

CAMBODIA

A difficult country which keeps showing us new ideas and new ways . . .



ACCA in CAMBODIA :

PROJECT CITIES (total 15)

- Serey Sophoan
- Samrong
- Preah Sihanouk
- Peam Ro District
- Bavet
- Khemara Phoumin
- Kampong Cham
- Pailin
- Sen Monorom
- Siem Reap
- Roessei Keo Dist, Phnom Penh
- Daun Keo
- Steung Treng
- Banlung
- Pursat

SMALL PROJECTS

Small projects approved : 136
 In number of cities : 15
 Total budget approved : \$230,000

BIG PROJECTS

Big projects approved : 8
 In number of cities : 8
 Total budget approved : \$320,000

SPECIAL PROJECTS

One disaster-rehabilitation project in Phnom Penh (\$5,000) and one national survey in 27 cities (\$10,000).

SAVINGS (only in 15 ACCA cities)

Savings groups : 265
 Savings members : 8,905
 Total savings : \$314,850

CITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

CDFs active in : 15 cities
 Total capital in 7 CDFs : \$530,000

- from ACCA \$320,000 (60%)
- from coms. \$152,000 (29%)
- from gov. \$32,500 (6%)
- from others \$25,000 (5%)

IMPLEMENTING GROUPS

All the ACCA projects are being implemented the national Community Savings Network and its partner the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF).

The ACCA Program came at a difficult time in Cambodia, with lots of development and lots of evictions happening across the country. But ACCA projects are now being implemented in 15 cities, where they are bringing new tools and new strength to community-driven alternatives to eviction, in which the communities and their local authorities work together to survey all the slums in the city, find possible pieces of empty land, and negotiate to upgrade the communities that don't need to move, and relocate those who do need to move to free land from the government. All this is being shown as something practical and possible through the ACCA projects. And now this process is being institutionalized (see box below). After two years of ACCA, the Cambodian groups are already close to achieving their three-year target of demonstrating this city-wide and people-driven community development model in 15 cities (including cities with well-established community processes and new cities where things are still quite raw). In 2009, at the start of the ACCA program, the national community savings network and UPDF conducted a national survey of poor settlements in 26 towns and cities around the country, and this survey has opened the way for many new cities to join the ACCA process and the national savings network.

THE "SPREAD-OUT" EFFECT : Cambodia is the country which has pushed the "spread out effect" the farthest in its implementation of ACCA. By giving smaller grants to larger numbers of communities, they have been able to stretch the \$15,000 small project budget ceiling to allow as many communities as possible in each city to join the process, to get active, to start planning and so start implementing their own small upgrading projects. In the town of Banlung, for example, all 17 communities in the city are implementing small projects, with budgets of between \$500 and \$2,000.

FREE GOVERNMENT LAND FOR HOUSING : After two years, it's clear that the ACCA Program works like a bridge between the poor communities and the local authorities in a city. Before, they invariably said no, there is no land for the poor. But after starting a few ACCA big projects, local authorities are now helping to give land for housing the poor in most of the cities in the national network - both ACCA cities and others. In five of the eight big housing projects approved so far, the government has provided the land for people's housing for free, and negotiations are now on for free land in the other three projects. Another interesting aspect of the Cambodian big projects is that they have blended resources from ACCA and UPDF to make larger, more city-wide and longer-term housing plans. Preah Sihanouk is a good example - a difficult coastal city where private-sector high-rises are going up all over and evictions were the rule. But the community network has used ACCA support to pave roads and lay drains and water supply systems, and by demonstrating a people-driven and on-site upgrading alternative to eviction, several poor communities have secured tenure on the land they already occupy.

Other ACCA-supported projects in Cambodia include the construction of a community construction training center in Phnom Penh (a collaboration with local universities and the new network of community builders), and a special disaster project in some of the riverside communities in Phnom Penh's Roessei Keo District, where the communities used loan funds from ACCA and UPDF, managed by their very strong district-level community network, to implement a massive house rebuilding and infrastructure repair project after a fire destroyed the settlements.

Two housing POLICY breakthroughs :

These two policies are helping to institutionalize the kind of city-wide, people-driven and partnership-based slum upgrading which has been on the bubble for 15 years . . .

1 CIRCULAR NUMBER 3 is a central government policy directive that was approved in May 2010 and is closely based on the city-wide community upgrading strategies that have been developed by UPDF and the National Community Savings Network and are being strengthened and applied with ACCA. The policy focuses on improving the housing, living conditions and land security of informal settlements in Cambodian towns and cities, through a flexible, pragmatic and participatory approach. The policy calls for a full survey and mapping of all the settlements in each city, to be carried out by local communities and NGOs, in collaboration with the local authorities, to develop an accurate settlement database. The next step is to determine whether or not the land each settlement occupies is required for other genuine development purposes. The policy then suggests three possible solutions :

- **on-site upgrading** as the first redevelopment option, where no other public development purpose makes a conflict.
- **relocation within the city** to land provided free by the government, only where upgrading *in-situ* is not possible.
- **other solutions**, as appropriate, like land-sharing or alternative housing provided by private-sector developers.

Whatever the solution, the policy makes clear the necessity for extensive discussions between all the key stakeholders (the communities, their networks, local authorities, NGOs and other actors), to develop plans which ensure that the poor's land and housing needs and the city's infrastructure needs are both met. The growing number of UPDF and ACCA supported housing projects (both on-site upgrading and relocation to free government land), are supplying a fast-expanding repertoire of demonstrations of how this new collaborative and city-wide upgrading policy can actually be put into practice, how the projects can be financed, how the land can be acquired, and how the communities and their cities can become development partners in finding secure housing solutions that are truly city-wide.

2 NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY : ACHR has been asked by the Ministry of Land Management to help draft a new national housing policy for Cambodia, and the concept note draft currently under discussion follows very closely the kind of city-wide, community-driven and partnership-based concepts we have been implementing in the ACCA Program, with the added element of community development funds to be set up or strengthened in each city, and the establishment of a national institution to support housing development around the country. In this draft policy, which builds on the strength of the community processes and the community-city partnerships which already exist in many cities, the role of the central government is very small, and it opens up a big space to cities to work with the urban poor communities in their cities to work out city-wide solutions to their problems of land and housing and basic infrastructure.

Good news on the **ASSETS** front in Cambodia :

ACCA big project funds have unlocked land, infrastructure and other contributions worth 12 times the original ACCA investment in the first 6 projects now underway

Of the eight big ACCA housing projects approved so far in Cambodia, six are now finished or well underway. The finance figures about these first five projects, which UPDF has just sent, are a revelation about what is possible when community networks play their politics with their local governments cleverly and are able to leverage support for their community-driven housing projects in their cities. Here are the figures for the six big projects that are underway:

- **\$ 240,000** Total funds from ACCA (6 projects x \$40,000 each). These funds used mostly for housing loans.
- **\$ 2,464,625** Total funds from government, mostly in the form of free land (5 projects) and infrastructure (4 projects).
- **\$ 47,700** Total contributions from the communities. This does not include all the community labor, and this figure will go up sharply, because people ultimately pay for their own houses, whether by loan or savings.
- **\$ 130,320** Total funds from others, mostly UPDF housing loans + some NGO support. This figure will also go up a lot, since many more UPDF housing loans for families in these 6 projects are still in the pipeline.



\$ 2,882,345 Total asset value of the six big housing projects (only so far!)

- ACCA's contribution amounts to only **8%** of the total asset value of these 6 projects.
- the government has contributed **86%** of the value of these 6 projects, mostly in free urban land and infrastructure.
- the communities have contributed **2%** of the value of these projects.
- other actors (mostly UPDF) have contributed **13%** of the value of these 6 projects.

So an investment of \$240,000 from ACCA has unlocked AT LEAST twelve times as much funds (\$ 2.9 million), mostly from the government, and these unlocked resources will probably go up to 15 or 20 times the ACCA investment by the time the projects are all completed, and will likely double again once the asset value of these newly-secure and newly-legitimate communities enter the formal world - *all assets in the hands of the poor!* And that doesn't include the 600 poor households which got secure land tenure through these projects - one of the most important assets of all.

FREE LAND from the government = secure tenure for 600 poor families in 5 ACCA projects

1

Free land for 33 households in SEREY SOPHOAN : After surveying all the slums in the city, two settlements (both facing eviction) were prioritized as having the most urgent housing problems: Poun Lea Meanchey (a big riverside settlement of 387 households) and Monorom (a smaller settlement of 30 households across the river). After long negotiations, the city agreed to a land-sharing plan for the larger settlement, in which the people would get free land title in exchange for reblocking and giving back part of the land for a park. Meanwhile, the Monorom settlement, which faced flooding every year, negotiated a piece of free government land (with infrastructure) for resettlement, 1.5 kms away (purchased under the Provincial Authority's "Social Land Concession"), where they have now built their new houses, on a collective title.



2

Free land for 288 households in SAMRONG : In Samrong, the government acquired a huge tract of land for settling decommissioned soldiers, at Pha Ong, on the outskirts of the city. After lengthy negotiations, the CDF and community network persuaded the government to cut 140 hectares from this large development (under the provincial government's "Social Land Concession" program) for resettling 288 poor families evicted from slums around Samrong (as identified through the network's city-wide survey), with large "self-sufficiency" plots big enough for people to build houses, raise animals and have small gardens, fish-ponds and fruit trees. The ACCA funds will support the first batch of 30 housing loans.



3

Free land for 52 households in PREAH SIHANOUK : 700 poor families live in Sihanouk's largest squatter area, on public land owned partly by the National Railways and partly by the Port. Big private sector and ADB-funded projects are on to expand the port and revive the railways, and eviction has been in the air for years. In 2009, the Prime Minister announced a land-sharing compromise, in which a large portion of the land would be granted to the community to redevelop their housing, in exchange for returning part to the government for its projects. But while negotiations around this larger project continue, 52 of these families, living on land urgently needed for the project, have negotiated relocation to free land, with full infrastructure and compensation of \$400 per family. ACCA will support housing loans to the first 29 families.



4

Free land for 33 households in PEAM RO DISTRICT : Pro Lay Toek is a small community of 33 extremely poor households (evicted from other areas), living in thatched huts on stilts on a long strip of flood-prone land along a canal. They used support from ACCA to plan a full on-site upgrading project, with land filling, infrastructure and new 2-story concrete-row houses. Because the land tenure was not clear, they used their planning as a bargaining chip to persuade the Commune Council authorities to give them the land free, on a collective land title. The people used a \$4,500 loan from UPDF to buy an extra 1.5m strip of land to slightly widen the individual house plots and make room for an access road.



5

Free land for 194 households in KAMPONG CHAM : The ACCA project is supporting two housing projects for very poor evictees, both on relocation sites provided free by the government, after long negotiations by the CDF and community network. Sesib Pir Knong (42 households) was the first slum in the city to negotiate a relocation agreement when the city wanted to evict them for a bridge project, and they are now building new housing on free land 6 kms away, on the outskirts of the city. Beung Snay is another relocation site which was carved out of (and cross-subsidized by) a larger commercial development in the center of town, and the network has negotiated to resettle 152 families from 4 roadside squatter settlements (identified in the city-wide survey) here, with free land and full infrastructure provided by the government.

