

# 50 Community Upgrading Projects

## CODIupdate

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**In October 2007, CODI marked the occasion of World Habitat Day in Thailand with a big celebration of the Baan Mankong Community Upgrading Program. 80 upgrading projects were showcased during that event that were either finished or in process, in some 40 towns and cities around the country. The auspicious number 80 was fixed upon in honor of the King of Thailand's 80th birthday, which was also being celebrated last year.**

For eight crowded days, there were gala inaugurations in finished projects and ground-breaking ceremonies in new ones, sign-board unveilings, first-column-raising, coconut-breakings and project visits by dignitaries, including the deputy prime minister, ministers, provincial governors, mayors, and officials, as well as community members, foreign visitors, university professors, students, activists, TV crews and supporters too many to count. There was also a big seminar on community-driven upgrading held at the United Nations building, with an exhibition of beautiful posters describing all these 80 projects.

This was the first time that the extraordinary variety in the Baan Mankong upgrading projects could be shown in such a big way, all over the country. The project inaugurations, seminars that happened in various cities during that week were organized by different

groups and brought together different circles of stakeholders in the local upgrading process. None of these local celebrations or these local mixes of actors were the same.

And in some ways, these far-flung and diverse celebrations brought out the quality of a program that is truly decentralized. And speaking of variety and decentralization, if anybody feels bored with all those housing projects around the world where sameness and repetition are the name of the game, then we invite you to come over to Thailand to see the Baan Mankong program. Because here you will find a housing process in which no two projects are alike. And that variety is what you are going to see in this newsletter, which is a kind of English-language baby sister to the much longer Thai-language booklet which was brought out during the event, and featured not fifty, but all 80 projects.

**Still a long way to go :** As of today, 512 projects have been fully completed or are in the process of being implemented all over the country. Because many of these projects include several communities, the projects so far cover some 1,010 communities in over 226 cities and involve 54,000 households. That's some large-scale good news, but even so, all these cases represent just the tip of the iceberg. The latest survey figures show us that there are about 3,500 informal communities with land and housing problems in Thai towns and cities. So we still have a long way to go.



## Bringing poor communities and cities together to forge city-wide solutions to problems of housing, land and basic services in Thai cities :

The *Baan Mankong Program* was launched by the Thai government in January 2003, as part of its efforts to address the housing problems of the country's poorest urban citizens. The program channels government funds, in the form of infrastructure subsidies and soft housing and land loans, directly to poor communities, which plan and carry out improvements to their housing, environment, basic services and tenure security and manage the budget themselves. Instead of delivering housing units to individual poor families, the Baan Mankong Program ("*Secure housing*" in Thai) puts Thailand's slum communities (and their community networks) at the center of a process of developing long-term, comprehensive solutions to problems of land and housing in Thai cities.

As part of this unconventional program, which is being implemented by the *Community Organizations Development Institute* (a public organization under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security), poor communities work in close collaboration with their local governments, professionals, universities and NGOs to survey all the communities in their cities and then plan an upgrading process which attempts to improve all the communities in that city - *all of them* - within a few years. Once these city-wide plans are finalized and upgrading projects are selected, CODI channels the infrastructure subsidies and housing loans directly to the communities.

This housing experiment in Thailand is the result of a process which has been developing over the past thirteen years, starting with building community savings activities around the country, then forming and strengthening large-scale networks of poor communities, and finally using these people's managerial skills to deal with housing problems at city scale. But Baan Mankong has only been possible with the commitment by the central government to allow people to be the core actors and to decentralize the solution-finding process to cities and communities.

By creating space for poor communities, municipalities, professionals and NGOs to look together at the housing problems in their cities, Baan Mankong is bringing about an important change in how the issue of low-income housing is dealt with: no longer as an ad-hoc welfare process or a civic embarrassment to be swept under the carpet, but as an important structural issue which relates to the whole city and which can be resolved. The upgrading program is helping to create local partnerships which can integrate poor community housing needs into the larger city's development and resolve future housing problems as a matter of course.

# Contents :

### How the **BAAN MANKONG** Upgrading Program works

- 3 What tools does the program offer poor communities?
- 4 How does the subsidy work?
- 5 Why are the projects all different?
- 6 Finding land for housing
- 7 Using public land for housing the poor
- 8 Building by people or by contractor?
- 9 Bringing cities on board
- 10 What kind of upgrading is possible?

### On-site **UPGRADING** projects

- |    |                   |    |                  |
|----|-------------------|----|------------------|
| 12 | Nong Bua          | 16 | See Buarai       |
| 13 | Charoen Nakorn 55 | 17 | Tehsaban Anusawn |
| 14 | None Somboon      | 18 | Nong Taolek      |

### On-site **REBLOCKING** projects

- |    |                      |    |                    |
|----|----------------------|----|--------------------|
| 19 | Ratana Thibet Soi 14 | 24 | Wat Potee Wararam  |
| 20 | Chumchon Gong Kaya   | 26 | Kampeng Ngam       |
| 22 | Klong Bang Bua       | 27 | Lower Bung See Fai |

### On-site **RECONSTRUCTION** projects

- |    |                  |    |                 |
|----|------------------|----|-----------------|
| 28 | Suan Phlu        | 33 | Tao Sura Soi 3  |
| 30 | Saam Huang       | 34 | Wat Phra Yakrai |
| 32 | Arkarn Songkhroa | 35 | Phra Thammasan  |

### **LAND SHARING** projects

- |    |              |    |               |
|----|--------------|----|---------------|
| 36 | Ruam Samakee | 40 | Klong Lumnoon |
| 38 | Tung Wah     |    |               |

### **NEARBY RELOCATION** projects (within 5 kms)

- |    |                        |    |                   |
|----|------------------------|----|-------------------|
| 41 | Bang Gruay             | 56 | Taa Takoh         |
| 42 | Klong Lat Paa Chee     | 57 | Khoom Klaw        |
| 44 | Mit Sampan             | 58 | Dynamo            |
| 46 | Charoen Pattana        | 59 | Boong Kook        |
| 47 | Gao Mai Pattana        | 60 | Klong Saa Bua     |
| 48 | Chumchon Tab Luang     | 61 | Meuang Maw        |
| 49 | Panu Rangsee           | 62 | Naa Technique     |
| 50 | Bang Prong             | 64 | Baan Lang Poonsap |
| 51 | Baan Chang Mankong     | 66 | Soi Amon          |
| 52 | Mandaa Mankong         | 67 | Soi Setakit       |
| 53 | Tehsaban Muang Chainat | 68 | Koh Lak           |
| 54 | Sam Chuk Town          | 69 | Naa Bua           |

### **RELOCATION** projects (more than 5 kms away)

- |    |                          |    |              |
|----|--------------------------|----|--------------|
| 70 | Sirin Market and Friends | 73 | Poo Poh      |
| 71 | Sahakorn Keha Satan      | 74 | Khajorn Kiet |
| 72 | Talat Tap Klaw Tai       |    |              |







**When the work's done right,  
with no fuss or boasting  
ordinary people say,  
Oh, we did it.**

*(From the Tao Te Ching, by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, the father of Taoism, in the 6th Century B.C.)*

## Upgrading on a COUNTRY-WIDE scale :

What are the main tools which the Baan Mankong Program offers to help unleash this energy and creativity in Thailand's poor communities?

**1 FLEXIBLE FINANCE :** One of the most important tools in this people-driven upgrading process is flexible, accessible finance, in the form of housing and land loans and infrastructure subsidies. No need to get all theoretical about what kind of housing approach is the right one: the lesson from Baan Mankong is that if the resources can flow in a flexible way and people can see these resources are accessible to them, they will plan for what they really need and do what's right. Once they know this financial resource is available, people can see possibilities, can organize their savings groups, can search together for land, can start their land negotiations, can learn how to plan and develop projects from friends in other communities, and can be free to develop their own unique land and housing solutions. Everybody in urban poor communities around the country knows this now.

**2 SAVINGS GROUPS :** To join the Baan Mankong program, communities have to have fairly well-established savings groups. These savings groups act as a crucial stabilizing force when the upgrading project begins, so that the flexible finance can link with people's collective financial base and to the money management skills they have already developed through their internal community savings and credit activities. When you put people's own collective resources and these collective management capacities together with this flexible external finance, it gives people a new power to change things.

**3 COLLECTIVE EVERYTHING :** Another important requirement to join the upgrading program is that communities have to find ways to do things together, and that everyone in the community (even the poorest) has to be included in the process, as a way of creating and strengthening their organizations. This collectivity is not a radical socialist imperative, but a tool to pull people together and create a new strength within their group. Working together as a group is never easy, but it gives the poor, who usually have no power at all, the strength and confidence to do all kinds of things they could never hope to do individually. Doing things collectively also creates an important balancing and proactive mechanism between community members and various outside forces: collective land, collective finance, collective management and collective welfare.

**4 HORIZONTAL SUPPORT :** As more and more upgrading projects get underway, and as community people get on buses and trains to join in a constant stream of project visits, exchanges, workshops and inaugurations, the Baan Mankong Program has made the whole country into one great big university of housing and land options for the poor, offering learning opportunities from kindergarten to Ph.D. level. If people see their peers doing something, they realize they can do it themselves, and there is nothing in the world more powerful or more immediate than this kind of exchange learning. The national upgrading process is also balanced and braced in many ways through these horizontal links.

**5 TECHNICAL SUPPORT :** The Baan Mankong program also supports the involvement of a growing number of community architects, planners, architecture faculties and design students to assist communities as they develop their settlement layout plans and housing designs. These professionals and students play an important role in the upgrading process. In a program which has to do with *physical change*, their ability to make lovely drawings and models helps communities to visualize new possibilities, and their professional presentations are essential ingredients in the success of the upgrading program.

**THE VERDICT IS IN :  
When communities are in  
charge, it's cheaper,  
better, more appropriate  
and it can reach a very  
big scale . . .**

Most conventional low-income housing strategies focus on the physical aspects of housing and treat housing as an *individual* need, to be provided to poor families *individually*. The individual approach may work for better-off people, but not for the poor, whose position at the bottom of the economic ladder leaves them especially vulnerable when they're alone. But while the poor may be weak in financial terms, they are particularly rich in social terms. In Thailand's communities of the poor, there is a *social force* which can and does already deal with most of the economic disadvantages people experience individually.

There's no denying that a lot more poor people will be coming into Asia's cities in the coming years. The old conventional housing approaches won't be able to answer these growing demands for housing. A new approach is badly needed, in which poor people themselves can work together and bring their huge energy and their *social force* to the task of delivering secure, affordable housing to everyone.

The Baan Mankong program is now in its fifth year. Upgrading projects in 1,010 communities are either finished or underway in 226 towns and cities, in 69 of the country's 76 provinces, involving 54,000 households. We're not talking any more about a few pilot upgrading projects - it's the whole country now and growing!

This concept of a people-driven housing development process, in which poor people themselves are the main actors, the main solution-finders and the main delivery mechanism is no longer a new concept in Thailand. While adjustments continue to be made in the Baan Mankong program, as lessons learned along the way are plowed like fertilizer right back into the process, this people-driven approach has been the core principle since the beginning of the upgrading program.

Since the beginning, people in hundreds of different contexts have transformed situations of informality, insecurity and powerlessness into situations in which they are in control of their housing and their settlements, which are now clean, healthy, beautiful and secure, with social support systems that are stronger than ever before - all using their own steam and their own ingenuity.

**There is still a long way to go, but after almost five years, we see very clearly that this approach is not only feasible and affordable, but it is the right way to solve very large, very complex housing problems on a country-wide scale.**

# SUBSIDY : 68,000 Baht per unit

**In this housing program, the subsidy goes straight into the creative hands of poor communities**

If you look at almost any low-income housing project around the world, there will be a subsidy involved, in which public funds are used to make the project affordable to the low-income target group. Almost always, that subsidy goes into the buildings, and very often into the pockets of the government or contractor that builds them. People never touch it. The Baan Mankong program comes with a total subsidy from the government that works out to just 68,000 Baht (US\$ 1,943) per unit. But this modest subsidy is divided up and channeled directly to communities, in different forms and with different conditions, so that it unleashes all their creativity and their togetherness and their resourcefulness to make the most of it in their upgrading projects. How is this 68,000 Baht per-unit subsidy broken down?

## 1 INFRASTRUCTURE SUBSIDY : 40,000 - 45,000 Baht per unit

The Baan Mankong program provides subsidies which allow communities to upgrade their infrastructure and living environment, according to priorities they set, using budgets they manage and technical assistance they select themselves. The size of each community's subsidy is calculated by multiplying the number of households by per-family infrastructure subsidies for different kinds of upgrading. A community of 200 houses, for example, which is going to upgrade on the same site, will get a total upgrading budget of 5 million Baht (US\$ 142,857) to work with.

- **On-site upgrading subsidy : 25,000 Baht** (US\$ 715) per family for communities upgrading settlements in the same place, with minimal change in the layout of the settlement.
- **Reconstruction subsidy : 35,000 Baht** (US\$ 1,000) per family for communities rebuilding their settlements on the land they now occupy or for communities relocating to different land and rebuilding there. This is the standard subsidy, but in special cases where the cost of filling land or bringing in trunk infrastructure to the site is very high, the per-family infrastructure subsidy can go up to 45,000 Baht (US\$ 1,285).
- **Additional subsidies :** Additional subsidies are available (as necessary, not always) to help communities do heavy land filling if their land is low-lying, to install household sewage treatment systems, to landscape the newly upgraded settlement (20,000 Baht per community), to liven up the visual character of the new community (200,000 Baht per community), to construct temporary houses in cases of fire or eviction (18,000 Baht per family), or to construct a common "welfare house" in the newly upgraded settlement.



## 2 LAND / HOUSING LOAN SUBSIDY : 20,000 Baht per unit

Soft loans are made available from CODI to families to purchase new land (in the case of relocation) and to improve their houses or build new ones after upgrading or relocating, with interest rates subsidized by the program, so loans can go to the community cooperatives at 2% annual interest (the non-subsidized CODI housing loan rate is 4%). The ceiling for land and housing loans put together is 300,000 Baht (US\$ 8,571) per family, and in general, housing loans alone go up to a maximum of no more than 150,000 - 200,000 Baht (US\$ 4,285 - 5,715) per family. All loans are made collectively to the community cooperative, not to individual families. With both housing and land loans, the community cooperatives must have saved 10% of the amount they borrow from CODI and keep that 10% in their community savings account during the repayment period.

More recently, this loan subsidy has been handled a little differently. Now, communities can receive the loan interest rate subsidy in the form of a one-time housing / land cash payment of 20,000 Baht (US\$ 571) per family, at the start of the upgrading project. The cooperatives then pay CODI's standard non-subsidized interest rate of 4% on whatever land and housing loans they take. Most cooperatives add a 2 - 3% margin on top of this (to support their activities and create a fund for late repayments), so individual cooperative members pay 6 - 7% interest on their land and housing loans.



## 3 ADMINISTRATIVE SUBSIDY : 500 - 700 Baht per unit

A grant equal to 5% of the total infrastructure subsidy will be made available under the upgrading program to whatever organization the community (or the community network) selects to assist and support their local upgrading process. This could be an NGO, another community network, a local university, a group of architects, or a local government agency.



## 4 PROCESS SUPPORT SUBSIDY : 2,000 - 5,000 Baht per unit

This is the subsidy the program provides to support all the various activities that go with such a large national upgrading process, including exchange visits between cities, seminars at various scales, meetings, coordination costs, on-the-job training activities, support for the community network's involvement in the upgrading process and salaries.





"When the opportunity, the power and the resources are open to different groups of people, you will always find different kinds of solutions, different kinds of projects, different forms of housing."

## Why are these projects all **DIFFERENT**?

**Here is an upgrading process in which community people have their say, and in which human variety is the rule . . .**

*When you look through these 50 projects, you may wonder why this program has led to so many different kinds of upgrading projects here and there. Why all these shapes and sizes and forms? And why the small scale of so many of the projects? Here is a little explanation about these particular characteristics of Thailand's Baan Mankong upgrading program, from CODI's director Somsook Boonyabancha :*

**Y**ou'll see in the following pages that each upgrading project has its own history, its own context, its own cast of characters, its own design and its own history of squabbles and triumphs. Of course there is a lively cross-pollination of layout and construction ideas and much borrowing and re-adapting of popular house models, which is encouraged by a constant stream of exchange visits, meetings, and sharing mechanisms. But even still, every project is one of a kind.

One of the most important aspects of this very large-scale, national community upgrading program is that *community people have their say*. Because the program gives people the power to think and to do, and to search for their own solutions, each solution inevitably takes a completely different form, in each city and in each upgrading project.

The program opens space for communities to initiate whatever kind of housing projects they like or to take advantage of whatever opportunities may be available in their local situations. The power to initiate their own housing projects is granted to whoever has housing problems and whoever is ready: any size of project (8 to 650 families), any location (nearby or distant), any kind of land (public, temple, private, rented, purchased, municipal or "gray-area" land) and any group of people (old slums, scattered squatters, room-renters or house enters, joint families in crowded houses).

I think it is a question of power. When groups of community people have the power, the opportunity and the resources to answer their housing needs in their own way and according to their own context, variety will happen all by itself. And by the same token, the great variety we see in the form of all these upgrading projects is a manifestation of the Baan Mankong Program's design, which allows people to be the main actors and the owners of the process. It's as though all kinds of different flowers were blooming in all kinds of different gardens at the same time, in a profusion and variety that no single master gardener could ever be able to even keep track of, much less to plant!

## **NO FENCES** in the communities in the town of Chumpae . . .

My house and my community in Chumpae are now very beautiful, after we upgraded them. I'm so proud to show these visitors from 20 countries in Asia and Africa how we use our own savings to organize ourselves and to improve our lives and communities.

And I'm also proud of this government, which gives its full support and guidance to the Baan Mankong community upgrading program, which lets people do things our way. Today we can walk right into Government House here and nobody looks down on us, even though we may not be wearing such beautiful shoes. Acharn Paiboon, the Deputy Prime Minister, came to inaugurate our newly-upgraded community in Chumpae, and during the celebration, he visited my house. And he even used my toilet!

Our local administration in Chumpae has also been very helpful to our city-wide upgrading process. We had to work very hard on this, though, and if any other communities need help coordinating their upgrading projects with their local administration, I can help.

We never get bored in our community network in Chumpae - we're busy with work, meeting each other, talking together, making exchange visits, helping communities in other cities prepare their Baan Mankong proposals. I am so busy with work around the country, in fact, that I almost never get a chance to sleep in my own house! We have no fences between neighbors in our communities in Chumpae, after upgrading. We believe that if you do good deeds, nobody will steal from you - those good deeds will act like a fence to protect you and your house.

*(Paa Nome, community leader from the Baan Rom Yen Community, in the town of Chumpae, in Khon Kaen Province, speaking at an international seminar on community finance, which was held at Government House in November 2007, a month after the World Habitat Day celebrations.)*

## **And why are so many of the upgrading projects smallish in size?**



Among the 512 Baan Mankong upgrading projects so far, there have been projects as small as eight and as large as 650 households. But most projects are fairly small, falling within the range of 50 to 100 households. Most groups find this "community scale" to be most comfortable: big enough to provide plenty of "group power" but small enough so everyone can know each other and can manage things together. Because these projects are all organized by poor people themselves, they don't tend to organize 500 families, a scale that is incomprehensible to most of them. But the small project sizes also relate to the nature of the housing problems. In Thailand, informal communities tend to be

smaller in size and more dispersed in smaller pockets of land than slums in other Asian countries. Plus, people don't have to wait to gather too many passengers before joining the upgrading program. If only 30 families within a community want to live together or move and make their new housing together, that's OK. And if a group of scattered squatters or room renters decide to form a new group and make a housing project, that's also OK. As long as these smaller groups are ready and can do their homework and find a good piece of land to buy or rent a piece of government land, then the Baan Mankong program will support them and they can make a project.



*Too many poor people stay in their same old insecure communities, locked for years in an unending pattern of fear, insecurity and squalor, never being able to improve their living conditions because their tenure status is so precarious, never being able to plan for the future because the future is so uncertain. Life can go on like that forever. But when people decide to move out and chose other land, finally the pattern changes! This is their land! Nobody can evict them! The whole sense changes. This is what is important!*

## LAND for housing :

The city-wide community upgrading process has become a kind of “back door” urban land reform

Land and tenure is always an important factor in determining the success or failure of any slum upgrading program. Poor communities struggle with the land issue in Thailand also, where they still experience serious problems accessing secure land for their housing: problems of control over public land use being too centralized, of the commercialization and commodification of land, of skyrocketing land values, of changing land uses and of eviction and displacement. Land is no easy factor, and all the economic, commercial and political pressures on land make it all that more difficult.

But here in Thailand, the flexible finance which the Baan Mankong Program offers is giving people the power to search for alternative land themselves. Under the program, it is the responsibility of each community to negotiate themselves for secure land, by buying or renting the land they already occupy, or else by buying or renting land they find elsewhere.

As a result, a great deal of land searching is going on around the country and hundreds of communities are in the thick of land lease and purchase negotiations with all kinds of public and private land-owners. Even in cities where local authorities have long insisted *there is no room for the poor*, communities are managing to find pieces of secure land to buy cheaply or lease.

**All this wheeling and dealing to get secure land could be called a new kind of urban land reform for poor people's housing. But it is a type of land reform that is highly decentralized, highly informal and highly unconventional, and it is being implemented by the people who are themselves in greatest need of secure land. What is extraordinary is that even in a context where the laws are clearly stacked against the poor, and where the country's legal system and land politics continue to work in favor of the haves over the have-nots, these land negotiations are still happening on a very large scale - and they're succeeding.**

Instead of taking on a struggle against inequities in the legal system, or pushing for this act or that legislation, the tools the Baan Mankong Program offers poor communities allow people to sidestep that whole battle, in which the poor would probably be the losers anyway. Instead, they can undertake land reform right away, in practical ways, by quietly finding land, using their knowledge of their cities and the modest tool of this flexible finance at their disposal. In this form of land reform, people work it out, they empower themselves and they believe they can do it because they see all their peers doing it.

When communities take the initiative in negotiating for secure land, it pushes them once and for all out of the passive victim mode and gives them the upper hand. Why? Because all of the sudden they're exploring options, they're the ones doing the searching, the selecting, the negotiating and the deal-making. Instead of waiting around passively for the eviction to happen, or for the relocation to who-knows-what-godforsaken land to be announced, poor communities around Thailand are exploring their own territory and drawing up their own lists of land options. In these ways, communities are changing the game to be on their own terms. They search for land that is possible and that works for them, they choose the land and they negotiate the terms on which they get that land, and then they develop their housing and community plans on that land - all because they know they have the flexible financial resource at their disposal and they have their togetherness as a community.

## Finding secure land : it's something like an “ARMY OF ANTS”

When you have flexible and reachable finance, and when people are confident this finance is available and open to them to deal with their insecure land and housing needs, there is room for all kinds of variety in how those needs can be met. If people can negotiate to buy or lease the land they already occupy, great. And if they can't, then they can find land elsewhere that is available and suitable and cheap and not too far from their existing settlements. There are so many kinds of land in Thai cities: temple land, municipal government land, central government land and many types of private land.

Because people don't have a lot of money, and because the Baan Mankong program sets rather low ceilings on how much communities can borrow for land and housing, people need to be very, very creative. But once they come together as a community and as networks of communities within cities, the possibilities for finding alternative land multiply fast and the resourcefulness and energy start pouring out.

Some staff in CODI have described this process as being something like a very large army of ants being let loose across the country. These thousands and thousands of ants are very busy scanning their local territory, searching for available land and coming up with some very interesting pieces of vacant private and public land that have been “hiding” in the cracks of some 250 towns and cities - land that no government agency or NGO or researcher might ever have found or thought of as possible.

And this army of ants, with its colonies in all the different cities and provinces, is very well connected. There is a good grapevine of ideas and knowledge about land which is constantly being shared and transferred, and this means possibilities increase exponentially.

Some communities may feel more secure if they can get cooperative title to a piece of land and so may negotiate with private land owners to buy various kinds of land. There are many categories of private land rights in Thailand, running along a spectrum from full freehold land title (which is the most secure) to user rights (which can be converted later to full title, after a certain number of years of occupation). The more secure the title, the more expensive the price for the land, so many poor communities are opting to buy cheap land with rights that can be upgraded to full title later.

But many communities are also negotiating some very interesting land solutions on public land, under a variety of public land owning agencies. In many of the smaller towns and cities, communities prefer to negotiate lease contracts on public land, where it is possible for them to negotiate very cheap land lease rates, cheaper even than the cost of purchasing cheap private land in those towns and cities. *(See next page)*



# Using **PUBLIC LAND** for housing the poor :

When poor communities negotiate with public land owning agencies and are able to build some initial housing projects or upgrade some existing communities, it is a powerful way of showing these public agencies new possibilities. In the third and fourth years of the Baan Mankong Program, we are seeing increasing numbers of examples of good cooperation with government land-owning departments, after gradually proving to these agencies that commercial exploitation is not the only reasonable use for public land assets, but that decent new housing for the poor, which allows them to develop themselves and improve their lives in every way, is a reasonable and socially equitable way to use public land resources. And these communities are not asking for free land. Through the upgrading program, public land upon which hundreds of informal settlements have been squatting can be transformed into "developed land" which generates a modest rental income, without that agency having to spend a penny! Many of these public land-owning agencies are seeing now that by giving long-term leases to poor communities, they can help provide housing for a good group of people who can transform their vulnerable and dilapidated living conditions into proper decent communities. And for this, these public landlords have every reason to be proud. Here are a few details about cooperation to provide secure land tenure to communities on land belonging to some of the key public land-owning agencies in Thailand :



# 1

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT :** The greatest majority of public land in Thailand is under the control of the Treasury Department, so this is an extremely important public land-owning agency for urban poor communities. Cooperation with the Treasury Department on Baan Mankong has been very good. In the early years of the upgrading program, CODI signed an MOU with the Treasury Department to cut land rental rates in half and give longer-term lease contracts to many communities on Treasury Department land. Then in 2006, the process spread out to include all of the Treasury Department's provincial public land offices, which are now routinely granting 30-year renewable leases to poor community cooperatives upgrading or building new communities on their land, at fairly uniform, nominal rates. There is still some negotiating going on, but it keeps getting better and easier for communities on Treasury Department land to get favorable and long-term leases.

Many of these provincial land offices are now even approaching the community networks and CODI with offers of un-used parcels of public land under their control for developing relocation projects, in cases where other communities or scattered renters and squatters cannot upgrade on site, according to the city-wide surveys of people with housing problems. Also, in many old communities on Treasury Department land, where some people have individual land leases and others don't, the communities are linking together through the Baan Mankong program, forming cooperatives and renegotiating new, long-term leases as a community cooperative and then upgrading or reblocking their settlements *in situ*.

# 2

**CROWN PROPERTY BUREAU :** The Crown Property Bureau (CPB) is another very big landlord of slum communities in Bangkok and other cities. CODI has just signed a new MOU with CPB to provide long-term collective lease contracts to 30 informal communities around the country, in which the bureau asked CODI to help organize on-site upgrading projects. The Baan Mankong budget for five of these communities has already been approved and work is starting. Three of these projects will be land sharing projects.

# 3

**STATE RAILWAYS OF THAILAND :** The State Railways of Thailand (SRT) has always been one of the most difficult public landlords. In 2006, CODI signed an MOU with SRT to allow 14 squatter communities on railway land to upgrade on-site, with a long-term (15-30 year) cooperative leases to the land. Now CODI has signed a new MOU with SRT to allow another 100 squatter communities on SRT land around the country to upgrade on-site with a long-term (15-30 year) cooperative land leases. Because the SRT has so far felt uncomfortable leasing the land directly to these communities, like the other public land owning agencies, they have asked CODI to act as an intermediary. So the land for all these projects is being leased to CODI, which then sub-leases to the community cooperatives. This is not an ideal solution, but it allows these important precedent-setting upgrading projects to go ahead, and hopefully, the next batch of leases on SRT land can be direct.

# 4

**BUDDHIST TEMPLES :** Control over the enormous land assets of Thailand's thousands of Buddhist temples has recently been partially centralized. When communities on temple-owned land negotiate directly with their temples, they can get leases of no more than three years. If they want longer leases than that, they have to negotiate with the central government's National Buddhist Department. The Wat Potee Wararam Community, in Udon Thani, was the first community to successfully negotiate with this agency to get a 30-year cooperative lease for the land they occupy and have upgraded. Now that there is a precedent, it has been easier for other communities on temple land to negotiate similar long-term land leases.

# 5

**WATERWAY BANKS DEPARTMENT :** Many of Thailand's thousands of canal and river-side communities have squatted on the narrow strips of leftover land between the canals (controlled by the Irrigation Department) and the internal land (controlled by various public and private land-owners). The central government's Waterways Banks Department, which controls these swampy margins, has in the past been a notoriously difficult agency to deal with, and the answer to requests for secure tenure has always been no. But now, in an increasing number of precedent-setting cases, these settlements have been successful in negotiating long-term leases. The more cases get the leases, the easier it is for the next ones to negotiate.

## An example worth following :

Now don't be thinking things were always so rosy in Thailand! These public landlords in Thailand, with whom long-term community lease contracts are being negotiated, were not always so cooperative or so friendly towards the poor. They had to be convinced along the way, through a long effort which combined creativity, diplomacy and negotiation by the communities, the networks, CODI and local governments and NGOs, and which gradually began to build scale and a set of precedents. But there are two main conditions necessary for breakthroughs with these public landlords : you have to work on a *huge* scale, and you have to have the finance available to achieve this scale of upgrading.

Many other Asian countries have similar problems of overly "stiff" public land-owning agencies, which remain forever reluctant to allow land under their control to be used for poor people's housing, even though in so many Asian cities, most slums are already on public land. This attitude makes it extremely difficult to negotiate upgrading and secure tenure arrangements on any significant scale.

That is why the Baan Mankong Program is such an important example for other Asian governments, because it shows that using public land assets for poor people's housing is feasible and the right thing to do.



## CHANG CHUMCHON

### The busy new network of skilled community builders :

Over the past three years, as the number of upgrading projects has zoomed, community networks in many cities have begun to make lists of masons, carpenters, plumbers, electricians and skilled construction workers who live in poor communities (both men and women) to draw on when communities doing upgrading projects need help.

This is technical support mechanism for the upgrading process, but it's also a kind of job creation scheme and a collective business. In Klong Bang Bua, for example, a lot of community people have developed serious construction skills through on-the-job training designing and rebuilding their own community. A lot of this expertise is being channelled into community construction groups, who are taking on jobs with other communities, as well as small contracting jobs outside.

These teams are now proudly calling themselves *Chang Chumchon* ("Community Builders"), which gives a new status to their work and to their movement. Most of these teams prefer to work for other poor communities for the standard labor fees of about 200 Baht/day. And many communities prefer to hire *Chang Chumchon* when they need help, instead of risking getting ripped-off by a private contractor.

Sometimes communities hire Chang Chumchon like a contractor to build everything, and sometimes they just help out with the heavy work of laying foundations in communities that want to do most of the work themselves. Sometimes they provide the labor force, and sometimes they're asked to provide specific technical expertise to work out problems of drainage, structural engineering, or house design.

**So far, Chang Chumchon has helped to build 38 upgrading projects in 18 cities, covering 5,609 housing units.**

If you add up the labor costs involved in building all these houses (which usually averages at about 40,000 Baht / unit), these projects have generated at least 225 million Baht (US\$ 6.4 million) worth of employment for some of the country's poorest (but skilled!) urban citizens.

# Building by PEOPLE or Building by CONTRACTOR?

A study of 5 community upgrading projects finds that people can build for **HALF** the price of contractors . . .

How do the poor get the best possible house at the cheapest possible price, within the extremely modest loans and infrastructure subsidies the upgrading program offers? Working together is the first and best way to reduce costs. Another good way is for people to use their own sweat. One of the things that's becoming clearer and clearer, as more Baan Mankong projects get finished, is that when communities have a strong organization, they will participate more energetically in the construction of their own houses and make the cost of their project lower. By the same token, communities which opt to hire a contractor and push up the price of their housing tend to be the communities with the weakest organization.

Some communities may hire a contractor to do only the heavy work which they can't do themselves, like laying foundations or erecting reinforced concrete frame structures, but that's different. The only way to make the cost low enough to be affordable to the truly poor is for people to do it themselves. If it is really a project of poor people, this "sweat" quality will be there. When communities use a contractor, and rack up big debts, it's probably a community where the really and truly poor aren't having any power.

A recent study which compared the building costs of five community upgrading projects in Bangkok found that communities that hired contractors to build their projects paid almost double the cost for their housing than communities that built themselves. Using a contractor is like climbing up to a higher layer in the system - a more expensive layer where besides charging for labor and materials, contractors add on a hefty profit margin of 15 - 30% on top. This wisdom is now spreading around, and more and more communities undertaking Baan Mankong projects are opting to build themselves, and fully contractor-built projects are becoming rarer and rarer. Here are figures on building costs in the five communities :

# 1



### COMMUNITY-BUILT 2,586 Baht / m<sup>2</sup>

These 2-story detached houses at **KLONG LUMNOON** offer 99 m<sup>2</sup> of living space, and were built by three community construction teams for an average of 256,000 Baht (US\$ 7,314) per unit. Average construction cost was 2,586 Baht (US\$ 74) per m<sup>2</sup>.

# 2



### COMMUNITY-BUILT 2,818 Baht / m<sup>2</sup>

These 2.5-story rowhouses at **RUAM SAMAKEE** offer 110 m<sup>2</sup> of living space, and were built by the community's own construction team for an average of 310,000 Baht (US\$ 8,857) per unit. Average construction cost was 2,818 Baht (US\$ 81) per m<sup>2</sup>.

# 3



### COMMUNITY-BUILT 3,220 Baht / m<sup>2</sup>

These 2-story rowhouses at **KLONG BANG BUA** offer 100 m<sup>2</sup> of living space, and were built in phases by the community's own construction team for an average of 322,000 Baht (US\$ 9,200) per unit. Average construction cost was 3,220 Baht (US\$ 92) per m<sup>2</sup>.

# 4



### CONTRACTOR-BUILT 6,714 Baht / m<sup>2</sup>

These 2-story rowhouses at **KAO PATTANA** offer 49 m<sup>2</sup> of living space, and were built by a private contractor for an average cost of 329,000 Baht (US\$ 9,400) per unit. Average construction cost was 6,714 Baht (US\$ 192) per m<sup>2</sup>.

# 5



### CONTRACTOR-BUILT 7,200 Baht / m<sup>2</sup>

These 2.5-story rowhouses at **SUAN PHLU** offer 43.75 m<sup>2</sup> of living space and were built by a private contractor for a cost of 315,000 Baht (US\$ 9,000) per unit. Average construction cost for these units worked out to 7,200 Baht (US\$ 206) per m<sup>2</sup>.



# Bringing **CITIES** on board . . .

**A**s the Baan Mankong program expands, local authorities in most of the cities are getting more and more involved and taking on an increasingly important support role in upgrading process. This is a big change that has come about in the past few years. Many of the local authorities, municipalities and mayors in the 226 towns and cities in the process so far have become the backbone of the process of change.

Many cities are now helping communities to negotiate for water and electricity connections and house registration. Many are even going further and using their own municipal budgets to bring access roads into upgraded and relocated communities and add value with contributions to the upgrading projects in other ways. Since dealing with infrastructure is ordinary bread and butter stuff for cities, this represents no hardship for them. But when local authorities get involved in these ways in supporting poor communities' efforts to upgrade their housing and living conditions, it is clear that there is a historic shift taking place in the relationship between poor communities and their city government - a shift from relations of antagonism and mutual distrust to relations of cooperation, mutual assistance and friendliness. In these ways, cities can also feel justifiably proud of the upgrading process, and can feel it's their work also.

For decades, centralized governance structures in Thailand have left cities with almost no tools for addressing the housing problems of their own poor constituents by themselves: they have no resources, they have no control over most of the land in their cities and they find themselves hampered at every turn by centralized control. Many mayors have tried to solve their city's poor housing problems, but they lack the tools to go very far. In the Baan Mankong Program, CODI channels the support directly to poor communities, but city governments are increasingly feeling part of this, becoming actively involved and playing an important support role in the upgrading process. In most places, the city committee is chaired by the Municipality, and this kind of institutionalizing of support has increased the program's momentum enormously.

**W**hen one or two pilot upgrading projects are implemented in a city, the mayor and the city administration can begin to see this community-driven housing model as something possible, something practical and "do-able". These initial projects in most cities are extremely important in their power to convince not only poor people but city governments that change is possible. That's when the learning really starts to flow, and that's when the momentum increases so the city's upgrading program can move from the pilot stage to cover many other poor communities - and eventually *all the communities* in the city.

When people within a city look at their own context and their housing problems and then initiate their own experiments to resolve those problems, in a collaborative way, it is a way of unleashing all the power and creativity and confidence to do things themselves, according to their particular realities - all those things that centralized systems have squashed for so long.

And, when the momentum comes from the communities and from the local authority like this, with support from the universities, temples, teachers, NGOs and other local actors, it becomes something very powerful, with a potential to solve problems on a scale no government department or agency like CODI could ever hope to reach. In the fifth year of the Baan Mankong Program, we are seeing community networks and their city authorities in 226 towns and cities around Thailand making upgrading plans that are truly city-wide, that try not to leave anybody out.



**No need to push the poor out of the city, and no need to criminalize their informal settlements!**

*Upgrading and providing land tenure does everybody good - the poor, the land-owners, the city, the government, the larger urban society. Upgrading is a way of changing the whole relationship between the poor and the cities they are part of. How? It takes all those old antagonistic aspects of the relationship and twists them around into being aspects of friendliness and cooperation and mutual benefit. It changes the atmosphere.*

## **ECONOMICS:** **Shoot one bullet and kill five birds . . .**

A budget of 3.6 billion Baht (US\$ 104 million) has already been approved in the Thai Government's 2008 fiscal budget, for the Baan Mankong Program, to support the upgrading of 25,000 units during the year. That may seem a huge amount of money to other Asian countries, which may complain that their governments don't have such public funds and cannot possibly afford to finance a similar upgrading program. But is that really true?

First off, that 1.7 billion Baht is a tiny fraction of total public spending, even though it brings so much benefit to a highly productive portion of the population, which usually gets little benefit from government programs. Secondly, this modest public investment in poor people's housing triggers all kinds of other investments and generates economic spin-offs of all sorts in and around the upgraded communities, which will in turn create additional assets worth far more than the original investment.

- **Economic assets :** If you add up all the economic activity generated by these upgrading projects, we estimate that the investment that the government puts in represents only about 20% and another 80% comes from communities. People almost always spend more than they borrow for their housing and more than the infrastructure grant for their upgrading, and this means a lot of extra money flowing into local economies.

- **Tenure security assets :** People get land tenure security, and if you measure that by the local land values, it is a hugely valuable asset.

- **Land values nearby increase** when communities upgrade or relocate to under-developed areas, and this leads to new pockets of development and investment all around.

- **Municipal infrastructure assets :** The local authorities very often invest in improvements in addition to what the communities plan, in and around the upgraded communities.

There are many other non-financial benefits that come from the investment, and these benefits are tangible and huge: benefits like the confidence, the sense of hope, the energy, the improved relations with the city, the greater sense of security, the improved health, the greater sense of legitimacy, and the new culture in which people come together and work together after the project is over.

Far from being money down the drain, this is an investment which brings very handsome returns for cities, and for the country as a whole. The Baan Mankong Program is an investment in people, in land, in economic regeneration, in correcting social inequities and in solving serious urban problems of accessible affordable housing and housing insecurity. This is a new way of looking at how public resources are managed and used. It is a way of shooting one bullet and killing five birds (*with apologies to animal lovers!*).

# What kind of upgrading is **POSSIBLE**?

Instead of promoting a single development model for obtaining secure land tenure and improving housing and living conditions, a range of options are being tried and tested by communities. As the work spreads out and scales up, these strategies are being expanded, refined and adapted to suit the particular needs, aspirations and conditions in each city and each community. The five broad strategies listed below are by no means the final word on what's possible, but they make a good starting list of options for communities under the Baan Mankong Program :

## 1 On-site **UPGRADING**

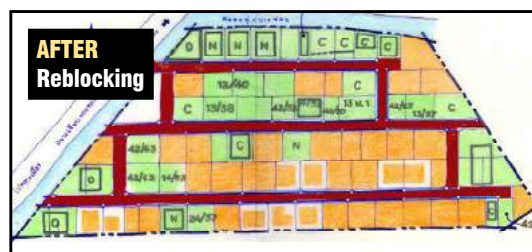
Slum upgrading is a way of improving the physical environment and basic services in existing communities, while preserving their location, character and social structures. Usually upgrading means that the houses, lanes, roads and open spaces are improved, without changing the layout or plot sizes. Besides improving the physical conditions and quality of life in these poor communities, the physical improvements made under an upgrading process can act as a springboard for other kinds of development among community members such as income generation, welfare and community enterprises.



**Upgrading the Trok Kanom Touay Community :**  
Here are some before and after photos of a poor squatter community in Ayutthaya which paved their walkway, repainted their houses and planted trees.

## 2 On-site **REBLOCKING**

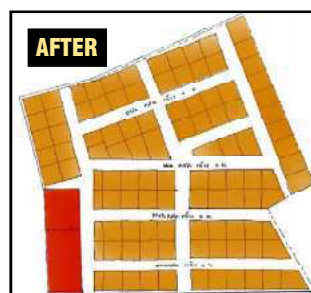
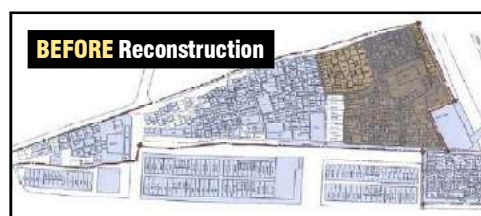
Reblocking is a more systematic way of improving the infrastructure and physical conditions in existing communities by making some adjustments to the layout of houses and roads to install sewers, drains, walkways and roads, but doing so in ways which ensure the continuity of the community. Communities can then develop their housing gradually, at their own pace. When communities opt for reblocking, some houses usually have to be moved and partially or entirely reconstructed to improve access. Some lanes may also have to be re-aligned to enable drainage lines, water supply systems or sewers to be constructed. Reblocking is often undertaken in cases where communities have negotiated to buy or obtain long-term leases for the land they already occupy. In both cases, the process of reblocking is an important step in the progress towards land tenure security and improved housing.



Reblocking at **Charoenchai Nimitmai** in Bangkok, with straightened and widened lanes and rebuilding of many of the houses.

## 3 On-site **RECONSTRUCTION**

In this upgrading strategy, existing communities are totally demolished and rebuilt on the same land, either under a long-term lease or after the people have negotiated to purchase the land. The new security of land tenure on the already-occupied land often provides community people with a very strong incentive to invest in their housing, through rebuilding or new construction. Reconstruction also allow communities on low-lying land to first raise the level of the land above floodlines before investing in proper housing. Although the reconstruction option involves making considerable physical changes within the community and requires some adaptations to a new environment, the strategy allows people to continue living in the same place and to remain close to their places of work and vital support systems. This continuity is a crucial compensation for the expense and difficulty reconstruction involves.



Reconstruction of the first phase of **Bonkai**, in Bangkok, a large slum on public land which was almost completely burned down and negotiated to get a long term lease and rebuild the settlement.





# 4

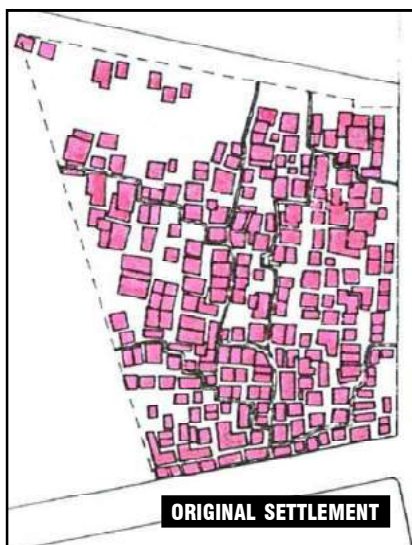
## LAND SHARING

Land-sharing is a housing and settlement improvement strategy which allows both the land-owner and the community people living on that land to benefit. After a period of negotiation and planning, an agreement is reached to "share" the land, where the settlement is divided into two portions. The community is given, sold or leased one portion (usually the less commercially attractive part of the site) for reconstructing their housing, and the rest of the land is returned to the land-owner to develop. There's no rule about how the land is divided: the amount of land the people get and how much goes back to the owner is settled during the negotiations.

At the core of a land sharing process is the ability to translate conflicting needs and conflicting demands into a compromise which takes a concrete "win-win" form, and which is acceptable to all parties involved. The people may end up with less area than they had before, and the land-owner may get back less-than-all of his land, but the trade-off is that the poor will no longer be squatters but the legal owners or tenants of their land. And the landlord finally gets to develop the land.

### Land sharing at Manangkasila :

This project in central Bangkok, which was carried out in the early 1980s, was one of Thailand's pioneering land sharing initiatives. After a long dispute with the public land-owning agency, the community negotiated to get a long-term lease and rebuild their housing on half the site, in an extremely efficient arrangement of 3-story row-houses, and return the rest of the land to the Treasury Department to develop commercially.



▲ BEFORE land sharing :



▲ AFTER land sharing :

# 5

## Nearby or not-so-nearby RELOCATION

The greatest advantage of the relocation strategy is that it usually comes with housing security, through land use rights, outright ownership or some kind of long-term land lease. Relocation sites can sometimes be far from existing communities, job opportunities, support structures and schools. In these cases, community members who want to keep their old jobs or attend the same schools must bear the burden of additional traveling time and expense and must adapt themselves to a new environment. But in many towns and cities around the country, resourceful communities are finding bits of land to buy or rent cheaply for their housing that are not far away at all.

**In Baan Mankong, we distinguish between NEARBY RELOCATION projects (within 5 kilometers of the original settlement) and RELOCATION projects (more than 5 kms away).**

In all cases of relocation - whether it is nearby or not-so-nearby relocation - communities face the cost of reconstructing their houses at the new site, and in some cases the additional burden of land purchase payments. But tenure security tends to be a big incentive to invest in housing and environmental development at the new community.



Before and after at **Klong Toey Block 7-12** in Bangkok, a squatter community on Port Authority land which negotiated to move to another piece of port land just 2 kilometers away and rebuild their community, on a long-term cooperative lease.



Before and after at **Sua Yai**, in Bangkok, a group of scattered squatters on private land who formed a cooperative and collectively purchased an inexpensive piece of land on the outskirts of the city, where they are building new housing.





## Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 200 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site upgrading

**Land owner :** Municipality of Surin

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the Nong Bua community cooperative

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 5 million Baht (US\$ 142,860)

**CODI housing loans :** 12.34 million Baht (US\$ 352,514)

# 1 Nong Bua Surin



Nong Bua is an old community of about 200 houses. In the 1950s, the community started when five or six families settled on public land beside this small lake and used the banks to grow vegetables, which they sold in the city's fresh markets. In the 1970s, a bus terminal was built nearby and after that, the community started to grow fast. People came from other parts of the city and other districts of Surin Province to earn a living as food vendors, laborers or recyclable waste collectors in the area. Eventually, the community spread all the way around the lake, and now the area is in the middle of an intensely urban quarter of Surin.

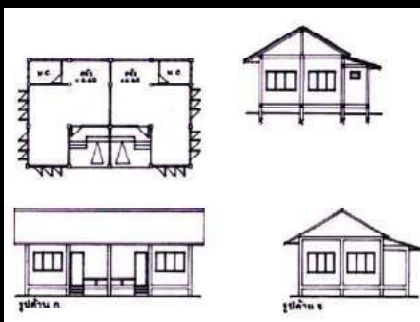
**Surin's first on-site upgrading project :** With support from the city's strong community network, the mayor, the sub district authorities and CODI, the community planned and carried out a full, on-site upgrading project in their community, in which they developed roads and basic services, built new houses and planted trees. They also did a little reblocking of some houses to develop trash sorting areas, a "garbage bank" and small outdoor recreation spaces in the crowded community. After forming a cooperative, the community worked with the Municipality to negotiate a long-term collective lease for the land.



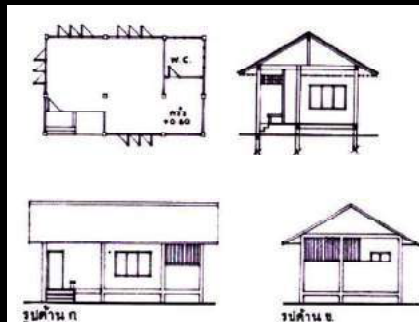
▲ BEFORE :



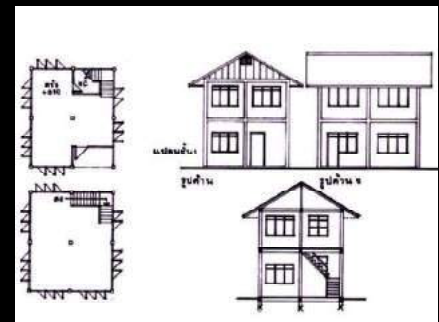
▲ AFTER :



**1 HOUSE TYPE**  
Cost : US\$ 1,875



**2 HOUSE TYPE**  
Cost : US\$ 3,000



**3 HOUSE TYPE**  
Cost : US\$ 3,750



# 2

## Charoen Nakorn 55

Bangkok

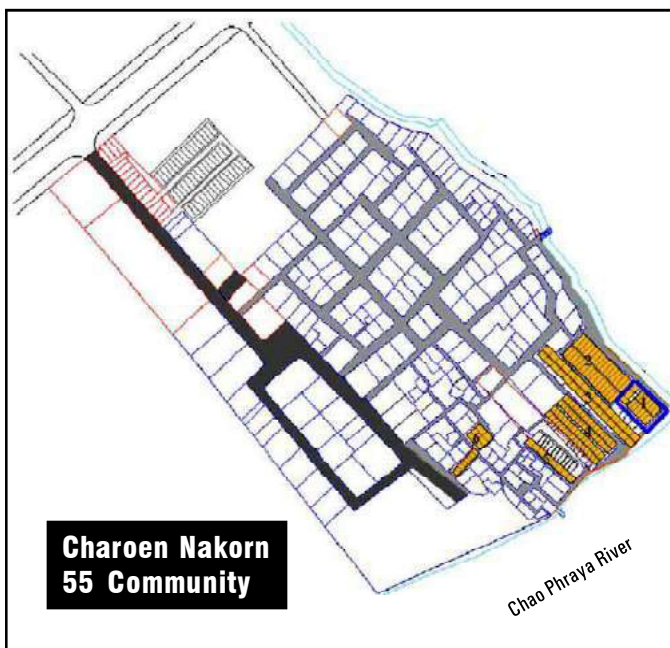


**HISTORY :** The history of this densely-packed community of 320 wooden houses built on stilts over the swampy margins of the Chao Phraya River goes back over 150 years. First it was an orchard, and then when the Charoen Nakorn market was built nearby, fruit sellers and vendors began settling on the land and raising pigs. Later, river boats would drop off passengers headed for community's famous opium dens, and later still for the celebrated Paiyachai Theater nearby. It wasn't until the 1950s that a well-meaning royal prince brought electricity to the community and began giving lessons to the children.

Long ago, there was no water supply, so people used river water or bought water from the owner of the Bombay Lumber Mill nearby. Conditions may be crowded and poorly-served, but this close-knit community has a long tradition of peaceful coexistence and mutual help, and many families are related to each other.

**LAND :** Although the land was granted to their ancestors by King Rama 5 in the 19th century, the community members have no official ownership deeds, and the land remains under Crown Property Bureau ownership. When the community decided to upgrade their housing and living environment under Baan Mankong, their first task was to negotiate a long-term lease contract. Because the land here is so extremely valuable (4.2 hectares of river-frontage, just a few boat stops down from the Oriental Hotel!), the negotiations were not easy and took a long time.

**PREPARATIONS :** The community's savings group was set up in 2007 and is divided into 10 sub-groups of 7 - 8 members each, who save 300-500 Baht per month. The cooperative was set up soon afterwards. Community committees have been set up to oversee various aspects of the upgrading process: accounting, purchasing materials, hiring contractors, monitoring work and checking the work and materials.



**UPGRADING :** The upgrading of the houses and infrastructure in this large and complex settlement will actually involve three upgrading strategies:

- **Upgrading** in which the houses and lanes will be improved in the same place (127 houses)
- **Reconstruction** with completely rebuilt houses and a slightly adjusted layout of lanes (120 houses)
- **Land sharing** where some land will be given back to the CPB and people will squeeze onto a smaller area (73 houses)



*In the heart of the settlement, under enormous old rain trees, sits a shrine to the community's guardian spirit, Chao Por Sue, who has protected the people for a century from the fires that devastate so many other Bangkok communities.*



### Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 320 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site upgrading

**Land owner :** Crown Property Bureau

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the Charoen Nakorn 55 community cooperative.

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 5.03 million Baht (US\$ 143,700)

**Septic tank subsidy:** 64,000 Baht (320 individual septic tanks @ 2,000 Baht per tank)

**CODI temporary housing subsidy :** 18,000 Baht (\$515) per unit (11 units) for families whose houses will have to be demolished in the land-sharing part of the community.

**CODI housing loans :** 46.6 million Baht (US\$ 1.33 million)



▲ **BEFORE :**



▲ **AFTER :**



# 3

## None Somboon

None Somboon Town, Khon Kaen Province

**Starting out as a leprosy colony :** This village-like community, in rural Khon Kaen Province, was set up by the government in 1964 as a colony for people affected by leprosy from around Khon Kaen Province. Back then, when the disease was much feared and little understood, the common practice was to banish leprosy patients to such out-of-the-way places, where it was thought they would not infect others. Today, there are 3,111 people living in the settlement (Buddhists and Christians), but only 786 are still affected by leprosy - none of their children or relatives in the community have the disease.

**A history of banishment :** The 456 hectares of land, which the people have used for both housing and farming, is under Treasury Department ownership. Originally, the government provided people with basic one-room wooden houses, built in the village style up on stilts, but most families later built houses for themselves in concrete and brick. Because they don't own the land, but have only individual land use rights, community members can't pass on the land to their children or sell out and move elsewhere. And because outsiders are still afraid of the disease, community members - even their children who are not affected by leprosy - are stigmatized, insulted and socially isolated. All these problems have meant no improvement and no change, leaving the people in the community feeling hopeless and stuck in their poverty.

**Run-down living conditions :** Environmental conditions in the community were not that great either. Most of the houses were old and in bad shape, with only make-shift electricity connections and primitive toilets. The roads were unpaved and mucky, without any drainage or trees to shade them from the hot northeastern sun. Because there were no garbage bins or solid waste collections, the community was strewn with rubbish.

**The Baan Mankong process in None Somboon** began with a survey of all the households and a big meeting to bring everyone together to discuss their housing and land problems and to learn about the possibilities the program offers to help them bring about improvements. There has been a high level of enthusiasm and involvement from the start, where people saw a chance to determine what they need, to design and carry out real improvements themselves - not some outsiders from the health department or do-gooders from a charity - and to strengthen their community in the process.

**Each of 15 areas in the community makes its own micro-plan :** The None Somboon residents decided to divide their loosely-scattered settlement into 15 areas, and let the group of households in each area develop its own upgrading plan, including road paving, drainage, solid waste collection points, tree planting, septic tanks, waste-water treatment and house improvements. Most of the groups decided not to make any major changes in the layout of their houses, roads and farming plots, but a few are doing a little reblocking of houses to make way for the new infrastructure or to regularize plots.

**Land tenure :** The community's savings group has now negotiated with the Treasury Department to convert their individual user rights to a 3-year renewable collective land lease. Once the community has registered itself as a cooperative, it will go back and negotiate a longer-term lease of 30 years, in line with the MOU between CODI and the Treasury Department to give 30-year collective leases (at nominal rental rates) to all community cooperatives upgrading their settlements on Treasury Department Land.



### Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 663 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site upgrading

**Land owner :** Treasury Department

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the None Somboon community cooperative

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 16.58 million Baht (US\$ 473,570)

**CODI housing subsidy :** 13.26 million Baht (US\$ 378,857) This money comes as a grant to each family to improve their houses, at 20,000 Baht (US\$ 575) per household. (no housing loans)

## Variations on the theme of "GROUP POWER" at None Somboon . . .

None Somboon is a community with a long experience of using "group power" to solve problems and resolve needs that their poverty and isolation have compounded. They have a rice mill, which they built many years ago and run as a cross between a cooperative enterprise and a community welfare scheme, with members investing shares in the mill and receiving dividends,



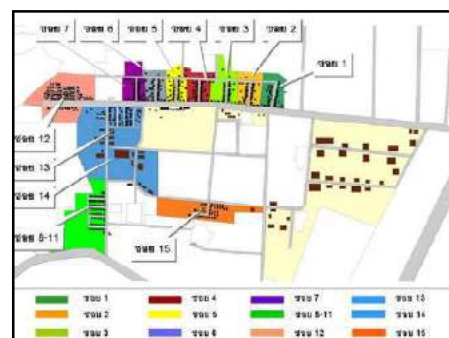
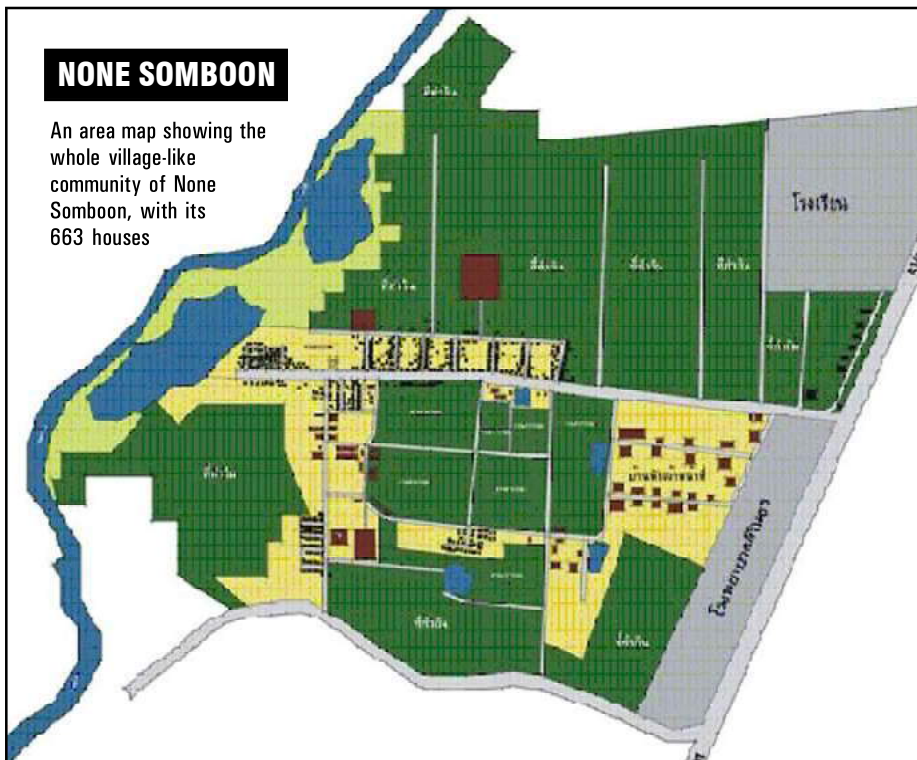
benefits and discounted rice from the profits. They also run a welfare program, a community shop, various occupation groups and a variety of innovative savings systems, including a women's savings group, a credit union-style savings group and a "vegetable bank" savings group in which members "deposit and borrow" vegetables instead of cash.





## NONE SOMBOON

An area map showing the whole village-like community of None Somboon, with its 663 houses



▲ This map shows the community's 15 areas, each of which makes its own micro-plan.



▲ BEFORE :



▲ AFTER :



BEFORE :



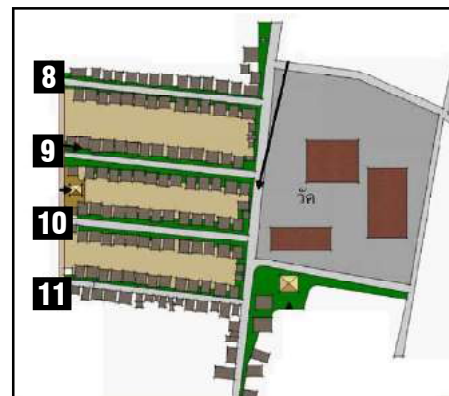
▲ AFTER :



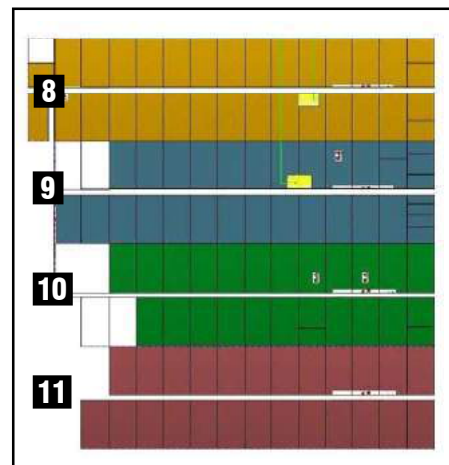
BEFORE :



▲ AFTER :



▲ This map above shows the original conditions in areas 8 to 11, before upgrading.



▲ And this map above shows the plot divisions in areas 8 to 11 after upgrading.



# 4

## See Buarai Surin

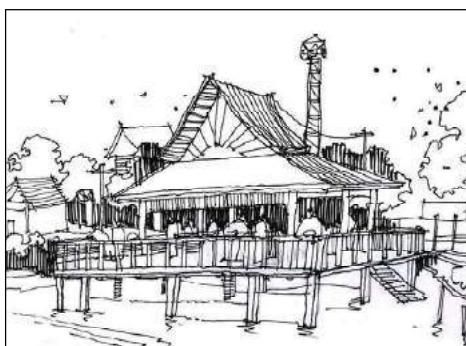


See Buarai is a settlement in two parts, with houses loosely-scattered along the ancient earth wall in the northeastern city of Surin. The community began in the 1960s with just a few families who settled on this vacant land and began planting vegetables to sell. As the city grew and more and more poor families from surrounding districts migrated into Surin, the settlement grew in size and became denser. People's occupations have also changed from farming to vending, daily labor and collecting and recycling of garbage. Although the community is now more than 60 years old, the people have no formal rights to the land, which

falls under the control of the Thai government's Fine Arts Department.

**Conditions in the community are bad:** The houses are flimsily constructed of bamboo, tin sheets and scrap timber, and there are neither paved roads nor municipal water and electricity supply. But as anyone in the See Buarai community will tell you, their main problem is land and their main fear is that as squatters, they may one day be evicted from the land they have lived on for so long.

**Upgrading :** The upgrading process in See Buarai began when the people formed a daily savings group (in which all 157 households are members), and started talking about how to make their tenure more secure and improve their housing conditions, with support from the Baan Mankong program. With help from two young architects from Khon Kaen, the people planned a project to upgrade their settlement in the same place, including filling the land (to avoid flooding), laying roads and drains, constructing a community center and making modest housing improvements - all without changing around the layout or the position of houses much. After forming a cooperative, they were able to negotiate a long-term lease to the land they occupy.



**Strong network, supportive city :** The strong community network in Surin links together all the city's 20 informal settlements, under the guidance of some very good senior community leaders. The network has a long history of collaboration with the Municipality and CODI on various activities involving savings and credit, environmental improvements and community welfare.



▲ **BEFORE :**



▲ **BEFORE :**



▲ **AFTER :** Single 1-story house model



▲ **AFTER :** 2-story "twin" house model



## Ancient monuments and **THE POOR** . . .

The upgrading project at See Buarai is important because it shows that poor communities and historic monuments can coexist quite nicely. Surin, like its neighbor Ubon Ratchatani, is a very old city and is dotted with ruins from the 11th Century Angkor Kingdom. But these ancient monuments are not kept up as well as those in Ayutthaya - in fact many are unrecognizable as ancient ruins at all.

Most of the city's poor settlements are located on the land that is near or around these ruins, and most of this land is under the control of the Thai Government's Department of Fine Arts. Surin's mayor has taken a pragmatic view of the problem of squatters on the city's historic sites, and feels the best way to spruce up the ruins is for the Municipality to work with these communities to improve their housing and living conditions in the same place. So most of the communities in Surin are being upgraded on-site.

## Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 157 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site upgrading

**Land owner :** Fine Arts Department

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the See Buarai community cooperative

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 3.9 million Baht (US\$ 111,430)

**CODI housing loans :** 3.65 million Baht (US\$ 104,428)



# 5

## Tehsabaan Anusawn

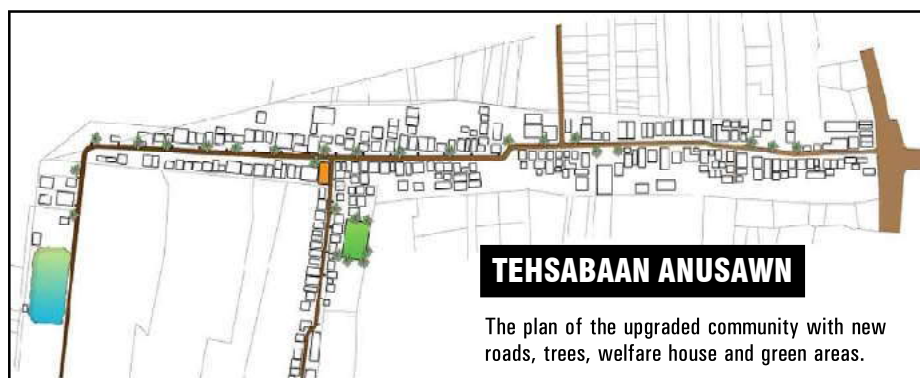
Surin

Tehsabaan Anusawn is another old squatter settlement located on land along the ancient earth wall in the northeastern city of Surin, in the Anusawn sub district. The first people to settle on this vacant land came in 1932, and over the years more and more poor migrants from surrounding districts joined the pioneers. Like its neighbor the See Buarai community, Tehsabaan Anusawn is a squatter settlement on public land under the Ministry of Fine Arts.

**Savings :** Community members here work as *samlor* (tricycle) drivers, daily wage laborers, carpenters, masons and collectors of recyclable waste. The community has made many attempts to start savings groups over the years. The earlier groups were not too successful and faded out, but later, with some assistance from the supportive Surin municipal government, the community's savings group was fired up again and is still going strong today.

**Baan Mankong :** The upgrading process in Surin has gone very well, with good support from a strong community network, strong community leaders, a supportive mayor and city council, and good cooperation from the various sub district authorities. In Tehsabaan Anusawn, the people's savings group formed a cooperative, negotiated a long-term lease for their land from the Fine Arts Department and worked with some young architects to plan a project to upgrade their housing, infrastructure and living environment. The project includes filling the flood-prone land to a little higher level, laying new paved roads and drains, setting up a "garbage bank" and making some house improvements. The whole process is being managed by the savings group, which has set up six committees to oversee various aspects of the upgrading project.

**Good carpenters here :** There are several skilled carpenters and masons living in Tehsabaan Anusawn. Besides helping construct the community's new infrastructure and houses, these craftsmen have also become a resource for the whole city, helping other communities with their upgrading and house building.



The plan of the upgraded community with new roads, trees, welfare house and green areas.



▲ BEFORE :



▲ BEFORE :



▲ AFTER :



▲ AFTER :



### WELFARE HOUSE :

**Taking care of everybody in the community, even the poorest . . .**

Most of the upgrading projects in Surin, including Tehsabaan Anusawn, have included in their plans the construction of a central welfare house (*Baan Krang*), which will be a place where poor, elderly, ill or needy people can stay. This central house is important because it represents a commitment by a community to take care of its own most vulnerable members. The Baan Mankong program makes its financial support conditional on a community including everyone in the community in the upgrading project, no matter how destitute or ill or elderly they are. So communities are finding ways to include even people with no income at all - *or with minus income!* - in the upgrading process.

### Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 259 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site upgrading

**Land owner :** Fine Arts Department

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the community cooperative.

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 6.48 million Baht (US\$ 185,000)

**CODI housing loans :** 1.05 million Baht (US\$ 30,000)





The first inhabitants of this beautiful community which rings a small lake settled here about 50 years ago. Since then, the area's central location has drawn some 450 households, who now live all around the lake. But environmental conditions in the community were never great, with swampy land and without proper drainage. The lake-edge became strewn with garbage and the houses were mostly dilapidated. Although most community members are poor laborers and vendors, the income levels in the community are mixed, with some quite well-off families.

**LAND :** The lake and the surrounding land the community occupies is all public land, under the control of the Treasury Department. After setting up a savings group and forming a cooperative (which so far includes only 120 families, mostly those living in front along the lake-front), the people at Nong Taolek were able to negotiate a long-term collective lease for the land they'd occupied for so long, and to upgrade their tenure status from illegal squatters to legal land lease-holders.



#### UPGRADING THE COMMUNITY :

The community then began a process of planning a project to upgrade their infrastructure and houses, with strong support from the municipality and design support from young architects. The upgrading project included developing a landscaped public walkway along the lake edge, improving the drainage along the walkway and around the houses, making a new children's playground and setting up a solid waste disposal system. Many of the families also took loans from CODI to build new houses or to improve existing ones. The community people did all the work themselves,

without any contractors, and the Municipality loaned them heavy construction equipment and trucks to help build the roads and clean out the garbage



#### ▲ BEFORE :



#### ▲ BEFORE :



#### ▲ AFTER :



#### ▲ AFTER :



#### Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 120 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site upgrading

**Land owner :** Treasury Department

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the Nong Taolek community cooperative.

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 3 million Baht (US\$ 85,715)

**CODI housing loans :** 6.76 million Baht (US\$ 193,145)



# 7 Ratana Thibet Soi 14

## Nonthaburi, Bangkok vicinity

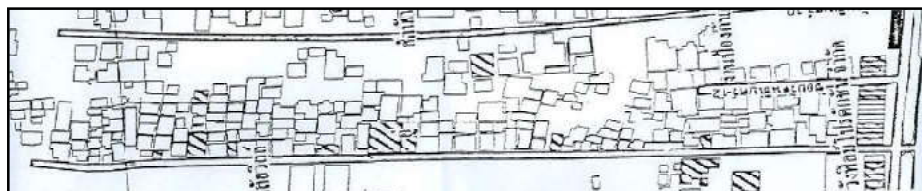
The large settlement in Soi 14 of Ratana Thibet Road, in the Bang Krasor sub district of northern Nonthaburi, covers 3 hectares of land. For many years, it was only partly used by a group of poor farmers who rented some of the land from a Buddhist nun, for their houses and small rice farming. When the old woman died in the 1950s, she left the land to a nearby temple, Wat Bang Kwang, which continued to lease the land to a growing number of migrant farmers. Later, as increasing problems getting water made the



land difficult to farm, the fields filled with new families, some paying a small land rent to the temple and some squatting. Eventually, the community grew to 250 households, all living in crowded and dilapidated conditions, with problems of flooding during the rainy season, and without any proper electricity or water supply, except what some families managed to buy informally from neighboring houses, at inflated rates. The people's first attempt to organize themselves was when they got together to ask the municipal authorities for electricity and water connections - and for house registrations, they key to accessing municipal entitlements in Thailand.

**LAND :** The community's Baan Mankong project began with planning how to regularize everyone's tenure under a single community land lease. In Thailand, Buddhist temples are only authorized to lease their land out for a maximum of three years. If communities want a longer-term lease on temple-owned land, they have to negotiate with the National Buddhist Land Office. So after starting a savings group and forming a cooperative in 2005, with support from the community network and CODI, the people at Ratana Thibet began their negotiations for the land, and were eventually able to get a 30 year cooperative land lease, with a nominal monthly rent of 3 Baht per square wah (less than 1 Baht per square meter).

**REBLOCKING :** The people decided to slightly reorganize the layout of houses to make it easier to lay proper roads and bring in drainage lines and infrastructure to all the houses in all of the 19 lanes within the settlement. With help from some of the young architects at CODI, the people went through an extensive process of community planning and house designing, and have now begun work on redeveloping their community. The first step was to raise the level of the land to resolve the flooding problems, before building new walkways, drains, septic tanks and infrastructure lines. The last step will be to construct new houses. The people decided to hire a contractor to do the work, but have 15 committees in charge of managing various aspects of the reconstruction process.



▲ **BEFORE :** Before reblocking, most of the houses could only be reached by extremely narrow pathways built over the swampy land on rickety boards and bamboo.



▲ **AFTER :** The new system of access roads and smaller cross-lanes have been laid out on the old plan to make for the most access with the least moving of existing houses.

### Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 250 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site reblocking

**Land owner :** Temple land

**Tenure terms :** 30 year lease to the Ratana Thibet community cooperative.

**Land rental rate:** 3 Baht per square wah (which works out to about 91 Baht per household per month, depending on unit size).

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 3.69 million Baht (US\$ 112,000)

**CODI housing loans :** (Not yet)



# 8

## Chumchon Gong Kaya

Thonburi area, Western Bangkok

**GARBAGE DUMP COMMUNITY :** Chumchon Gong Kaya is home to some of Bangkok's poorest people who earn their living collecting, sorting, trading and selling recyclable waste from the huge municipal garbage dump nearby, most earning less than 5,000 Baht (US\$ 140) per month. The people have squatted on this land for decades, since before the days when anybody thought of this urban land as having any value, and before the process of urban development had crept that far. The community has been managing a savings group since 2004, with separate savings for loans, housing and their community welfare system.

**A TWO-PART LAND TENURE SOLUTION :** Part of the land the people occupy is under Bangkok Municipal Authority (BMA) ownership, part is owned by the non-profit Kaset Tratikan Foundation, and part is privately owned. Finally, in 2005, with support from the Baan Mankong Program, the people at Gong Kaya began negotiating to redevelop their community on the land where they already stay, using a combination of tenure strategies and with the agreement that part of the land will be returned to the owners. After some long and difficult negotiations, it was agreed that the community cooperative will lease 4 rai (0.64 hectares) of land from the Kaset Tratikan Foundation and buy 1.5 rai (0.24 hectare) of land from the private land owner, which gives them a total of about 0.88 hectare of land to rebuild their housing. All of the families now living in the squatter settlement will be included in the new Baan Mankong upgraded community redevelopment, all have rights. Nobody gets excluded.

**LOTS OF HELPERS AND INTERMEDIARIES HERE :** Because Chumchon Gong Kaya is among the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the city, it has been the target of lots of help by NGOs, charities, CODI, local community network and foundations to tackle problems of drug addiction and children's development to try to open up new options to the community kids and get them off the garbage dump.

**HOW MUCH DO GARBAGE SCAVENGERS EARN?** One Gong Kaya resident tells some visitors that his earnings are going down these days, because the BMA garbage truck staff glean most of the most valuable recyclable materials from the garbage at source, as they pick it up on their rounds of the city. So by the time the trucks dump their contents at the dump here in Gong Kaya, it's only the less-valuable stuff left. Even so, a scavenger can earn between 100 and 200 Baht (\$3 - 6) per day on the dump, collecting materials in a bag and selling materials to recycle shops around the area. He also tells us that the farther you go from the dump, the higher the buying rate for recycled materials. For example, if you sell a kilo of plastic bags to a buyer right on the edge of the dump, he'll pay you only 2 Baht. But the shops out on the main road will pay 10 Baht (\$ 30 cents) per kilo.



### Big change in the community's confidence :

*The first time CODI staff began coming to Gong Kaya, the NGO workers did all the talking and the community people sat quietly and humbly in the background, with their eyes on the ground. Now, they are happy to tell visitors everything, they laugh and talk and drag out models and drawings and ledgers to show proudly around, offering cold drinks, and no sign of the NGO people around at all.*



**Community recycling factory :** *The community cooperative will build and run its own recycling factory, as a cooperative income generation strategy, which will buy recyclable materials from members at fair prices, provide employment to some, and will process certain recyclable materials so they can sell them to factories for a higher rate.*

## Temporary housing :

As in many of the Baan Mankong projects, CODI provides the community a budget for building temporary housing for people to stay in during the construction process (if they have to relocate to clear the land for the new construction) at a ceiling of 18,000 Baht per unit. Here, most families are still living in their own houses along the road into the community, but those whose houses have been demolished are staying in very decent temporary houses with deep front porches.



## Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 145 households

**Type of upgrading :** On-site reblocking

**Land owner :** Community cooperative / Kaset Tratikan Non-Profit Foundation

**Tenure terms :** Partly cooperative ownership and partly cooperative land lease

**CODI land loan :** 7.8 million Baht (US\$ 222,857).

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 6.98 million Baht (US\$ 199,428)

**CODI housing loans :** 22.5 million Baht (US\$ 642,857)



## Three housing options in the project :

- **PART 1 for the poorest** (20 units) single-story row houses on land-lease land for the poorest families. Each family will pay 25 Baht per day (repayment of a CODI housing loan) to purchase the house, and 65 Baht per month for land rent, on a 15-year lease to the cooperative.
- **PART 2 for the less poor** (50 units) 2-story row-houses on land-lease land for those who can afford the repayment costs for a larger, more expensive house. Each family will pay 1,210 Baht per month as a CODI housing loan repayment, and 65 Baht per month for land rent for a 13-square-wah house plot, with a 9 square wah house on it) on a 15-year lease to the cooperative.
- **PART 3 for the better-off :** (75 units) 2-story row houses on land which the cooperative is purchasing from the private land-owner: a charitable foundation. Each family will pay 1,210 Baht per month as a CODI housing loan repayment, and (???) Baht per month for the land loan repayment. All the houses are being built by the local contractor the community people hired, with community participation in the site supervision, materials checking and some labor.



▲ BEFORE :



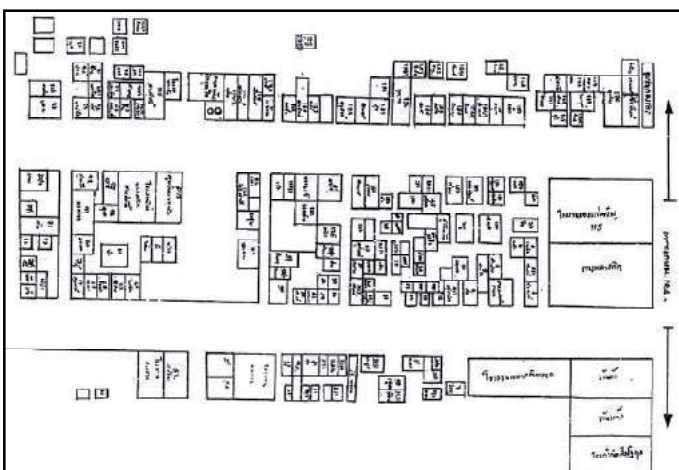
▲ AFTER :



▲ BEFORE :



▲ AFTER :



▲ BEFORE :



▲ AFTER :



# 9

# Klong Bang Bua Network

Bangkok



About 3,400 families live in the 13 informal settlements which line the 13 kilometer stretch of Bangkok's Bang Bua Canal, many of them vendors, laborers and daily-wage workers. After almost a century of living in insecurity, with the daily risk of fires and eviction and facing constant accusations of polluting the canal, the people living along the Bang Bua Canal joined hands with the Baan Mankong Program to upgrade their communities and secure their land tenure.

With good collaboration from the two district authorities (Bang Ken and Laksi) on either side of the canal, the nearby Sripatum University and CODI, the 13 communities along Klong Bang Bua formed a network, started savings groups, prepared plans for redeveloping their settlements and revitalizing their canal and formed a cooperative society. In the process, the Bang Bua communities have become the city's ally in revitalizing and cleaning this important canal.



**This is Bangkok's first-ever case of public land being leased to a network of canal communities :**

Klong Bang Bua was the first network of canal communities in Bangkok to successfully negotiate a long-term lease to the public land they occupy, under Treasury Department ownership. This lease could never have been negotiated by a single community, which has no bargaining power. But as a network of 13 communities, and with the "network power" support of the city-wide network of 200 canal-side communities in Bangkok, Bang Bua was able to convince the authorities that redeveloping their communities in the same place is good for the people and good for the city as a whole.

The 30-year renewable lease is key to long-term tenure security to these communities. After long negotiations, the people bargained the Treasury Department down to a rental rate of about 1 Baht per square meter per month, with adjustment for inflation every 5 years. This means that each family will pay between 40 and 70 Baht (US\$2 - 3) in land rent every month,



depending on the size of their house. Each family pays the cooperative, which then makes a collective payment to the Treasury Department.



## Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 396 houses (so far)

**Type of upgrading :** On-site reblocking

**Land owner :** Treasury Department

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the Bang Bua community cooperative.

**Land rental rate:** 40-70 Baht (\$2 - 3) per month, per plot (depending on plot size).

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 17.82 million Baht (US\$ 509,143) (only 2 communities so far)

**CODI housing loans :** 7.05 million Baht (US\$ 201,429) (only 2 communities so far)



▲ **BEFORE :**





## Klong Bang Bua gets a **face-lift** :

Besides new houses and infrastructure in the community, the canal is also getting a face lift and a brand-new, tree-lined, 5-meter lane along its edge, built partly on the swampy edges where houses used to perch, and partly on land reclaimed by the District Authorities in the klong. This new canal-side walkway will provide access to the communities along the canal and enable fire-trucks to enter the slum in an emergency. Though it will be open to motorbikes and cycles, the community people see this walkway as an important pedestrian amenity, providing space for children to play, people to visit and vending carts to sell their food and wares.

For years, the Bang Bua communities have held regular canal-cleaning jamborees, used unconventional organic "E.M." compost and water planting to bring the water in the canal back to life, set up grease-trap waste-water filters in all the kitchens and continue to negotiate with upstream polluters to reduce toxic effluents in the canal. Eventually, when the upgrading work is finished, the communities have plans to set up a traditional "floating market" on the klong.

All these activities, which have been strategically planned with other Bangkok canal networks, are ways of demonstrating to the city that these canal-side communities are not polluters but are an important asset to the city in its efforts to maintain its canal system.



## A housing construction process managed **BY PEOPLE** :

Samaki Ruam Jai was the first of the Bang Bua communities to begin rebuilding, in December 2004. Since then, two other communities (Chumchon Bang Bua and Saphan Mai-1) have begun work on their reblocking and upgrading projects. The network has plans for all 13 communities to be fully upgraded within three years.



■ **Temporary accommodation** : While their new houses are being built, families are accommodated in temporary "knock-down houses" within the community or in rooms on borrowed land just outside the community.



■ **Local labor** : To ensure that everyone in the community has work and to keep the economic benefits of the project within the community, most workers are hired from Bang Bua communities. Skilled and unskilled laborers are paid 250 and 220 Baht per day.



■ **Three house designs** : The community has developed three basic house types, all with two floors and about at least 90 square meters of living space (45 down and 45 up) with kitchen, living and dining room, two bedrooms and a balcony, a row house, a semi-detached "twin house" and a detached single house, costing 150,000 to 250,000 Baht.



■ **Labor costs** : Labor costs come to about 70,000 Baht for single "detached" houses and about 65,000 Baht for semi-detached or row-house models. A lot of the work digging for pipes and foundations is being done by hand, especially digging the foundations.

■ **Housing loans** : Only those who need them are taking housing loans from CODI. But those who are taking loans will be making average monthly repayments of about 1,187 Baht, for 15 years.

■ **Recycled materials** : To keep housing costs down and to avoid being saddled with heavy debts, many families are using materials salvaged from their old houses such as timber, doors and window frames and asbestos sheets.



▲ **AFTER :**



# 10 Wat Potee Wararam

## Udon Thani



Wat Potee Wararam is a 50-year old settlement of 136 families who had been renting land across the road from Buddhist temple. Ever since it was decided that this settlement would become the first upgrading pilot project in Udon Thani, the upgrading process has given a big boost to the spirit of self-help in the community. When the survey process first began, only five or six people would show up for the meetings, asking *"Is this upgrading program real?"* Gradually, more and more got involved, bringing their energy into the upgrading preparations.

**Land tenure :** Control over temple land in Thailand has been somewhat centralized. Initially, the people were only able to negotiate a short-term rental contract with the temple, since national laws forbid individual temples from giving long-term lease contracts, which have to be negotiated by the central government's Religious Affairs Ministry. But they were later able to obtain a more secure, long-term lease contract to the land, through the Municipality.

**A lot of delicate internal negotiations :** The design process took about six months and involved a lot of extremely delicate negotiations. Some people wanted to demolish everything and start over with same-sized plots, while others wanted to keep the houses they'd invested so much in. Some families owned only the house they lived in, while others owned several structures and were earning income by renting them out. Finding ways of accommodating all these differences was never easy.

**Reblocking plan :** The final reblocking plan at Wat Potee Wararam called for only some houses to be moved, to allow internal lanes to be straightened and widened, but most of the houses were rebuilt. Young architects from the local Rajabhat Institute helped the people to design three "adjustable" house types which allow old materials to be re-used. All the infrastructure was constructed collectively by the people themselves, without any contractors, and the community's savvy materials purchasing committee became infamous among building suppliers for haggling the lowest of low prices of materials.

**New houses :** The community worked with young architects to develop three house models, all of which were mocked up at full-scale at the project's inauguration ceremony in December 24, 2004. The idea was that people could adjust these basic house types to suit their needs and could use the existing materials they already had leftover from their old houses to save money. Although the houses were designed collectively, each family built its own house, individually, although some families opted to build together in groups.



▲ BEFORE :



▲ BEFORE :



▲ AFTER :



▲ AFTER :

### Upgrading Project Details :

**Number of units :** 136 houses

**Type of upgrading :** On-site reblocking

**Land owner :** Buddhist Temple

**Tenure terms :** 30 year renewable lease to the community cooperative, via the Udon Thani Municipality.

**Infrastructure subsidy :** 5.09 million Baht (US\$ 145,286)

**CODI housing loans :** 13.78 million Baht (US\$ 393,630)





## “Baan Klang”

This community built and manages its own welfare house . . .

Wat Potee Wararam was one of the first communities in the country to build a common welfare house at the center of the settlement, as part of their Baan Mankong upgrading program. The idea of this house is to provide housing and support to elderly, sick or unemployed community members who are alone or are unable to take care of themselves. The welfare house (“Baan Klang” in Thai) was financed with a margin of the interest charged on housing and income generation loans and built using contributed materials and entirely community labor.



**A BIG CHANGE :** “In the past, nobody listened to people! When I went to the municipality to talk about our plans for improving the living conditions in all the slums in the city, the officer said ‘Don’t believe this leader, it’s not possible, they can’t do it!’ They believed that development on such a large scale could only happen if the government did it. But people are doing it now, and the municipality is collaborating with what the people want to do. This is a big change!”

*(Community leader from Wat Potee Wararam)*



## It’s much easier when the mayor is on **YOUR SIDE** . . .

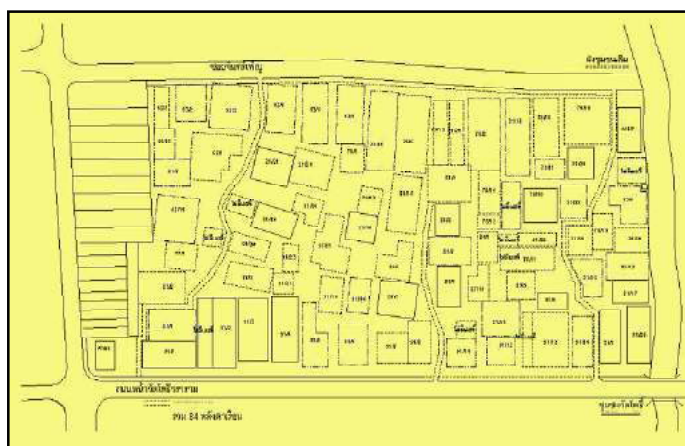
Some old-style mayors, who operate along more traditional patronage lines, have been reluctant to support Baan Mankong. But in a few cities, a new generation of mayors have embraced with enthusiasm the opportunities in this highly participatory and community-driven upgrading program.

Udon Thani’s progressive young Mayor, Mr. Harnchai Teekatananon, has been an enthusiastic supporter of the community network’s initiatives and a key ally in making the city’s Baan Mankong process go quickly and smoothly. His team has done a lot of the behind-the-scenes work to help negotiate lease contracts and tenure agreements for all the settlements and worked closely with the network to find pragmatic ways the city can support their upgrading efforts.



**“Decent, secure settlements are good for people and good for the whole city. The Baan Mankong pilot projects will help show this. When people plan and build their own secure, well-served settlements, they feel a sense of ownership of those communities, and they become sustainable communities, not like a government project, which outsiders build and people move into.”**

*(Khun Harnchai, Mayor of Udon Thani)*



▲ **BEFORE REBLOCKING :**

▲ **AFTER REBLOCKING :**