

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023 TO ACHR FRIENDS

Here is a hasty but heart-felt greetings from the team at the ACHR secretariat in Bangkok, wishing everyone all good things in the coming 2023 year - the year of the rabbit, by the Chinese lunar calendar.

## A QUICK UPDATE ON ACHR'S CURRENT PROJECTS

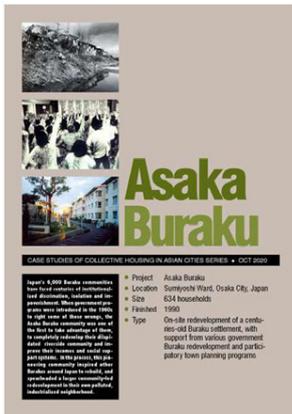
**KNOW STUDY in FOUR ASIAN CITIES:** After several years, this big global study on "pathways to urban equality" officially wrapped up in March 2022. The teams in the four Asian cities that ACHR has helped to bring into the study (Da Nang, Nakhon Sawan, Yangon and Yogyakarta) have finished their research and produced a stack of reports, videos, books, academic articles and all sorts of materials. Our academic partners at the DPU in London have put together some of the materials from the cities which took part in the study - including our Asian cities - on this website, where everything can be downloaded: [www.urban-know.com/achr](http://www.urban-know.com/achr)

Once the KNOW study in our four Asian cities was more-less finished, Marina Kolovou-Kouri, who had been working all along with the Women for the World team in Myanmar on the KNOW study in Yangon, put the key stories and lessons from the four cities together into a rich and colorful newsletter, titled "*Community-led development as a pathway to urban equality.*" A PDF of the newsletter can be downloaded from the ACHR website library here: [http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file\\_220517135816.pdf](http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file_220517135816.pdf)



**SELAVIP FIVE MODEL CITIES PROJECT:** Despite the unplanned limitations of the pandemic and assorted other crises, this project to demonstrate a more community-driven and citywide housing model continues to chalk up all kinds of important breakthroughs and innovations, and will be coming to a close in January 2023. The project, which is being funded by the Selavip Foundation with a lot of flexibility and understanding, is being implemented by community networks and their support NGOs in five cities - Jakarta, Yangon, Dhaka, Iloilo and Mahalaxmi. With funds for small upgrading projects and big housing projects, the project has allowed us to extend the kind of citywide, collaborative and people-driven action that began in our ACCA program. Minh Chau, who has coordinated several of ACHR's projects with Selavip in the past, continues to coordinate this one remotely, from her native Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where she recently moved with her family.

**COLLECTIVE HOUSING PROJECT:** This important regional project to promote more collective and more community-driven forms of housing in Asia, continues, with funds for national processes, for documenting collective housing case studies and for sharing news about Asia's collective housing innovations with urbaMonde and with the global CoHabitat network. urbaMonde has been an important new partner for ACHR, with whom we find sympathetic and like-minded friends.



**Asaka Buraku**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • OCT 2020

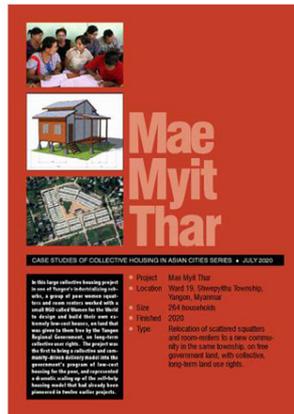
- Project Asaka Buraku
- Location Sanyoshi Ward, Osaka City, Japan
- Size 634 households
- Finished 1993
- Type On-site redevelopment of a center-old buraku settlement, with support from various government Buraku redevelopment and participatory town planning programs



**Sangsan Pattana 7-12**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • MARCH 2021

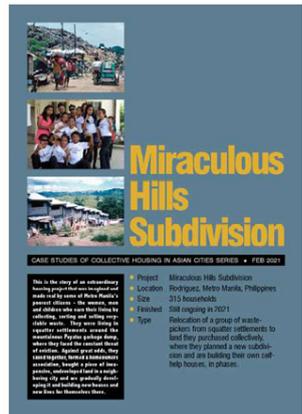
- Project Sangsan Pattana 7-12 Housing Cooperative
- Location Nong Toey District, Bangkok, Thailand
- Size 114 households
- Finished 2005
- Type Nearby relocation of an old squatter settlement to public land leased from the Port Authority of Thailand, where they built a new community



**Mae Myit Thar**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • JULY 2020

- Project Mae Myit Thar
- Location Ward 19, Shwepyithar Township, Yangon, Myanmar
- Size 264 households
- Finished 2020
- Type Relocation of scattered squatters and roommates to a new community in the same township, on new government land, with collective, long-term land use rights



**Miraculous Hills Subdivision**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • FEB 2021

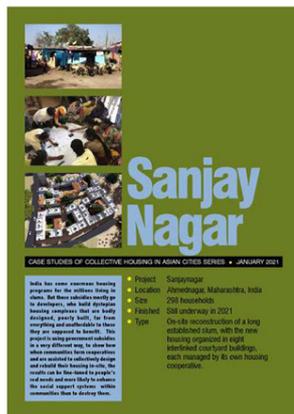
- Project Miraculous Hills Subdivision
- Location Rodriguez, Metro Manila, Philippines
- Size 315 households
- Finished Still ongoing in 2021
- Type Relocation of a group of waitlistees from squatter settlements to land they purchased collectively, where they planned a new subdivision and are building their own call-help houses, in phases



**Kampung Pisang**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • JUNE 2021

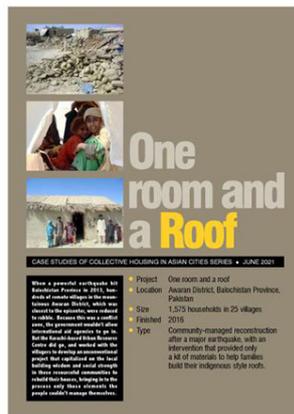
- Project Kampung Pisang
- Location RTK 090, Mandor Samba sub-district, Tangkubara District, Makassar, Indonesia
- Size 49 households
- Finished 2017
- Type Land sharing in which a small informal community rebuilt their houses on a small portion of the privately owned land they used to squat on, with permanent tenure



**Sanjay Nagar**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • JANUARY 2021

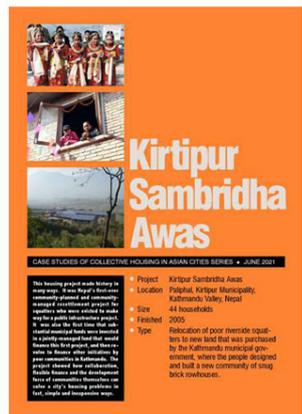
- Project Sanjay Nagar
- Location Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India
- Size 268 households
- Finished Still underway in 2021
- Type On-site reconstruction of a long established slum, with the new housing organized in eight identified courtyard buildings, each managed by its own housing cooperative



**One room and a Roof**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • JUNE 2021

- Project One room and a roof
- Location Anarud District, Balochistan Province, Pakistan
- Size 1,575 households in 25 villages
- Finished 2016
- Type Community-managed reconstruction after a major earthquake, with an intervention that provided only a bit of materials to help families build their indigenous, stone walls



**Kirtipur Sambridha Awas**

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • JUNE 2021

- Project Kirtipur Sambridha Awas
- Location Piplani, Kirtipur Municipality, Kathmandu Valley, Nepal
- Size 41 households
- Finished 2000
- Type Relocation of poor rheside squatters to new land that was purchased by the Kathmandu municipal government, where the people designed and built a new community of snug brick houses

Please follow this link to see some of the many detailed collective housing case studies (shown above) that groups around the region have prepared, as part of the urbaMonde-supported collective housing project: <http://www.achr.net/library.php?ic=16>

Our current project with urbaMonde will be wrapping up at the end of December 2022, but we are already working with Lea and Nina at urbaMonde in Geneva to explore ways to extend the partnership with another regional project. More on that soon.

## COMMUNITY COVID RESPONSE in FOUR ASEAN COUNTRIES: This brief "action-research"

project, which ACHR facilitated in collaboration with IIED, involved both study and action. The project officially finished in March 2022, and it gave us a good opportunity to look at some of the interesting ways communities and their networks in four countries (Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand) had been creatively coping with all the needs the covid crisis made so urgent. The project also allowed us to support those community-driven efforts a little bit, at the same time we studied and documented them. The final report from the project came in two forms: an academic "Working Paper" for IIED, entitled "Doing more with less: Covid relief by community networks in Southeast Asia", which can be downloaded here: <https://www.iied.org/20956iied>

And a special issue of the ACHR newsletter devoted entirely to stories about how Asia's urban poor communities were dealing with the Covid crisis. The newsletter can be downloaded from the ACHR website library here: [http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file\\_220624150800.pdf](http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file_220624150800.pdf)

Some of the detailed case studies that the teams in the four countries prepared can be downloaded from the ACHR website library, from the "Covid 19 Crisis Documents" tab: <http://www.achr.net/library.php?ic=19>

## NEW PROJECT: ACCELERATING CITY EQUITY (ACE):

Over the past year, ACHR has been working with a new partner organization on the first phase of a global project setting out to find ways to accelerate urban equity. Here's an explanatory blurb from the project's website: "The International Society for Urban Health's (ISUH) Accelerating City Equity (ACE) Project will identify and learn how equity (improving the health and well-being of all residents, not just a few) can drive sustainable development in cities worldwide. The project will contribute to making cities healthier, more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable for all residents. With funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,



**byPeople IN ASIA**

Newsletter of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights November 21, June 2022

**FINDING DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES EVEN IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC**

**PROTECTING HEALTH**

**COMMUNITY KITCHENS**

**COMMUNITY BARRIERS**

**REVIVING LIVELIHOODS**

**SPECIAL ISSUE ON HOW POOR COMMUNITIES ARE DEALING WITH THE COVID VIRUS**

this project aims to accelerate not only the exchange of global knowledge, but also the implementation of practices found to be most catalytic in cities. The project will help local grassroots leaders, policymakers and organizations identify the key elements of successful equity-driven urban development practices, with the goal of growing their use and improving equity in cities worldwide. To achieve this, ISUH will activate its national and global networks to facilitate knowledge sharing across borders through six international regional hubs and dedicated working groups."

As part of this new initiative, ACHR has helped build a decentralized regional team of active friends from around the region to discuss things and manage our Asian part of the project - including the preparation of a set of case studies (or "bright spots", which is the ACE team's far more poetic and upbeat term) of promising community-driven initiatives from around Asia that are promoting urban equity in different ways. Marina is helping to edit and compile these, and the next step will be to discuss what comes next. For that, a team from the ACE office in Valencia, Spain, will be coming to join our ACHR regional meeting in Nepal in January 2023.

## A GOOD YEAR FOR PRIZES

Even though the innovation and good work that groups in our coalition are doing on the ground continues, and keeps developing, keeps finding new opportunities and showing new light, very little of it ever finds its way into the bright light of international prizes and awards. But now and then, a well-deserved gold ribbon does float down among us. And the past year has been an unusually rich one for prizes and awards among our friends in Asia. A few highlights:

### PRIZES FOR THE RIVER SPACE PROJECT in JHENAIDAH, BANGLADESH:

The collaborative project to develop a new public park and other public spaces along Jhenaidah's Nabaganga River, which was facilitated by Kabir and Suhailey and the team at Co.Creation.Architects, has been winning accolades left and right. This is a project that was first conceived during a big participatory workshop of the Community Architects Network Network (CAN) in Jhenaidah, in June 2019. Later, the team of community architects at Co.Creation.Architects worked with the mayor and with communities and civic groups to make it actually happen. In June 2022, the project was one of six to win the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Here is the citation from the Aga Khan Prize website: "Urban River Spaces: Jhenaidah, Bangladesh, by Co.Creation.Architects / Khondaker Hasibul Kabir, Suhailey Farzana: A community-driven project providing public spaces in a riverine city with 250,000 residents, offering walkways, gardens and cultural facilities, as well as environmental efforts to increase biodiversity along the river." Here's a link to the prize information:



<https://the.akdn/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture/aga-khan-award-for-architecture>

Later in the same month, the Jhenaidah project was awarded another prestigious prize - the International Union of Architects (UIA) 2030 Award, announced during the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland:

<https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/news/uia-2030-award-winners/>

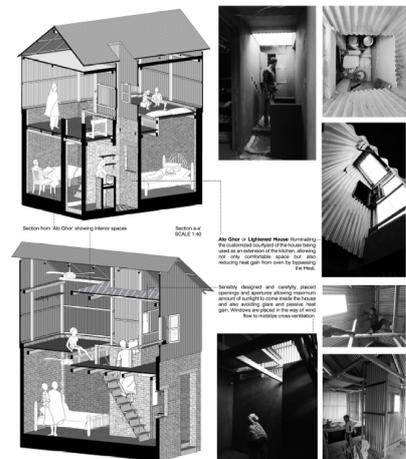
For more about all these gold ribbons - and about Co.Creation's work in Jhenaidah, please contact Kabir: [khondaker.kabir@gmail.com](mailto:khondaker.kabir@gmail.com)

### A PRIZE FOR THE GABTOLI HOUSING PROJECT in DHAKA, BANGLADESH:

Another team of community architects in the ACHR orbit - the Platform of Community Action and Architecture (POCAA) in Dhaka - has also been the recipient of a distinguished prize recently. Over the past few years, as part of ACHR's Selavip-supported "Five Model Cities Project", they have been working with the Gabtoli community - an extremely poor and crowded resettlement colony for low-caste municipal sweepers - to find ways to bring more air, light and living space into their shoebox-sized houses. That work, which they call *Aloghor* ("the lightened house"), won the second prize of the 2021 "Designing for resilience to the changing environment" competition, sponsored by the Architects Regional Council of Asia (ARCASIA). For more information about POCAA's work in Dhaka, here is a link to their facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/pocaaabd/](https://www.facebook.com/pocaaabd/)

Or contact Mahmuda Alam at [aritra.ahmed@gmail.com](mailto:aritra.ahmed@gmail.com)



### A PRIZE FOR THE CITYWIDE PROCESS in ILOILO, PHILIPPINES:

More laurels for our old friends in the coalition have come to the Homeless People's Federation in the city of Iloilo. The World Resources Institute (WRI) in Washington D.C. has chosen Iloilo (out of 155 cities in 65 countries) as one of the five finalists in their

2021-2022 Ross Center Prize for Cities. Here is what the WRI had to say about the community-led and collaborative housing and urban development work the Homeless People's Federation in the city of Iloilo has been doing - and leading - over the past 25 years, with a strong citywide focus: "They are lifting up the urban poor, women, children and informal workers, and helping their cities become more resilient, inclusive and better prepared for future shocks. They remind us that even in times of unprecedented turbulence, cities can reshape themselves for the better." The five finalists were announced at the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland, in June 2022. And in January 2023, Sonia and a team from the Federation in Iloilo will travel to Washington to attend the event, during which the winner of the prize will be announced. Please cross your fingers and toes for our friends in Iloilo. Follow this link to watch a very nice video about the work in Iloilo, prepared for the WRI Prize:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ffpquRGN3w&t=34s>



For more information about the work of the Homeless People's Federation in Iloilo, please contact Sonia: [scadornigara@yahoo.com](mailto:scadornigara@yahoo.com)



### A PRIZE FOR THE KIRTI PUR HOUSING PROJECT in KATHMANDU, NEPAL:

Earlier this month, more laurels descended upon the Himalayan city of Kathmandu, where the Kirtipur Sambriddha Awasiya relocation housing project won the 2021-2022 "People's Choice Award" for housing, sponsored by the Transformative Cities organization. This housing project, which was facilitated by Lumanti, was the first case in Nepal where a group of poor squatters was able to find new land and build a new community for themselves, after being evicted from their riverside settlements to make way for a new road. This beautiful housing project for 44 families, which was supported by the mayor of Kathmandu and by ACHR and SDI, was completed in 2005, and has been much visited, much-learned-from and much-admired ever since. As Lajana said after the prize was

announced, "This winning affirms that the approaches and strategies that we have been taking to house the poor are the right ones and should be continued." Follow this link for a detailed case study Lumanti prepared about the Kirtipur project:

[http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file\\_16062021100145.pdf](http://www.achr.net/upload/downloads/file_16062021100145.pdf)

And follow this link to read more about the 2021-2022 Transformative Cities Award:

<https://transformativecities.org/2021-2022/2022-results/>

## SOME CHANGES AT ACHR IN THE COMING YEAR

**ACHR SECRETARIAT SHIFTING TO NEPAL:** The big news you may already have heard: after over 32 years in Bangkok, under Somsook's guiding hand, the ACHR secretariat will be moving to Kathmandu, where Lajana and her team at Lumanti have heroically agreed to take on the task of facilitating the regional process. The transition won't happen at once. It has been our plan to use the next year or two to gradually shift the secretariat's various functions and coordination activities to Nepal, while the Bangkok office will play an increasingly supporting role - helping with finances and documentation, things like that. The shift couldn't come at a better time, because the grey hair, the bifocals and the flagging energy levels among the Bangkok team are starting to become conspicuous.

**REGIONAL MEETING IN KATHMANDU in JANUARY 2023:** What with the long Covid crisis and various other factors, it's been ages and ages since we have been able to organize one of our big ACHR regional gatherings. The blessings of e-mail and zoom have allowed us to keep in touch and continue to do our regional work - but only just. The coming together face-to-face, to exchange news, inspiration and affection, and to share meals and see projects together are all experiences that just can't be duplicated in a video conference. But the good news is that that long sleeping spell is about to be broken, and ACHR will be organizing a regional gathering in Kathmandu, during the last week of January 2023 (Jan 26-30). The meeting will be hosted by the team at Lumanti, and will give us a chance to ceremonially turn over the coordination of ACHR's regional work from Bangkok to Kathmandu. We'll also be able to discuss the collective housing project with urbaMonde, the Selavip-supported "Five Model Cities" project, the new collaboration with the ACE project and various other regional issues. After the meeting, Lumanti has organized an optional three-day field trip to visit a new citywide initiative in the southern Nepali city of Kalaiya, with a stop in Bharatpur (old ACCA project) on the way. For information about the meeting, please contact Lumanti at [lumantijoshi@gmail.com](mailto:lumantijoshi@gmail.com)

**ACHR STAFF NEWS:** Somsook has been making more gestures towards retirement recently, but continues to divide her full-time energies between ACHR's regional work and CODI's Baan Mankong housing program in Thailand (both urban and rural), for which she continues to act as advisor and innovation-nudging big sister. Natvipa ("Nat") is now fully retired from her work at CODI, semi-retired from her work at ACHR and comes in just a few afternoons a week to help with the ACHR administrative work. Pakorn ("Chai") is also making retirement murmurs, but continues to manage all the ACHR finances and day-to-day office stuff, with

his unsinkable grace and good humor. After a few years working part-time with ACHR in Bangkok, Brenda has moved back to her native Bogota, Colombia, and has now moved on to other adventures. Minh Chau has also moved back with her family to her home town of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, but continues to help coordinate the Selavip "5 Model Cities" project remotely. Chawanad ("Nad") has been working with the Baan Mankong program at CODI and is helping the team at Lumanti to manage the transition of the ACHR secretariat. The epidemic of returning-to-native-places has infected Tom also, who will be moving back to Portland, Oregon (for the second time!) in early January 2023. But if all the stars align as they ought to and we have enough new work in the coalition, he will be ready and eager to keep helping with any and all writing and documentation work from a distance.

The news is not all of aging and diminishment and withdrawal, though. In the last few months, we've had a new young face in the ACHR office in Bangkok: Marina Kolovou-Kouri, a former DPU-intern who spent several years working with Women for the World in Yangon, was obliged to leave the country right after the Feb 2021 military coup d'état. She continues to support the team there from a distance - first from her native Greece and adopted Germany, and more recently from Bangkok, where she has been helping coordinate the new ACE project "bright spots" and write up more collective housing case studies.



We'll close it there, and end with a big load of very warm wishes to everyone for a fruitful - and perhaps less viral - new year. Take good care everybody,

- Tom, Somsook, Marina, Nad, Nat and Chai