BURMA



ACCA in BURMA :

PROJECT CITIES (total 6)

- Khamu Township
- Kunchankone Township
- Dadeye Township
- Gangaw Township
- North Ukkalapa Township
- Hlaing Tar Yar Township

SMALL PROJECTS

Small projects approved :	25
In number of cities :	5
Total budget approved :	\$82,000

BIG PROJECTS

Big projects approved :	4
In number of cities :	4
Total budget approved :	\$160,000

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Disaster-rehabilitation projects in 3 cyclone-hit townships (Khawmu, Kunchankone and Dadeye), budget approved \$92,800.

SAVINGS (only in 6.	ACCA cities)
Savings groups :	53
Savings members :	3,419
Total savings :	\$37,533

CITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

CDFs active in :		3 cities
Total capital in 3	CDFs :	\$90,000
• from ACCA	\$80,000	(87%)
• from coms.	\$0	(0%)
• from gov.	\$0	(0%)
· farmer alle and	#40 000	(400())

• from others \$10,000 (13%)

IMPLEMENTING GROUPS

The ACCA projects are being implemented by four local groups: Aungzabu Foundation (Khawmu), Bedar Development Trust (Dadeye), Buddhist Youth Group (Gangaw) and Women for the World Myanmar (Kunchankone, North Ukkalapa and Hlaing Tar Yar).

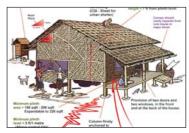
34 ACCA Second Year Report, December 2010

Cyclone Nargis brings big development opportunities along with the devastation ...

The community-driven development process in Burma (Myanmar) - one of Asia's poorest countries - got a very big boost through the intense process of relief and rehabilitation after Cyclone Nargis ripped across Burma in May 2008, killing 140,000 people and affecting a majority of the country's already-poor, already-traumatized population. The ACCA projects in Burma are being implemented by four small, local groups who all became active in the post-cyclone relief activities: Women for the World, the Aungzabu Foundation, the Bedar Group and the Buddhist Youth Group. Four of the five ACCA-supported project townships are in the Yangon region, and all were badly affected by the cyclone. These townships and the community groups within them all have their own activities, but they all have in common several key elements :

- SAVINGS : setting up active community savings and credit groups (mostly run by women).
- **RICE BANKS :** setting up communal rice banks as primary communal and self-sustaining projects in almost all of the villages which is a new thing after Nargis, with a lot support from ACCA.
- NETWORKS : linking together into networks of learning, sharing, mutual support and mutual management of development funds within and between the various townships ("townships" are the Burmese equivalent of "districts).
- COLLECTIVE REBUILDING: using the post-cyclone reconstruction as as a tool to help them rebuild their communities together - and by doing so many things together to revive fast-disappearing systems of collective village development.
- COLLECTIVE FINANCIAL MANAGMENENT: showing how simple, fast and efficient the rehabilitation process can
 be when communities work together and manage the funds themselves- even very small funds! (with many spin-offs)

IN KAWMU TOWNSHIP, a network of 18 villages organized around the Aung Zabu Buddhist Monastery used ACCA funds to rebuild their totally destroyed villages. They started by using the ACCA big project funds to repair and rebuild some 750 houses within less than a year, through an extraordinary collective construction process that was managed entirely by the village savings groups. They used the small project funds (and some additional disaster support) to repair roads and drains, rebuild community halls, set up rice banks, plant trees, restore wells and water ponds and rebuild bridges that had been washed away in the cyclone. They also set up a special fund for education and the elderly, and planted vegetable gardens, as part of a longer-term sustainable development program.



This "core house" designed and built by the relief agencies (above) costs \$800 to build, while this house built collectively by the villagers in Khawmu (below) cost just \$180.

Most of the UN and big aid agencies working in Burma got their engineers to develop standard house models and then reproduced those models hundreds of times, in long straight rows, with all good intentions. But in this ACCA project, where the people sat together and planned their own house reconstruction, they were able to repair and reconstruct 750 houses (all of them beautiful, all of them different and full of whimsy) for the same amount the big relief agencies could build less than 100 houses. Some houses needed only a little bit of repair, while others had to be totally rebuilt, but the important thing was that they did both repairs and reconstruction *together*. So the house reconstruction wasn't a charity hand-out, but became a tool by which these communities rebuilt themselves, after the cyclone.

IN KUNCHANKONE TOWNSHIP, a small Yangon-based NGO, Women for the World Myanmar (WWM), has used ACCA support to help another fast-expanding network of cyclone-devastated villages to rehabilitate their houses, farms and communal facilities and build new self-support systems in the process. Besides setting up savings groups, establishing rice banks and rebuilding destroyed houses and roads, they have used ACCA project funds to build children's libraries and set up special revolving loan funds to support experimental farming cooperatives for landless families (a huge problem in Burma) that are managed by the whole village and that are testing mixed cropping and organic farming techniques as an alternative to the conventional chemical farming practices which have bankrupted so many farmers.

IN YANGON : Most visitors to Yangon see only a nice, clean, colonial city, with wide, tree-lined streets, beautiful old buildings and few cars. But outside of this picturesque center lie vast swaths of informal settlements, where the city's poor live, without basic services, in thatch and bamboo shacks, on swampy land - some plots rented from farmers who have subdivided their rice paddies and many squatted on informally. The two ACCA projects in Yangon, also supported by WWM, are focusing on these peripheral areas of the city, with surveys, forming networks and setting up women's savings groups, which are growing fast and implementing small projects to set up biogas plants, lay drainage lines and develop communal water supply systems. But the most striking breakthroughs in Yangon have been in the two big ACCA housing projects that are being implemented so far: one completely finished in the Hlaing Tar Yar Township (*see opposite page*), and another in North Ukkalappa Township, which is now in process.



After reconstructing 37 houses in Ingapur Village, families repay their loans in rice.



Many poor families in Yangon's periphery raise pigs for food and income, and some used small ACCA grants to set up biogas plants to turn animal dung into cooking fuel.



A group of women in one of the savings groups in Hlaing Tar Yar Township had been trying for some time to purchase some government land to relocate, since many were facing the possibility of being evicted from the land they were squatting on. But nothing came of their efforts, so they decided to find an inexpensive piece of agricultural land nearby (just 6,600 square feet) to collectively purchase and then do a housing project there, with support from WWM and ACCA.

This small housing project (for 30 households initially, but now being expanded to add another 20 families on adjacent land) is being supported by the Yangon-based NGO Women for the World Myanmar (WWM), with design support from the ACHR community architects. This is Burma's first-ever community-planned and community-built urban poor housing project, so it's a real milestone. The project demonstrates a new model of collective secure housing for the poorest landless squatters in Yangon's peripheral slums in a situation where no solution exists yet and where the possibility of free government land for housing is still a long way off.

In August 2010, two young Thai architects from ACHR, Nad and Tee, spent three days with the women in the Pan Thakhin savings group, helping them to develop plans for building a new community for some of their poorest members, on the new land they had purchased. Besides the community members, the site planning and house design workshops that Nad and Tee organized were attended by community representatives from other slums and villages in Yangon, some local architects and engineers, and some support professionals from other NGOs working with poor and cyclone-affected communities in Burma.

The group worked in collaboration with the government's Housing Cooperative Department, which means this cooperative will be able to provide a proper legal status to the cooperative these 50 households set up, to buy their land and develop their housing collectively. The \$40,000 ACCA big project funds were channeled through the women's saving group to the new cooperative, in the form of loans of about \$800 per family (for both land and house), which the women will repay in 5 years, in monthly installments of about \$15 to the new city-wide community development fund.

Here are some notes and photos from Nad on the Pan Thakhin women's remarkable housing design and construction process. Typical conditions in the squatter and land-rent settlements in Yangon's Hlaing Tar Yar Township.

A big milestone for BURMA :

This is the country's first-ever community-planned, community-built and collectively-owned urban poor housing project . . .



Affordability is the starting point : The process began with letting them tell us about who they are, where they live, how much they earn and save. We start from that important reality: how much people can afford to invest in their house and how much loan funds are available. We designed the houses only after making a financial system to support houses people can really afford.



But there is still room for dreaming : After that, we let them dream on paper about the kind of community and houses they'd like to have. Then we prepared some tools to help them work out a scale map of the new land and design a layout of roads, houses and services on it. Leaders from other communities facing similar land problems also joined, to learn from the design process.



Designing the houses : We started by letting the people explore their housing ideas in paper models, with some simple scale tools. People are almost always extremely practical and realistic when they draw their dream houses, which showed a simple house on stilts, a toilet, a shelter for the pig, a water pump and a big tree. From there, we moved into the design of the real houses, at scale.



The role of professionals : We architects just helped them with a few details, like proposing shared septic tanks to save money on toilets. All the households have at least two pigs, so we suggested they could do biogas. And when the people's house and community layout designs were more-less finished, we helped to draw them up and showed them in 3-dimensional model form.



A new community built in just 3 months : The people staked out the plots, constructred the infrastructure (with water pumps, toilets, shared septic tanks and simple raised earth lanes) and built the houses themselves, in sub-groups, very simply and well. They figure that these simple houses will last about 7 years, when they'll be better-off and be able to upgrade them.



Super cheap \$300 model house : Another thing we did was to build a sample house which showed what kind of house you can build for US\$300, which was about how much people could afford to borrow, so we focused on options which fit within that budget, gathering all the ides from carpenters and the women in the community on how to make the house well but cheaply.