

Nepal

Heritage mapping for old towns in Thecho and Thankot



Many small towns in the Kathmandu Valley are heritage sites, but with little effort made to preserve cultural heritage, rapid urbanization is taking its toll on the culture heritage of these sites and traditional buildings are quickly falling into conditions of dilapidation.

LUMANTI Support Group for Shelter has helped communities and the saving cooperatives in the towns of Thecho and Thankot to link with architects from **PTAG** (a network of technical professionals working to assist poor communities) to help upgrading settlements under ACCA funding. Mapping has proved to be an incredibly important step to engage the community in developing a passion to upgrade their housing and preserve their cultural heritage for the city.

And it all started from sharing across borders... In 2011 the communities of Thecho and Thankot in Nepal attended a workshop in Penang, Malaysia to share their ACCA funded city-scale mapping and upgrading with other countries. During the workshop the community leaders were inspired by the heritage mapping from Kotagede in Yogyakarta, and returned to Nepal with the desire to do the same in their cities. Young architects from the Institute of Engineering volunteered to support the communities in their heritage mapping. The architect team prepared a base map and the savings group coordinators in each of the settlements helped to link the team with their communities to identify key information in their area. The team developed various maps, following 7 themes which helped define the characteristics of Thecho and Thankot (material and age



By mapping, the communities developed a passion to upgrade their housing and preserve their cultural heritage for the city.

of buildings, infrastructure facilities, special ornaments, culturally important heritage buildings such as temples and shrines, traditional houses and water infrastructure, and cultural festivals and chariot ways).

The maps helped the savings cooperatives get information about their members and understand the housing conditions within the city context. But furthermore the communities were able to pride themselves in preserving particular culture and heritage to their towns. One of the community leaders stated that if this mapping had been completed 5 years ago, they would have been able to save many of the traditional buildings of cultural values which are now either demolished or have been “modernized”. The Village Development Committees (VDCs) and the government authorities are now committed to support the cooperative in their drive to save the cultural heritage of their settlements.

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