



Kampung Tongkol

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Kampung Tongkol is one of many poor settlements in Jakarta that have been served with eviction notices in the name of flood control. Residents in this area decided to take action. They collaborated with numerous partners to plan how to improve their settlement, become river guardians, and implement community-based tourism activities. They reblocked their facades, developed a new housing design, began cleaning campaigns, cultural activities, and urban farming. Eventually, the city took notice and supported the community with significant infrastructure and services - a collaborative model that is now being replicated in other communities.

- Project Kampung Tongkol Upgrading
- Location Kampung Tongkol, Ancol Pademangan, North Jakarta, Indonesia
- Size 164 households
- Finished 2019
- Type Riverside housing reblocking and reconstruction to make way for a riverside inspection road

CONTEXT, PROCESS AND PARTNERS

The city:

With its skyscrapers, freeways, and foreign investment, Jakarta is often seen as a shining example of what Indonesian cities should strive to become. However, there is another side to this bustling metropolis – a catalog of flaws in Indonesian urbanization, characterized by inequities, poverty, corruption, pollution, and unaffordable housing. Shockingly, about 40% of Jakarta's eleven million residents live in poverty, facing unhealthy, insecure, and dangerous conditions. The situation is especially dire for those residing in "informal" settlements, known as *kampung kota* ("urban villages"), which have endured waves of large-scale, brutal evictions.

Over the past two decades, four successive governments have evicted thousands of kampungs in Jakarta, impacting hundreds of thousands of families. Surprisingly, these governments, despite their different agendas and political ideologies, have used similar justifications for their actions. They cited reasons like "illegality," "disturbance of public order," and "public interest" to justify demolishing kampungs and relocating residents. For instance, kampungs labeled as "illegal" are targeted because they are situated in areas not designated for residence, such as parks, railroad tracks, riverbanks, highway underpasses, and high-voltage power lines.

Recently, "flood control" has emerged as the newest justification for such evictions. Climate change impacts have led to increased pressure on major cities, including Jakarta, to address disaster management. Northern Jakarta, being below sea level, frequently experiences floods due to heavier rainfalls, groundwater depletion, and urban development. Unfortunately, riverside kampungs are unfairly blamed for all the flooding and pollution. Despite evidence linking these terrible floods to broader urban planning and development issues, kampung residents have become convenient scapegoats, stereotyped as "thugs," "thieves," "dirty," and "illegal," and their settlements viewed as obstacles to Jakarta's modernization.

Numerous flood control projects have been undertaken, with the government arguing that these are essential to protect both the city and the urban poor from flooding. Sadly, this has led to the eviction of riverside kampungs to widen rivers and construct concrete riverbanks and riverside "inspection" roads. Concurrently, the government has pushed for the construction of massive blocks of flats known as *rusunawa* (*Rumah Susun Sederhana Sewa*, meaning "affordable vertical rental housing") as a resettlement solution to the so-called "slum problem" in Jakarta. Under the guise of development and flood control, the "River Normalization" project has forced thousands of families to leave their homes, jobs, and support systems behind, relocating them to rental flats kilometers away, where they have only become poorer.

The community process:

In response to the escalating evictions in Jakarta, housing activists came together in 1997 to form the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC). Their primary mission was to challenge the state's violent practice of labeling the poor as "illegal" and forcibly displacing them. To empower the city's poor communities, UPC adopted three key strategies: organizing, advocacy, and networking. The aim was to strengthen people's collective organization, raise critical awareness, and enhance their capacity to challenge the systems that oppress them. UPC's initial efforts focused on mobilizing residents from 30 kampungs in the north, west, and east of the city. Over time, these efforts culminated in the formation of the Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota (JRMK), or Urban Poor Network, in 2008. JRMK serves as a citywide network of low-income women and became instrumental in adopting organizing, advocacy, and resistance principles, inspired by their exchange trips to other countries.

Notably, a trip to South Africa had a profound impact on shaping their approach and resulted in hundreds of women in Jakarta's kampungs initiating savings groups under the slogan "saving money, knowledge, and power!" Each group comprised 10–15 members, with distinct roles and responsibilities. Beyond financial contributions, their collective organization offered a platform for members to discuss their concerns and share vital information. As a result, female community leaders began to emerge from these savings groups, establishing a new power structure in an environment previously dominated by male leadership. Among the communities where UPC and JRMK made a difference is Kampung Tongkol, which stands as a testament to people's resilience against evictions and their pursuit of comprehensive settlement improvements.

The community:

Kampungs Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan form a cluster of small settlements, lining both sides of the Ciliwung River as it flows through northern Jakarta toward the sea. With 54 households in Tongkol, 62 in Lodan, and 48 in Krapu, these riverside communities consist of a total of 164 houses. While each settlement retains its unique identity, for simplicity, they are often collectively referred to as Kampung Tongkol. Situated near the historic Old Wall and the Eastern Warehouse of the Casteel Batavia Complex, built by Dutch colonialists, these

kampungs were established in the 1960s by fishermen, warehouse porters, and factory workers who constructed their houses on stilts along the vacant riverbanks.

The banks they settled on were categorized as "state land" (*tanah negara*), meaning they did not belong to any private individual or legal entity. Such a situation arose due to sedimentation along riverbanks, causing them to widen and effectively create new, unregistered strips of land, as was the case in Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan. Unfamiliar with the legal procedures for land registration and assuming it was unattainable, the residents did not pursue registration. Over time, more families joined and constructed their houses, some directly over the river, leading to the kampungs' expansion. However, due to the uncertain land tenure, the communities faced limited access to urban services.

As the kampungs grew increasingly crowded, they lacked essential infrastructure such as roads, drainage, and sanitation. For decades, residents obtained clean water from mobile vendors and electricity from nearby settlements until access to clean water pipes and electricity was granted in the early 2000s. Due to their status and poor accessibility, the communities were excluded from the municipal waste collection system, leading residents to dispose of trash and household waste into the river, treating it as their backyard. On top of that, they endured annual floods from upstream and the sea until floodgates were constructed to mitigate the impact.

In addition to the challenges of inadequate infrastructure and services, the residents faced constant threats of eviction due to their settlement's status. In 1989, the government announced plans to construct a dam nearby and imposed a 5-meter setback from the water to build an inspection road, resulting in the demolition of dozens of houses built over the water and on the 5-meter strip of land. Although the evicted families received compensation, it proved insufficient. While the government constructed rock piles along the riverbank to prevent landslides and floods, the promised inspection road was never built. Over time, more families returned to the settlement, constructing houses over the setback, and gradually reducing the road width to 1-2 meters.

Initiating the project:

The subsidiary Ciliwung River, connecting Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan, became a part of the recent river normalization project. The government's plan involved widening the river from 20 to 40 meters and constructing a 15-meter-wide inspection road along its banks. In December 2014, the *Daerah Khusus Ibukota* (DKI) Jakarta government (Special Capital Region) notified residents in the three kampungs about their impending home demolitions and relocation to public housing blocks. With insufficient information about their fate, people were given a maximum of 14 days to vacate their homes. This sudden announcement left everyone distressed and uncertain, not knowing whether to resist or comply.

Initially, the kampungs Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan had little interaction with one another. However, their shared challenge compelled them to unite and communicate to find a collective solution. Their first mutual decision was to reject the demolition and relocation. Instead of passively accepting eviction, as had happened in many other Jakarta kampungs, they took matters into their own hands. To negotiate, they needed a counterproposal for the resettlement plan. Gugun Muhammad, a UPC community organizer and resident of Kampung Tongkol, explained: "*The inspection road regulation is just an excuse for them to demolish us. This is more about labeling slum areas. So, the people here got together and said, 'Let's give the government the road they demand.'*"

Recognizing that fighting as individuals would lead to defeat, they formed an independent people's organization to unite the three kampungs and resist the eviction plans. Thus, the Komunitas Anak Kali Ciliwung (KAKC) was established in Kampung Tongkol in 2015, inspired by similar experiences of citizen organizations in Surabaya (Stren Kali) and Bangkok (Klong Bang Bua). In these cities, riverside communities successfully resisted eviction by proactively upgrading their settlements, showcasing their potential as protectors of the environment and the city. KAKC swiftly formed various working groups, collected data, connected with cross-kampung and cross-class networks, and started preparing alternative proposals for on-site upgrading.

During an early workshop, a strategy for upgrading the settlement and transforming their way of life emerged. The residents' approach comprised two key elements. Firstly, Tongkol residents aimed to demonstrate their ability and suitability as "guardians of the river," dispelling stereotypes of them as polluters and troublemakers. They reasoned that if the government took charge of the river, it would be limited in its response due to constraints in human and financial resources. In contrast, residents living next to the river would be more effective in addressing any issues. Secondly, they recognized the city's aspirations to become a global tourist destination and integrated this vision into their own plan. By leveraging their proximity to attractions like the Old Wall, they sought to transform Kampung Tongkol into a destination for local and foreign visitors, breaking away from its image as the hidden backside of the Ciliwung River. They also aspired to foster a healthier way of life, create open, breathable spaces in their communities, and celebrate the spirit of their people.

One of the community's first initiatives involved collaborating with the University of Indonesia's Architecture Department to create a detailed settlement map. This map was crucial to understanding the current situation, including the number of houses, their locations, dimensions, and materials. With this information in hand, residents and their allies could run simulations to estimate how various setbacks would impact the settlement. They tested scenarios ranging from a five-meter to a ten-meter and the government-favored 15-meter setback, calculating the number of houses that would need to be moved or reblocked in each case.

To fortify their case for remaining in their current location, the mapping process included essential details such as people's occupations and workplaces. By compiling this data, the community could demonstrate that relocating the settlement would have a devastating impact on residents, most of whom depended on work opportunities in and around Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan. Moving to distant rusunawa would mean losing their means of survival. Additionally, the mapping process documented the community's history, showcasing the continuity of their heritage and social connections, thereby strengthening their tourism-oriented proposal.

Another crucial step in their upgrading process was the formation of women's savings groups, guided by JRMK. These groups, comprising 10–14 members each, began saving money for home renovations and other community development projects. Members contributed on a daily basis, with the saved amounts varying based on their circumstances. The majority contributed between 5,000 to 10,000 rupiahs (US\$ 0.34–0.69) per day.

Support groups and partners in the project:

The success of this project can be attributed to the collaboration of various partners from different sectors, each contributing their diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives to the upgrading process. Community members, with the assistance of UPC, reached out to architects, artists, scholars, lawyers, journalists, and others, forming a network of volunteers and organizations. According to Amalinda Savirani, a political scientist from Gadjah Mada University, these volunteers are not traditional activists limited to street protests. Instead, through collaboration, they challenge prevailing perceptions of the city, break down class barriers, and pioneer new development approaches that avoid forced evictions. Working together, these partners set out to make Kampung Tongkol "eviction-proof."

- **Komunitas Anak Kali Ciliwung (KAKC)** is a local citizen organization founded in 2015 by residents of kampungs Tongkol, Lodan, and Krapu. KAKC is also a member of JRMK.
- **Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota (JRMK)** (Urban Poor Network) is a network of poor communities and occupation groups in North Jakarta, founded in 2008 with support from UPC. JRMK comprises 32 kampungs, three street vendor groups, and 16 pedicab hubs.
- **Urban Poor Consortium (UPC)** is a Jakarta-based NGO founded in 1997 to address issues of urban poverty, housing rights, slum improvement, children's education, and alternative health. UPC and JRMK organize communities through savings, capacity building, and connections with other communities, policymakers, professionals, and institutions.
- **University of Indonesia**, specifically its Architecture Department, assisted the Tongkol community in conducting settlement mapping, documenting their history and heritage, and developing a strategic vision and upgrading concept for the settlement.
- **Architecture San Frontiers (ASF) Indonesia** (Architecture Without Borders) provided technical and design assistance in developing a prototype housing unit for the Tongkol community and supervised the construction of five such buildings. Andrea Fitrianto, one of ASF-Indonesia's co-founders, contributed bamboo construction expertise to the design.
- **Lab Tanya** is a Jakarta-based architectural practice partnering with communities and civil society organizations to develop sustainable solid waste management solutions and improve urban environments. Lab Tanya helped set up a solid waste management and recycling system in the project.
- **Kampungkota Merekam** (Archiving Urban Kampungs) is an initiative where professional journalists collaborate with kampung-based reporters to write stories about the communities and challenge false narratives about kampungs and their residents.
- **Genus Organik** is a group of farmers and urban gardeners promoting organic farming in Jakarta and the vicinity, often partnering with low-income urban communities.
- **Ruangrupa** is a Jakarta-based artists' collective encouraging artists and practitioners from various disciplines to participate in the city's cultural and social life.
- **Rujak Center for Urban Studies** is a think-and-do tank promoting urban transformation and environmental awareness. Rujak assisted the community in connecting with relevant actors to implement artistic and cultural activities and urban farming.
- **Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)** is a regional coalition of housing professionals, NGOs, and grassroots community organizations dedicated to finding inclusive solutions to housing, land, and urban poverty issues in Asian countries. ACHR has collaborated with UPC and JRMK to organize community

exchanges and study tours of riverside community redevelopment projects. In this project, ACHR provided grant funding from the Selavip Foundation to seed the housing loan fund and support some of the infrastructure improvements in Kampung Tongkol.

- **DKI Jakarta Government** was initially hesitant to support the community's plans, but its perspective gradually changed as people's capacity and resourcefulness were demonstrated. The authorities recognized the importance of involving residents in determining development priorities in their community and provided significant budgets for infrastructure implementation. The government also agreed to change Kampung Tongkol's spatial planning documents, converting it from a water zone to a residential zone, and included the kampung in its plan for the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Program.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

Legal background and legal status:

Indonesian legislation provides avenues for improving settlements through renovation, reconstruction, and resettlement. However, the application of these laws often disadvantages residents who lack proper tenure arrangements. Poor communities can only benefit from these legal pathways if certain criteria are met. The ability to pursue housing improvements, especially renovation and reconstruction, depends on factors such as the legal status of the land, spatial planning regulations, and vulnerability to disasters. The government typically relocates settlements in disaster-prone areas or those considered "illegal" based on land registration, spatial planning, and building permits. As a result, despite the existence of on-site housing upgrading options, the stringent conditions associated with them often exclude poor communities.

Similarly, the regulatory frameworks governing land administration and management in Indonesia, on paper, do not exclude the poor from opportunities for secure tenure. For instance, Law No. 5 of 1960 on Basic Agrarian Law recognizes land as a social good and acknowledges that land ownership is not solely legitimized through legal documents. Government Regulation No. 24 of 1997 on Land Registration allows for the ownership of "state land" (land without rights attached) by the poor who occupy it for a certain period of time. Moreover, Law No. 2 of 2012 on Land Procurement for Public Interest ensures compensation for residents evicted from their land, irrespective of ownership certificates. However, significant gaps exist between what these laws permit and the reality on the ground, leading to evictions that sidestep or ignore informal tenure rights.

In response to the growing disparities in land control and ownership, the central government initiated the Agrarian Reform Program with Presidential Regulation No. 86 of 2018. This program operates through two channels: land redistribution and legalization. Redistribution targets the poor, who do not own property or reside on contested land. Legalization aims to assist landowners who have been unable to register their property, often due to financial constraints. To participate in either channel, interested communities require a government letter of recommendation and confirmation that their intentions align with spatial planning regulations. In alignment with the national Agrarian Reform Program, the DKI Jakarta government established the Agrarian Reform Task Force through Governor Decrees Nos. 162 and 575 of 2019. These decrees aim to address not only land issues but also access to resources, including housing.

Land tenure:

Kampung Tongkol is situated on state land, which means it lacks ownership rights. While technically considered squatters with no permissions or legal rights, this situation presents their best opportunity to obtain a proper title since state land is "up for grabs." With support from UPC and after extensive consultations regarding legal opportunities and gaps, the residents had to decide the tenure conditions they wanted to propose to the government. The idea of registering as a cooperative and obtaining the land certificate collectively was met with resounding approval. Under this approach, the land would be owned by the KAKC cooperative, and its members would have individual rights to use it based on an agreement between them and the cooperative.

However, the process of allowing cooperatives to acquire state land is only clearly outlined in legislation for rural contexts and agricultural cooperatives. Despite the agreement of the Jakarta Governor and the National Land Agency with the community's proposed terms, the Jakarta Land and Spatial Planning Authority claimed that no framework existed for establishing a collective land title in an urban setting. Instead, they suggested individual land ownership titles, an option rejected by the community. Nevertheless, with continued support from allies, the community continues to negotiate and advocate for land reforms that would permit cooperatives to own land in urban areas. A recent success in their unwavering campaign was the revision of the spatial plan, which converted the land strip occupied by the three communities from a water zone to a residential zone, as specified in Jakarta Decree No. 21 of 2022.

Government support:

Initially, the housing improvement project in Kampung Tongkol received no government permission or endorsement. On the contrary, authorities were determined to relocate residents because their houses violated the spatial plan, which prohibited such constructions in the area. However, the climate began to change after the community made a "political contract" with gubernatorial candidate Anies Baswedan, offering their support in the elections in exchange for his backing of changes in spatial planning and land legalization, along with support for people-driven settlement upgrading initiatives. Indeed, things started looking up for Kampung Tongkol residents soon after Baswedan assumed office as Jakarta's new governor in 2017. A breakthrough moment arrived with Decree 878 of 2018, wherein the Jakarta Governor selected 21 kampungs, including Kampung Tongkol, as target locations for implementing the housing upgrading program.

Simultaneously, the new DKI Jakarta government introduced new tools to fulfill its commitment to the various kampung communities. Among these initiatives was the establishment of the Community Action Plan (CAP) program, designed to create avenues for community participation in urban and infrastructure development. Through CAP, the Jakarta government provided a platform for amplifying people's voices and taking their priorities into account. Additionally, the government launched the Collaborative Implementation Program (CIP), which allowed communities to access municipal budgets regardless of their legal land status. As a result of these efforts, the Tongkol community enjoyed the implementation of substantial infrastructure in their settlement, primarily funded by government budgets. These initiatives marked a significant shift in the government's approach, as they began actively collaborating with impoverished communities and sharing the responsibility for improving housing, facilities, and the overall environment. Subsequently, two more decrees were issued, expanding the number of target settlements in Jakarta to 445 (Decree No. 90 of 2018) and an additional 22 (Decree No. 979 of 2022).

PROJECT FINANCING

1 US\$ = 14,500 Indonesian rupiah (approximate rate during the project term)

Project costs and who paid for what?

Land: The Tongkol residents did not incur any costs for their existing land. The community, in collaboration with UPC and JRMK, is still in negotiations to obtain a free land title for the cooperative.

Houses: A small number of houses were rebuilt from the ground up to showcase low-cost housing solutions for this riverside settlement. The Selavip Foundation contributed 34 million rupiah (US\$ 2,340) for each of the five reconstructed buildings, to which each family added one million rupiah (US\$ 70). Additionally, aside from the reconstructed houses, the remaining families in the settlement improved the facades of their homes using varying loan amounts from the Selavip funds and their own savings.

Infrastructure: This project accomplished an impressive amount of infrastructure work with support from various sectors. The Jakarta government, through the CIP program, contributed approximately 50 billion rupiah (US\$ 3.45 million) for the construction of roads, drainage systems, septic tanks, street lighting, a small bridge, gates, and river sheet piles. Ten communal septic tanks were implemented with US\$ 8,000 from the Selavip Foundation, and roads and drainage systems near the Old Wall received a small grant of US\$ 6,700 from the University of Indonesia. Moreover, since 2015, residents have contributed nearly US\$ 15,000 from their savings towards infrastructure implementation.

	Community	DKI Jakarta	Selavip Foundation	Indonesia University
Housing	IDR 1.62 billion / US\$ 111,700	_____	IDR 435,000,000 / US\$ 30,000	_____
Infrastructure	IDR 215,000,000 / US\$ 14,830	IDR 50 billion US\$ 3.45 million	IDR 116,000,000 / US\$ 8,000	IDR 100,000,000 / US\$ 6,900
Activities	IDR 197,380,000 / US\$ 13,600	_____	IDR 29,000,000 / US\$ 2,000	IDR 100,000,000 / US\$ 6,900
TOTAL	IDR 2 billion / US\$ 140,130	IDR 50 billion / US\$ 3.45 million	IDR 580,000,000 / US\$ 40,000	IDR 200,000,000 / US\$ 13,800

Financing:

The Selavip Foundation played a crucial role in supporting the community through a grant for housing and infrastructure, which was utilized as a revolving fund for zero-interest loans. These loans are repaid to the

cooperative and then reinvested to support various other projects. For the five families whose houses were entirely rebuilt, they repay the housing loans in monthly installments of approximately 300,000 rupiah (US\$ 20) over a 10-year period. Through these repayments, enough funds were accumulated by 2018 to rebuild three additional homes in Kampung Tongkol. Besides the prototype houses, the revolving fund provided smaller loans to several other families to repair their homes' façades.

As the grant support was not sufficient for all 164 houses in need of upgrading, the remaining families utilized their own savings to repair and enhance the settlement's demolished façades. Additionally, community funds were allocated for various activities, including a river cleanup at the project's inception (costing 12 million rupiahs or US\$ 830), and the establishment of a waste management system, which has received contributions of 160 million rupiahs (US\$ 11,000) from the residents since its initiation in 2015. Moreover, approximately 25 million rupiah (US\$ 1,720) from the community savings has been dedicated to cultural activities, events, and hosting local and international visitors.

Lastly, the various planning activities and workshops were primarily funded through community resources and some modest budgets from NGOs, with additional support coming from in-kind contributions. Since 2015, various organizations and volunteers have actively participated in the project, providing their expertise and labor to assist the community, enriching the project's development.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Design process:

The urgency felt by the residents to meet the government's expectations and avoid eviction led to a rushed implementation of the setback without a concrete plan for the upgrading process. It was only after the demolition that the community collaborated with the University of Indonesia's Architecture Department to develop a design for their renovation. Workshops and discussions were held to create a conceptual collage illustrating the community's vision for their upgraded façades. The plan included rows of houses painted in various colors, with vertical green elements and gardens along the Ciliwung River. The architects also assisted in developing a master plan for the community, organizing functions and services, and creating a pleasant, green, and shaded promenade along the canal, away from the city's busy traffic.

Armed with this broader upgrading vision, the next step was to determine how the partially demolished houses would be reblocked and repaired. The architects began by developing a detailed upgrading plan for the first 20 houses in Kampung Krapu, where families were further along in their savings process. In these workshops, residents received technical assistance on reblocking their houses, selecting appropriate materials and construction techniques, and implementing wastewater treatment solutions. The process was then repeated for the next 20 houses and continued until all 164 households had devised their reblocking strategies.

Subsequently, the architects focused on designing the houses that would be rebuilt from scratch, to serve as prototypes for affordable, compact, and integrated canal-side living. ASF architects led participatory design workshops with house owners and community members, taking into consideration the river's presence and the Dutch Wall behind the settlement. Design details were developed based on residents' needs and ideas. Architects and residents tested materials through scale models and drew floor plans on the ground to ensure optimal dimensions and functionality. After nearly two months of intensive workshops, the housing designs were finalized.

House design and layout plans:

For the prototype houses, two similar designs were created to accommodate various family configurations. The base design consists of a three-story structure with several separate rooms, capable of housing up to six or seven families. The design is compact, reflecting the limited availability of land in the area. By accommodating more families in a single multi-level structure, the need for additional materials is reduced, and vertical expansion is used to limit the requirement for more land. Each structure has a footprint of 9 x 5 meters (29.5 x 16.4 feet) and a total floor area of 135 square meters (1,453 square feet) spread across three levels. A common staircase and corridor lead to the individual rooms. Additionally, each building is equipped with two bathrooms and four shared kitchen areas for the residents.

The houses are constructed using a combination of brick, wood, and bamboo. The ground-floor walls are made of brick, providing stability and durability to the structure. On the other hand, the upper floors are constructed with various textures of wood and bamboo. The use of bamboo as a building material not only aligns with environmentally friendly practices but also serves a practical purpose in the densely populated

riverside kampung, where the soil is unstable. Bamboo's lightweight nature helps mitigate potential issues related to the ground conditions.

The upper-floor walls are made with bamboo mats, woven in a variety of traditional patterns. This showcases the skill and artistry of local craftsmanship, creating an eye-catching façade for the community. Moreover, the ground-floor brick walls feature decorative perforations that serve as both ventilation and add aesthetic appeal to the design. For a comfortable living environment, the upper floors have large openings, strategically placed to allow abundant natural light and efficient air circulation within the structure. This thoughtful design ensures that the residents can enjoy a well-lit and well-ventilated living space.

Housing construction:

Clearing space for the road: The first urgent task of the Tongkol community was to adjust the houses that extended over the 5-meter inspection road to the new boundary. This required partial demolition of each house in the three settlements. The demolition of the houses' façades was carried out by the dwellers themselves, as part of the *gotong royong* ("working together") culture, which is similar to sweat equity, and it was carried out in a way that would allow salvaging materials for reuse in the reconstruction.

Building the prototype houses: A few months later, once the housing design was finalized, construction of the sample houses began. Homeowners bought materials in bulk to save on transportation costs and negotiate better deals with suppliers. A mixed team of hired masons, carpenters, and community members worked together to build the ground floor and main structure. Homeowners were responsible for constructing the lighter walls on the upper floors, after receiving training from local carpenters and the ASF team. ASF architects provided regular monitoring and assistance during construction. Community members, including children and youth, pitched in by helping with the finishing touches, such as painting the exteriors.

Repairing the façades: Although the partial demolition of structures extending over the 5-meter road was relatively quick, the renovation of the demolished façades posed a more time-consuming challenge. Some families required only minor finishing touches, while others had to reconstruct entire rooms. Due to financial constraints, some families couldn't immediately afford the renovations. As a temporary solution, they used tarpaulins to provide privacy and protection from the elements. After nearly a year, with sufficient savings set aside, the façades were renovated by hired workers, with community-based volunteers acting as supervisors and providing assistance with minor tasks.

Building infrastructure: Between 2015 and 2017, small-scale infrastructure interventions were carried out with funds from Selavip, the University of Indonesia, and the community's savings. Contractors were hired to dig drainage channels and septic tank pits, while Tongkol residents oversaw and assisted with the construction. In 2019, the second round of infrastructure projects began, funded by the municipality and carried out by government-chosen contractors, with minimal involvement from the community in the construction process.

COMMUNITY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Community process:

Adjusting their houses and creating a setback from the river were just the initial steps in the community's process. While their main motivation was to avoid eviction, they soon recognized that building a strong community required ongoing organization. Throughout the housing upgrade and beyond, Kampung Tongkol implemented a diverse program of activities, including physical interventions, cultural events, and collective actions. These endeavors have fostered a sense of community and serve as tools to achieve larger and longer-term goals in policy development and improve the perception of Jakarta's urban poor communities.

Waste management: After years of living without proper waste management, the community members decided to establish their own system to make the settlement cleaner and healthier. They started by introducing waste bins as a simple first step to prevent waste from accumulating on roads and around homes. With a limited budget, they purchased used oil barrels, cut them in half, and distributed them throughout the settlement as garbage bins. To address the need for waste transportation, they collectively agreed to pay a monthly fee for one community member to carry the waste from the improvised bins to the nearest municipal waste disposal site. Even today, each household contributes 10,000 rupiah (US\$ 0.70) per month for this waste collection service.

River cleanup efforts: After adjusting their houses according to the agreed-upon setback, the growing problem of canal waste became much more visible. Identifying waste accumulation points using a drone, the residents decided to take action. They pooled resources and purchased bamboo to construct simple rafts,

which they used to float down the river and clean up the trash. Assisted by Daniel Oscar Baskoro, an expert in applied technology with a strong dedication to community development, they held a big ceremonial event under the motto "Cleaning Ciliwung," and invited local government officials and the media to witness the river cleaning initiative. This garnered significant attention, as it was covered by Kompas, Indonesia's largest newspaper! Community volunteers continued to clean the river monthly until the local government stepped in and assigned municipal workers to handle the task. Additionally, the government provided the Tongkol community with municipal bins to replace their improvised barrels in 2018.

Community greening: In 2015, the community introduced the concept of small community gardens. Collaborating with Genus Organik, an activist urban farming group, they planned and built a small common garden on the riverbank. Over time, coordinating and caring for the communal garden became challenging, leading to an agreement to encourage individual planting in front of homes instead. Each home's entrance is now adorned with pots of vegetables, herbs, and flowers, reducing the need for significant funding and simplifying the responsibility of garden maintenance. Additionally, trees have been planted along the riverbanks, providing much-needed shade. These small-scale green interventions have helped improve the quality of the environment and provided locally grown products, such as chilis, spinach, and long beans, for the community.

Promoting tourism in the kampung: The residents of Kampung Tongkol devised a plan for their community that emphasized cultural and tourism potential. The community collaborated with other actors and initiatives to achieve this goal. Tongkol residents, for example, took part in a workshop co-hosted by UNESCO and the Architecture Documentation Center, where they learned about the detailed history of the Dutch Wall and other landmarks near their settlement in order to be confident guides for visitors. Furthermore, with the assistance of the University of Indonesia, they developed a master plan that includes a tourist trail connecting their settlement to nearby tourist attractions. To promote local livelihoods and traditions, their plan included distinct zones for productive planting, food markets, and local crafts. The University also assisted in the preparation of signposts along the river with information about the local history and the settlement's upgrading trajectory.

Cultural activities: The Tongkol community actively engages in arts and cultural endeavors. In 2015, murals were painted by community children with assistance from local artist collectives like Hysteria and Ruangrupa. Later, the local government adopted the mural concept, commissioning more artists to create street art, and transforming Kampung Tongkol into a small street art hub. The community has also welcomed artists in residence who participate in various activities with and for the residents. For example, artists from Berlin, Hamburg, and Amsterdam spent time at KAKC, and collaborated with Rujak in designing and building a small stage on the riverbank for meetings and performances. Photographers have also documented life in the kampung, organizing exhibitions for both residents and visitors. For example, KAKC, the University of Indonesia, and the Architecture Documentation Center curated an exhibition about the community's upgrading concept in the early stages of the project, hosted in an Old Town café and open to the public.

Anak Kali Ciliwung Festival: KAKC has also been instrumental in organizing the annual "Anak Kali Ciliwung Festival," first introduced in 2016. Held on November 11, also known as "Ciliwung Day" in celebration of the river, the festival is a joyful occasion for Tongkol residents to come together and commemorate the community's accomplishments. Emphasizing the spirit of unity and coexistence with the river, each year's festival revolves around different themes important to the community, such as "Harta Kota" (City Treasures) or "Manusia Sungai" (River People). This vibrant event features concerts, drawing sessions, boat races, planting actions, lively markets, and various workshops.

Establishing a cooperative: Although saving groups had been mobilized in Jakarta since 2008, it was not until 2016 that JRMK shifted its focus to organizing cooperatives. Recognizing that cooperatives, as collective legal entities, offer improved access to and management of funds, as well as better services to their members, the Tongkol community was inspired to follow suit. Registering as a cooperative provided them with several advantages, including facilitating their claim for collective land ownership and instilling a sense of unity as they work towards shared goals. With guidance from UPC and JRMK on the registration procedures, the KAKC community officially became a cooperative in December 2019. Since then, the cooperative has consolidated and expanded its savings-and-loan schemes and income-generating activities. Moreover, during the COVID pandemic, the cooperative actively engaged in relief efforts, supporting its members and beyond. One of its explicit goals is to provide housing and infrastructure loans to continue improving the three settlements.

Project timeline:

1960: Families of fishermen and warehouse porters begin to settle along the Ciliwung River in northern Jakarta, establishing kampungs Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan.

- 1989:** As part of a flood mitigation project, the government demolishes several houses built over the river on the 5-meter strip of land next to the river. However, over time, the riverbank becomes once again covered with new houses.
- 2014:** In December, Kampung Tongkol receives an eviction notice, mandating residents to demolish their homes within two weeks. Distressed, the residents gather to discuss their options.
- 2015:** In May, UPC and University of Indonesia architects facilitate rapid mapping and enumeration across canal communities, highlighting the impact of 5m, 10m, and 15m riverbank clearance on families. In a bid to avoid eviction, residents start demolishing all structures built over the 5-meter strip next to the canal, making way for a proper inspection road. ASF initiates a participatory process to design a prototype house and the first five houses start being built in October.
- 2016:** In February, the prototype houses are completed, and the families move into their new rooms. Over the next few months, residents begin the renovation of their facades, nearly a year after the partial demolition.
- 2017:** In April, a political contract is signed in Ancol, North Jakarta, between gubernatorial candidate Anies Baswedan and 32 kampungs from the JRMK network. The contract pledges political support in exchange for legalizing houses, accepting on-site upgrades as an alternative to forced evictions, and ensuring land security for people-driven housing processes.
- 2018:** As part of its CAP program, the city government allocates 300 million rupiahs (US\$ 20,700) per “kelurahan” (the smallest administrative unit) according to a new governor's decree issued in May. Authorities and community members participate in infrastructure and economic development workshops. Three more houses are rebuilt in Kampung Tongkol.
- 2019:** Throughout the year, various infrastructure projects are implemented by the Jakarta government through its CIP program, including roads, streetlights, gates, river sheet piles, and murals. In December, KAKC establishes itself as a cooperative, becoming a legal entity to claim collective land ownership and strengthen its financial capacity.
- 2020:** The Governor of Jakarta and the National Land Agency agree to grant land ownership titles to the cooperative. However, the process is halted by the Jakarta Land and Spatial Planning Authority due to a lack of a mechanism for implementing the transfer of titles.
- 2022:** In Jakarta's spatial planning documents, the land on which the Tongkol community resides is officially converted from a water zone to a residential zone.

IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

Social and political impacts:

The project had a profound social impact, forging stronger connections between the three kampungs – Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan. Before the project, these communities had little interaction with one another. However, as they united in their goal to resist eviction and transform the settlement, personal relationships blossomed. The riverbanks became a welcoming space for socializing and chatting with neighbors, leading to the emergence of shared activities like women's gymnastics, Saturday night karaoke, card games, and collaborative projects such as building fishponds.

As a result of the transformation, residents found themselves in a markedly different position within their neighborhood and the city. Previously stigmatized as part of an “informal” river community, they faced negative stereotypes and exclusion from conversations. However, their successful resistance to eviction and the subsequent upgrading of their settlement showcased their capacity, resourcefulness, and power. Residents gained confidence, recognized their strengths, and felt a sense of pride and belonging in their improved community.

The project also acted as a catalyst for collaboration among diverse actors from various backgrounds. A network of communities, architects, academics, artists, community builders, farmers, and government officials emerged, demonstrating the power of cross-sector and cross-class cooperation. Many of these actors have remained actively engaged in the Tongkol community, contributing to the continuation of activities and momentum. Overall, the project fostered stronger public awareness and support for communities to remain in their settlements, acknowledging their integral role in the city.

Beyond its immediate impact, the project had broader political implications, showcasing what Jakarta's poorest communities can achieve and why they should not be forced into distant, soulless suburbs. Participants in the project became influential in shaping government policies related to spatial planning, housing, and land. Successful lobbying by JRMK led to an increase in the number of kampungs chosen for similar upgrading projects from six to 21, accelerating people-driven and collective housing solutions.

The transformation of Kampung Tongkol also marked a significant shift in the government's attitude towards informal settlements and their residents. Previously stigmatized as lazy and unproductive, they were considered a burden on the state. However, the authorities increasingly see these communities as part of the solution. Jakarta has been designated a collaborative city, emphasizing direct citizen participation in every development process. A powerful symbol of this changing attitude occurred during a meeting in the governor's office, where JRMK representatives presented their upgrading proposal. The then-Governor remarked that the same room, which was once used to decide kampung evictions, would now be used to upgrade kampungs in Jakarta!

Economic impacts:

Quantifying the economic impacts is challenging, but certain positive changes have become evident since the implementation of collective savings practices. Residents now experience increased stability and are more willing to invest in their homes, as they feel safer from the threat of eviction. The availability of building permits and the ability to register businesses within the settlement have also opened doors to accessing loans from banks. Though land titles are yet to be obtained, these factors collectively contribute to an improved financial situation and brighter future prospects for the community.

Problems:

Kampung Tongkol faces its most significant challenge in ensuring the long-term viability of the movement. While momentum surged during the successful resistance against eviction, it has somewhat diminished since the threat subsided. However, the community must recognize that their struggle is not over. Tenure security remains uncertain, with potential threats of eviction and market instabilities still looming. To secure genuine security for themselves and other communities in the region, it is vital to sustain ongoing organizing and advocacy efforts. By continuing to work together, they can safeguard their progress and pave the way for a more secure future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

This case study was written in June 2023 by Dian Irawaty, at the Rujak Center for Urban Studies in Jakarta, and by Gugun Muhammad, who works with the Urban Poor Consortium and is also a resident of Kampung Tongkol.

A good article about the Kampung Tongkol upgrading project in the November 25, 2016, issue of the Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/nov/25/jakarta-kampung-tongkol-eco-future-river-community--green-to-fight-eviction-threat>

And another article about some of the riverside community upgrading projects in Jakarta that were inspired by the Kampung Tongkol project, in the April 4, 2018, issue of the Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/apr/04/jakartas-urban-poor-have-found-a-new-way-to-fight-city-hall-and-win>

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PHOTOS



For some, Jakarta is a shining model of all that Indonesian cities should be, with its skyscrapers, freeways and foreign investment.



For others, it is a catalog of how Indonesian urbanization has gone wrong, with its inequities, poverty, corruption, and unaffordable housing.



In the flood-prone city, kampung residents have been frequently and unfairly accused of polluting and blocking the flow of the rivers.



The city government has implemented various projects to widen rivers, concrete the banks, and construct riverside "inspection" roads.



In the name of flood control and public interest, these projects have resulted in the eviction and resettlement of many riverbank communities.



Thousands of families have been relocated to public rental housing dozens of kilometers away from their communities in recent decades.



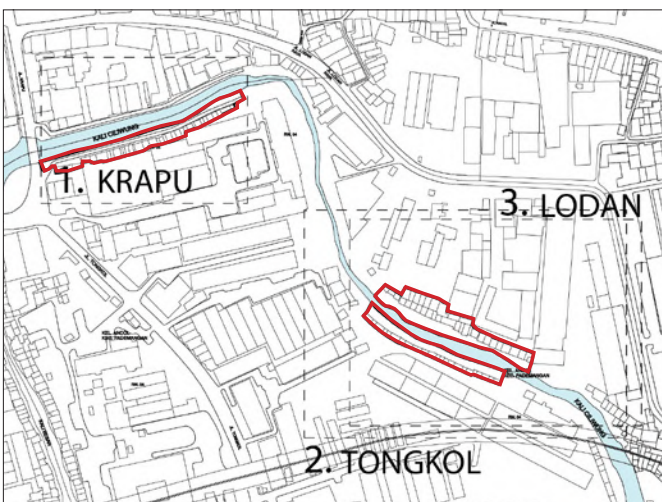
▲ In response to the increasing evictions, the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC) was formed with the goal of assisting communities in resisting.



▲ Through organizing, advocacy, and networking, UPC began working for the empowerment of 30 of the city's poor communities.



▲ The Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota (JRMK), or Urban Poor Network, was established in 2008 to bring together all of Jakarta's dispersed communities. JRMK members began saving together and created a platform to share problems and organize collective responses after learning from their peers in other countries.



▲ Kampung Tongkol is a North Jakarta settlement comprised of three distinct villages: Tongkol, Lodan, and Krapu. Because the settlement is built on "state land" that was never registered, the 164 families who live in the three communities are caught in a legal limbo.



▲ *The community was formed in the 1960s, near the historic Old Wall and the Eastern Warehouse of the colonial Casteel Batavia.*



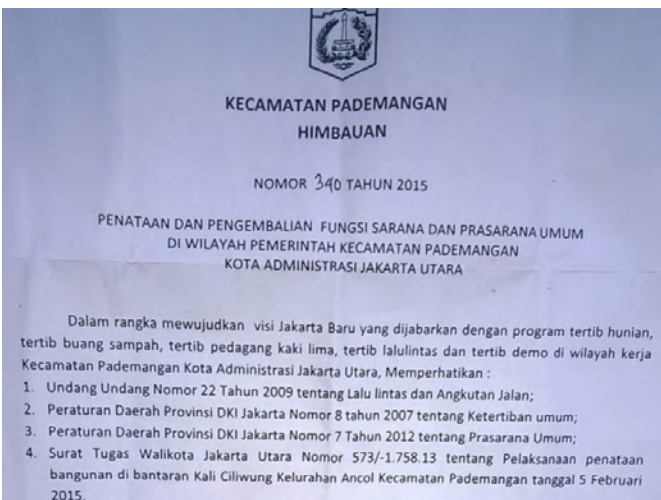
▲ *For years, the neighborhood was without services, and the river became the backyard of the densely built houses.*



▲ *Several houses protruding over the river were demolished in the late 1980s, ostensibly to make way for a road and make the river accessible.*



▲ *However, the settlement continued to grow in the years that followed, and the road was gradually reclaimed by makeshift structures.*



▲ *In December 2014, the government issued an eviction notice to residents, giving them two weeks to prepare for resettlement.*



▲ *Residents began to gather to discuss what they could do to oppose the eviction despite their lack of solid relationships with one another.*



They quickly reached an important agreement: they rejected relocation and decided to oppose the government's plan.



To unite the three kampungs, residents formed an independent organization called Komunitas Anak Kali Ciliwung (KAKC).



JRMK mobilised Kampung Tongkol women to form 12 savings groups of 10-14 members each, to finance their plans.



Depending on their circumstances, the members save varying amounts every day, but most have been contributing 5,000-10,000 rupiahs daily.



People came up with a two-pronged strategy for upgrading their settlement and changing their way of life during an early workshop.

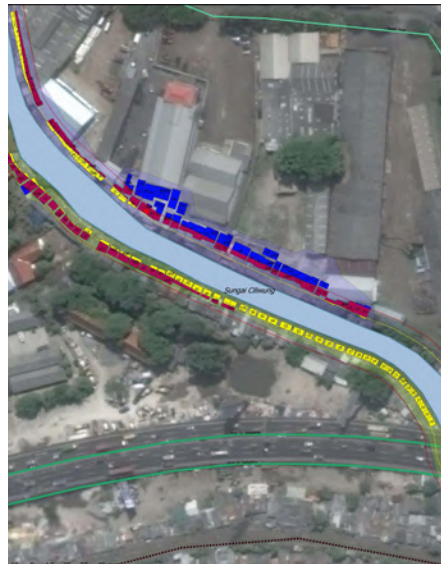


They wanted to demonstrate their capability and suitability as "river guardians," as well as turn Kampung Tongkol into a tourist destination.



▲ The residents started the process by mapping their settlements and gathering data about their houses' locations, dimensions, and materiality.

▲ Using that data, they calculated how many families would be affected by different setbacks of 5, 10, and 15 meters from the riverbank.



▲ On the maps, the yellow color represents the portion of the houses that would have to be re-blocked to create a 5-meter setback; the red depicts the impact of a 10-meter setback; and the blue shows that, for the 15-meter setback advocated for by the government, all houses would have to be demolished.



▲ The community's top priority was to demonstrate their commitment to creating a buffer zone from the river and becoming the ones who monitor water flow and flood risks. Consequently, their first step was to adjust the houses that extended over the 5-meter inspection road to the new boundary.



▲ The demolition of the houses' facades was carried out by the dwellers, as part of the "gotong royong" (working together) culture.

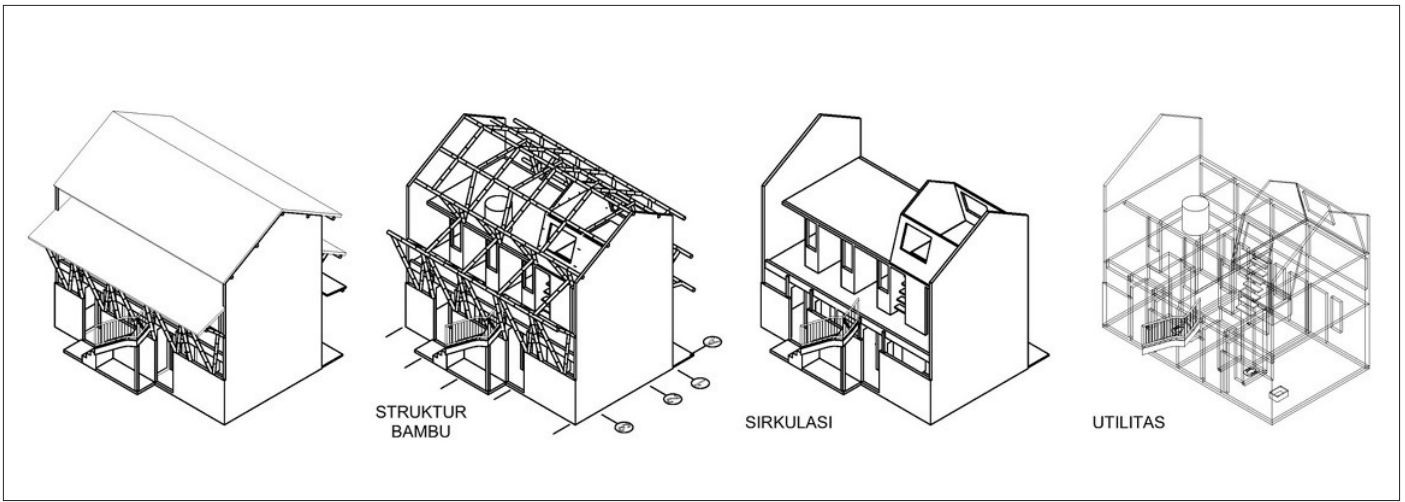
▲ The facades were carefully demolished with the goal of salvaging as many materials as possible for reuse in the renovation.



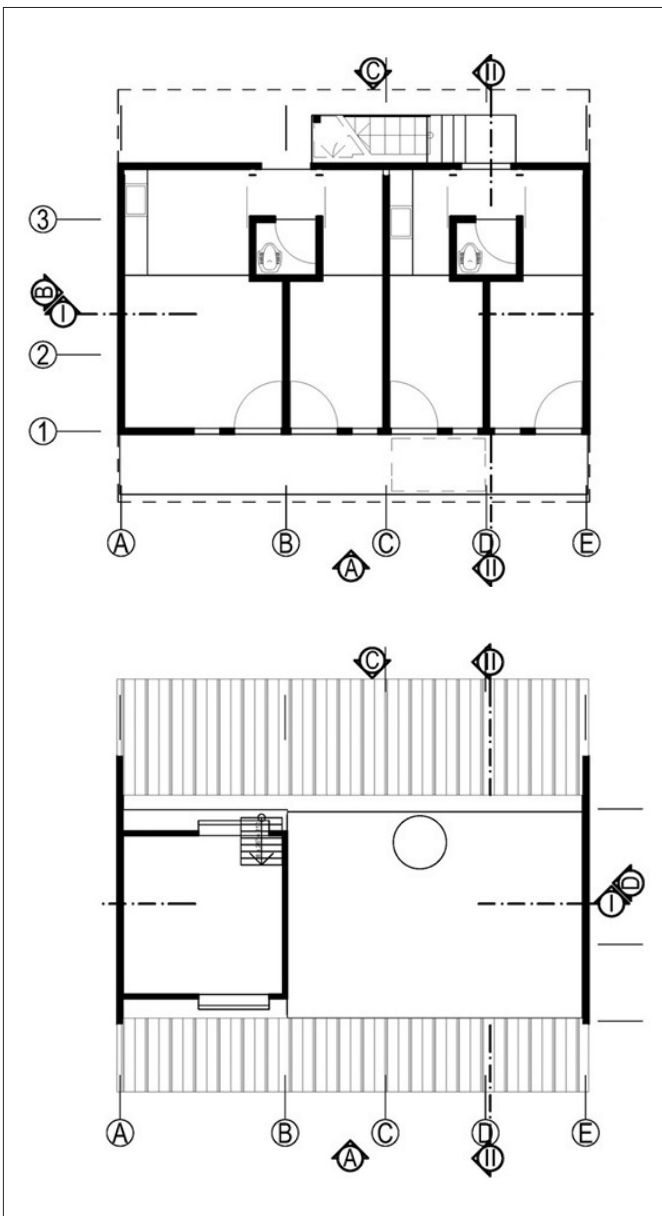
▲ After the road was cleared, residents began working with ASF architects to create a housing design that could be piloted in Kampung Tongkol to showcase a new, more sustainable, and integrated housing typology that harmonizes with the surroundings and environment.



▲ This drawing depicts the concept of the prototype housing design, which is situated between the river and the Old Wall. A wide promenade provides access to the water while also housing a utilities channel for drainage and septic tanks. Residents can enjoy a tranquil and shaded gathering space on the Wall side.



▲ The design comprises a three-story structure with multiple separate rooms capable of accommodating up to six or seven families. The individual rooms are connected by a common staircase and corridor, making this compact design an ideal option for areas with limited land availability.



▲ Each building also includes two bathrooms and four kitchen areas that are shared by the residents.



▲ The ground-floor walls are constructed using locally manufactured brick, while the upper floors are made of wood and bamboo.



▲ Bamboo was chosen for its environmental friendliness and its lightweight nature, which is essential for construction on riverbanks.



▲ A mixed team consisting of hired masons and carpenters, along with community members, constructed the ground floor and main structure.



▲ The homeowners, who received training from ASF and local community builders, completed the finishing of the upper floors.



▲ Community members, including children and youth, pitched in by helping with the finishing touches, such as painting the exteriors.



▲ This is the finished look of one of the five upgraded houses, realized through Selavip funds and the community's own savings.



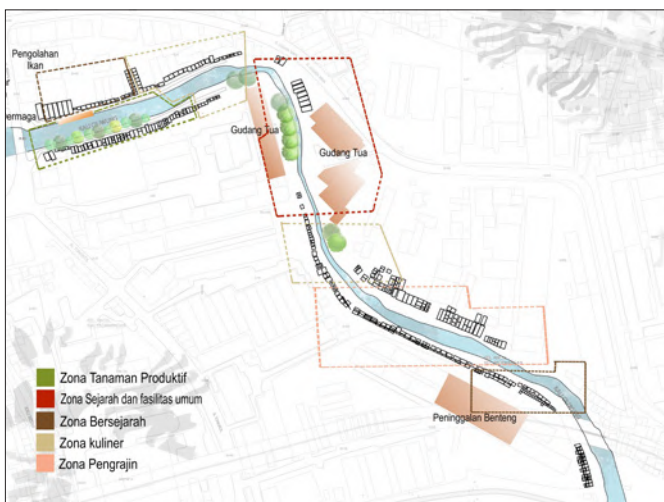
▲ These two photos illustrate the before and after conditions of the prototype houses. The initial state, characterized by a patchwork of old materials and a narrow road, transformed into a stable, colorful home with higher ceilings, better ventilation, and proper road, drainage, and sanitation facilities.



Architects from the University of Indonesia collaborated with the community to create a master plan and concept design for the upgrade of their settlement. They photographed all the facades and compiled them into a collage, which was then displayed within the community for residents to share and test their ideas.



This is a close-up of the collage, which portrays the residents' aspiration for each house to have a vertical garden element. Additionally, each small group of houses could opt for a color scheme to create a vibrant and harmonious settlement.



The University of Indonesia also assisted in the development of a master plan for the area, with different zones highlighting different aspects of the community's identity - from productive planting to historical, culinary, and crafts zones. The newly-cleared green, shaded riverside trail would link all of these attractions together.



While the demolition of structures protruding over the 5-meter road was quick, due to a lack of funds, renovating the facades took much longer. Some families required only minor finishing touches, while others had a whole room of their house demolished and needed to find a way to 'stitch' it back together.



Meanwhile, most families had closed their facades using temporary solutions, with some relying solely on tarpaulins for rain protection.

With the conceptual design in hand, people collaborated and strategized how to renovate the facades in groups.



Finally, almost a year after the demolition, hired workers renovated the facades, while community-based volunteers supervised the process and provided assistance with minor tasks. The freshly painted facades resembled the colorful collage created during the design workshops.



▲ The issue of canal waste became more evident after the houses were adjusted to the agreed-upon setback. In response, residents took action and utilized their savings to construct a few simple bamboo rafts, which they used to float down the river and collect trash.



▲ They organized a big ceremonial event to launch the “Cleaning Ciliwung” action and invited local government officials and the media.

▲ Their actions even made headlines in Indonesia’s largest newspaper! Cleaning the river became a monthly ritual.



▲ Meanwhile, the advocacy of the communities and UPC resulted in a political agreement between gubernatorial candidate Anies Baswedan and 32 kampungs from the JRMK network. The candidate pledged to consider on-site upgrading as an alternative to evictions and to advocate for land security for the poor.



▲ After the political agreement and Baswedan's election, kampung residents gained new opportunities to be involved in development decisions through the government's Community Action Plan program. Additionally, they had access to municipal resources to construct infrastructure in their community.



▲ A series of infrastructure projects were executed in Kampung Tongkol in 2019 following a collaborative planning process.

▲ The Governor of Jakarta, accompanied by the KAKC chief, visited Kampung Tongkol to see the progress of the infrastructure projects.





▲ The establishment of small community gardens was another concept introduced in Kampung Tongkol as early as 2015.



▲ The residents collaborated with Genus Organik, an activist urban farming group, to design and build a shared garden on the riverbank.



▲ After some time, the residents recognized the difficulty of coordinating the common garden and decided to promote individual planting instead.



▲ The houses' entrances are now adorned with pots of vegetables, herbs, and flowers, while the banks have been planted with shady trees.



▲ After years of living without proper waste management, the community decided to set up waste bins as an initial step to prevent waste from accumulating on roads and in people's yards. They created trash bins from oil barrels and started saving money monthly to establish a community-based waste collection service.





▲ The Tongkol community has also been highly engaged in the arts and culture. In 2015, murals were initially painted by community children with assistance from local artist collectives like Hysteria and Ruangrupa. These vivid drawings became an additional attraction in Kampung Tongkol.



▲ The government noticed the trend and commissioned artists to paint more murals throughout the settlement.

▲ The community organized an exhibition showcasing their upgrading journey, which was exhibited in a cafe located in the Old Town.



▲ Numerous artists, scholars, and practitioners have visited Kampung Tongkol over the years to learn from this significant project and contribute to the community's history. The images are from a small photography exhibition that showcased the work of a Korean artist who was in residency at that time.



Rujak Center for Urban Studies invited artists from Germany and the Netherlands to create a small riverside pavillion for Kampung Tongkol.



The small wooden platform also serves as a stage for dance performances and gymnastics classes for children!



KAKC has been hosting an annual festival called "Anak Kali Ciliwung," featuring a diverse array of activities, including fire safety training, children's drawing activities, concerts, competitions, planting actions, and various fun games for people of all ages.



The result of this transformative process in Kampung Tongkol is a strikingly tranquil settlement, which boasts a riot of colorful, inventive houses alongside papaya and banana trees, and a thriving community spirit.