

# **ACHR MISSION REPORT**

**Chapters  
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## Chapter - 3

### The Asian Urban Context and the Poor

#### 3.1 PREAMBLE

This section is derived from the discussions that the Mission members had with ACHR partners and communities and from their personal experiences of working in development projects in Asian cities and research studies.

Urban poor communities in Asia face problems at two levels, micro and macro. At the micro level there are first household or personal survival issues relating to incomes, essential expenditures in terms of food, clothing, health and education and the like. Next, these households and their neighbourhoods require water, sewage, road paving, solid waste management, electricity, fuel, health and education facilities and space for recreation and commercial and community activity. In addition, they require funds to meet the financial burden that emergencies place on them and also funds to support their small commercial activities. In the absence of such funds many poor families are forced to borrow and as such remain in debt. As a result, they cannot invest in housing. At the macro level things that need to be arranged include (adequately paid) jobs, transport to and from their places of work, housing and land/plots, and location of their settlements near to their work areas and development projects at the city level that enhance the quality of their lives. In addition, there is a need to develop an adequate overall policy that addresses poverty related structural issues.

The micro level problems can be partially addressed by accessing patronage from political parties and power groups, organising on an issue such as sewage or through creating saving groups, or through various government upgrading programmes. However, influencing macro level issues is beyond the capacity and capability of poor communities without the support and involvement of professionals, NGOs and other relevant interest groups.

There are major problems in tackling the micro level issues as well. It has been seen again and again that unless there is active community involvement, a supportive NGO and/or professional support the best of programmes fail to meet their objectives. They are taken over by the touts of political parties and various mafias that provide protection to vulnerable poor populations. Technical inputs are poor (because of the limited capacity and capability issues of government departments) and the end-product is substandard due to corruption and mismanagement which are partially due to the fact that poor communities are not sufficiently powerful or empowered to check or stop this. In many cases infrastructure, both physical and social, is developed for settlements but since it cannot be linked to city level infrastructure, it rapidly falls into disuse. This is a major problem that is the result of seeing poor settlements as something separate from the rest of the city.

The most important issue however, remains of security of tenure and this in turn is related to the land issue and to the laws that govern it. In many Asian countries there are laws that protect the right of squatters and give them ownership rights if they are on public land, such as Pakistan, and in some states in India. However, in the absence of proper procedures and regulations these laws can be manipulated and violated. In most Asian countries such laws do not exist.

What is required therefore is the enactment of relevant laws where they do not exist and the development of proper regulations and procedures for laws that do exist.

### **3.2 LAND**

Land ownership and tenure patterns vary considerably in different cities of Asia. In Karachi for instance, over 90 per cent of all land is in the public domain. In Thailand, on the other hand, much of it is owned privately. Seoul has excellent land records. Manila on the other hand, has poor records and in the case of Phnom Penh records are not easily available.

The populations of most Asian cities increased sharply in the 1960s and early 70s. The demand-supply gap in housing could not be met. As a result, squatter settlements developed on private and state land, much of them near the city centre. These settlements were, and some still are, on "valuable" land. During the building boom of the 70s and 80s developers tried to acquire the land of these settlements for building residential apartments and commercial plazas. For this they sought the support of politicians and bureaucrats and as a result a powerful developer-bureaucrat-politician nexus came into being and shared the profits that the real estate industry could provide. In the process large scale evictions of the poor took place and are continuing. They were moved out of the city and to places far away from their work. The nexus strengthened itself since developers increasingly became the financiers of political parties and their election campaigns.

Various attempts by NGOs and by the poor themselves to acquire affordable appropriately located land for housing have been unsuccessful. This is for two reasons. In many cities land records are not available. This is something the Mission was told repeatedly in Manila. More generally, public information on this issue does not exist in most Asian cities. The other reason is the high price of land which makes it unaffordable to the poor. This high cost is manipulated. There is no non-utilisation tax on land and property in most Asian cities and so speculation is rampant.

The land issue therefore is at the core of the housing problems for poor communities. To ease the situation land records should be updated and easily available and a heavy non-utilisation charge should be imposed on all vacant property to prevent speculation and manipulated land values.

### **3.3 FORMAL SECTOR HOUSING**

Formal sector housing in all Third World Asian cities has serviced only a small percentage of the demand. It has consisted of sites and services schemes, upgrading of squatter settlements and relocations. Attempts at providing built housing has been on too small a scale to deserve attention.

Sites and services were carried out on a large scale in the 60s and 70s. However, they failed to reach the target groups because they were unaffordable; procedures to acquire them were long and cumbersome; there was a big time gap between allotment and delivery; and the bye-laws and procedures for building were of too high a standard for the poor to follow. Many inner city informal settlements have over the years become gentrified and their poorer residents pushed out to be replaced by the middle classes. In many cities this has happened through a government promoted programme of regularising and upgrading. In other cases, it has happened because of the power of the developer's lobby and its nexus with policy makers which make evictions of the poor from prime land possible, sometimes even in violation of existing laws.

The upgrading attempts have been far too costly for governments since recovery from the beneficiaries has been poor. The reason for this is that there has been little or no genuine community participation in the process which has been dominated by corrupt local leaders and elected councillors. In addition, intermediate infrastructure linking the settlement to the primary infrastructure of the city has been missing in most cases. Again, upgrading has been successful where communities have developed an alternative leadership and have been able to take control of the programme. Such cases are rare and are often sighted as best practices such as the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) projects in Karachi.

Relocation has almost always meant the transferring of inner city settlement dwellers to distant sites where social and physical infrastructure is normally non-existent. Families in such cases usually move back into the city nearer to their jobs so as to avoid a long, expensive and uncomfortable journey to their work place and back. The disruption of children's schooling is a major issue in evictions and also in the development of the relocation sites. The other issue is employment and security.

Loans for the purchase of land, which is essential for housing have not been available to the poor except in some more recent innovative programmes. Housing bank loans are normally also not available since land collateral is required to secure the loan. As such, the poor are completely pushed out of the housing loan market.

A number of innovative programmes have been developed in Asian countries to overcome the constraints of formal sector planning. These programmes need to be promoted and made a part of the official planning process.

### **3.4 THE RESPONSE OF COMMUNITIES AND INTEREST GROUPS**

The response of communities and interest groups to the housing and poverty related issues has been varied and has mostly consisted of "fire fighting". Where communities are organised and have produced an alternative leadership to the existing/official one, they have been able to negotiate better terms with government agencies regarding relocation. Where they have been able to access political patronage through large organisational networks and conflict, they have also been able to acquire land rights such as the case of the Sama-Sama people in Manila where 45,000 families now own the land on which they have squatted.

The key to successful negotiations is organisation and alternative leadership. Such organisation and mobilisation is developed in different ways in different countries. In the Philippines it has traditionally been developed through the Alensky method of NGOs grooming/supporting community organisers as an alternative leadership and then by agitating against the state on the basis of specific demands. In Pakistan, it is developed by organising people to finance and build their infrastructure. In India and now in many Asian and African countries it is built around savings. All successful programmes seem to be the result of the process of organising people. Once such organisations and the work they do have become sufficiently large and effective (through networking and federations), then they can no longer be ignored by government or by international development agencies. This is especially so if they are funded by indigenous sources, and if they themselves again unite in ever larger networks or federations. At such a time they are able to have an influence on policy.

Process oriented organisation of communities creates a more equitable relationship between different players in the housing and development game. It is important to support such processes as opposed to the presently dominant top down ones.

### **3.5 CITY PLANNING ISSUES AND THE URBAN POOR**

City plans and projects are prepared by government agencies whose professionals have been conventionally trained. These professionals are not aware of grass root realities or of the informal processes that service the needs and requirements of the urban poor. Much of the planning theory they apply is derived from the First World experience and textbooks. As a result, most development projects fail to take into account the needs and considerations of poor communities and settlements. This leads to the development of infrastructure projects that displace people, upgrading standards that destroy homes, and building by laws and regulations that are anti-pedestrian, anti-mixed land use, anti-street. In short, anti all the things that low income settlements are. The Mission came across these problems in discussions with William Keyes,

Director of 'Freedom To Build' and saw the adverse repercussions of this in the re-blocking for settlements along the Pasig River in Manila.

The major problem here is that alternative plans to the government schemes cannot be presented by communities and NGOs since they do not have access to professional and technical advice. Where such expertise is available, especially if supported by the media, negotiations with the government have been comparatively more successful. The Mission saw the positive effect of professional involvement in the case of the Pasig River communities in Manila and in the case of a relocation project in Ayutthaya, Thailand.

Professional support to poor communities and the planning of alternatives from their point of view, requires special understanding and training. Such training and understanding is not normally provided to administrators and professionals in Asia. Where such training is provided at the academic level (Karachi, Surabaya) the urban poor have been its main beneficiaries both in terms of policy decisions and project formulations. However, a change in the curriculum in the manner of education and imparting skills is a difficult process as most academic institutions are pre-occupied with theory.

Professional support to communities is essential for protecting their interests. Such support can only be built by identifying, training and grooming more suitable and community sensitive professionals.

### **3.6 THE ROLE OF DONORS**

A number of donors operate housing and poverty related programmes in Asian cities. They consist of multilateral donors, bilateral donors and international NGOs.

The multi-laterals provide loans for development projects. Most of these projects do not form part of an overall city plan and as such fail to meet their objectives, while remaining at best island of progress in otherwise unchanged conditions. These projects are designed by foreign consultants with involvement of local professionals and are often implemented through international tenders. This curtails the development of local expertise and can increase development costs by over 200 per cent which the poor will ultimately have to repay mostly through indirect taxation. However, multilateral donors have considerable influence on policies. Unfortunately, the policies they promote often overlook the political aspects of development and assume that local government agencies in the absence of political support can fulfil the roles that are assigned to them by their programmes. Hence, they over-estimate both the capacity of local government and underestimate the power of vested interests.

Programmes of bilateral agencies and international NGOs have introduced a variety of new ideas into the development process in Asian cities. However, their programmes have had problems since they require communities to participate in what they have decided rather than support what communities feel they need. Also, they tend to determine the process rather than let the process evolve. The programmes are time bound (communities are not) and have to spend the money that is allocated (even if the community is not in a position to use it). These are severe constraints. Where agencies have been able to modify their programmes and link up with process oriented local NGOs and CBOs, the programmes have been comparatively more successful.

It is essential therefore that donors should be exposed to successful projects and should adopt them for their programmes. This is more easily said than done because it also means that the donors will have to change many aspects of their organisational culture.

### **3.7 THE CHANGING CONTEXT**

Neo-liberal economics and the globalisation process that accompanies it has had a major impact on Asian cities. Structural adjustment is an integral part of this process. This has led to a number

of important repercussions in the social and economic spheres which effect poor communities. First there has been the increasing privatisation of health and education. This has increased the gap between the rich and the poor, the poor being forced to rely on deteriorating government services and the rich to depend on expensive but improved private services. It has also led to an increase in charges of utilities, sometimes to the extent of over 100 per cent in a two-year period. More increases are forecast and the main sufferers are the urban poor. Pakistan, Indonesia and Philippines are all victims of these reforms. The privatisation of water has also taken place in certain cities. There are conflicting reports on how it has effected the urban poor. In Manila, poor communities are dissatisfied with it whereas the richer people the Mission spoke to said that conditions had improved. Whatever the repercussions, the private sector is becoming an important player in the development game. This is all too obvious from the fact that there is increasing private sector involvement in solid waste management, electricity generation and transmission, telecommunication systems and urban transport. It seems that city structure plans have been replaced by build-operate-transfer projects.

There has also been local government reform in many Asian countries. This reform has aimed at devolving power to city and neighbourhood levels. This process has been initiated in India, Philippines and Pakistan. Where communities and NGOs are strong, and have been backed by professionals they have been able to make use of this devolution process. Examples of this are Karachi and Naga city in the Philippines. Where civil societies are weak, the devolution process has been hijacked by influential families and/or the local elite. In our discussions with COPE and UPA examples of both these trends were given to us.

The feedback from Pakistan suggests that the devolution process has a greater chance of success in smaller towns where civil society is strong rather than in larger cities. This is because in the larger cities there are powerful interest groups such as loan pushing multi-laterals, local and international consultants, national and foreign contracting firms and the developer-bureaucrat-politician nexus. The Philippines situation appears similar.

In addition to the changes mentioned above, a major sociological change has also taken place in Asian cities. For the first time we will be dealing with a generation of urban poor who have no links with the countryside from where their parents or grandparents migrated. This generation does not consist of pioneers. It is urban in culture, streetwise, wishes to have access to the corridors of power and is interested in the political process. In addition, it is educated, unlike most of its parents. Its relationship with officialdom is therefore also different and officialdom has to change to accommodate it. This change is already in the process of taking place. This was pointed to the Mission by the head man of a village in Nakornsawan in Central Thailand who said that the younger officials were less bureaucratic and more supportive of community organisations and leadership than the older ones. He indicated that it was easier to deal with them.

With structural adjustment and the economic pressures that it has generated there are also anti-loan movements in Asia. They exist in Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Another important development in Asia which has created immense problems for the poor in South-East Asia in particular, is the Asian economic crisis. Due to the crisis there has been large scale unemployment and inflation. Poor families have had to borrow from loan sharks to survive and according to a number of people the Mission spoke to, a very large number of households are heavily in debt. This indebtedness constrains families in participating in government or NGO programmes in which they are asked to contribute financially. Also, among academia and financial institutions, there is a serious questioning of the policies, both global and domestic, that are perceived as the causes of the crisis.

Development work will increasingly have to take into consideration the role of the private sector and its financial institutions in the development process and to accommodate the new sociological developments in the youth of Asian cities.

### **3.8 INNOVATIVE NGO PROJECTS AND THE ACHR RESPONSE**

The conventional approach of NGOs has been of two types. One, to develop a project and ask communities to participate in it. Most of such projects were funded by international NGOs. Later on, NGOs have been involved in promoting government and or international agencies funded programmes with communities. For this promotion they have relied for the most part on government agencies, traditional leaders and elected local government representatives. Although many such projects have delivered physical infrastructure they have made almost no impact in changing the relationship between various players in the development game and nor have they empowered communities. Also, the scale of their success has been far smaller than what was originally envisaged. These projects have been capital intensive and recovery has been poor at best. Thus they are not really replicable. It is for this reason that the Mission was somewhat concerned that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was once again promoting slum upgradation in Manila.

Other NGO approaches that have relied upon initiating a process of community interaction, generation of local resources which the community decides on how to use, are now accepted by most development experts as being a much more appropriate answer to the problems of the urban poor. The concepts and methodology of these projects is now being promoted by most international agencies, governments and donors. However, when they began in the mid 70s and early 80s, there was considerable cynicism about them and often open hostility from the development world and academia. In Asia, almost all such NGO initiatives and their founders and promoters are the founding members of the ACHR.

## Chapter - 4

### The Origins and Evolution of ACHR

#### 4.1 FATHER JORGE ANZORENA'S MISSION

SELAVIP is a Latin American Foundation that supports housing initiatives for the poor and also has a housing building programme in Latin America. In 1976 SELAVIP decided to improve its understanding of the housing situation and new initiatives in Asia, Latin America and Africa. To this end, it came to an agreement with Sophia University in Tokyo which is run by the Jesuits. Under the terms of this agreement, Fr. Dr. Jorge Anzorena, an architect and a teacher at the University, would visit various countries in Asia and identify important projects and people in the housing field who could be supported. Fr. Jorge would spend six months travelling every year and spend the other six months teaching at Sophia. Fr. Jorge began his travels in 1976 and continues with them until today. He uses the material that he collects for his teaching purposes and also produces a biannual newsletter on the projects that he has visited and on their evolution and development and on overall conditions in the countries where they are located.

In his initial visits Fr. Jorge visited the addresses given to him by his contacts in Asia who were mostly from academia and development agencies. According to Fr. Jorge the projects that these contacts were involved with were not solving the problems of the urban poor and nor did they even have the potential to do so. However, during his travels Fr. Jorge came across projects that were different. These projects had a number of things in common. They were indigenous; they were not time and money bound; they had no blue prints that communities were to follow; they sought to understand communities and the city context from the point of view of the poor; and they wished to set into motion a process which would change social, economic and political relationships. In short, these projects were moving towards a new paradigm which was trying to overcome the constraints of conventional official and academic programmes and placing the poor at the centre of development.

#### 4.2 THE NEW INITIATIVES

Among the new initiatives identified by Fr. Jorge were the following programmes / projects:

**Asia Committee for People's Organisation (ACPO):** This organisation was formed in 1971 and adopted the Alensky model for organising people. It became very powerful in the Philippines, Korea and India where important programmes were initiated. These involved the training of Community Organisers (COs) who organised and mobilised communities to voice their demands in a powerful manner to the state thus creating a conflict. It was reasoned that if the conflict was strong enough, a resolution to it was bound to take place. These programmes trained many COs in other Asian countries as well such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. Many of the stalwarts of the APCO were the founding members of the ACHR. A number of organisations were born out of this movement and include Urban Poor Associates (UPA) and its sister organisation in the Philippines; PROUD, India and Bogum Jahri in Korea. (People in early stages: Denis Murphy, John Daly, Bill Keyes, Paul Jeong Ku Jei, Rabial Mallick).

**Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Mumbai:** This organisation was building communities around savings and credit groups and in the process understanding the nature of poor communities and the nature of their relationships with the larger city environment. It worked closely with an organisation that it helped set up, Mahila-Milan, literally meaning "meeting of women". This organisation brought together women's saving groups. It also worked with the National Slums Dwellers Federation, an organisation of slum dwellers in various settlements in India. Thus an alliance of three organisations was created (People in early stages: Sheela Patel).



**Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), Karachi:** The OPP was working with communities in the Orangi settlement. It was supporting people in building infrastructure through their own resources and in improving their homes. Health education; support to communities and small entrepreneurs for the setting up of schools; and provision of micro credit for businesses was also being provided by the OPP. The OPP's aim was to develop models that overcame the problems conventional programmes have in reaching the poor (People in early stages: Arif Hasan).

**Kumpung Improvement Programme (KIP), Indonesia:** KIP was a government programme which provided infrastructure and social facilities to informal settlements rather than demolish them. A few professionals from academic institutions were associated with the programme and through it were promoting a better understanding of the problems of the poor and alternatives to conventional planning (People in early stages: Johan Silas).

**Land Sharing, Thailand:** This began as the Building Together Project in Bangkok which was initiated by professors at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). Professors and their students worked within squatter settlements with the urban poor. Fr. Jorge says that the project gave respectability to professionals working in slums. AIT in those days had a lot of students from all over Asia and they were influenced by these new ideas. The Building Together Project led to the concept of land sharing whereby land marked for eviction could be shared between the owner and the squatters occupying it. The land sharing process was supported by the work of the Human Development Foundation which had been supporting poor communities in the informal settlements of Klong Toey in Bangkok (People in early stages: Paul Chamniern, Sholom Angles, Jo Maier, Somsook Boonayancha).

**Million Houses Programme, Sri Lanka:** The Million Houses Programme of the Government of Sri Lanka was novel in the sense that it sought to facilitate the housing process rather than build houses or develop sites and services. It sought to support existing good practices. Its promoters and people working with it acquired a new way of looking at the housing issue (People in early stages: Lalith Lankatilleke).

A number of Japanese architects and academics were also looking at the problems of the urban poor in Japan at this stage and they came into contact with Fr. Anzorena's work. His students at Sophia University were also the beneficiaries of his work (People in early stages: Prof. Yuzo Uchida, Mitsuhiko Hosaka).

### **4.3 THE KUNCHANABRI MEETING**

Fr. Jorge's newsletter was circulated widely and through it the innovative programmes and projects. The people who worked with them, not only got to know each other but also got to know about other organisations and people who were thinking on similar lines and whose work could be of use to them. In short, a family of like minded people in the housing field was in the making. In 1986, in preparation for the UN Year for the Shelterless, UNCHS supported a seminar in collaboration with the National Authority of Thailand and the AIT. The seminar was held in Kunchanabri, Thailand and was really a gathering of the representatives of the innovative projects identified by Fr. Jorge's newsletter. The title of the seminar said it all "The Essence of Grassroots Participation in Human Settlement's Work: An Asian Perspective".

At the seminar the representatives of the various projects got to know each other personally and were able to exchange ideas, concepts and future directions. Many of them entered into direct correspondence with each other as a result of this seminar. An Asian vision, identifying common issues, was in the making.

#### 4.4 THE 1987 BERLIN MEETINGS AND THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH ACHR

As part of the UN Year for the Shelterless, the Berlin Habitat Forum was held in 1987. Most of the innovative Asian projects were invited to it. By then most of them had also become members of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC). The Berlin Forum gave them an opportunity to meet again and this time in an international event. They also participated at a HIC meeting during the Forum. During the Forum it became obvious to the Asian participants that there was an enormous gulf between their approach to housing and that of governments, international agencies, academia and also of the other members of HIC. However, a number of like minded people from international agencies and academia in Europe were also befriended and relationships with them were established.

Another follow-up meeting of the Berlin Forum was held in November 1987 in which HIC was the main participant. At that meeting it was decided that an Asian network was necessary to promote the concepts and programmes that were discussed at the Kunchanabri seminar. It was further decided that this Asian network would be a subsidiary of HIC.

In June 1988, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) was formally launched in Bangkok at a HIC seminar as a regional HIC sub organisation. Nineteen grassroots practitioners from ten Asian countries participated. A declaration was drafted and endorsed and an action plan was prepared. Texts of these are given in **Appendix 4** (Proceedings of the HIC-ACHR Meeting in June 1988). In 1989, however, the ACHR had itself registered as an independent entity although it remained HIC's Asian sub organisation. A mission statement was also prepared and it reads:

*“To improve the living conditions of urban slum dwellers in Asian cities by promoting community-based development and empowerment through networking, implementing projects, and sharing of experience among community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and others working with urban poor in countries of the Asia Pacific Region.”*

#### 4.5 FROM PROJECTS TO PROGRAMMES AND NETWORKS

- The ACHR set about achieving its mission aims by four processes.
- Introducing community leaders, NGO representatives, government officials to the projects of its partners through various means and facilitating their replication and adaptation to local conditions.
- Taking the message of grassroots participation to the various actors in the housing drama (governments, international agencies and donors, academia, NGOs).
- Carrying out fact-finding missions regarding housing rights abuses so as to pressurise governments into rectifying them.
- Creating a network of partners which can discuss and formulate new directions through feedback from the field.
- For the promotion of these four inter related processes the ACHR initiated a number of activities. These are described in Section 6 of this Report. An executive committee was created and secretariat was set up in Bangkok. Their functioning and changes in them overtime are described in Section 5 along with their outputs.
- Many of the original partner projects of the ACHR have now expanded to become city and or national programmes. Some of them have partnerships with governments. Their effectiveness and what they have brought to the ACHR in general and to housing in particular is given in Section 7 of the Report.

- The ACHR is thus very much the creation of Jorge Anzorena's work, and has been built and expanded on the solid foundation that he laid. This work to a great extent is responsible for keeping it together as well. Its continuation is crucial to the survival of the network.

However, the change from projects to programmes and networks has meant a change of focus in ACHR's work. ACHR's founding partner organisations were concerned primarily with the shelter rights of the poor and of those under the threat of eviction. That is why most of ACHR's initial activity was related to fact finding missions regarding housing rights violations and to finding solutions to tenure related problems of pro-poor communities. There was an understanding that organised communities were better placed to negotiate with government agencies and powerful developers. However, models for organising communities were limited to the Alensky model of creating and resolving conflict; the OPP model of organising around infrastructure; the SPARC model of savings and credit; and the URC model which had a close link with the OPP. In 1988, when the ACHR was formed, the Alensky model was the only one that had matured over a period of 20 years. The OPP and SPARC models were still evolving.

In the 90ies, the OPP and SPARC model consolidated and became large enough to influence the thinking of government officials, donors and planners. Both these models were non-confrontational and ideally suited the more open society that local government reform helped create in Asia. The Alensky model was less suitable to this changing scenario but it has adjusted by adopting a process of self-help in neighbourhood upgrading, savings and non-confrontational negotiations with government agencies and international development organisations.

The ACHR has increasingly promoted the SPARC and the OPP-URC model because they have been successful. These models have evolved into a number of programmes and their application in different Asian contexts have added new dimensions. As a result, the ACHR shift has been increasingly to address larger structural issues and in recent Executive Committee meetings a greater stress has been laid on these issues than on grass root community organising for which it is felt that models already exist and are being practised. In this context, the Mission agrees with what Adam Burke of DIFID has written in his Fund Approval Memo, 2000, He says, "ACHR has been selectively expanding its work in areas where it has made most impact over the past decade. By reviewing its work regularly, ACHR focuses on the most successful programmes and drops others – something many organisations find institutionally difficult." This is one of the reasons for ACHR's comparative strength. However, due to this it also may be missing out on the possibility of making "unsuccessful" approaches successful by understanding their constraints and removing them. A need to understand and analyse the causes of "unsuccessful" programmes is necessary; they may teach us more than 'best practices'.

ACHR's new directions are summarised in the September 1999 meeting where "the meeting agreed that many communities are already empowered - so they need to be given more tools and opportunity to become of city wide change processes – in the next decade. ACHR increasingly seeking to develop processes through which its partner members and communities play a larger role in planning, city decision making..." The Mission feels that this change is necessary and welcome. However, there is a realisation among a number of ACHR partners that this change must not be made at the cost of continuing to promote urban poor organisations. Also, there is a realisation that urban communities are not organised sufficiently in most Asian cities where effective NGO programmes have not taken root and developed the "critical mass" required for the creation of a more equitable relationship between NGOs, CBOs and government agencies and their international donors.

## Chapter - 6

# ACHR ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES

## INTRODUCTION

As a regional coalition with many different (types of) partners all working towards empowering of and improving conditions of Asia's urban poor, ACHR's impact lays in its capacity to initiate, support, organise, replicate and fund activities which facilitate its partners to do a better job. Two different ways can be distinguished: activities which aim to directly intervene in realities (for example the Eviction Watch programme, which perhaps most typifies ACHR's initial concern with *housing rights*), and activities which are expected to have a catalysing or multiplier effect, for example community exchange programmes with mixed community, NGO and LG representation. Generally, the latter types of activities are those which come under the Training and Advisory Programme (TAP), which was initiated in 1992 as a separate set of ACHR activities (TAP I: 1992-96). The TAP programme was renewed through a new proposal 1996-1999 (TPA II), and again for the present period (TAP-III) all of which were mainly funded by DFID starting in 1992. However, there is a gradual blurring of the former clearly separate ACHR components TAP and activities such as Eviction Watch, advocacy and country projects. This is due to some extent to the recent practice of general 'core funding' both by DFID and CORDAID which makes the distinction less important, but more importantly it fits better with ACHR's rather more holistic, non-sectoral way of working. We will briefly consider all ACHR activities here, indicating the scope and aims and assessing achievements and performance.

It is finally important to note that initially, ACHR did not in fact pre-programme its activities. They rather developed over time and they built on the strengths of coalition partners, and those of their activities and strategies that proved effective and successful to enhance the position and power of poor urban communities. The most successful experiences were replicated and sometimes formalised into regional programmes such as the community exchange programme and the model of the Urban Resource Centre. Indeed, it is the strength of ACHR that it could lean on a number of successful models and strategies (and that it could discard or gradually abandon less successful approaches). It is imperative that, with a view to the future, the organisation remains open to possible adjustments and changes of the methods now applied, but especially that it retains its *niche* and reputation as being innovative and successful. ACHR: the SG, secretariat, and its partners need to keep on "being sharp" and on edge to explore new venues, practices and methods, attracting more and innovative partners to the coalition, which will keep the coalition dynamic.

### 6.1 The Training and Advisory Programme (TAP);

- The TAP programme has three key objectives:
- To develop the capacity of urban poor communities
- To influence professionals and decision makers of the future
- To make accessible relevant information to the grassroots through translation.
- Each of these three objectives has been translated into separate activities, which we will briefly deal with here.

### **6.1.1 Capacity Building of Urban Poor Communities**

This programme has again three components, which we will consider successively below:

- Saving and Credit: support for the creation, development and strengthening of community based S&C programmes as a means for strengthening community capacity and developing community leadership
- Training and advisory activities: regional exchanges amongst professionals and community groups to learn from one another's community development initiatives
- Training and advisory activities in terms of skill training workshops and exchange visits on specific capacity building issues such as how to build low cost housing or design effective sanitation solutions.

### **6.1.2 Different Approaches to Mobilise and Strengthen Urban Poor Communities**

An important ACHR objective is "to develop the capacity of poor urban communities in Asia so that they can become change agents for their communities as well as for their cities" (ACHR, 1999:4). This activity belongs to ACHR's core business. After all, of all ACHR activities, this is the one most directly focused on the urban poor and their empowerment. It is not surprising that there are different views amongst ACHR partners as to how to bring this about.

There are roughly two positions, and the oldest one was the one following the model of action-and-confrontation developed by Alinsky (introduced in chpt 4; see also Murphy et. al., 2001:8). The approach starts from community awareness building and mobilisation, then leads to confrontations with relevant authorities, be it an official, the municipality or the state. The aim is never a complete all-out attack, rather tactical small (if needed repeated) 'pin-pricks', to let those in power feel there is an issue, so as to enhance the chance that it is acted upon. The position taken under such approaches was more radical, more focused on structural issues of domination and exploitation, more associated with advocacy rather than service delivery or relief work by NGOs. One could argue that the approach was quite appropriate for the initial stages of ACHR, when the issue was housing rights, when the concern was mostly with those evicted or the threat of eviction, and when the state was itself more confrontational and aggressive (the Seoul Olympics leading to mass evictions, Marcos ruling the Philippines, Thailand under dictatorship).

While the approach was in vogue in many NGOs in most countries at some stage (sometimes in combination with Freire's pedagogy methods), it has generally dwindled in the eighties and early nineties. It made place for more status quo minded approaches which started from the immediate needs of the poor, which in some cases resulted in the emergence of what Korten called NGOs as 'public service contractors'. Yet a middle way developed, and it was perhaps the strength of SPARC in Mumbai that it developed the model of engaging the urban poor in Savings- and Credit groups as a vehicle for group mobilisation. Those groups then became – through clustering or networking - building blocks for a larger movement or federation which might together form a considerable power bases, from which it could negotiate with the authorities. SPARC appears to have been relatively successful with this approach (see VMSDFI, 1998: 8; and the Evaluation by v. Lindert, et al 2002).

Presently the first (Alinsky) appears to be quickly losing ground. It is still important amongst some NGOs in The Philippines, where the approach was most relevant until recently, in view of the need for opposition against first Marcos, and quite recently President Estrada. However, with a state more sympathetic (at least in its reactions and rhetoric) towards the poor in The Philippines and in most other Asian countries (perhaps barring Bangladesh and Nepal), the approach seems to have lost much of its charm. And it seems to be also the spirit of the time that the focus is on negotiation rather than confrontation almost anywhere. And it appears as if none of the ACHR partner NGOs can be characterised as Public Service Contractors only (like

complementing the work of municipalities for example). There may be service delivery like in OPP, but then the determining factor is mode of delivery: starting from people's participation, then moving to a division of labour with the municipality.

It is safe to say that presently the 'Savings and Credit group mobilisation model' is the dominant approach amongst most ACHR partners: in India (that is Mumbai), but especially in Thailand with its national CODI (previously UCDO) organisation. The approach has been introduced in Phnom Penh and is being introduced in Vietnam and Laos. It appears as if there was at some stage some sort of competition between the two approaches. This need not concern us here, but for the fact that it is important that ACHR – through the SG and especially the Executive Committee - makes sure that such competition is channelled into an in-depth discussion on the relative merits and de-merits of these, and also possibly other approaches. It needs to be recognised that

- a) National contexts have changed and that they may call for new/adjusted approaches;
- b) there need to be flexibility of approach differing from country to country, even perhaps from city to city (compare Thailand and Bangladesh);
- c) Combination of approaches may be possible or effective (as in evolving stages) where there is confrontation/conflict approaches are based on community S&C mobilisation, as is happening successfully in The Philippines, where NGOs like UPA and COPE are now starting to apply the S&C approach as one of different methods (COPE Evaluation p. 33).
- d) It does not matter whether NGOs differ of opinion if only they implement approaches which work from the point of view of the urban poor.

The Mission takes no position in this debate; whatever works to empower the poor and to improve their conditions should be done. Given the wide variety of national and even local contexts and adversaries, it is only natural that there are different approaches towards the same goal. However, there may be a difference when short term and long term objectives are distinguished, and there is the question of scale. The Mission is obviously sympathetic towards those who emphasise and keep highlighting the structural, underlying causes of urban poverty: very skewed/or mal-distribution of resources including land and housing, exploitation of labour without minimum wages, the domination of women by men etc. Explicit attention for these 'rights' issues is more typical for the early ACHR days than for today, but the rights issues are still important to the organisation. However, there has been a realisation among all ACHR partners that structural issues need to be addressed and this can only be done by creating a critical mass of organised poor with support of knowledge.

ACHR should be constantly aware of the question as to how these issues can be best addressed in terms of impacts on the urban poor. Seen this way there is more to differences of opinion between various approaches; at a deeper level it may a debate as to which issues to address, how suspicious one should be of authorities, whether to co-operate with them, the approaches to and use of awareness building etc. Besides, it is also very important to consider how many urban poor are actually reached through any of these approaches and whether they do result in empowerment and improved conditions. And as the Mission has been unable to assess this in any meaningful/ methodologically reliable way, it cannot take a position in the matter. It is hoped that the SPARC evaluation will give some hard evidence and the Mission would like to support to identify more research and more precise and solid monitoring for which suggestions are given later, for example closer co-operation with academic institutions. This of course is not to deny that ACHR's larger and better organised partners do this and their literature is available on the efficacy of various mobilisation/empowerment approaches. But there may be scope for far more and far better monitoring practises by partner NGOs, using bench-mark surveys and indicators to assess actual impacts (rather than perceptions- and not only dealing with the successes but also the problems).

There are finally some concerns which were expressed on the model of the S&C mobilisation approach, and on the prospects for community organisation generally:

- whether it could be an effective model for reaching all community members; it could be that precisely those too poor or not knowledgeable are left out, so that one bypasses the ideal of broad based urban poverty alleviation;
- there are complex dynamics and relationships in any slum or low income neighbourhood; there may be those who want to save but do not actually join a group as they do not trust the local leaders, or the Saving Group leadership;
- many of not most urban poor have (very) large debts; joining a S&C group does not often solve such massive financial problems, which may need other, and more structural approaches (targeting loan sharks, banks etc);
- this led one respondent to argue that S&C groups were mostly “talk-talk”; while recognising that such groups can have a more important social function;
- there is an element of mobility: it was mentioned that the very poor in Bangkok could not even afford the slums any longer. This led to ‘a floating poor population’ slums like transition camps, which obviously are in no position to join any organisation; There are no easy answers to organising such ‘mobile’ poor but if they form a considerable group ACHR/the EC may need to reflect on strategies.

The Mission has taken cognisance of other community mobilisation/ organisation approaches such as participatory surveys and enumeration processes, forging partnerships between various local level stakeholders, community contracts as an important form of community participation/empowerment (Sri Lanka); and specific capacity building approaches on issues such as housing construction. It is beyond the scope of this report to deal with these approaches here in any detail, but they are key building blocks of what can be termed ‘the ACHR method’. They are all important and promising strategies- to be further developed and expanded on the basis of monitoring and impact measurement. We refer to the SPARC evaluation for more information on the successes booked in Mumbai with the Community Enumeration method, and we will return to that method later when dealing with the Young Professionals programme.

### **6.1.3 Regional Exchange and Exposure**

A second component of the programme to build Urban Poor Capacity is the Regional Exchange programme. In 2000-2001 ACHR supported and financed 32 community exchanges (see annex ... Regional Exchanges). This is actually more than was envisioned in the ACHR 2000-2002 Activities proposal where 6 exchanges for 6 persons each are budgeted (ACHR proposal p. 12). In order of frequency, it was mostly Thai community people travelling abroad (to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam 14X), while in 7 other cases communities travelled to Thailand. This includes 3 visits from people from South Africa. Nepal communities were involved twice, 4 groups travelled to The Philippines, but no Filipino communities travelled to other countries- at least not in the ACHR context. As far as the Exchange Themes go, this is mostly exposing people to saving group functioning, which also explains why Thailand ranks high both in sending and receiving communities, of which there are so many in CODI. But there were also exchanges around the issue of Solid Waste Management, Security of Tenure, and low cost housing. It may be noted that there are many more community exchanges, especially to SPARC in Mumbai and OPP in Karachi (8,500 persons visited OPP and in 240 cases elements or approaches have been replicated. Indeed, ACHR reports in the Face to Face Newsletter (Jan 2000: 27) that in October and November 1999 alone, 1,711 persons went on 367 national exchanges and 141 persons went 19 international exchanges. And this does not include exchanges within cities ‘which almost everybody has given up trying to monitor’. All this goes to show that most community exchanges within the partner network of ACHR are neither organised nor funded by ACHR itself, but by its partner organisations. Indeed, exchanges between India and South Africa, organised by SPARC; exchanges to OPP; and exchanges to and from Phnom Penn are quite numerous. Also, there have been more exchanges to and from The Philippines; 8 of these are listed in VMSDFI

(1998:3), 3 of which were Filipinos visiting Mumbai (2) and Southern Africa (1); the remainder were in-country exchanges (see also below on impacts). See also 'Face to Face', Jan. 2000, page 2 on costs and the efforts to be frugal and cost effective; a list of perhaps all community exchanges on pp. 4-5.

It is generally difficult to assess the impact of regional exchanges and workshops. The mission has been unable to directly assess such impact, in view of time constraints, but also as a proper assessment would have been a mission in itself. Some evidence may nevertheless be reported. There are first encouraging reports from Sri Lanka that Community Exchanges were successful and important both to the participants and their communities. There is also the informative meeting report of the 2001 CITYNET congress in Thailand (Citynet, 2001). Before the actual congress, there were pre-congress exposures, where participants from Nepal, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, The Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand made visits to various Thai cities to witness and assess various innovative approaches and models in the field of urban community networks active in community driven activities. On the whole, these pre-congress activities were successful and certainly much appreciated by the participants. These activities testify well to the ACHR philosophy that communities themselves can host and inform others best on how they are organised, how their organisations perform and what is achieved, rather than that others do so for them.

The mission reported some other positive voices on community exchanges as saying:

- they give new ideas to communities, and transfer knowledge amongst equals; it is the only way communities can meet and enrich themselves;
- integrated exchange develops friendship between Govt, officials, NGOs and CBOs, leading to the co-optation of government bureaucrats and managers;
- this has led to changed official attitudes and policy influence;
- seeing is believing (Citynet, 2001: 9); ironically, people better assess their own situation becoming more aware of personal/community shortcomings and potentials.

However useful, these voices remain perceptions, and there are also a few question marks about the community exchange/exposure approach.

- They are expensive, certainly if one group visits another country. For that reasons some NGOs prefer exchanges inside the country or even city. For cost-benefit reasons, it is therefore best to link exchanges to other events like a workshop, national meeting (like the CITYNET congress; the Philippines Launch of Security of Tenure campaign).
- One source said that more donors for funding the exchanges were needed, while also recognising the need to keep in view the costs and the benefits of exchanges. ACHR was said to only have limited funds for the purpose.
- Some argue that it is most important if Government officials are 'exchanged'; amongst all stakeholders, it is most important for them to learn to listen.
- Some indicated that there might actually be too many community exchanges, as if "a new class of travelling leaders is being created".
- And there are also sceptics, like one informant who was initially against it, but who now perceives the value as things are now better organised, indicating that community exchanges need careful preparation and especially a careful selection of the team of participants. NGOs



are seen being best placed to select the participants, and in most cases it appears they do so successfully.

So on the whole, almost everyone has a positive opinion of Community Exchanges; people believe that they are effective, if only perhaps that they are costly. More hard evidence on exchanges/exposures comes from an "Impact Assessment of International and In-country Community Exchanges undertaken by Philippine Savings Groups" (VMSDFI, 1998). This interesting study introduces a useful framework to assess exchange impacts and associated learning processes, and also lists some impacts in terms of the experiences and perceptions of about 15-18 participants. There are very detailed interviews of participants so that the study is rich even as an almost anthropological account of slum life and the complications of S&C systems. It is not so clear as to whether their voices are sufficiently representative for most Community Exchange programmes, but they are all invariably positive of what they learnt. Perhaps most importantly, there are indicating that the lessons learnt were put into practice: S&C groups, even with small amounts and with saving books which model was copied from South Africa; the 'federating model of saving groups witnessed in Mumbai and copied to Payatas (ibid. 9). It may be good to quote from the report:

'Because of its most personal and direct impact on its participants, community exchanges have a great potential for internalisation which translates into more forceful yet sure-footed changes in one's community. When the exposurists earlier spoke about their confidence in sharing new inputs with their community members, they are talking about this same internalised process which gives them confidence as advocates and as change agents' (ibid: 13).'

A weakness of the study is that the very positive participant responses are not complemented by: Voices from other members of the participants communities to assess how they think about the exchanges and their impacts (after all, the participants are bound to be positive/happy to be able to travel to far away places);

- a) An assessment as to what has really changed at the *community level* where the impacts are expected as the name community exchange indicates (the claim is that it not about individuals). It is useful to see the list of Savings groups and their savings, but we should have known how many groups there were before and after the Exchange, also as a percentage of all households. It would also help to know whether there is a significant rise in saving after the Exchange (with the –debatable - assumption that the Exchange is the main determining variable).
- b) We have discussed the very useful VMSDFI study especially as we feel it could be a good model to assess more widely the impacts of community exchanges, if possible while taking our additional comments are taken into consideration.

To conclude:

1. The Mission is appreciative about the concept of the 'integrated training' approach, through which participants from a variety of actors involved with the urban poor are brought together to join an exchange programme, to participate in a regional workshop or some other international programme. Normally, representatives from CBOs, NGOs and local government are brought together which has certain important implications. First, it is no longer only consultants, academics and (senior) (central) government officials who are freely travelling the world to benefit first hand of experiences and developments elsewhere. Now these benefits extent to the urban poor themselves, to NGOs, and also to local government officials, which too is an innovation.
2. The concept allows for (and, indeed makes necessary) a careful selection of participants, and it is our impression (but no more than that) that this is also actually done. One should use the

possibility for participation as an incentive and as an investment, and one may expect that a Local Government official who joins an exchange, would be more interested and/or helpful on return.

3. Care to be taken to carefully select the LG and CBO participants keeping in mind the maximum impact in terms of the (large!) investments.
4. The Mission would support close monitoring of exchange processes across countries and themes so as to make sure that maximum impacts – at the *community level* -are obtained from the expensive methods which has the in-built risk that benefits remain individual. For this the VMSDFI model is particularly appropriate.

#### **6.1.4 Issue based National and Regional Workshops**

In the period 2000-2001 25 national, international and regional workshops were supported by ACHR. Again, this is a much larger number than anticipated in the ACHR 2000-2002 Proposal/budget where only 6 Issue Based Regional Workshops are expected per year (each with 6 participants). However, it appears as if the workshops actually held were smaller in scope and cheaper than those listed in the proposal (and 4 of them concerned workshops around the Young Professionals programme). Indeed, many of those listed (see **Appendix 10**) seem to rather have been events like launching a programme, an inauguration, and there are also 6 national workshops like those in Vietnam. Those perhaps most in line with proposal characteristics are the truly regional City Alliance Calcutta Meeting in 2001, the Citynet Bangkok meeting in 2001 (already mentioned before); the Security of Tenure Campaigns such as the one in India, and the successful East Asia Workshop on the Homeless.

The latter workshop was said to have been particularly successful. It was held 7-9 July in Osaka Japan, and had participants from Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan. The workshop served several purposes: first of all, but implicitly, it forged (re-established) closer ties and solidarity between representatives from different countries/cities in the region, who were stimulated to share opinions on the issue of homelessness; the participants engaged in drafting action plans and made renewed efforts to continue exchanges on a regional scale. Hence, the workshop served both as a meeting to renew contacts, but had policymaking elements as well. However, it appears as if here too, follow up action was rather limited. Another model for regional workshops is the one held in Cebu City in October 1997 on Low Cost Housing and Community Participation in Construction (see ACHR, 1997). The workshop addressed a clear theme for which there was much interest; it reviewed trends, cases and developments in the participants' (9) countries; and it brought together people with diverse backgrounds from these countries. The workshop led to a number of recommendations – of which the Mission cannot judge to what extent these have been implemented or actually followed up. Finally, this Regional Workshop was well documented, and the excellent workshop was report made available widely through the ACHR network.

We may finally mention that there are plans to convene a South Asia Sub Regional Workshop, and that a preparatory workshop was already held, but the actual workshop could not be organised yet. This is unfortunate, because South Asia has by far the largest number of urban poor in Asia, and poverty (especially for women) is more severe there than in South East Asia and East Asia. The countries of the latter regions appear to have fewer constraints to get together in regional events, even workshops. Of course there was the Calcutta City Alliance meet which was not in itself an ACHR event, but in SE Asia there are/were the Japan Homeless meeting, Eviction watch visits to Indonesia, excellent and frequent contacts between Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam).

So even while there are regional events and some workshops (but to few in South Asia), these rarely have the character proclaimed in the ACHR policy document/ the ACHR Strategic Plan to:

“Continue to introduce new issues and processes through a series of issue based training workshops which seek to examine and find solutions to common issues facing the

region's urban poor communities. These regional workshops will bring together professionals, communities and officials to both learn from each other and to forge new perspectives of the problems faced by the poor and their solutions to city problems: In some cases they will be the initiating process to formulate new ACHR programmes.(...)" (ACHR proposal, 1999:11)

Proposed themes include: Solid Waste Management, Health and Environment; Analysis of Asian cities and how they function in reality and solutions from the perspective of the urban poor; The concept and practicalities of establishing a regional Urban Poor Fund.

The Mission believes that the idea as expressed here is a sound one, and that such a concept of multi-purpose meetings is very useful indeed. It entails thematic discussions; problem identification and policy/programme development and formulation, a forum for various mixed stakeholder groups (community/NGO/Govt and academia), and it would be an excellent vehicle for expanding the ACHR membership and reach if and when new groups from ever more cities are invited. Such regional workshops would be even more effective if there were a proper and systematic follow up.

Ideally, the initiation and co-ordination of regional workshops should not in fact be the task of the ACHR secretariat; this should ideally be done in the region which again throws up the question of decentralisation: are there organisations/NGOs which are ready to play a more prominent role? The Mission is not optimistic that partner NGOs will be able and willing to play such a regional co-ordinating role on a sustained basis (not including incidental events: that would be less problematic). They are normally already quite busy; they have no funds to entrust new tasks to (existing/new) staff, and ACHR is not in a position to provide such funds/incentives.

The Mission suggests that this issue is discussed at the upcoming Executive Meeting, and that possibilities are explored to address the modalities. Perhaps a *via media* can be found, a mix of Secretariat/regional responsibility where the EC suggests where and when and with which themes regional workshops should be held and that Secretariat and a volunteer NGO jointly organise the event. The mission is especially appreciative of the fact that Regional Workshops ideally have a mixed participation from community members/CBOs, NGOs, professionals, officials and academics.

#### **6.1.5 Advisory Support and New Initiatives**

An inherent strength of ACHR is that its members can double up as advisors: starting from their own wide experience, skills and knowledge, they become much valued resource persons who can set in motion processes or who can with little extra effort be change agents at the local or even higher levels. While they may be engaged in on-going programmes and processes in Asian Cities, they may also be involved in exploring opportunities in other/new countries or help start up processes there- the so-called new initiatives.

First, There is a clear demand for advisory services in current ACHR activities and with ACHR partners. In the evaluation of TAP-I (ODA, 1996:24), the following areas were mentioned as where a need existed for training and advisory services: Community organising; Savings and Credit; Community Improvement Processes; Women's roles in Community Organising; Dealing with evictions; Building partnerships; Housing construction; and Participatory Research and Action. It appears as if the same needs still exist today, certainly as part of New Initiatives. Perhaps an exception must be made for the 'old' ACHR partners which often excluded the broad field of community organising- where most people we talked to felt sufficiently confident. Areas needing support as mentioned by ACHR partner NGOs (in The Philippines) include community enumeration processes and mapping, and more technical, engineering skills relating to slum upgrading (the latter issues are also relevant for Young Professionals and will be taken up later also).

ACHR is lucky to have a small 'fund' of professionals who are capable and willing to be advisors, many of them core ACHR members and founders. The impact of their activities appears to be considerable in a number of fields, first of all imparting skills and motivation to set up S&C groups, in terms of community mobilisation approaches generally, but also giving common sense, technical advice on construction issues, on how to deal with/ forge partnerships with local government etc. Some of them carry out research in the process of being advisors or while setting up new activities (Hasan, 2000; Somsook 2001) and are important in expanding the reach and scope of ACHR activities. Some advisors were engaged in starting new activities, examples include visits made by 2 ACHR core members to Kazakhstan and Khirgyzstan in 1996 and 1997. This aimed to help local NGOs in developing processes and organisations for upgrading informal settlements and Soviet style dormitories, and to begin savings and micro credit activity. The programme has been successful and the NGO that is managing it, BASPANA, is in constant touch with the OPP which had supported it.

Hence, there is considerable demand for their work, and it is critical to ACHR. Yet their number is actually quite small, perhaps 6-7 persons. Indeed, looking at the list of ACHR supported Advisory Services, only 6 names are mentioned, whereby Jockin/Celine top the list in terms of frequency of advice (7), followed by Somsook (6), Katri (4), Hasan (3) and Kerr and Arron both 2. Of course one might include the important advisory role of Father Jorge, who travels around with a high frequency and intensity (**Appendix 10**).

There is some concern about this, also since these persons are normally already very busy- often actively leading their organisation, leading to a situation that visits by resource persons and advisory teams are not always possible when required and/or requested. For example, advisors from India were quite successful in helping start S&C groups in Cambodia, where they made frequent visits. They have become so busy in India now that they have not been able to go there for over a year- which is regrettable.

Attempts at rectifying this are being made. For example, people from the CODI Programme in Thailand now visit Laos to initiate the saving programme rather than wait for a team from India. Similarly, an arrangement has been made with the OPP-Research and Training Institute (RTI) that one of its members will spend three months in a year (one month after every three months) visiting projects in South East Asia so as to provide technical assistance and managerial guidance. A similar arrangement is being attempted whereby the Urban Resource Centre (URC) Co-ordinator in Karachi can visit URCs in other Asian cities. And, just like expanding the EC membership is important, ACHR is also seeking ways to motivate and engage younger people in advisory work- with some success. There are younger professionals from Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Thailand who are able and willing to become more involved in advisory work, which is a very positive development.

The mission would like to suggest that these 'younger advisors', are stimulated to make frequent visits on request, and to explore as to whether incentives can be made available to them to this effect. These need not be material (the Mission assumes that air-fees and a per diem are made available- and that salaries are paid by the respective NGOs) but rather things like organising (annual) workshops for these advisors, and establishing feed-back mechanisms. At such workshops potential, new or aspiring advisors can also be invited so that they are familiarised with the role of advisors. It may also be considered for making arrangements for younger people to team up for missions with (the present senior) advisors, so that they can get on-the-job training, and are slowly groomed to take on advisory tasks alone.

Linking back about what was mentioned in Chapter – on finance, (limited) financial incentives for the advisors, and the costs of such workshops could perhaps be financed from the overheads ACHR could earn on project activities, like Cambodia project. The mission also sees opportunities for the advisors to properly document their experiences – and not only the ubiquitous best practices, but also problems encountered, conflicts witnessed etc. This would again contribute to

the need in ACHR for more research and for monitoring processes and to learn lessons in the field (we will come back to this under research).

A useful suggestion was also made to create “moving teams”, of two advisors – from the same but perhaps even better different countries – which are available for advisory work regionally. Obviously, proper care should be taken that the advisors are qualified to advise on the issue at hand, and that he or she is fully aware of and takes into account the unique, local context, in which some approaches may work and not others. In summary, the Mission agrees with respondents that the system of advisors is vital to ACHR: it promotes reflection, brings in new ideas, and helps developing new ways of doing things.

#### **6.1.6 URCs, Information and Communications activities**

An important component of the TAP programme are various programmes aimed at collecting and sharing information, (participatory) research, and training and skill development for poor communities. The activities are the following (ACHR proposal, 1999:5):

- Promotion and learning of Urban Resource Centre concepts and implementation of information systems to increase understanding of the urban poor in city development; incl. exchanges and formation of regional network;
- development of bi-annual newsletter and monthly info e-mail (see 5.8);
- support for the translation of relevant news and information into the relevant regional languages;
- documentation (video, audio, written, etc) also by urban poor communities;
- workshops and training for the poor communities to develop their skills.

We will briefly reflect on the concept and practice of the Urban Resource centre and some of the other activities mentioned.

#### **Urban Resource Centres:**

The first Urban Resource Centre (URC) was set up in Karachi in 1989. It was established by planning related professionals, NGO representatives and grass-roots community organisers and teachers at professional colleges. They felt that Karachi’s official development plans ignored the larger socio-economic reality of the city and as such were unworkable, unaffordable and environmentally unsustainable. They perceived an urgent need for workable alternatives, and that these were possible only with the involvement of informed communities and interest groups. To promote its objectives the URC identified the actors and factors that are involved in shaping Karachi’s development along with their relationships with each other and with relevant state agencies. In addition, it started to carry out research on all proposed major urban development projects and to analyse these from the point of view of communities and interest groups. Through this process the URC has managed to create a space for interaction between poor communities, NGOs, private (formal and informal) sector interest groups, academic institutions and government agencies. The success of the Karachi URC lay in its origins. Professors at the Department of Architecture and Planning changed the curriculum and rooted it in the grassroots reality of the city and removed it from abstract theory and the very different First World experience. These same professors were involved with the Orangi Pilot Project, and as such with local communities. Their students on graduation joined their work. Thus, a network of informed professionals, academics, NGO leaders and CBOs became possible. This was a powerful network and as such it was easy to get journalists and interest groups involved in it. Providing pro-poor alternatives to insensitive government projects, and promoting these interests is URC’s success. As a result, Karachi’s Mass Transit Programme was shelved for a more friendly alternative. ADB funded sewage

schemes were rejected in favour of cheaper alternatives and work on expressways which displace people have been stopped and reviewed for better options.

This URC has been replicated in other Asian cities: in Phnom Penh (1997), Colombo (1993), Katmandu (1992) and Kuala Lumpur (1996). Institutions which serve some purposes like the URCs are the urban Poor Consortium, Jakarta, and the Urban Poor Colloquium (encompassing PHILSSA, Urban Research Consortium, Freedom to Build and others). It must be understood that each URC reflects the concerns and experience of the people who are running it and the context of the city they are working in. For example, the Phnom Penh and Kathmandu URC are very much involved in eviction and relocation issues rather than city level issues. The Seoul URC, which is run by university academics, is involved in looking at policy issues and influencing government through its research and publications rather than working with the poor. The Chang Mai URC is involved with issues related to heritage and the built environment. However, through exposure to the Karachi URC there has been an exchange of ideas but it will take sometime before this asserts itself. In the case of Phnom Penh the URC is involved with the CDS and the research that it is currently carrying out is related to land and tenure issues. In **Appendix 19** we provide brief profiles of some of these URCs (see also *Housing by People*, No. 13, 2001:28-9)

The 2000-2002 ACHR strategic plan indicates that 'The success of urban resource centres (such as the URC in Karachi) and their replicability will be examined. Finally, more effort will be made to examine and influence formal training establishments, through lectures and co-sponsored training programmes' (ACHR 1999:9). The Mission believes that this is a very good idea, and supports the examination of URC functioning, impact and replicability. Since this decision was taken, the ACHR has organised two trainings at the Karachi URC for its partner organisations. The first training was held in March 1991 and was attended by URCs and potential URC promoters from Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The second training was held in November 2000 with representatives from Japan, Philippines, Cambodia, Korea and India. The Mission feels that there is a need to promote the development of the URCs in a manner that they become the alternative planning agencies for the poor and are able to create a space for interaction between the various actors in the urban drama including professionally supported poor interest groups.

### **Information and Communications Activities**

These activities aim at addressing the dilemma that most development information is top-down and available primarily in English. ACHR provides opportunities to explore ways in which information can be made accessible to grassroots practitioners and by providing support for bottom up information processes and experimentation with efficient translation processes. However, the Mission has found that this facility is not being used much (one exception the Mission saw was a translation of the ACHR newsletter by the Karachi URC into the Urdu language; the Communications and Information activities list mentions 6 Translations 2000-2001). The Mission suggests that ACHR gives more information about this to its partners in the region, as this is potentially an important means of building awareness, of information as providing a basis for proper decision. However, the question is then from whom the demand is to be expected: is it from the partner NGOs for example in Kathmandu or The Philippines (the 'grassroots practitioners'); or is it likely/possible that such demands/requests come from poor urban communities, and how is that to be organised?

The Mission has noted that more and more attention is given to the use of video as a means to document activities and for training, awareness building and skills/knowledge dissemination- also for example making video cameras available to communities. The Mission feels there is good potential there, but proper care be taken that such methods fit well with the nature and coherence of a community, which is to be monitored by the partner NGO. If properly carried out, such information on communities, effective approaches and lessons learnt, could complement community exchanges.

In summary, with respect to the information and communication activities:

- The Mission strongly supports the idea that a professional from Pakistan travels around and visit and advice several URC in the region; the possibility should be explored to make this an annual routine, carried out by this professional, but perhaps others could also be involved;
- The Mission believes that links between URCs and universities and colleges have a lot of potential, and that these should be expanded and deepened, also a potential source for Young Professionals. Ewe will return to this issue later under the sections on YPs and Research;
- There is increased interest in and support for video making by URCs and communities which needs to be supported in proper frameworks and guidelines. Such videos could complement community exchanges where the lessons from a community exchange are disseminated widely to more/many communities after the exchange; here the teams visiting other cities should present and further elaborate the findings and their personal experiences as part of the follow up activities;
- ACHR should give more publicity to the possibility to support translation of relevant texts into local languages: people may not to be sufficiently aware of this facility.

## **6.2 The Young Professional Programme (YPP)**

The Young Professionals programme is yet another component of the TAP programme. It aims to influence professionals and decision makers of the future – to give them some understanding of urban poor realities so that they have a realistic understanding of how their cities function and are more effective at solving city problems- including those of the poor. It has the following elements:

- short internships for students/recently graduated professionals or young slum professionals to work/ and or undertake action research under mentorship of ACHR coalition partners in their respective countries;
- networking of concerned professionals in countries and the region through workshops, exchange and exposure tours;
- support training programmes and exposure visits for YPs to enhance their learning;
- ACHR professionals, activists and community leaders to work with academic institutions to undertake lectures, develop curriculum and training programmes to enhance student understanding of urban poor realities;
- establishing links between universities and urban resource centres which are long term and change city processes.

As per the 2000-2002 plan, there will be an increasing emphasis on networking concerning Young Professionals (YPs) in countries, rather than within the region (ACHR, 1999:15). It is also envisioned to provide more support for national than regional processes. Concretely, 10 Internships per year in 5 countries are to be organised. More generally, the ACHR strategic plan (Jan 2000 to Dec. 2002) indicates that 'The YP programme will be strengthened over the next three years, to enhance young professionals understanding of the realities of city functioning...'.

According to a listing of ACHR activity under TAP III, 7 YP workshops were held between 1996 and 1999, altogether 16 activities for and with Young Professionals. Out of these are 6 items listing internships, involving 144 Young Professionals who appear to have been engaged in urban/ urban development/ urban poverty related activities for a longer period (mostly 3 months)

(see also Housing by People; Oct 1997, nr. 10: 22-23). Things don't look so well in the subsequent period 2000-until today. As far as one can judge, the headings on the activities list (**Appendix 10**) indicate 15 activities which are internships or YP carrying out activities (2 activities are mentioned: architects work on evictions in Phnom Penn, YPs working with canal communities in Bangkok). 11 of these concerned internships for YPs in Thailand, one of these was a training of Phnom Penn professionals in India, and three other activities took place in Cambodia. So there are not as many internships as planned, and there is a heavy bias towards internships in Thailand, which are often related to UCDO/ now CODI. However, just like in the case of Community Exchanges, more YP programmes may actually take place, organised and financed by the ACHR partners – and there is some evidence from The Philippines to confirm this.

A special YP office existed in Karachi (The Young Professionals programme of ACHR: YPP-ACHR) which published a newsletter in 1998 (YPP-ACHR, 1998). But this newsletter is no longer published today. A successful regional workshop was held for Young Professionals from all over Asia in the Philippines in 1998 (Young Professionals, 1996)

However, by and large, the YP programme does not seem to be functioning as planned. It appears that it is presently fragmented and not sufficiently co-ordinated to form a regional programme. There is a need to re-vamp the programme which is again an important corner stone of the ACHR programme, which is recognised in its Strategic Plan. However, in line with what we said before on ACHR's planning and implementation capacity, nothing appears to have been actually done so expand the programme. This is unfortunate. After all, an expressed need exists for Young Professionals to help out on specific tasks with partner NGOs and the YP programme is an excellent way to create change agents who in due time will take up positions in public and private offices and agencies across the region. In our discussions the following strong points were mentioned about the YP programme: alternative plans prepared by YPs help in negotiating with Governments; YPs work strengthens communities and unites them around a plan or a collective action; YPs help communities to relate to city level issues; and YPs can help communities to make effective use of available funds and savings.

But it was also confirmed – as indicated above- that the YP programme is not expanding enough. Some constraints facing the YP programme were also mentioned, including the fact that Young professionals need some allowance to make a livelihood; they may need a further strengthening of skills so as to be more effective in their work with communities and community/NGO organisations, and, related to this, there is a clear need for more technical support to involve, guide and stimulate young professionals. Where YP skills, or areas of involvement are concerned, it was mentioned by some that most NGOs were sufficiently aware of community organisation/mobilisation approaches, including by now well established S&C approaches. There appears to be much more need for support amongst NGOs for more technical skills including (participatory) community mapping, surveying and enumeration; but also the skills associated with architects and engineers in fields such as cost-effective construction methods, settlements planning and land filling (also mentioned was GIS- Geographical Information Systems - which are aeroplane methods to obtain detailed aerial maps of areas, most useful for urban planning).

Once Young Professionals are working with an NGO, there is a need to make sure that they are fully involved in all the aspects and dynamics of the NGO-community relationship. For example, young engineers should not only be involved in community level planning and implementation; they should also be present at the meetings about the community with the municipality/government. That way they learn most; they feel completely involved and informed which is a key incentive; and they are more effective as change agents and experts (to be). Finally, there is no guarantee that Young Professionals, once they successfully complete an internship – will keep on working with the NGO concerned, or even in the field of poverty alleviation/community approaches, but that is only to be expected and is also not the key expectation from the programme. If trainees join the public or even private sector, one may expect a long term beneficial impact in terms of attitudes and awareness of (bias to) the urban poor, their problems and potential.



The Mission would like to suggest that ACHR carefully considers the possibilities to expand the YP programme and would like to make the following comments.

The YP programme needs the following inputs: 1) a network of NGOs, training institutions/universities/lecturers/ professors, 2) young persons with a degree of altruism and an interest to work with/learn from communities; 3) effective communications between these NGOs, and institutions, also in terms of 'demand and supply'; 4) funds to finance internships at a basic level (e.g. sponsors); and 5) guidance of the YPs in terms of locally available advisors who, apart from the NGO, can make visits to the YP (groups) to give on the job guidance and training, and personal support if needed (see also Chapter 9 Section 9.3.)

It appears most, if not all these requirements are being met for the YP programme linked to CODI, and some good arrangements exist in Karachi also. The OPP's YP programme is both for professionals and para-professionals. Para-professionals are from the community and are taught surveying, mapping, estimating, levelling. Their internship is for one year after a probation period of six months. On qualifying they become an asset to their communities who are constantly negotiating regarding land issues with the government. Some of these para-professionals have opened up their own consultancy organisations the creation of which the OPP has supported with small grants. At the Department of Architecture and Planning, Dawood College, the Young Professionals Training Unit (YPTU) was set up. YPs working with development projects in Karachi and various other cities in Pakistan were provided a stipend by the YPTU, and YPs work in carefully chosen projects so that the YPs technical skills could benefit them and that the YP would be benefited in return.

It is suggested that ACHR reflects on the basic YP programme conditions as listed, and to consider the possible lessons that can be learnt from YP programmes in Thailand and Karachi with a view to replicating their arrangements. However, most of the arrangements will have to be made at the national – even more city level, and there is only little ACHR (the secretariat) can do. The Mission suggests concretely:

- ACHR can offer start up funds and grants to NGOs who are interested to use the YP internship facility, so that such NGOs are more motivated to explore ways to identify and employ YPs, and to link up with universities, and training institutes for Engineers and architects. It can be hoped that such initial co-operation may grow into more long term collaboration – for example that an architecture school annually sends a batch of students to the NGO for practice
- ACHR should continue to support national (or even regional) workshops for YPs, applying the very successful model of the Bicol (Philippines) Summer Camp for YPs;
- ACHR could help fund workshops to be held after a batch of YPs completes their internships so that the YPs, NGOs, schools etc. to take note of and assess lessons learnt, action plans etc.
- The YP programme is not developing sufficiently although there are YPs working with all URCs and with a number of NGOs. It needs to be expanded since there is a demand. What is required is a study to understand the problems as to why it has reached the stalemate. This study could perhaps lead to a better understanding of the problems and suggests ways to overcome these problems and chalk out a more effective programme.
- In terms of themes and approaches, ACHR (explicitly referring to the EC also) should make an effort to identify trainers who can form an advisory group of experts to advise on the programme, including the nature of skills required in various countries (it could be GIS in Manila, community mapping in Nepal, and community organisation in Vietnam or Bangladesh for example).

- More use should be made of so-called 'para-professionals', defined as young men and women in the slums who are deliberately recruited by the NGO or Young Professional to work with the latter, so that there is an automatic process of capacity building/on the job training inside urban poor communities. Such para-professionals would become more self-confident, might be able to find better jobs, or develop into (alternative) leaders. All this would lead to processes to build community capacity. Some incentives need to be provided to make it attractive for young persons to become involved. OPP, URC Karachi and SPARC are already doing this.

### 6.3 The Eviction Watch programme

The Eviction Watch programme (EWP) aims to document and reduce the number of forced evictions throughout Asian cities, and to introduce alternative methods for solving housing related problems in Asian Cities and to develop solutions and alternatives to the large number of forced evictions taking place throughout the Asian region. It has three components: monitoring evictions, organising fact findings, and dissemination of information on evictions, partly through selected studies for advocacy on eviction related issues. In the 1999 ACHR strategic plan (1999: 9) it is indicated that

'New components will be added to the Eviction Watch programme, to examine the structural causes of eviction and resettlement and to explore concrete solutions. These activities will provide the means for ACHR groups to establish a dialogue with key city actors, including external development agencies... (...)'

The Eviction Watch programme is an example of a decentralised ACHR activity: it is presently managed by co-ordinator Mr. T. Adana of UPA, Manila, The Philippines. He receives a compensation for his co-ordination work from ACHR. Mr. Adana again closely works with the COHRE organisation (Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions, based in Geneva and Melbourne). As ACHR does not centrally manage the EWP, it does not keep track of all activities as it does with the other TAP/ACHR activity. The 1999 ACHR proposal makes budgetary reservations for the salaries for the co-ordinator and assistant co-ordinator, regional Steering Committee meetings, printing the EWHR reports, exchanges of leaders and NGOs, special meetings with ADB, OECF, WB, and 2 Fact Finding Missions per year.

The Mission has not been able to receive much information on the above programme, which may be explained by the fact that it is managed from Manila. It was learned that Fact Finding Missions were organised in August 2000 (to Dhaka, Bangladesh: COHRE, 2001) and to Jakarta, Indonesia in November 2001 (UPC, 2001). The UPS organisation in Manila also monitors evictions and forced resettlements, as is for example documented in its 'Demolition Monitor' (UPS, 2001). All these documents do give a depressing picture of misery and pain experienced by powerless poor men – and especially women and children which is the result of forced evictions, police high-handedness/cruelty all related to misconceived policies. For example, people are evicted from Dhaka slums which land lies vacant for years thereafter (COHRE, 2001: 41). So it is certainly important to document these processes and to disseminate the information especially to local stakeholders with a view to create a counter movement and opposition. It is also important to keep informing and pressurising Central and state governments, and Donor agencies- who are sometimes linked to forced evictions when they support infrastructure projects which affect the land of slum dwellers. And the EPW programme does play a useful role here. For example, a campaign is organised to support anti-eviction forces when there is a plan for an eviction anywhere in Asia. People are requested to send letters of protest to the authorities of such cities, urging them to stop/cancel such evictions. And this actually happens: numerous letters were sent for example at the occasion of the very controversial and ill-conceived 2001 Jakarta evictions.

There are positive perceptions then of the EPW programme- including the Fact finding missions and its information. It is said to have taught partner NGOs a lot about the reasons for evictions so that appropriate responses could be developed. Some NGOs claim successes in preventing

evictions due to regional co-operation and co-ordination. Related to this, Governments themselves have become aware and concerned about the ill-effects of evictions, also due to the activities to bombard them with letters, facts, figures and alternatives.

Yet It is not so clear to the Mission – partly due to a lack of information what are the actual impacts of the present ACHR EWP programme. There are those who say that the programme has not prevented evictions; that it runs behind the facts, that it amounts to fire fighting only, or to fighting the law. In contrast, there are those who maintain for example that the anti-eviction activities in The Philippines are successful: after all, the number of evictions is believed to have gone down very much. This is partly attributed to research carried out by the UPA organisation, as well as a result of the proven failure of distance relocation. Some argue that it has become clear even to governments that relocation to distant locations just does not work.

However, others argue that other factors are more important to explain the decrease in number of evictions. They mention the economic/financial collapse following the 1997 Asian crisis; related to this the fact that there are fewer projects; and finally there is a much more sympathetic government today which needs to be accommodative towards the urban poor etc. (The Philippine president even announced a moratorium against evictions). So, in reality there is some doubt as to whether the EPW programme is really effective and whether it adequately addresses the structural causes of evictions.

The Mission feels that there may be scope to make the EPW programme more effective. For this, first of all more research would be needed, and more reflection on the structural, deeper causes of evictions (even the otherwise excellent eviction report on the Dhaka forced evictions is not very clear about the reasons why so many people were evicted – it questions the official reason ‘to weed out terrorists’). A workshop could be organised to consider the roots of and common patterns as regards of the problem, but even more so to develop projects and programmes that can deal with the root causes of evictions.) The workshop could include Fact Finding Mission members, but also representatives of World Bank, Asian Development Banks etc, who may be instrumental in influencing Governments. The Mission would like to suggest that in such a workshop but also generally, a broader, more comprehensive perception is adopted on evictions, which includes land, the law, speculation activities, and the position of Donor agencies.

- There is a need in many cities, but especially in The Philippines, to create a land register or ‘city land data base’. If compared to Indian and Pakistani cities, there is a surprising lack of data on land, land ownership etc. in Manila (and probably other cities), which assumedly makes evictions more easy, but even more so silent removals/people threatened away and land capture. Hence the suggestion to apply GIS methods or to acquire aerial maps which are no longer so costly these days. Land mapping could include making categories such as legalised/illegal slums, public/private slums etc., perhaps as a start for more comprehensive slum surveys, which also map services, tenants/owners etc.
- There is a need to address the legal side of evictions, and to lobby with governments, courts and development agencies to formulate (and enforce) proper land laws. These could be part of campaigns for security of tenure, and for Good Urban Governance- a donor fashion which includes attention for ‘The Rule of Law’.
- Related to this, cities should enact rules to collect a NUF (Non Utilisation Fee for Land). If urban land is left idle, the owner will have to pay a certain fee annually so as to discourage land speculation. This process should lower cost of urban land and be a disincentive for the wealthier groups to buy land allocated for lower income groups for speculation purposes. A NUF has been instituted in Karachi and it has brought down land values and speculative trends. However, it is too early to judge whether it will bring any major relief to poorer communities.

- Where possible, lawyers networks should be formed, which can collectively – and with NGOs, CBOs and affected communities- work towards land rights, and the implementation of suggestions as the above. Examples of existing lawyers networks are those in Jakarta, Pakistan and Salizan in the Philippines.
- ACHR should agree on a common position on forced evictions, and discuss and then defend this position with multi- and bilateral donor agencies- esp. WB and ADB.
- In those cases where ‘development’ projects like infrastructure projects lead to the prospect of forced evictions, local NGOs and CBOs and sympathisers should develop (adequate and appropriate) alternative plans, which offers the authorities a viable alternative (as has happened in Karachi).
- In cases where forced evictions are expected, it may be possible to mobilise energies from the community, to discuss as to whether things can be stopped, and, if this is not likely, to make arrangements to reduce the suffering and loss of assets.
- In relation to this, eviction watch would be crucial, but then at a very practical city level, to support people threatened by evictions in the entire process starting with rumours until- in the worst cases – people having been relocated to a distant location.
- All this calls for much more reflection and research – as indicated before. It also calls for widening and strengthening the network of concerned NGOs, lawyers, officials and donor agency staff who should discuss things regularly, who monitor developments and who ideally anticipate on developments so as to protect the urban poor as much as possible. ACHR should play a lead role here- along with COHRE and other groups- it has the network, funds and capacity. And, not least, the issue touches the heart of ACHR, where the R of Rights is concerned.

#### **6.4 The Asia Women and Shelter Network Programme (AWAS)**

The AWAS programme aims to support activities which seek to particularly address and give recognition to the role of women as change makers in human settlements; their specific needs for empowerment and the need for cross fertilisation of ideas between movements and the raising of gender issues within the human settlements movement. Specific activities mentioned in the 1999 ACHR Strategic Plan include:

- networking amongst organisations, activists and professionals in the region;
- development of newsletter on activities of women’s groups so that they can learn from each other;
- act as a gender advisor to other ACHR programmes, activities and groups;
- advocacy on women issues generally, with HABITAT, HIC and donor agencies;
- promote grass roots level activity implementation to boost the role of women in community processes.

The AWAS is yet another example (like Eviction Watch) of a programme which has been delegated to a partner NGO, in this case to SPARC in Mumbai, with Sheila Patel as co-ordinator. The programme was established in 1995, played a key role during the Habitat II process in Istanbul in 1996. From 1995-1998 the AWAS secretariat functioned from Malaysia, then Thailand and Cambodia. Since 1998 the AWAS secretariat is with SPARC, and the funds are being provided by UNDP. For these reasons there is little or no knowledge on the programme with the

ASCHR secretariat- and activities undertaken by SPARC for the AWAS programme do not figure on the general activities lists of ACHR. There is also no separate AWAS budget in the general ACHR Proposal 2000-2002 proposal to DFID. According to some respondents in Manila AWAS was better known before it was delegated to Mumbai; there is hardly any news on it presently. This is despite the fact that AWAS has a Steering Group on which are represented the ACHR SG, and Fides Bagaso (Community Organisers Multiversity) in Manila.

The mission has been reading the material on the AWAS Web-site, which is quite comprehensive. However, the web-site has not been updated recently- the last update was June 9, 2001. The Web site indicates that the programme was active at the occasion of the Habitat+5 New York Conference in June 2001, when AWAS members participated in parallel events organised by UNDP (The Urban Government Initiative- TUGI). The Web site helpfully provides information on what other women's groups are doing, for example the Women's Housing Rights Programme. There is also information from UN agencies working for women. Most activities listed on the web site are those that took place in 1999, and it is not clear as to what is happening in recent years – apart from the announcements on UN, TUGI, WHO, BBC events up to June 2001. In 1999, the following activities were undertaken:

- a grassroots international exchange programme with 20 women activists and community leaders from 11 countries who gathered in Tamil Nadu and Mumbai, India;
- 40 participants from 17 countries met the Best Practice task Force in India;
- National workshop with 40 participants to discuss World Bank supported projects in India, focusing on gender and community participation in project design and implementation;
- Three workshops were held in New York at the occasion of a UN conference where 300 persons participated, on grassroots exchanges, micro-credit and engendering governance;
- AWAS participated in the DAWN workshop in Thailand; in a DPU conference, London.
- AWAS participates in the Best Practice Campaign, launched by the Huairou Commission, co-ordinating the activities in Asia.
- AWAS disseminates information on gender and community issues through its publications, the web-site and newsletters.

Apart from these AWAS activities, ACHR is committed generally to devote attention to women at the grassroots level and their role in development. Indeed, in its 1999 Strategic Plan it is indicated that ACHR wants to mainstream gender issues, rather than 'having a separate programme for women in particular' (ACHR, 1999: 10). All ACHR programmes are to have in-built attention for women and gender issues. This is to translate into selection criteria for exchanges, workshops, community/ S&C group activity; that the Young Professionals Programme will have young women as co-ordinators and that women will be especially targeted for internships; the Eviction Watch programme will devote special attention to women; and the Advocacy and Communication programme will rely especially on women advocates and target women's roles and issues. We do not have sufficient evidence as to whether these objectives are being achieved but indications are certainly positive.

- Saving and Credit groups have a predominantly female membership
- There is evidence that amongst the 'new, alternative' leadership there are many women leaders (like Colombo, Manila, Ayudhya)
- Amongst the Young Professionals there are many women Young Professionals (e.g. CODI)

- At the secretariat level there is the female SG, and recently a female staff member joined the secretariat.

The Mission feels on the whole that ACHR is effectively supporting poor urban women and that most of its activities do indeed target women, and that women do respond well and are quite active as indicated. That way ACHR's mainstreaming strategy seems to work, and in fact, this is still complemented by a separate women focused programme AWAS – even while the precise relationship between AWSA and ACHR is not clear.

But while mainstreaming would be the best strategy in the long term, one (short term) disadvantage is often that there is no longer specific attention for the issue, and it may be helpful if there is some monitoring (applying indicators) to make sure that attention does not lapse. Partner organisations should try and keep a gender balance and the gender mainstreaming agenda should be discussed at the EC meetings. Perhaps AWAS can play a monitoring role to support the secretariat on this (the ACHR Secretary General is a member of the AWAS Steering Committee). After all it is women who generally bear the largest burden of poverty, at the household (often also domestic violence), community (lack of basic services) and even city level (e.g. urban safety).

## 6.5 Advocacy activities and Relations with UN and Donor Agencies

The ACHR 2000-2002 proposal indicates that ACHR will act as an advocate with the region's urban poor, at the local, regional, and international levels – both to highlight views and interests but also to promote solutions to urban poor housing and city problems. This would include representation at various levels and fora and international agencies; advocacy work through documentation and training tours to other regions; and the organisation of meetings, discussions, government/donor agency interactions with a view to influence and intervene in policies and programmes affecting the urban poor (ACHR, 1999: 6). In the Strategic Plan (ibid.:26) it is mentioned that the Secretary General and the Executive Committee will act as advocates as described, and more specifically:

- To develop a plan of action for ACHR to play a more systematic and pro-active role in representing ACHR groups at various levels and forums;
- Carry out research studies, such as on re-settlement policies and/or documentation on successful community solutions to be pro-actively used as a basis for dialogue with Government officials, regional and multilateral agencies (we will come back to this research issue under 5.9).

It is clear that advocacy is an important activity of ACHR, as also indicated in the various activities, the participation of ACHR in diverse forums, the lobbying activities and (related and supportive) documentation. ACHR is well linked to many different organisations, networks and donor agencies (**Appendix 10, ACHR Advocacy list**). The ACHR SG is a member of the Advisory Board of the City Alliance. She has given presentations at the World Bank, UNCGHS, SELAVIP and ESCAP between October and December 2000. ACHR is also a member of the Steering Committee of Citynet, is a Board Member of Habitat International Coalition (HIC), and is part of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI). ACHR partners are frequent guests and resource persons at urban expert meetings all over the world, and through their advisory work its members do enjoy considerable influence at levels ranging from the community to the regional development banks. Indeed, it is the strength of ACHR and its partners that it can easily bridge the gap between these levels, as they are known and respected to talk from a position of knowing – and being backed by -the grassroots.

Many workshops/seminars were organised jointly by ACHR and DFID/World Bank (2001); Citynet (1993 and 2001); ESCAP (1993 and many thereafter); with UNCHS (2001, 2000- Secure Tenure

Launches in Asia); with UNCHS in Cambodia and Vietnam in 2000-2001; and also with the International Institute of Environment and Development (IEED) and Homeless International (2001). Importantly, as much as possible ACHR will bring in the urban poor themselves, or organise visits to urban poor communities as happened in the Calcutta City Alliance and Bangkok Citynet meetings (Citynet, 2001). It is finally important to note that ACHR, its partners and projects are well recognised internationally. This is confirmed in a recent publication of UNCS under the discussions taking place in the Urban Forum (UNCHS, 2002). Under the heading "Innovative Approaches", listed and described are the NSCF in Mumbai, UCDO, Thailand, SDI, Africa/Asia and Cities Alliance (ibid., pp.7-10).

So on the whole, ACHR and its partners are well connected and do appear to have 'clout' in (urban) development circles. It is of course impossible to assess the impact of these advocacy activities but it does seem that ACHR successful in projecting innovative community based and participatory approaches, and that it finds ways and means to disseminate its message. Very good examples are the Special Issues of *Environment and Urbanisation*, a very recent one published in 2001, including articles on ACHR, SPARC, the Philippines Homeless People's Federation and the ACHR Cambodia activities, to mention a few. An earlier excellent initiative was an article on Lessons Learnt in the same magazine (Anzorena et. al. 1998, Environment and Urbanization, 2001).

The only concern could be – and this was voiced by some - that ACHR might become complacent, being too convinced that everything is going well: "if you believe that you are always right, you lose the capacity for learning". Being applauded in all possible fora and meetings should not blind oneself for the need to always link back to poor urban communities and to make sure that advocacy ultimately leads to concrete positive changes in their position or prospects. So there is a need to be willing to admit that there may be failures, and secondly, to keep on being innovative. ACHR has become important and respected due to many successes and innovations in the past: it should make sure to remain sharp and innovative in the future. Some recommendations that were mentioned by some and which are supported by the Mission:

- Use and combine the collective ACHR know-how to 'attack' or lobby with donor agencies and governments as effectively as possible;
- Discuss and adopt common positions on important issues such as evictions, the Debt issue, ADB and EWB policies so that there is a strong lobby and negotiation position vis-à-vis these institutions;
- Share experiences amongst all ACHR partners, also in view of the need to strengthen/bolster local groups which are sometimes not strong enough by themselves. For example, Karachi civil groups have had the Karachi Mass Transit Programme completely changed from an inner city elevated light rail system to a suburban rail system. They have also had ADB funded projects cancelled and replaced by cheaper alternatives funded by local resources. Other groups can learn from these experiences. the success in Karachi of civil groups to pressure for change the course of an expressway may be an important experience to learn from by other groups.
- It may be opportune to keep track of important meetings and discussions and events in the Region so that network-wide interest is created which could lead to more effective lobbying;
- There is a need to map the friends and allies to approach in agencies and governments; this information needs also to be shared so that persons/groups need not re-invent the wheel.
- As will be elaborated below we feel that more research is needed, also in view of the need to remain innovative, 'sharp' and to learn lessons from practice. Research results could also plough back into advocacy work, into publications, seminars and workshops.

## 6.6 Country level Support / New Initiatives

This ACHR programme component concerns countries which need more comprehensive support for a certain period of time in order to develop technical skills, to build mechanisms and strengthen capacities for development actions, especially the urban poor. Development support from the region can so be mobilised in concert for the needy conditions in a given country (ACHR, 1999: 6, also 12). Activities to be undertaken here can include:

- research studies and exploratory missions to understand country situations;
- planning of activities to be initiated and implemented depending on particular conditions and the urgency of problems.
- Under this component, in contrast to ACHR's normal way of working (opening up possibilities, linking to promising existing initiatives), a more pro-active role is taken and the initiative for activities lays with ACHR or its partners itself.

Examples of such new initiatives include the fact finding missions carried out to Kazakhstan and Kirgystan in 1996 and 1997 by Father Jorge and Arif Hasan (cf. Kandasami, 2001: 11). The mission linked up with an alliance of NGOs and a federation of Homeless People and studied local housing processes in Almaty. This was followed up by exchange visits of local people to OPP, Karachi. There are plans to bring teams from the ACHR network to the informal settlements of Almaty, to help set up S&C groups. The Almaty groups visited the OPP-RTI in Karachi twice and have modelled their housing improvement and micro credit on the OPP programmes.

Another example concerns the Tibet Country project, which is a pilot project focusing on Tibet's housing problems and the preservation of Tibet's cultural heritage. The project was implemented in 1997-98 in partnership with the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF), with funds from Misereor. The project aimed at providing shelter for Tibet's indigenous lower income groups, to improve their hygienic and living conditions, to provide vocational training and to preserve Tibetan cultural heritage. There were plans to enable Tibetans to participate in ACHR's TAP programme, but it is not clear whether this actually eventuated. Recently, two representatives of the Tibet Project accompanied an ACHR advisory mission to Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. Their involvement was to expose them to concepts of community participation and planning, the concept of the URC and the concept of government-NGO-community partnerships.

In co-operation with ESCAP the Regional Community Based Development Project was implemented in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam in 1990-1994. The project aimed to introduce alternative housing solutions based on community approaches. While the project took off well, in due time several constraints led to implementation problems, largely related to the nature of Vietnamese (top-down, centralised) policy making, with very little scope for the involvement of (independent/ new) civil society groups. Yet the experiences were valuable for ACHR and its local counterparts, and good contacts were established (see also Kandasami, 2001: 10). Following this, many more activities have been organised in Vietnam such as a workshop in Hue for UNCHS, and most importantly the new initiative entitled 'Support to the Provincial Cities Project', funded by UNDP. The aim is to develop a partnership between 5 Vietnamese cities, between the stakeholders in these cities, with a view to promote learning and networking through workshops, exposure visits and training support. Presently, a series of preparatory workshops is aimed to help design a long term project based on participatory and community development approaches. A training workshop was held in November 2001 in Can Tho, which aimed to discuss and help create Community Development Funds (CDF) in the five cities. The ACHR Secretary General provided training inputs and discussed ACHR/CODI experiences and modalities of savings and credit groups and CDF approaches (UNDP, 2001). There are also plans to establish Urban Poor Funds in Vietnam, and there are discussions as to the possibilities to co-operate with formal and informal groups and institutions in Hanoi (Hasan, 2001: 11).



ACHR was able to find an inroad into Laos, through a project supported by ESCAP. A small community fund has been established and the savings process was initiated. As a result ACHR was able to help set up 30-40 Saving Groups, a network and an Urban Poor Fund in Vientiane and the surrounding districts.

It may finally be noted that ACHR has not been able to do much work in Bangladesh. This is regrettable, as urban poverty in Bangladesh is growing fast and very severe, especially for women (and women workers) in Dhaka. ACHR is aware of the urgency to establish new initiatives also in Bangladesh, and for that reason had organised one of its annual Executive Committee meetings there. It hoped that this would stimulate local NGOs or trigger off more activity aimed at poor urban communities. However, this did not materialise, and there appears to be a lack of NGOs or CBOs with sufficient power and mass-base to take on the kind of activities ACHR would like to promote such as appropriate, tailor made S&G groups, urban Poor Funds, and local eviction watch cells.

The Mission strongly supports the new initiatives and new country processes depicted in the above, if only as we feel that there is scope for ACHR to expand its area of working, and to more widely 'export' its innovative, community based methods and approaches across the region. It appears that so far most of the New Initiatives have been co-ordinated and implemented from the ACHR secretariat, or in close consultation with it.

- If and when such new initiatives grow, there will be a clear need to co-ordinate the efforts of different ACHR partners in such 'new countries'.
- In contrast, it may also happen that promising new initiatives are not being followed up by partners, and then too, the secretariat may have to play a role in stimulating suitable follow up. There is a task here for the Executive Committee, which should as it were make a 'cost-benefit' or SWOT analysis on the decision to become and remain involved (invest) in a new initiative or country, and to identify contact persons and partners.
- The Mission is finally concerned about the plight of the urban poor in Dhaka, and would support ACHR to try and initiate new initiatives there, in terms of building networks, empowering women and helping stop evictions. Yet the Mission is aware of the lack of NGO capacity to take up issues and if there is no local support or initiative, there is little ACHR can do.

## **6.7 Activities in Cambodia, and Contract work under the CDS (UNCHS) Cambodia**

The present, quite important activities ACHR carries out in Phnom Penn also started under the New Initiatives component of TAP. From 1994 ACHR supported community survey activities of the Phnom Penn urban poor, gradually expanding the number of communities and also its range of activities. More and more frequently there were exchange and exposure visits from Cambodian groups to other countries like Thailand and India and vice versa (as already indicated in 6.1.3). An important role was played by community organisers both from India (SPARC) and the Philippines (UPA) which helped organise communities, be it in their different ways: respectively the S&C group approach and the more Alinsky oriented conflict and confrontation approach. A new phase of involvement started in 1995 when ACHR began to co-operate with the local unit of UNCHS with support from UNDP and DFID (UK) under the urban squatter upgrading project "Support to the Phnom Penn Squatter Communities and Municipality for Participatory Urban Development". ACHR was one of the major partners in the project, being in charge of training components, aimed at strengthening community development processes by building capacities for community members, NGOs and government officials (Cities Alliance, 2000: 3). ACHR has also been instrumental in establishing several community based development organisations in Phnom Penn, which since then have played key roles in the city's urban development and urban poverty alleviation efforts. These include the Solidarity for Urban Poor Federation (SUPF), the Urban Resource Centre (URC), the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) and the Community

Development Management Committees (CDMC) in each of the city's municipal districts. For example, the SUPF is a city wide federation of poor community saving groups, active in almost half of Phnom Penn's 500 poor settlements. This makes it the only large-scale people's organisation in the city (ACHR, 2000b, see also Environment & Urbanization, 2001:61-73).

It is beyond the scope of this report to deal in detail with the dynamics and successes of ACHR's work and the constraints faced by ACHR and its partners while working in this difficult country (see for example Khatri, 2001). After all, much of formerly existing civil society' was wiped out and poverty, country-wide mistrust and weak governments determine realities. The Mission has no way to ascertain the impacts of ACHR work, given the difficult conditions, but most respondents were positive. Also, it is a measure of success that UNCHS has followed up on previous co-operation with ACHR in a contractual agreement to the tune of US \$ 170,000. This is despite the fact that there are some reports which indicate – not surprisingly – occasional uneasiness in the ACHR-UNCHS relationship. After all, the pure fact that ACHR and UNCHS/UNDP did in fact co-operate is already some feat. Here two organisational cultures meet: the flexible, bottom-up, non hierarchical culture without many guidelines or procedures of ACHR meeting the hierarchical, top-down, inflexible, procedure minded culture more typical for UNCHS. Unsurprisingly there are indications that UNCHS may have found ACHR reporting to be not in time, and ACHR feeling the UN agencies to be very bureaucratic indeed. Yet this has not prevented co-operation which is now succeeded by a contractual relationship. Between July 2001 and April 2002 ACHR is expected to complete a number of tasks, including carrying out research (on land issues, squatter relocations, urban development plans for Phnom Penn; cf. URC Phnom Penn, 2001) and organising interest group consultation. Besides, it facilitates the participatory process of formulating the City Development Strategy for Phnom Penn while mediating between all stakeholders including the Municipality, Cities Alliance, WB and UNCHS.

The Mission believes that the work ACHR is carrying out in Phnom Penn – both the regular work of supporting the SUDF, the URC community building and networking *and* the contact work for UNCHS is extremely important. There is a clear and urgent need, ACHR can build on much previous work and contacts, and ACHR can test, modify and fine-tune its approaches under complicated and difficult conditions. It appears that the project is actually about the building up strong communities and community networks as a counterweight to the overpowering presence of donors (funds) who are rarely co-ordinating their activities. Besides, there appears to be a strong and ruthless interest articulation by private sector firms, capitalists and mafia-like individuals, in conditions of weak governance, which is not quite supportive of the poor (Kazmin, 2002).

The Mission expressed some concern as to whether ACHR and its local partners will be successful in negotiating and meaningfully involving the government. However, by and large an ACHR consultant working closely with local groups and inputs by others appears to be able to do the job, and there 3 excellent research studies have already been completed. Indeed, involving local groups has the added advantage of building local capacity. So while the technical side of the task seems safeguarded, there appears to be another important task of negotiating, and of convincing and persuading the local and national authorities to actually adopt the community approaches and the outcomes of the consultative processes. The person best equipped to carry out this work is the ACHR Secretary General who has excellent contacts locally and who is well respected. However, as indicated before, she is very busy and it is hoped that she will be able to support the process of project implementation as and when needed. All in all, the CDS/Phnom Penn project is a rather ambitious project, and, care should be taken that it will not crowd out other urgent tasks or attention for other key ACHR activities.

## **6.8 Newsletter, Website and Research**

In actual fact, both the ACHR Newsletters and its Web-site should have been with under the section dealing with Communication and Information. Yet we feel it is appropriate to deal in a bit more detail with these important media: the public relations of ACHR. Some of the persons we

talked to did not have direct contact or a working relationship with ACHR- some even now associating ACHR mostly with evictions or as a place where one could obtain funds. Many organisations- some close to ACHR but many more not very familiar with the organisation are dependent to a large extent on the newsletter, occasional publications and the web-site for keeping informed about ACHR. These are simultaneously a key source to obtain ideas and suggestions on innovative approaches and strategies, addresses and news of organisations in countries etc. In brief, the newsletter and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the web-site are important instruments to safeguard a sense of belonging, of identity, if you like to underline membership of the ACHR family.

Most people said they like the newsletter and this is also how the Mission feels. The newsletter is very well made, very well readable, full of information, and it appears to give attention sooner or later to all issues of importance to the urban poor, their organisations and the NGOs working with them. The Information officer is fed with lots of information from the region, the cities and even beyond into Africa, but he also has a large network that he can activate to collect news, stories and information generally. However, there were some who said that the newsletter was not sufficiently regular or predictable, and in fact the Newsletter only appears (almost) once a year (in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2001, but none in 2000). That is not to say that there were no publications in 2000; indeed, there was the excellent and very useful Face to Face issue on Community Exchanges (January 2000); there was a very comprehensive UCDO Update magazine (October 2000), as well as a Special Publication 'Meet the Philippines Homeless People's Federation' (November 2000). The Mission is impressed by this output (and there may have been more as the Regional Information Officer at the secretariat often takes on the drafting/lay-out of report by other ACHR partners). Yet, based on suggestions made to it, the Mission wishes to give into consideration the suggestion to make an effort to have a more regular Newsletter, even if it would mean that it is not so thick/full- that may even be an added advantage. The newsletters are presently almost like booklets, and it is likely that people consider them like that, and not like a magazine which appears regularly and which one reads and discards- for better or worse. There may be a cost aspect to more frequent Newsletter production and distribution, and this which is for the Secretariat and EC to decide on- we may feel it is money well spent. But it is important that it does not significantly increase the work of the Information officer, whose burden is already considerable.

### **The Website and Research**

The web-site plays a less important role in terms of public relations and probably attracts another audience. Since its inception in March 2000 there were 5,735 "visits", and 59,318 "hits" (ACHR activity report Oct-Dec.2000: 4.4.). So there is interest out there in ACHR, its activities, its network and its family news. Yet the Web Site is not updated so frequently (at the time of writing in March, the latest update was in July 2001, some parts Feb. 2002), which, one would expect, will eventually lead to a lesser frequency of visits. Partly for that reason, the web-site cannot be a real alternative to the Newsletter, which will (should) remain the regular "Family Magazine". But some suggestions were made to make the Web-site more attractive and functional.

One suggestion already mentioned is to have solid reports on the annual EC meetings which then constitute a regular update and review of ACHR activity, developments and plans. And as is usual already now, these should go onto the website and serve also to keep alive interest in the site and keep up knowledge of ACHR. Secondly, there is a suggestion related to the often repeated feeling of the Mission that there should be more research in the context of ACHR. This would help to strengthen it as "a learning organisation", to base itself more solidly on the realities of the urban poor and their dynamics with a view to be more effective (policy) advocates, and to keep a clear eye on changing conditions and policies in different countries, the region and the world.

Now the ACHR secretariat has obviously no capacity for research, but in reality many of its partner NGOs carry out research implicitly: by visiting slum communities, being interested or

forced to follow developments in the slums, witnessing the interactions between people and policy, people and politics, the impact of changing donor practices etc. Yet not that much of these experiences and lessons are documented, or only in very informal forms: reports to donor agencies, quarterly project progress reports, internal memos or discussion notes for NGO meetings or annual workshops. Of course, some experiences do get actually published, for example by the Philippine Research Consortium (Murphy et. al, 2001), and many publications by Arif Hasan, Ken Fernandes and others.

A professor we talked to indicated that there would be a wealth of important "hot" information was so laying idle, whereas there would be plenty interest from researchers, academics, but also practitioners from other cities, countries, regions. Such information or such case studies could be even used for teaching when students analyse case studies directly from the field. Someone in the Philippines suggested that ACHR partners should feed each other (much more) with information and on-going research findings on reforms into the land and housing sector, for example reforms on the Community Mortgage Programme and the diverse experiences groups encounter.

The suggestion is therefore made to have the Web-Site function as a "market place" for the supply and demand of case studies, reports, community profiles etc. One part of the ACHR Web-Site would have to be earmarked for the purpose: NGOs, practitioners, people working in the field put up the title and a brief abstract of the document on the Web-Site, indicating their e-mail address. Anyone interested in the document can directly approach the "supplier" by e-mail and request to be sent the document- by mail, by post, with or without some compensation.

In summary, the Mission would support more research to be carried out in the context of ACHR:

- Use the web-site and make it more attractive by offering the facility of supply-demand-exchange of formal and especially informal "grey" research material;
- Important areas for research could be different approaches of community organisation under different conditions (e.g. S&C groups versus the Alensky approach) which debate is basic to ACHR and needs a proper foundation in realities of community work;
- Other fields often mentioned include research into land with a view to developing a land database; into legal issues, into the housing sector and housing policies, including policies such as the Community Mortgage Programme or the impacts of the massive Indian urban poverty alleviation programmes;
- The 1999 ACHR Strategic Plan (1999: 26), under Advocacy Activities, calls for more research on resettlement policies and the documentation of successful community solutions 'to be pro-actively used as a basis for dialogue with government officials, regional and multilateral agencies';
- As much as possible there should be close ties between academics and ACHR and its partners, whereby the relationship between IEED and ACHR could serve as an excellent model (Environment and Urbanisation, 2001);
- ACHR should support/facilitate academics willing to carry out research into ACHR (partner) activities, but in the very clear understanding that it should not normally require (much) extra work for its staff and that the findings have to be submitted to ACHR before eventual publication;
- Apart from research, close links between ACHR and universities and colleges and polytechnics might well lead to increased exchange of views, staff and students as is happening in Surabaya, Indonesia. This would again benefit the Young Professional

Programme. There have been successful attempts; and in the case of Surabaya and also Karachi, linkages with ACHR NGO-partner programmes are strong. With Oxford Brooks University and Thai universities and NGO projects, such links are being built. But apart from this, linkages with universities have not been successful. The recommendations given in 6.2 as regards a mission to evaluate the programme would help in identifying the reasons why these linkages have not been created.

- In all this Urban Resource Centres should play a lead role, as already happens in Karachi and in Phnom Penn where the URC is supporting studies into land, relocation etc.

## 6.9 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

This chapter on activities has repeatedly called for more monitoring, developing indicators, more research on processes and community dynamics. The present section considers what is already being done and what more should and could be done. It is important to note that ACHR itself is well aware of the need to carry out regular monitoring:

“ACHR will continue its internal impact monitoring and evaluation process for its programmes. Such processes have in the past led to subsequent improvements and fine tuning to increase impacts” (ACHR, 1999: 27).

And it is also not that nothing is being done, but it is not so much: in 2000-1 there were 5 activities under the heading Evaluation and Monitoring, including the EC meeting in 2000 in Bangkok. Also, a lot of monitoring does already take place at the level of the Secretariat, at the occasion of office meetings, while drafting progress reports, and the newly employed staff member is especially charged to become active in this field. But there are complications and perhaps even more could be done, as will be discussed here.

Let us first agree that the M&E of ACHR activities is not at all easy, as already indicated in our section on Methodology at the start of this report. The impacts of ACHR are hard to measure or quantify, as already recognised by ODA/Schultz (1996:8)

“The primary thrust of the project (promoting participatory processes) is thoroughly accepted in producing desirable and sustainable change. However, the impact of those processes is not so easy to measure’.

The Mission is also aware of the problem to monitor and follow or to be even aware of all ACHR activities and their outputs as it notes itself:

“The numbers (of TAP-II activity + participants listing) are underestimates of the training processes and participation because many TAP regional processes are replicated in city and national wide processes by ACHR contact groups with their own support process (ACHR, 1999a: 4).

In spite of the complication, the Mission feels that more should and could be done in terms of monitoring and evaluation, as has been argued in several places in this report. In some cases we have suggested a review (like the Young Professionals Programme) or a study (into the scope for closer links between universities/colleges and NGOs/URCs). Perhaps ACHR should reflect on the above complications, and it might be possible to inventorise with some regularity outputs and (impressions of) impacts at the national level. This appears to have happened before in Sri Lanka and The Philippines, as well as in processes leading up to TAP Steering Committee meetings (ibid: 3). Another possibility is to elaborate on a very useful Logframe has been developed for TAP II by ODSA/Schultz (1996:1-3) which lists systematically the ACHR programme objectives, the verifiable indicators, means of verification and important assumptions (**Appendix 11** where we reproduce one sheet). This Logframe method – or some simplified form tailor made for specific activities might help ACHR keep track of activities and related expected outputs, in

addition to the very useful activities sheets that are being made already. As reported by ODA/Schultz, under the TAP-I programme, ACHR's evaluation strategy included:

- A survey of training and advisory needs of NGOs and CBOs in the region (which yielded responses from 150 groups);
- A impact monitoring process with TAP participants;
- Evaluation by the TAP steering Committee and co-ordinators;
- Discussions with a wide range of ACHR's contacts (a checklist was used with 'Types of Impacts to Look for', which appears to be very useful even today (see **Appendix 12**).
- Some of these activities could be revived, and then with a focus not so much on activities per se, but rather on processes: how is an activity performing, where does an activity go; what activity has been dropped and for what reasons: this forces one to reflect.

In summary, the Mission wishes to offer the following ideas and suggestion for discussion:

- ACHR need not only to study and monitor impacts, and the possible success of expansion, but also whether one must check 'deepening', does the movement or the process remain inclusive? Does ACHR not lose sight of the very poor and poor in processes which are assessed in terms of partnerships, policy change etc?
- The new method of making sheets with each activity by the ACHR secretariat is welcomed much, and it is suggested that more attention be given to filling in indications of impact; if only to be forced to reflect on what the activity aimed to achieve and whether it got there;
- There has been an agreement also with the consultant Kandasami to improve the ACHR monitoring systems related both to its activities and finances. Hence, ACHR was advised to develop a system for obtaining reports from the country programmes for funds spent in the respective countries for the various programmes; country programmes should submit the necessary accounting reports timely to ACHR (Kandasami, 2001:4).
- There has been some agreement to come to a system of regular staff meetings at the secretariat, but there are doubts whether such a system will last very long. This, in spite of its obvious potential to help structure AVCR activities/monitoring and be a building block to the regular donor reports, and as a forum to assess and reflect on the dynamics and outputs of ACHR.
- All ACHR advisors on mission for ACHR should be advised to report on their findings and established outputs and impacts on brief standardised report formats.

However, most of all, and also in view of quickly changing conditions and activities, there would have to be regular Executive Body meetings - at least once a year as is mentioned in all documents and plans (the last one took place in June 2000). More than anything else, such a regular, expected and anticipated rhythm of EC meetings will help ameliorate present weak monitoring efforts. There will be a need to look at countries and processes and to reflect on these developments. There could be a regular practise for countries to prepare brief country reports, including activities completed, and outputs/impacts achieved. The Executive Committee recognises the need for internal impact monitoring processes and it should make arrangements to organise and institutionalise this, perhaps also reserve some budgets for the purpose. All this should obviously be done keeping with ACHR ways of doing, including stakeholder analysis, applying participatory approaches, community participatory monitoring workshops and the like. All this will help ACHR strengthening its position as a learning organisation.

## Chapter - 8

### LESSONS LEARNT

A number of lessons that are of relevance to players in the urban development game, emerge from the work of the ACHR. These are given below.

- Communities organise at their own pace. This process cannot be determined by project targets and methodologies. Development agencies need to recognise this and make modifications to their present approach to programmes related to supporting the urban poor.
- Communities organise around a common interest or issue and not just for the sake of organising. Not all community members may form part of the initial organisation but join slowly if they see that the organisation is of use to them and if it is being successful in tackling the issue around which it has been created.
- Organisations that generate money, through it access money, manage money and or projects, invariably develop an alternative leadership which is chosen by consensus and is accountable to the community. This leadership is chosen because people can trust it with their own money and also because the leaders should have spare time. Communities, if small enough, know the persons who have these qualities. On the other hand, programmes and projects that pour money into communities without the communities going through the process of generating their own finances fail, because the leadership in such cases is identified by the financiers themselves or is accepted by the community because of the communities lack of involvement and interest in the programme.
- Smaller groups (upto 50 members) are more cohesive and since everyone in them knows each other, issues of mistrust are minimised. Without collective trust, community organisations cannot be successful.
- Urban poor funds in support of savings and credit or component sharing, make it possible for communities to initiate physical development and employment. Without these funds these two activities are not possible at a sufficiently large scale to have an impact on local government and hence on policy.
- The ACHR TAP programme promoted integrated exchange between countries. Under this programme each country was represented by teams consisting of government, NGO and CBO members. This integrated exchange creates relationships and understanding between the three groups who have traditionally often been in conflict with each other. As a result, government officials can be co-opted by CBOs and NGOs and become supporters of their programmes.
- NGOs very often require small funds in emergencies or for support to CBOs. Such funds are difficult to access quickly from donors. The availability of such funds enhances the functioning of NGOs and CBOs.
- The creation of a network of CBOs and NGOs is far more effective in dealing with poverty issues, especially at the policy and advocacy level, than independent NGOs are.
- Government plans are often insensitive to the needs and concerns of poor communities. To counteract them communities require the development and promotion of alternative plans along with their financial implications. However, such plans cannot be developed by communities themselves. They require professional expertise and such expertise is difficult

for communities to access. Also, almost all professional expertise is trained conventionally and is not equipped to work with communities and to map their settlements. It is necessary to develop such expertise and to develop a system whereby it can be accessed by communities. This can be done by developing the YP programme and finding ways to overcome the constraints it now faces. In this connection, it is recommended that a proper evaluation of the programme is carried out that identifies what is required to make it effective.

- Communities carrying out infrastructure and housing projects also require technical assistance. Without proper assistance and supervision the end product is faulty in design and poor in construction. Often, it is a waste of finances. This can be overcome by building up the YP programme and linking it to the NGOs that work with communities on the one hand and with professional resource persons on the other.
- The politician-bureaucrat-developer nexus can be challenged by an NGO-CBO-professional nexus. However, for this to be successful the role of academia in research into the processes of urban poor social dynamics and a critique of conventional planning is necessary. Attempts at establishing such an alternative nexus has had some limited successes in Karachi where development projects have been altered due to pressure from NGOs, CBOs and professionals. However, these are project-wise successes that have not resulted in any policy changes.
- The more partners you have in the urban poor process the more effective it is. The potential partners are the local formal and informal private sector and the corporate sector.
- Evictions of poor communities can be delayed but not stopped where laws to protect them are not in place. Such laws need to be developed and enacted.
- It helps if the culture of an organisation that is dealing with the poor reflects or is compatible with their culture.
- Low income communities learn best from each other. A meeting between them and an exchange of views regarding their programmes, especially on the programme sites, is far more meaningful than any number of workshops and conferences.



## Chapter – 9

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 9.1 The ACHR Culture

The ACHR culture is important because it is compatible with the culture of its partners and the partner's national networks. This culture needs to be understood and protected. It should be respected by international agencies and donors.

#### 9.2 ACHR Secretariat and Executive Committee

- The ACHR Secretariat should stay in Bangkok since Bangkok is central to the Region, is cheap in terms of accommodation and food, has the necessary airline links and other logistic support facilities.
- The Secretariat should be strengthened by additional staff that can support the current staff and activities of the Secretariat. Such support is needed in documentation and monitoring. Getting interns on a yearly basis from partner organisations in Asia is one possibility. This will also help create links of the Secretariat with the partners and involve young people from various countries in ACHR activities. However, this is something for the ACHR Secretariat to explore since interns can also mean more work for the ACHR Secretariat than support.
- The Secretary General should appoint an assistant to herself. She should choose this assistant herself and groom her to take over some of her functions. This assistant should accompany her to her meetings and develop reports on them since they are of considerable importance to the ACHR process.
- New blood should be inducted into the Executive Committee of the ACHR from middle level staff of ACHR national partners who are already playing an important role in their national programmes.
- ACHR EC committee meetings should be held regularly, and it must be attempted to hold them in the same month every year to guarantee continuity. These meetings should be properly minuted (in addition the report and its placement on the web as is being done currently) and circulated. A report and a work plan should also be published (not just put on the web). The report must reflect the richness of discussions that take place in the meeting. If the Secretariat does not have time for this, it should be contracted out to an ACHR member organisation or resource person.
- ACHR EC's views on new trends in Asia and their relationship to global trends on the one hand and local level trends on the other, are crucial for not only the ACHR itself, but for Asian governments and international NGOs and agencies. It is recommended that at the next ACHR EC meeting this subject is addressed, views documented and disseminated.
- The work plan of ACHR should not be a wish list of its EC members. The wish list may be noted but the work plan should reflect what is possible given conditions in the various countries and ACHR constraints. For the preparation of such a realistic plan, it may be necessary to associate an EC committee member with the Secretariat for a week or so. However, every plan should have the necessary flexibility to deal with emergency requirements from the various partners and for promoting new initiatives when and if the opportunity arises.

- The ACHR EC should seek to increase its partners. National partners should be encouraged to form networks and make their members a part of the ACHR family. This will help in promoting a more effective “common agenda” which is discussed in item 9.7.
- The Secretariat is already following the recommendations of Mr. Kandasami with regard to accounts. Perhaps an annual review of the problems associated with this new process should be carried out in-house by the ACHR and its results be shared with the EC so that a direction to address such problems can be decided upon.
- The ACHR is increasingly becoming involved in structural issues related to poverty. This is a trend that needs to be supported. However, following this trend means greater involvement in programmes that are more developed and brings along the risk that countries and programmes are ignored that are less developed and which are in the phase of fighting for basic housing rights. It is recommended that the ACHR EC should not ignore the rights issue in favour of the structural issue but should maintain a balance and understand that the two are closely related.

### **9.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- ACHR needs to improve its monitoring systems and feedback from the field. For this, complex procedures should be avoided. Instead simple non-time consuming reporting formats for visits of ACHR staff and or advisory resource persons should be developed. Reports on such visits already take place and should be encouraged.
- Monitoring of impacts does not take place. For this also simply forms should be developed and filled in by ACHR resource persons and staff members visiting the field. Partner NGOs should also be encouraged to fill such forms for their projects which have an element of ACHR support.
- Regular meetings of the ACHR staff are now being held. These should be minuted. These minutes along with the reporting back forms should be put together and analysed every quarter. This will help in assessing impact and promoting more appropriate planning, implementation and further monitoring directions. It will make ACHR more pro-active.
- The results of the impact analysis mentioned earlier should also be published/put on the web since it will help identify failures and weaknesses.
- Documentation of follow-up on the exchange programmes has not always been regular. The monitoring formats should be developed in a manner that such follow-up feedback becomes an integral part of it.

### **9.4 WEB, Research, Documentation and Dissemination**

- The ACHR web site should carry with it a list of annotated relevant research publications. Research organisations should be asked to provide such lists. This will link up the ACHR with research organisations, a link they are interested in establishing. Reports of the ACHR Executive Committee meetings should be developed and circulated on the model of the 1998 ACHR Executive Committee meeting (which the Mission found was excellent) and also put on the web site.
- The ACHR newsletter should be published regularly and preferably every quarter, even if it means that it will be less bulky. Partners wish to hear from the ACHR more often and the newsletter is an important manner of communicating. It must be realised that a web site does not create a sense of belonging to an organisation but receiving material and communication by post, does.

- Partners should be informed that funds are available for translation of the ACHR newsletter into local languages. Through the web they should be informed about where such translations are taken place and the manner in which they are being done, published and circulated.
- Partner NGOs to whom ACHR has donated videos should be encouraged to send the video material that they have developed to the Secretariat in Bangkok. The Secretariat should judge this material and circulate to ACHR partners that which can be of use to them or to the local communities they work with.
- New developments are taking place within the ACHR partner projects, which are the result of partner programmes consolidating themselves. The coalition needs to learn from these developments, many of which are not seen as “new models”. They should be documented on the net and circulated through small write-ups as separate from the newsletter, which will give them special importance that they deserve. These new developments include: i) the CODI network and how communities determine the disbursement of funds; ii) the methodology of the rehabilitation programme of the Mumbai Slum Dwellers who are being displaced as a result of the expansion of the railway system; iii) the manner in which the Karachi URC deals with development projects and develops civil society consensus around its alternatives (the alternatives also change as a result); iii) projects on conservation of built heritage and its relationships to the poor in Thailand, Pakistan and Tibet; and iv) the Seoul URC which has brought together important academics to look at their subjects in relation to the problems of poor communities.
- Communities in the ACHR family are being organised not only through the Alensky method, Savings and Credit group mobilisation, component sharing, URCs. They are also being organised through community enumeration and mapping. These new developments need to be promoted through the web site and other methods and should become part of the exchange visits.

## **9.5 Young Professionals Programme**

- A number of young professionals are interested in supporting ACHR activities and working with poor communities. However, they need small start up grants and professional fees. ACHR should look into the possibility of providing such grants and should encourage its partners to employ these young professionals as staff or consultants against payments.
- Work being carried out by young professionals needs to be assessed and supported by resource persons. Advisory visits from such resource persons are necessary for improving the work of the young professionals. Such visits should be arranged.
- A major problem for young professionals is to map and document existing settlements. They need training for this. Such training and orientation should be provided to them by partners who are successfully doing such work. Also, GIS systems and their introduction to the young professionals work should be examined and if found beneficial, they should be promoted.
- Young professionals are often not made a part of the NGO-CBO-government dialogue. Partners should see to it that they are a part of this dialogue since it will help in their development and also improve the quality of their work.
- A demand for the services of the young professionals is considerable and cannot be met. It may be necessary therefore to support the young professionals by creating para-professionals from within the community. The programme of countries where this is being done (example Pakistan, India) should be promoted by the ACHR through its newsletter and

web site so that other partners can adopt this. A special workshop for this promotion is also recommended provided the YP programme evaluation as suggested in the next paragraph supports it.

- The YP programme at present is fragmented and lacks coherence. It is recommended that an evaluation of the programme be carried out by a senior resource person. The evaluation should identify the current problems of the programme and chalk out future directions so as to make the programme fulfil its objectives and become effective. Meanwhile, visits from the OPP engineer for a month every quarter to provide technical support to partner NGOs and YPs should continue.

## **9.6 Cultivation of Academic Institutions**

Academic institutions met by the Mission in the Philippines wish to have a closer link with the ACHR. Such a link can only be established by the research organisations themselves. The ACHR can support their work by providing their researchers and students access to its partners with whom they can work. It can also provide access to its archives in Bangkok for research and publication purposes. Such a link can be promoted through the web site (see item 9.4) and the newsletter.

## **9.7 A Common Agenda**

Given the differences between countries and ACHR partners, it is difficult to arrive at a common agenda on dealing with bilateral and multilateral agencies and repercussions of globalisation. However, an understanding of these issues and how they effect the lives of the poor in Asia and urbanisation as a whole, is necessary. It is recommended that a structural debate on these and related issues is initiated. It will help partners in understanding their country situation better and in developing new approaches and partnerships. It will also help in clarifying conflicting approaches to international loans and debts which in certain countries (Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines), are increasingly a source of poverty rather than poverty alleviation. The EC should initiate the process leading to such a common agenda. It will also determine ACHR's relationship with the new models such as City Alliance and the implementation of the CDS concept.

## **9.8 Evictions**

Fire fighting with regards to evictions has simply delayed them but not stopped them from happening. The ACHR Eviction Watch has now a good understanding of the reasons and processes of evictions. It is necessary to move beyond fire fighting and explore other possibilities including the development of national laws and guidelines for development projects. It is recommended that the ACHR identify groups of lawyers in different countries who are engaged in fighting the legal battle against evictions. It should try to bring these groups together to chalk out a comprehensive law-related ACHR position on the issue. Such a position should be promoted with national governments and international agencies.

The issue of evictions is directly related to the issue of land and the standards used for redevelopment, relocation and development projects. Various proposals for dealing with these issues have been made by civil and housing rights groups in various Asian countries. A number of recommendations have also been made by academics and planners. For a better understanding of the issue, the ACHR should collect and compile relevant parts of all such materials so that it can feed into the law-related recommendations proposed in the previous paragraph. This material can eventually be used for promoting a more rational-pro-poor land policy, planning standards and implementation procedures.

## **9.9 Gender Issues**

At all EC meetings, it should be compulsory for ACHR partners to present a gender related report regarding the involvement of women in their organisation and in the activities of the communities they are working with. This will put gender on the agenda.

It is recommended that the ACHR newsletter carries a special gender page giving details of women's involvement in various partner organisations and programmes.

## **9.10 Urban Resource Centres**

It is recommended that the co-ordinator of the URC in Karachi should visit other URCs and hold discussions with them on their programmes and functioning. This will give the URCs the opportunity of looking at themselves critically. It will also expose the Karachi URC (the oldest of URCs) to new ideas and methodologies.

Through the web site, the URC concept should be promoted. The promotion material should describe the manner in which a URC can be formed and its many advantages. Once such a URC is formed, the ACHR should arrange the visit of its founders to the Karachi URC so as to learn the manner in which it functions.

## **9.10 Endowment**

ACHR has funds available for its functioning for the time being. However, this may not always be the case. It is recommended that the ACHR should try and set up an endowment for the functioning of its secretariat. This will free the Secretariat from seeking funds from donor agencies for its functioning. Funds for individual programmes can continue to be sought from donors.

## Appendix – 3

### What People/Partners Say About ACHR

#### 1. Executive Committee/Secretariat/ACHR General (What Secretariat and Partners Say)

Strength	Weakness
<p>Secretariat strength: Somsook, flexibility, ACHR family.            Informal culture which is compatible with partners culture            Few people, much achieved            Growing influence in cities            Can respond immediately to partners needs            Secretariat must respect partners culture to be effective            Secretary must be Thai            Secretariat must be in Bangkok            Secretariat must not be a think tank. Should stay as it is at present            Trust rather than regulations            “Making tight money looser”</p>	<p>Wish we saw more of Somsook            ACHR culture conflicts with donor / corporate culture            Too much to do, too little time            Fear of burning out            The inner core of ACHR has not expanded            No strategy for the future            Fear that it may become too bureaucratic            Reliable people are limited and so not always available            Proposal writing and E&amp;M takes too much time            Absence of technical support with partners</p>

#### 2. Eviction Watch (What Eviction Watch and Other Partners Say)

Strength	Weakness
<p>Eviction Watch has taught us a lot about reasons for evictions so policies to deal with them have been evolved            Successes in preventing evictions due to regional cooperation and coordination            High lighting eviction with facts, figures and alternatives has created awareness and concern in government circles</p>	<p>Eviction Watch is simply fighting the law            It has not prevented evictions just delayed them</p>

#### 3. TAP

Strength	Weakness
<p>Gave ideas to communities            Transferred knowledge            Integrated exchange developed friendships between government functionaries, NGOs and CBOs leading to the cooption of government bureaucrats/mangers            Governments changed attitudes</p>	<p>Not enough exchanges            Choice of members/participants is important</p>

<p>TAP influenced on state policy  International agencies changed their mind set – become more people friendly  ESCAP's Human Dignity Initiatives Strategy uses CODI-UCDO Strategy  Only way communities can meet and enrich themselves  The Naga city mayors change of heart came about due to an ACHR exchange programme</p>	
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#### 4. Advisory Visits

Strength	Weakness
<p>Most helpful if from the right persons  They promote reflexion, ideas and new ways of doing things.</p>	<p>Not enough for there are not enough persons to do it</p>

#### 5. Young Professionals (YPs) (What YPs and NGOs Say)

Strength	Weakness
<p>Alternative plans prepared by YPs help in negotiating with government  YPs work strengthens communities and unites them around a plan for collective action  YPs help communities to relate to city level issues  YPs can help make effective use of available funds and savings  Para-architects are needed to support YPs so as to use them optimally.</p>	<p>YPs need to make a livelihood. They need funds and payments  They need to learn techniques of mapping and surveying  Need assessment of their schemes from resource persons  Much more technical support required  YPs not expanding enough  YPs not made part of NGO-government dialogue</p>

#### 6. Women and Shelter Network

Philippines was in touch with the programme when it was in Kuala Lumpur but since it has moved to Bombay there is no news of it.

#### 7. Other Comments

##### 7.1 Belonging/Accessing Knowledge and Information

- Except for the newsletter no other communication gets to us
- ACHR is only related to projects/programmes it funds (said by a non-partner organisation)
- I thought it was a funding organisation (said by a research non-partner organisation)

- There should be proper ACHR national chapters
- Newsletter should be more regular plus other sources of information must be developed
- National out-reach and partners not aware of ACHR. (But then, does this matter?)

## **7.2 Academic Institutions**

- I simply associate ACHR with evictions (said by a non-partner academic institution)
- Building regulations need attention. They are a major problem for the poor
- There should be joint strategy to deal with donor/loan giving agency conditionalities, procedures and planning and implementation concepts
- If donor funds are not available how will ACHR fund itself?

## **8. ACHR Impacts**

- Integrated exchange concept
- Community mapping concept
- Alternative plan concept
- Para-professional concept
- URC concept
- Savings and credit: began in India and now in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, South Africa, Laos, Indonesia, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Namibia
- Component sharing: began in Karachi and now in Kathmandu, Colombo, South Africa, Central Asia
- URCs: began in Karachi now in Kathmandu, Phnom Penh, Colombo, South Africa, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Jakarta, Seoul
- YPS: began in Karachi/Surabaya and now in Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Japan
- Land sharing: began in Bangkok and now Philippines, Cambodia, India, Indonesia
- Conservation and the poor: Tibet, Pakistan, Thailand, Nepal
- International recognition of ACHR individuals and partners for national and international awards

## **9. Potential Impacts**

- The Cambodia Programme
- The Phnom Penh CDS
- Laos and Vietnam Savings Programme



- Conservation and the Poor

#### **10. Changes in ACHR**

- Better knowledge
- More people
- More resources
- Broadening of partnerships
- Growing influence in cities
- Some national partner programmes have become part of national policy
- International agencies/donors adopt ACHR methodologies
- ACHR partner representatives gain political positions in governments
- Politicians/government functionaries coopted
- Growing involvement of professionals and academia
- Initial partner projects move to programmes; become too large for states to ignore; become part of policy debate; promoted by international agencies; new directions are partnership with governments and national networks of community organisations.

## Appendix - 5

### Different Country Contexts

Sr. No.		Philippines	Cambodia	Thailand	Bangladesh	Pakistan
1.	Local government reform	Has been carried out	Has been carried out	Not yet	Not yet	Has been carried out
2.	Government attitude	Anti-poor	Undefined	Benign	Anti-poor	Anti-poor
3.	Anti eviction laws	Do not exist	Do not exist	Do not exist but compromises possible	Do not exist	Exist but are often violated
4.	Press	Partly poor	Almost no press coverage	Very little press coverage	No press coverage	Partly pro-poor
5.	Judiciary and evictions	Anti-poor judgements	Issues not taken to court	Issues seldom taken to court	Anti-poor	Pro-poor
6.	Land	In private and public sector	Still vague	In private sector	In private sector	In public sector (Karachi)
7.	Land records information	Not available	Not available	?	Not available	Not available
8.	Non-utilisation fee on land	Does not exist	Does not exist	Does not exist	Does not exist	Exists but is not high enough
9.	Civil society	Strong but not pro-poor	Weak	Strong but not pro-poor	Weak	Strong but divided
10.	Academia's involvement with poor issues	Involved at a theoretical level	Weak involvement	Beginnings of involvement at practical level	Little involvement	Strong practical involvement (Karachi)
11.	Government-NGO-CBO partnerships	Negotiations	Exist but are dominated by government	Strong and growing	Weak	Were strong but now in a state of flux
12.	Innovative pro-poor projects / programmes	CMP/UPA HPFP	UPDF/URC	CODI	None to ACHR's knowledge	OPP-RTI/URC

## URBAN RESOURCE CENTRE PROFILES

### Urban Resource Centre (URC), Karachi, Pakistan

The Urban Resource Centre (URC) was set up in 1989. Its founders were urban planning related professionals, representatives of NGOs and grass-root community organisations and teachers at professional colleges. They felt that Karachi's official development plans ignored the larger socio-economic reality of the city and as such were unworkable, unaffordable and environmentally disastrous. They further felt that workable alternatives were required and these were possible only with the involvement of informed communities and interest groups.

To promote its objectives the URC identifies the actors and factors that are involved in shaping Karachi's development along with their relationships with each other and with relevant state agencies. In addition, it carries out research on all proposed major urban development projects and analyses them from the point of view of communities and interest groups. This research and its documentation is developed through case studies; profiles of formal and informal organisations and individuals; and by holding forums on different subjects in which the various interest groups (communities, informal service providers, government agencies, political parties) participate. These forums are documented and their results disseminated. This interaction has generated debate and discussion in the press about subjects not discussed before, and brought about substantial changes in how problems and planning are viewed by government agencies and different stakeholders.

Through this process the URC has managed to create a space for interaction between poor communities, NGOs, private (formal and informal) sector interest groups, academic institutions and government agencies. The URC feels that this space needs to be nurtured and institutionalised.

As a result of URC's work, the Karachi Mass Transit Project (KMTP) was modified considerably because of pressure from citizen's groups and was made more environmental and cost friendly. Also, due to the information and alternatives supplied to communities living on the Lyari River corridor, the Lyari Expressway, which was going to uproot 125,000 people and cause immense environmental damage to the city, was abandoned. The Expressway project has been replaced by the northern bye-pass for which the URC has pressed. In addition, URC's research, negotiations and support to the Karachi transporters has helped them in establishing a more equitable relationship with state organisations. This has helped in identifying 32 sites for bus terminals, workshops and depots on which work has begun. URC's research on the garbage recycling industry, not only documented its economic, physical and environmental repercussions on the city, but has made it one of the major interest groups in the search for a new solid waste management programme for Karachi. Through forums, problems (and their micro and macro level causes) of flat owners, scavengers, theatre groups, commuters, residents of the historic districts of Karachi, working women, wholesale markets, transporters and others, have been identified and documented along with their activists. This knowledge has been disseminated and these groups have also been put in touch with each other and with relevant resource persons and professionals. The result has not only been the beginnings of an involvement of communities and interest groups in the planning process but also an increase in the awareness of planning related issues in society as a whole.

The URC works in close association with the OPP and the Department of Architecture and Planning at the Dawood College of Engineering & Technology. Its work is published through quarterly reports, monographs and a monthly publication entitled "Facts and Figures" which gives details of what has transpired in Karachi during the last month. URC has a three member staff

(coordinator-architect, social organiser and administrator). In addition, it gives one-year fellowships to young university graduates and community activists who help it in research, documentation and interaction with communities and interest groups. Through these fellowships the URC seeks to broaden its base in society as a whole. At present it has 10 fellows working with it.

#### **Urban Resource Centre (URC), Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

The URC was set up in 1997, and since then its enthusiastic young team has not stopped for a breath. The URC provides technical assistance to poor communities, particularly Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation (SUPF), helping with the exploration of house designs and cost saving building techniques, mapping and surveying settlements, computerising survey data, housing construction, infrastructure planning, estimating, providing measured architectural drawings and coordinating with other aid organisations. The URC's support to poor communities housing and infrastructure improvement projects has been an important ingredient in the city government's increasing acceptance of community driven solutions to problems of poverty and homelessness in Phnom Penh. The URC provides opportunities for volunteer students to work with communities and produces a bilingual newsletter on community issues, The Lotus Flower.

#### **Urban Resource Centre (URC), Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The Sevanatha Urban Resource Centre assists low income urban communities in the areas of community based housing and infrastructure projects, savings and credit, self-employment activities, health and sanitation, environmental management and solid waste disposal. Besides collecting and disseminating information on all these issues, the URC offers training to local CBOs and small NGOs, assists them to link up with each other in networks and with national and international institutions, development programmes and sources of funds. Since 1993, the URC has published a bi-monthly newsletter called Thorathurumalla (Information kit) which covers community based housing and infrastructure projects and passes on a variety of information on health, sanitation and environmental issues. Besides the main URC in Colombo, URC supports local organisations in four provincial towns to operate branch URCs. In the role of mediator, the URC has assisted poor communities (and Community Development Management Councils) to access government aid programmes and local and external resources, while mediating in conflicts.

#### **Urban Resource Centre (URC), Kathmandu, Nepal**

Lumanti Support Group for Shelter was established as an NGO in 1992, and is now working in 68 slum and squatter settlements in the Kathmandu Valley (representing about half of the Kathmandu metropolitan area's poor communities) on a variety of issues – house, sanitation, water supply, savings and credit, informal education, children's activities, health, etc. Lumanti works in close partnership with two large federations of poor communities, the Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaji (Women's Unity Federation) and Nepal Baso Bas Basti Samrakshan Samaj (Community Protection Federation). Lumanti set up its URC in 1998, with support from the Asia Pacific 2000. A small team of engineers and technicians have been increasingly engaged in providing technical support to communities that are building their own sewers, water supply systems, toilets and road pavings. As poor communities and the two federations gain in experience and proficiency in managing these projects, the Lumanti URC's role is gradually taking on a more advocacy and support role, with the URC actively involved in research into sanitation and water supply issues, and interfacing with donors.

#### **Urban Resource Unit (URU), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

The Urban Resource Unit in Kuala Lumpur was set up in 1996 as a response to the mass evictions of urban squatters in the 1980s and 1990s, even when the country's boom was stalled by Asia's economic crisis in 1997. The URU was set up in order to empower communities

thorough information sharing, to increase awareness, build solidarity and rotation and protect is the only response left, and lobbying and negotiation alternatives is difficult. Action happens and to prepare alternative plans, and to present these to the government to begin a dialogue on secure housing. The URU has worked with community groups and other NGOs to organise a massive assembly of residents of 15 long houses (state built temporary housing where communities are dumped after eviction) to discuss their needs with the Housing Ministry and Chief Minister's office.