CODI, when necessary.

Baan Mankong in Khon Kaen

New friends with drafting pencils :
Khon Kaen University gets involved in upgrading . . .

Lek Sompop, CODI's Baan Mankong coordinator, thinks the upgrading process in Khon Kaen makes a very good example of how this new model of facilitating and balancing and promoting local relationship-building can work very well - instead of just taking the easy way out and working with individual communities in the old way. In Khon Kaen, there are five groups that are very powerful: the municipality, the university, the community network, the NGOs and the communities themselves - many of which have different affiliations with different groups. Getting all these different groups to come together and work *"in a smooth atmosphere"* has been a very delicate and difficult process. But finally, these groups have managed to form their local committee and make their 3-year upgrading plan.

Khon Kaen has 69 communities, of which 50 (which are the poorest) will be improved in this first phase of the Baan Mankong Program. The others are mostly communities within markets or older communities whose housing needs are not so urgent and can come later.

Railway slums in Khon Kaen :

Some of the poorest and most insecure communities in Khon Kaen are the settlements along the railway tracks. All these railway communities are included in the first year's upgrading projects. Some will have to relocate to nearby land, but most will be able to stay, according to an agreement negotiated by national network of railway communities, in which :

1 Communities located within 20 meters of the tracks will have to relocate.

2 Communities located 20 - 40 meters from the tracks can get 3-year lease contracts and upgrade their settlements *in situ*.

3 Communities on railway land beyond 40 meters from the track can get 30-year lease contracts and upgrade *in situ*.

In the northeastern region, architecture faculties at three big universities have become active in supporting the Baan Mankong program: Maha Salakam University, Korat University and Khon Kaen University. Besides working with communities in their own cities, they are also arranging to send teams of students to work with communities in nearby cities which don't have architecture faculties.

These professors, architects, planners and students who have begun working with communities play an extremely important role in the upgrading process. In a program which has to do with *physical change*, their ability to make lovely drawings and models, help community people to visualize new possibilities and put together professional presentations is an essential ingredient in the success of the program. For most of these technical people and academics, assisting communities with their upgrading and housing plans and sitting on these local committees is some-

thing very new. And many are finding that it's not simply a matter of making a few models. Some are finding themselves being dragged into all the messy, complicated realities of communities in the process, getting phone calls at all hours with questions and requests, being called to endless meetings, being asked to sign forms and negotiate with contractors. But this only happens because through the work they're doing, a relationship of trust and respect is growing. No longer is it a matter of some dry academic research project. In these ways, the process is building a relationship between the university and the communities - and the society of Khon Kaen city as a whole.

Plus, when it is a university supporting the people, as a team, rather than an individual architect, there's a much greater continuity to share and discuss. Architects may come and go, but universities stay put. No matter how many different students they send to the communities, the faculty base remains strong.

Diagram of the Baan Mankong working process in Khon Kaen

Development will include: city development plan, social development, community organization development, savings activities development, income generation, welfare.

Local Committee : (18 persons total)
- Local authority (2 reps.)
- University (3 reps.)
- NGO (1 reps.)
- CODI (2 reps.)
- Community (10 reps.)

Municipality

Working group

Three-year upgrading plan

Network Network Network

Total number of communities in this phase of upgrading :
63 settlements
(5,000 households)

2004: Upgrade 5 communities **(1,000 households)**

2005: Upgrade 20 communities **(2,000 households)**

2006: Upgrade 25 communities **(2,000 households)**

• Collective land management
• Collective financial management
• Collective social management

Why doing things **collectively** makes sense for the poor and is an important part of the Baan Mankong approach :

In a society which is becoming ever more individualized, poor people alone don't stand a chance. For the poor, the collectivity of the communities they live in is an important survival mechanism, which helps them meet needs and resolve problems they can't individually. To strengthen this *"collective force"* in poor communities, the Baan Mankong Program is experimenting with finding ways to make every aspect of the upgrading process collective, as much as possible.

Unfortunately, there are cases where difficult landlords want land leases to go to individual families. In all those projects, there are many more problems than in projects where the land is owned or rented collectively. Why? Because the *collective force* is able to deal with whatever minor problems which come up, as a matter of course. Collective land management (through cooperative lease-hold or cooperative ownership) can help safeguard against speculation and gentrification, which are *always* a

danger when the tenure of inner-city settlements is secured. But besides assuring the people keep their community, there is an automatic and binding element in the cooperative management of land which links people together. The monthly rituals of collecting the rents or land payments, or the process of making decisions about land which is collectively owned are more ways of bringing people together. Like savings groups, cooperative land management gets people meeting each other all the time, so they learn what their neighbors are up to. If someone's sick, or needs rice or has kids who can't go to school, this *collective force* can find a way to help. These support systems are vital to people's survival in poor communities.

In a number of the Baan Mankong housing projects, this force becomes visible. In the Boon Kook resettlement community in Uttaradit, for example, the people have designed into their community six units of "communal housing" for poor or handicapped members of their community who have nowhere to stay. In Bangkok's Klong Lumnoon com-

munity, and in Udon Thani's Wat Po community, the people have also built "central houses" for old, crippled, needy and ill people. These are expressions of a highly decentralized and richly human social welfare system, in which communities collectively look after their own.

These kinds of communal facilities are appearing in many community upgrading plans because the program creates space for people to think about these issues and provides tools and resources to translate their social development and community welfare ideas into facilities. In these ways, the Baan Mankong Program is being used as a tool to strengthen a collective social process which can improve community people's security and well-being in many other ways than purely physical ones.

Reality check in Khon Kaen :

Last March, there was an informal meeting in Khon Kaen to launch the Baan Mankong process in the city. Three representatives from each of the 63 communities came, along with the city's young Mayor and CODI staff. Somsook was there and had these comments afterwards :

All the very different kinds of communities were there, from the run-down or poorly-serviced older settlements with no serious land tenure problems right down to the most vulnerable squatter settlements started only a few months ago. We showed slides of different kinds of community upgrading and resettlement projects to help people start seeing the range of what's possible. This was the first time we'd gotten all the communities in the city to discuss the Ban Mankong program. And the people had a lot of questions about this policy, which they all understood was going to be very important. For example :

- **If we get a land lease contract from the State Railways, will it provide us real security?**

- **What will be the rights of house renters or room renters in the community? Or the rights of absentee house-owners or people who came only recently? Who gets what?**

- **What are we going to do with the community members who never care about others, never participate in community activities?**
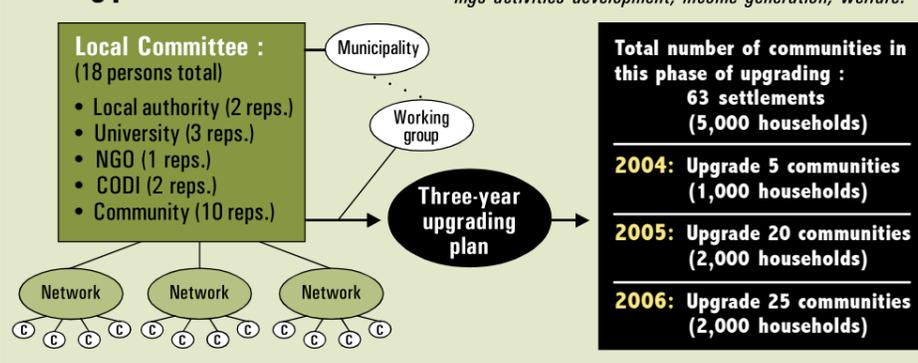
These are very important and very difficult questions. These questions give you an idea of the reality in these settlements. You can start with a very idealistic vision of dazzling possibilities, but the force of reality soon brings you back down to earth.

Most informal settlements are organized by extremely complex arrangements: there are house-renters, house-owners, absentee landlords, slum lords, all of whom benefit in some way from things being the way they are. But if one day you go in and say, "We are going to provide security and from now on people will be more equal to each other, and the poor can find a place so they can stand up in society with dignity and all good things" not everyone will be jumping up and down. It's not that easy.

We could only answer that these are all good questions, and that it's going to be their job to work out how to deal with these issues. This is not the kind of program in which the government is telling anybody to do things like this or that. In this program, people have to write their own rules. In all the communities there may be some rich people, some who like to sleep, different kinds of people! The important thing is that within this reality, the active people who want real security have to work out what to do and take up this opportunity. They have to network, have to discuss with others, they have to get others to join the process, to get it going in a good direction. Only a good organization can do this.

Baan Mankong in Ayutthaya

Ayutthaya's Baan Mankong process was launched in a national jamboree in February 2003, when leaders from 100 urban networks gathered in Ayutthaya to share ideas about this national upgrading program, which was just then getting started. It was Thailand's largest-yet horizontal exposure visit and an important chance for community people from around Thailand to see the projects in Ayutthaya, which make good examples of what kind of things are possible with Baan Mankong . . .
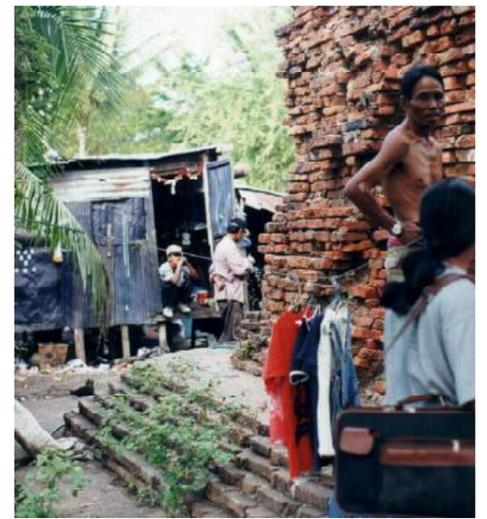
A few years back, UNESCO designated the old Thai capital city of Ayutthaya a *"World Heritage Site."* That was good news for historic preservation, but a big problem for the city's poor, who are as authentic as the ruins, but suddenly found themselves are in danger of being evicted from their city. On the oldest "island" part of Ayutthaya, where most of the monuments are and where the tourists go, 80% of the land is under government ownership, and that has created a situation in which the poor's only housing option has been to live in squatter settlements, scattered here and there between the ruins.

> The six year-old community network in Ayutthaya has linked communities around the idea that poor people and historic monuments can cohabit in mutually beneficial ways.

The network began by surveying and mapping all of Ayutthaya informal settlements, finding 53 informal communities within the municipal boundaries (6,611 households). To open a public dialogue on the city's critical housing problems, they organized a public seminar in July 2000 and presented their survey information to the city and to all the actors with a stake in Ayutthaya's development. The idea was to look at the city as a whole, and to jointly develop a comprehensive housing plan for the entire city, rather than just doing a project here and a project there.

The people's idea for historic Ayutthaya? Monuments need to be maintained and tourists who come to see them need guides, drink vendors, souvenir sellers, bicycle-renters. The people who are already providing these services are Ayutthaya's poor citizens and they've lived all their lives in the shadow of those ancient spires and battlements. If they are allowed to improve conditions in their settlements, bring in basic services and construct proper houses, shifting their houses a little where necessary to allow the monuments to be rehabilitated, then the unsightly shanties the preservationists are so vexed about will turn into healthy, attractive neighborhoods.

Since then, CODI has coordinated with the NHA, the Municipality and the Department of Fine Arts (responsible for Thailand's historic monuments) to promote the idea that poor communities and historic monuments can make good neighbors. An agreement was eventually made to test the idea in a series of pilot community improvement projects, and then to use the experience of those pilots to inspire a city-wide community adjustment and reconstruction process.

1 **Arkarn Songkroa :** Ayutthaya's first full-scale, community-driven on-site community redevelopment. *(see box above)*

2 **Trok Kanom Touay :** This settlement of mostly wooden houses on Treasury land stood in the way of a planned road building project, and had been resisting eviction for a long time. Here people used the process of making environmental improvements to organize and unite their settlement, *through action,* and to strengthen their negotiations to stay.

3 **Wat Peechai :** Another community under threat of eviction, here from the temple which owns the land and the wooden shophouses the people have rented for 50 years. The people used the process of repainting the building and widening the public gallery in front to organize and unite the community, and to show the temple they can make everything look nice, no need to evict! The network linked with the Provincial Development Committee to help facilitate discussions with the Abbott to allow the people to make improvements instead of eviction.

Arkarn Songkroa :
Ayutthaya's first crack at on-site upgrading . . .

The **Arkarn Songkroa** community began life 45 years ago as an early social housing project, in which the government built two lines of simple row houses for families whose dwellings had burned down in settlements nearby. Later, more households moved into the open spaces and the tightly-knit community grew to 67 households. The people work as vendors, factory laborers, *tuk-tuk* drivers and traditional Thai massage therapists - all active members of the savings group. With the help of two young architects from Bangkok, the community spent 3-months designing a full redevelopment plan for *Arkarn Songkroa* which included the realignment of all the houses to equalize plot sizes and to create some much-needed open spaces, and the complete reconstruction of the community's housing an infrastructure. For Ayutthaya's community network, the upgrading of Arkarn Songkroa was the first step in showing the city and the preservationists that improving the living conditions and tenure security of poor communities answers the imperatives of both historic preservation and need for housing, and is a big step towards making Ayutthaya "livable" for all its citizens.
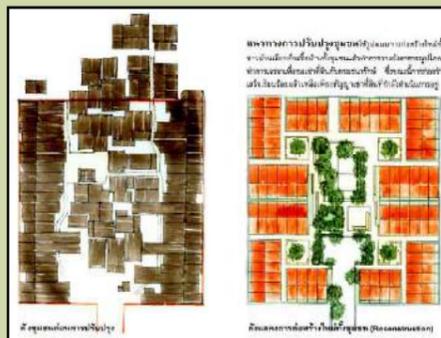
BEFORE UPGRADING :

AFTER UPGRADING :

■ **House design :** The 2.5-story row-houses measure 3 x 7 meters with 1 meter setback for a small porch and balcony in front and 2 meters for a toilet and kitchen at the back. Total living area is 60 square meters.

■ **Core houses :** To keep costs low, the people collectively built *core houses* with side walls, floor slabs, roof and space for a 2nd floor loft. Each family provides front and back walls, windows, doors and finishes, many using recycled material from old houses. Cost of core house: 72,000 Baht.

■ **Housing loans :** 7.2 Million Baht loan from CODI to cooperative, which on-ends 72,000 Baht to individual members and manages repayment.

■ **Infrastructure :** Contractor-built, according to NHA standards, using 2.5 million Baht NHA subsidy, which comes through the local authority.

■ **Land :** 4,800 square meters of land in the full settlement, with 66 units, open spaces, lanes.

■ **Tenure terms :** Land belongs to Treasury Department, which has leased it to the Municipality, which in turn has sub-leased it (on a long term 15 - 20 year renewable lease) to the cooperative (not to individual families) which the community formed at the beginning of the negotiations.
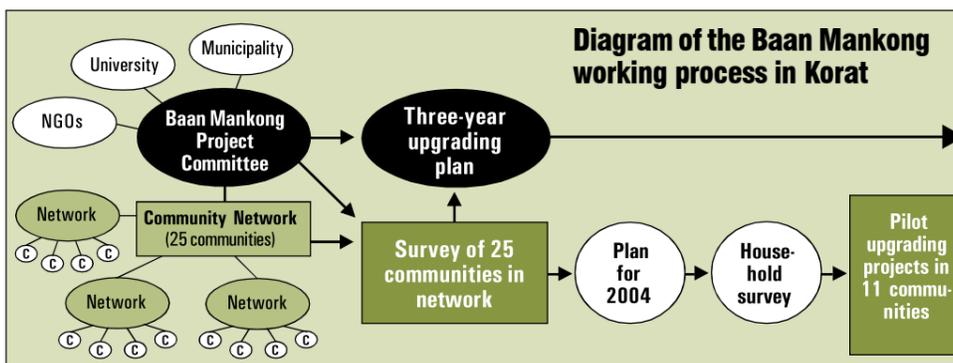
Baan Mankong in Korat

When the Baan Mankong process began in the central Thai city of Korat last year, everyone thought it would be very fruitful, for many reasons. The communities were very powerful, the network was strong, and the people understood the problems very clearly. There was also a very active and enthusiastic mayor who had become a close ally of the community network and had understood the Baan Mankong concept. (This mayor was famous for suggesting to a group of 20 other mayors at a seminar in Korat that it actually makes better sense for the poor to stay in the city, where they live in settlements now, close to their workplaces, and let the rich live outside of the city, since they have cars!) But other factors slowed things down. The mayor lost the election recently and the network has had to start all over building a relationship and educating the new mayor. Also, the NGOs in Korat have been slow to understand the concepts behind the upgrading program: that it's not their job to construct houses for people, but to support the people to do it and to help change the relationship with the city also. But despite these factors, the project committee has been set up and the upgrading process has moved forward, because the communities are strong enough and clear about their problems.

Diagram of the Baan Mankong working process in Korat

Korat's upgrading plan :

Total number of communities in the city :
52 settlements (9,900 households)
2004: Upgrade 11 communities (2,090 households)
2005: Upgrade 25 communities (4,750 households)
2006: Upgrade 16 communities (3,040 households)

> Decent, secure settlements are good for people and good for the whole city - the Baan Mankong pilot projects will help show this. When people plan and build their own secure, well-serviced settlements, they feel a sense of ownership of those communities, and they become sustainable communities, not like a government project, which outsiders build and people move into.
>
> *Khun Harnchai, Mayor of Udon Thani*

Baan Mankong in Udon Thani

The Baan Mankong Program in the city of Udon Thani, in northeastern Thailand, was officially launched in December, 2004, with a three-day national seminar on community upgrading. Community savings in Udon Thani began just nine years ago in a few of the city's 51 informal settlements, but since then has helped build a city-wide network of poor communities. Nine of these settlements have been selected by the joint committee and the community network for upgrading in the program's pilot phase, of which the first is the Wat Po Teewaram community (*see box below*).

The seminar, held at Udon Thani's Rajabhat Institute, brought together about 500 community leaders from around Thailand, all involved in developing community upgrading plans with the municipalities and other partners in their own cities, under the Baan Mankong Program. There were also visiting teams of community leaders from Cambodia, Lao PDR and India, as well as architects, planners and academics who also wish to support this community-driven upgrading process and came to learn. On the first day, community leaders gave reports on the progress of the Baan Mankong upgrading in their various regions. On the second day, participants broke into subgroups to discuss in more detail issues relating to the upgrading program such as the role of the municipality, community surveying, holistic social development, community planning and strengthening links with local partners. The third day began with a gala parade through the city, complete with marching bands and dozens of community groups in matching t-shirts - all triumphantly headed by the city's mayor, driving a decorated tuk-tuk!

The parade ended up at Wat Po Teewaram, where the ceremonies to inaugurate Udon Thani's first community upgrading project were held. The program drew a big crowd of community people from settlements around town, as well as officials from local, provincial and national government, academics and professionals - and more than a few curious on-lookers. Community upgrading plans and house models from the nine pilot projects were on display, while up the dais, several very important milestones for the city's poor were taking place :

1 **The signing of the M.O.U.** between the Municipality, the urban community network and CODI to officially launch the Baan Mankong community upgrading program in the Udon Thani, which was celebrated with the ceremonial ringing of a big gong by the Provincial Governor.

2 **The signing of land lease** contract for one of the first pilot projects and the making of the first land-purchase payment in another.

3 **The ceremonial cementing** of the first reinforced concrete column in the Wat Po community's reconstruction across the street, with various officials and visiting dignitaries and community leaders taking their turn pitching in a shovel-full of fresh concrete. Afterwards, the crowd toured the settlement, now under reconstruction.

It's much easier when the mayor is on your side . . .

Community networks in many cities are now working hard to develop working relationships with their municipal governments, especially with their mayors, who can play an extremely important role in the Baan Mankong process. Some old-style mayors, who operate along more traditional feudal lines, have been wary of this new program which places communities at the center of a process and have been reluctant to give their full support.

But in a few cities, a new generation of mayors have embraced this new opportunity with enthusiasm and become key actors in promoting this highly participatory and community-driven upgrading program. Udon Thani's progressive young Mayor, Khun Harnchai, who has been an enthusiastic supporter of the community network's initiatives and a key ally in the city's Baan Mankong process, is an important model for how to build community-city partnerships in other cities.

On the first night of the big launch program in December, the ten pilot communities hosted dinners for all the seminar participants, featuring all kinds of local delicacies and followed the traditional northeastern *zaisin* ceremony, in which elders tie string around the wrists of individual guests, with lots of bowing and smiling and murmuring of good-natured blessings. The mayor and a big contingent of his municipal staff made the rounds of all ten settlements that night, taking a little dinner with each community and joining in the blessing ceremonies.

This very personal gesture of support was only the public side: he has done a lot of behind-the-scenes work helping to negotiate lease contracts and tenure agreements for all the settlements and worked closely with the network to find pragmatic ways the city can support their upgrading efforts.

Udon Thani's first pilot project at the Wat Po Teewaram community

Wat Po Tee Waram is a settlement of 136 families on temple land in the middle of Udon Thani. Because of its land tenure situation, strong savings organization and active involvement of the municipality, the community was chosen to be one of the cities first nine pilot upgrading projects.

A few poor migrants built the first houses here 50 years ago on land they rented from the temple. Over the years, more joined and the land gradually filled up. Different families pay different rents, according to when they moved in and how much land they occupy, but all the rents are very low. The people have managed to negotiate a 3-year rental contract with the temple, but everyone knows if someone with big money approaches the temple with plans to develop the land, they might get thrown out. So the community is now negotiating for a longer-term lease contract.

The upgrading program has pushed membership in Wat Po's savings group up to 100% and given a big boost to the spirit of self-help in the community. It was, as one leader says, *"like throwing a rope into a deep well, so that people can now climb out, one by one!"* When the survey process first began, only five or six people would show up for the meetings, asking *"Is this program real?"* But gradually, more and more got involved, bringing more energy into the upgrading preparations. The design process took about six months and involved a lot of extremely delicate negotiations. Some wanted to demolish everything and start over, so everyone would have same-sized plots; others wanted to keep the houses they'd invested so much in over the years. Some families owned only the house they lived in, while others owned several structures and earned income by renting them out. Finding ways of accommodating all these differences was never easy.

The reblocking plan that finally emerged calls for some houses to be moved to allow internal lanes to be straightened and widened and most houses to be rebuilt. Young architects from the Rajabhat Institute helped the people to design three "adjustable" house types which allow old materials to be re-used. The construction of all the infrastructure and new houses will be done collectively, by the people themselves. The community's savvy materials purchasing committee has become infamous among building suppliers for haggling the lowest of low prices for materials.

> The people's plans include a common "welfare house" in the middle of the settlement for elderly, sick or unemployed community members who are alone or are unable to take care of themselves. This house is being built by the people themselves, partly with contributed materials and partly with funds drawn from the margin charged on interest for housing and income generation loans.

Baan Mankong Targets :

(January 2003 - December 2007)

For almost everyone involved, the short time-frame (5 years!) and huge scale (300,000 units nation-wide!) of the Baan Mankong Program are not seen as obstacles to success, but as an inducement to think big, to create capacities and strengthen linkages within communities and within cities to bring about change at a very large scale. This is a deliberate strategy to put the era of individual little projects, in individual communities behind us. Here's a brief look at the targets :

2003 Targets

10 pilot community upgrading projects (total 1,500 units) and national preparation starts in 20 cities. First year's budget of 146 million Baht (US$ 3.65 million) covers 10 pilot projects and preparation process in 20 cities.

2004 Targets

Plan to upgrade about 15,000 units, in 174 slum communities, in about 42 cities, while city preparation goes on in 50 cities.   The second year's budget of 1,000 million Baht (US$ 25 million) has now been approved by the government. It was agreed to keep the targets modest for this second year, when second round pilot upgrading projects would be carefully selected and carried out in such a way as to:

- provide maximum learning within (and between) various cities in the program.
- demonstrate to communities and city governments as broad a variety of upgrading options as possible (i.e. land-sharing, reblocking, upgrading, nearby relocation).
- organize communities and use the projects to bridge the relationship between communities and the city, as upgrading possibilities become more real and move evident.

2005 - 2007 Targets

Initial target of 285,000 units in 200 cities. Then, during the third and fourth years, that's when things should accelerate, and the scale will go up. During the final year of the program, the process will be consolidated and everyone will be working to find ways to transfer the upgrading program to the city processes, so that the withdrawal of CODI's intervention will not stop the upgrading process but allow it to be carried on by the cities. By the end of 2007, the Baan Mankong program should have been able to upgrade and secure *at least half the urban poor communities in Thailand.*

"The Baan Mankong program means that all our children are getting security in their lives. We won't have to migrate somewhere else any more. Land and housing is the focus of the Baan Mankong program, but the upgrading process is pushing all of us into thinking about security in general - how to make our communities and our lives and our futures more secure."

Khun Ratchanee, community network leader from Sisaket

Baan Mankong Progress :

(January 2003 - May 2004)   *(Thai Baht 40 = US$ 1)*

- **Total number of cities in the process**   **70 cities**
- **Total number of projects approved**   **31 projects** *(some cover several communities)*
- **Total number of communities covered**   **67 communities** *(in 18 cities, 13 provinces)*
- **Total number of families covered**   **3,134 families**
- **Total budget approved**   **99.6 million Baht**   *(upgrading subsidy)*
                                                               254.6 million Baht *(housing loans)*
                                                               8.9 million Baht   *(administrative grant)*

Projects organized by type of upgrading

	projects	households	
On-site upgrading	2	605	(19.3%)
Reblocking	5	420	(13.3%)
On-site reconstruction	2	237	(7.6%)
Reconstruction after fire	4	331	(10.6%)
Land sharing	1	49	(1.6%)
Nearby relocation	6	429	(13.7%)
Relocation	10	1,023	(32.6%)
Homeless	1	40	(1.3%)
TOTAL	**31 projects**	**3,134 households**	

Projects organized by nature of housing problem

Solving eviction problems	12	1,158	(36.9%)
Housing after fire	5	461	(14.7%)
Resettling scattered squatters	2	185	(5.9%)
Redeveloping indebted communities	2	203	(6.5%)
Developing secure tenure	9	1,087	(34.7%)
Housing for homeless	1	40	(1.3%)
TOTAL	**31 projects**	**3,134 households**	

Projects organized by terms of tenure security

Cooperative ownership (with title)	11	1,057	(33.7%)
Individual ownership (with title)	1	82	(2.6%)
Long-term lease to community cooperative	8	1,192	(38%)
Short-term lease to community cooperative	2	227	(7.3%)
Lease to individual households	1	124	(4%)
Permission to use land	8	452	(14.4%)
TOTAL	**31 projects**	**3,134 households**	

66% of these households have been upgraded in the same place or on land which is very close by.

65% of these households have secured their tenure in resolution of eviction crises or serious land conflicts.

78% of these households got long-term land security; of these, **92%** are on cooperative terms.