

## LAND SHARING :

The latest news on Bangkok's unique solution to the classic urban stalemate :

**B**angkok has about 1,000 slums, a quarter of them under eviction threat. On one side are the landlords, who claim it's the government's job to protect their legal land rights and to clear the squatters. On the other side are the slum dwellers, who claim they have nowhere to go without losing their means of survival, and have the right to stay on land where they have stayed for years. If so many must suffer so a few can benefit, then the law is unjust, they say, and it is government's responsibility to help solve the problem and house them properly.

**Governments find themselves in a stalemate, unable to fully support either claim. As a consequence, landlords can't develop their land while squatters stay, and slum dwellers can't invest in better houses while eviction looms.**

Land Sharing is Bangkok's unique way of resolving these conflicting claims. Slum dwellers faced with eviction have organised and bargained successfully for a share of the land they occupy, and landlords have agreed to sell or lease them the land. Everybody benefits. But land sharing also divides the cream of urban prosperity a little more equitably: the poor get minimum, decent housing, and the private sector, which profits from development and from the poor's cheap labour, helps pay for it.

- Landlords can clear some land for immediate development, save time and costs of long eviction litigation.
- Slum dwellers can stay where they have been living and working, get formal land tenure and keep their community intact.
- Government gets land and housing to the city's poor communities without having to pay for it.

**B**ut land sharing is a long and complicated process, and doesn't work in every situation. Behind a successful land sharing scheme, there must be a strong community organisation and a skillful inter-mediator. But at the core of the land sharing process is the ability to translate conflicting needs and conflicting demands into a compromise **which takes a concrete form**, and which is acceptable to the parties involved, and not to any abstract policy or set of regulations.

*That's the scheme at Klong Pai Singto, towering in the background over the remains of the old settlement in the foreground :*

*The original community occupied 14 rai of land (22,400 sq.m.). Two 28-story towers, with 264 apartments, were built on 3.5 rai, leaving 10.5 rai open for commercial development (that's the "sharing" part).*



## Land Sharing at Klong Pai Singto :

*Since the 1980s, several landmark land-sharing schemes have been developed in Bangkok. Because the process is based on compromise and negotiation, each project is very different. Here is a brief look at Bangkok's most recently completed land sharing project. These notes were drawn from the Thai script of UCDO's second "Community News Video".*

**T**he 345 families in the long-established Klong Pai Singto community were tenants of Bangkok's semi-public **Crown Property Bureau**. When a fire levelled the settlement, their formal rental contract was cancelled, and later, when the city expropriated land for road-building, the community was cut into two pieces. The people stayed put, though, amidst skyrocketing land values and increasing fear of eviction.

• **Crown Property** : As luck would have it, their's was one of Bangkok's few landlords with some vision. 73 of Bangkok's 1,000 informal settlements are on Crown Property land, making it the city's largest slumlord. When the CPB proposed land-sharing for Klong Pai Singto, it acknowledged people's right to stay where they were living and working, and saw the project as a model for redeveloping poor communities on other Crown Properties.

• **Joint Venture** : The project was undertaken by a joint-venture comprising three legal partners: the community association, the CPB and a Community Development Foundation (as a neutral third party). The community was a key party in every decision about the project's design, and every decision involved negotiation - apartment sizes, rental rates, common facilities.

• **The Deal** : The buildings are rented to the community's *Ruam Jai Pai Singto Association*, which in turn allots units on 30-year leases to members at monthly rents of 20 Baht per square metre. All families in the community's 1990 survey get apartments - even renters - small families get 32 square metre apartments, bigger families get 48, and renters get 24. People can stay where they were before, keep their jobs and get apartments that are secure and legal. The CPB gets 10.5 rai of the hottest property in Bangkok to develop.

• **Allotment System**: The system for allotting apartments allows extended families and groups of neighbors to draw numbers on the same floor. In government schemes, people often sell their rights and move back to the slums. In Klong Pai Singto, the people have rules for handling these inevitable turnovers. Anyone who opts out of the scheme gets a fixed compensation from the association, based on area he was eligible for.

## Land Sharing Projects in Bangkok :

Wat Ladbuakhow	67 families	private land
Klong Toey	7,000 families	public land
Samyod	150 families	public land
Manangkasila	200 families	public land
Rama 4	800 families	public land
Sengki	200 families	private land
Intamara 10	70 families	private land
Klong Pai Singto	264 families	public land
Klong Plabpla	400 families	public land
Bonkai	400 families	public land

• **Design** : Many residents are street vendors, and the design includes special areas for selling, preparing food and stowing their carts at night. The scheme also includes shopfronts for those with shops in the old community.