



Kampung Akuarium

CASE STUDIES OF COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN ASIAN CITIES SERIES • AUGUST 2023

After authorities demolished the vibrant settlement of Kampung Akuarium in 2016 with only a few days' notice before eviction, numerous residents decided to reclaim the land and initiate negotiations for the reconstruction of their housing on the same site. This effort aligned with wider mobilization urging government support for upgrading kampungs without displacing their communities. After lengthy collective efforts, the Aquarium community succeeded in its endeavor. Collaborating with architects, they developed a new housing complex on the same site, which will eventually be owned and managed by the Aquarium cooperative.

- **Project** Kampung Susun Aquarium
- **Location** Pasar Ikan Street, Penjaringan Ward, Penjaringan District, North Jakarta, Indonesia
- **Size** 240 households
- **Finished** first phase completed in 2021, second phase is ongoing
- **Type** On-site reconstruction of a former squatter settlement into cooperatively managed public rental housing

CONTEXT, PROCESS AND PARTNERS

The city:

In the vibrant metropolis of Jakarta, a paradox unfolds. For some, the city stands as a symbol of progress, boasting towering skyscrapers, bustling freeways, and foreign investments. Yet, for others, it reveals a catalog of urbanization flaws, including rampant inequities, pervasive poverty, entrenched corruption, unrelenting pollution, and unaffordable housing. Nearly 40% of the city's eleven million residents endure the harsh reality of poverty, dwelling in unhealthy, insecure, and perilous conditions, often within "informal" *kampungs* that face the constant threat of evictions.

Between 1997 and 2017, successive governments justified these evictions using familiar pretexts of "illegality," "disturbance of public order," and "public interest." Even more recently, the rationale for evictions has shifted to flood control, even though the city's flood issues are rooted in deeper urban planning and development problems. Despite mounting evidence of these underlying causes, *kampung* residents have unfairly become convenient scapegoats, being labeled as "thugs," "thieves," and "illegal," and wrongly blamed for flooding and pollution.

To address flood concerns, a range of infrastructure projects was initiated, often involving the eviction of riverside and coastal *kampungs*, and the construction of concrete riverbanks and sea walls. Meanwhile, the government advocated for the construction of *rusunawa*—massive blocks of flats for rent presented as a resettlement solution and the answer to Jakarta's so-called "slum problem." In the name of development and flood control, thousands of families have been forced to forsake their homes, relocate to rental flats dozens of kilometers away, and sink deeper into poverty. Despite claims of protecting the urban poor from flooding, many people find themselves vulnerable and displaced, facing dire consequences as they lose not only their homes but also their livelihoods and essential support systems. This reality stands in stark contrast to the promises of progress, raising serious questions about the true priorities and consequences of urban development in this complex metropolis.

The community:

Kampung Aquarium is an informal settlement located on the northern coast of Jakarta, with a long and intriguing history. In an area originally known as "Pasar Ikan" (the "Fish Market", due to its location behind the fish market), a semi-permanent laboratory was established in 1905 for marine research. Dr. J.C. Koningsberger, the head of the Agricultural Zoological Laboratory, chose this location for the Dutch East Indies Government Marine Research Institute to study the local marine habitat. In 1922, the compound saw the addition of a groundbreaking aquarium—the first of its kind in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Opening its doors to the public in 1923, the aquarium quickly became a popular attraction for tourists in Jakarta.

Following Indonesia's independence, the management of the site was handed over to the Oceanography Institute under the Indonesian Research Institute (LIPI). Over time, the marine laboratory relocated to Ancol, and by the late 1970s, the aquarium itself ceased operations. Subsequently, the vacant buildings were informally repurposed as dormitories for police officers. Over the next three decades, the area witnessed informal land transactions as more individuals occupied small parcels of land, constructing semi-permanent bamboo and wooden houses for their own habitation or rental purposes. In homage to its historical roots, the settlement came to be known as Kampung Aquarium. By 2016, the community had grown to encompass approximately 386 families, 241 of whom were "structure owners" while the rest rented rooms or structures from other families.

Strategically positioned, Kampung Aquarium finds itself in close proximity to noteworthy landmarks, including the historic Sunda Kelapa port and Kampung Keramat Luar Batang, Jakarta's oldest mosque and cemetery. Furthermore, it lies near popular tourist attractions like the Maritime Museum and Syahbandar Tower. This advantageous location fostered a vibrant economic environment, with thriving services, tourism, and property rentals in the surrounding area. Many residents of Aquarium found employment in nearby markets or offered daily rental services for wooden boats, catering to the needs of visiting tourists.

Over the years, the residents fostered a strong sense of security. They obtained official identity cards with their Kampung Aquarium addresses and had limited access to municipal services, including authorized electricity meters. They also made investments in the area's development, such as constructing roads and establishing a water supply system. Because of that, and despite witnessing the eviction of other *kampungs* in Jakarta since 2012, they firmly believed in their legitimate right to reside in Kampung Aquarium and never anticipated facing eviction themselves. To their astonishment, however, even after decades of calling Kampung Aquarium home, they would soon face a similar fate.

Eviction threats and demolition:

In March and April 2016, the residents of Kampung Akuarium received a series of eviction notices from the government. The first notice arrived on March 30th, giving them a mere 7 days to demolish their homes and vacate the area. The justification for the eviction primarily revolved around spatial planning regulations, asserting that the residential function of Kampung Akuarium did not align with the designated land use and that the residents did not have legal building permits. Furthermore, the Jakarta Provincial Government aimed to construct a sea wall as part of the National Capital Integrated Coastal Development (NCICD) project, an initiative to mitigate floods in the region.

However, according to a community organizer from the NGO Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), the eviction had deeper underlying reasons. The government held a generalized aspiration to eradicate all slums in the city, often perpetuating negative stereotypes about kampungs. They claimed that these communities harbored diseases like tuberculosis and negatively impacted tourism, deeming them "eyesores" for foreign visitors. Leveraging such arguments, the authorities campaigned for the immediate dissolution of kampungs and the relocation of residents to what they considered "improved" housing.

In the same spirit, the authorities offered the Akuarium families a choice: to move into public rental housing in Marunda, a sub-district in Northeastern Jakarta, and in Kapuk, a sub-district in Northern Jakarta. However, the residents were far from pleased with these options. Both choices meant uprooting themselves from their workplaces and familiar neighborhoods. Additionally, they would have to bear the burden of paying rent, an expense most of them had not previously encountered while residing in Akuarium. To make matters worse, they felt a sense of betrayal from President Widodo, who had promised during his gubernatorial campaign (prior to running for president) to legalize the settlement and provide official certificates for their homes.

Meanwhile, within Kampung Akuarium, the atmosphere grew tense as police and soldiers went from house to house, pressuring residents to leave by the end of the week. Intimidation tactics were employed, warning people that if they did not accept immediate resettlement and register for public rental housing, all available spots would be taken, leaving them homeless. Just before the initial one-week deadline expired, another letter arrived on April 6th, granting them an additional 3 days. This was followed by a third letter on April 8th, threatening eviction the following day. To heighten their fear, authorities set up a tent at the entrance of the settlement, displaying maps outlining the specifics of the impending demolition. These tactics proved effective for several families, who chose to relocate to the remote public rental units and began proactively moving their belongings.

Within a mere two weeks of receiving the initial eviction notice, a final letter arrived on April 10th, commanding an immediate demolition. The Akuarium community prepared themselves to resist and intervene in the demolition. On April 11th, 2016, a scene unfolded as public order servants, police, and military personnel arrived at the kampung. Determined to defend their homes, the residents formed a human chain, with women and children leading the way, joining hands and offering prayers together. But their efforts were in vain as the security forces forcefully pushed through the crowd, and the bulldozer reduced the once-vibrant settlement to nothing but a pile of rubble.

Initiating the process:

In the aftermath of the demolition, the community found itself fractured and scattered, with families forced to disperse in various directions. Many found themselves resettling into public rental units, while others opted to return to their villages, seeking solace after the traumatic experience. Some even stayed on wooden boats at the pier. Their identity cards, which listed Kampung Akuarium as their official address, were revoked, leaving them extremely vulnerable in dealing with day-to-day issues. Although those who resettled in public rental units eventually received new ID cards with their updated addresses, over 100 families remained in a state of limbo for months on end.

At first, only a handful of families defiantly chose to stay in the same spot, refusing to be uprooted. However, within a matter of months, an increasing number of determined individuals returned, resulting in a community of 128 families who pieced together small, precarious huts from salvaged remnants of their former homes. It was during this period that the remaining members of the Akuarium community began to forge a more organized front, aided by NGOs and other allies.

Outwardly, the residents' anger and opposition to the forced eviction were made loud and clear. Press conferences and demonstrations were organized to condemn the authorities' callous treatment. Internally, they rallied together, coordinating their efforts to garner solidarity with help from organizations like UPC and the Urban Poor Network (Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota, JRMK). Fundraising campaigns were launched to improve their living conditions, resulting in the installation of public toilets, a community kitchen, a temporary mosque,

better tents, and various activities for the children. And beyond that, they started crafting a comprehensive proposal for a scheme that would allow them to rebuild their homes on-site, eliminating the need to relocate to far-flung districts of Jakarta.

The 2017 election for Jakarta's new governor presented the community with a unique opportunity to harness political momentum and strategize their efforts in Kampung Aquarium. During the election for Jakarta's new governor, Mr. Anies Baswedan emerged as a progressive candidate, garnering support from the JRMK network. The network played a crucial role in his election through a "political contract" they negotiated with him. On February 15th, 2017, a momentous public ceremony was held to sign the political contract, which involved a commitment from the governor to support a set of pro-poor policies in exchange for votes from the urban poor. This strategic collaboration between JRMK, UPC, and Mr. Baswedan aimed to amplify the visibility, legal standing, and participation of the urban poor in the city's governance.

The political contract stands as a milestone that paved the way for the development of Kampung Aquarium. From then on, UPC intensified its engagement with the community and sought support from other allies. Architects from the Rujak Center for Urban Studies were brought in to lend their expertise in developing a comprehensive planning proposal. Neighboring communities also joined forces, demonstrating solidarity and contributing to the process. Their objective was not only to voice their demand for on-site reconstruction but also to present a tangible pathway toward achieving their vision. This involved formulating designs, devising long-term development and management strategies, and establishing a financial mechanism to support their aspirations.

Support groups and partners in the project:

- **Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota (JRMK)**, or Urban Poor Network, is a coalition of impoverished communities and occupational groups in North Jakarta. Established in 2008 with support from the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), JRMK encompasses 32 kampungs, three street vendor groups, and 16 pedicab hubs. During this project, JRMK played a crucial role in forming the Aquarium cooperative and fostering connections with other cooperatives throughout the city. Additionally, they provided invaluable support in negotiating the political contract with the government.
- **Urban Poor Consortium (UPC)**, an NGO based in Jakarta, emerged in 1997 with a mission to tackle urban poverty, housing rights, slum improvement, children's education, and alternative health. In collaboration with JRMK, UPC organized savings initiatives, capacity-building programs, and meaningful links with policymakers, professionals, and institutions. Their contributions extended to strategic planning for the reconstruction project, community training, networking with other organizations, and leading the political negotiations with Jakarta authorities.
- **Kampung Aquarium Cooperative** was established by the residents of Kampung Aquarium, serving as a legal entity to facilitate community organization and collective economic empowerment. Tasked with managing the buildings and surrounding areas, the cooperative also facilitated various activities within the housing project, ranging from laundry services and gardening to education and community welfare.
- **Rujak Center for Urban Studies**, a think-and-do tank committed to urban transformation and environmental awareness, worked closely with the community to develop the reconstruction project's design while providing comprehensive technical support.
- **DKI Jakarta government**, responsible for the Special Capital Region, played a pivotal role in facilitating the Kampung Susun Aquarium. Measures included providing on-site temporary housing for evicted families, modifying the spatial plan to accommodate residential development, financing the kampung susun construction using fines from private developers, and establishing agreements for land use and building ownership rights after a mutually agreed period.
- **Governor Anies Baswedan's** political support was instrumental in advancing the redevelopment process of Kampung Aquarium. He supported alternative housing concepts and recognized the cultural importance of kampungs as spaces for collective living, ensuring active involvement of kampung residents alongside the government and private sectors.
- **Agrarian Reform Task Force (GTRA)** was established in 2019 to facilitate the Agrarian Reform program's implementation. Comprising city- and national-level government officials alongside a diverse team of academics, land experts, and community organizers, the GTRA conducted a comprehensive study and formulated recommendations to address land issues and determine the appropriate reconstruction scheme.
- **Private developers**, including PT Almaron, Greenwood, Pondok Indah Land, and Trimitraland, indirectly financed the project as part of their obligations to the Jakarta government, resulting from previous development permits granted to them. These companies were responsible for constructing the buildings in Kampung Aquarium.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

Legal background and legal status:

The land status of Kampung Akuarium was a tangled web of confusion and contradictions right from the start. Ownership records were murky, and conflicting land zoning plans added to the complexity. Following the relocation of the Oceanography Institute, a pioneering group of families took root in the Akuarium land. Securing their place in the community involved seeking approval from the resident police officers, occasionally accompanied by modest bribes. This first generation of settlers transformed the once vacant and swampy terrain into a thriving settlement. As the settlement grew, new waves of newcomers arrived, often paying fees to the original settlers as compensation for landfilling and preparing the area for habitation. Some families managed to purchase plots, although they never obtained formal land titles. Nevertheless, these households paid property taxes and possessed letters from local authorities acknowledging their awareness of the built structures—both of which cemented their perception of themselves as landowners.

Alongside the homeowners, numerous renters resided in Kampung Akuarium. Some leased entire houses from absentee "owners," while others rented single rooms within existing households. Both homeowners and renters faced a precarious situation, lacking official titles that would grant them legal recognition. Their claims to the land remained unrecognized, leaving their rights and standing within the community in an ambiguous balance.

In asserting their ownership, the residents of Kampung Akuarium argued that the land they occupied fell under the category of state land. State land (*tanah negara*) is a special category of land that does not belong to any specific individual or entity and requires a legal process to determine rightful ownership. However, the government contended that the plot had already come under its ownership when the Oceanography Institute moved to another area and the state land in question was no longer up for grabs. The only evidence provided was an agreement between the DKI Jakarta government and the Oceanography Institute to exchange two plots of land; however, the former had never registered the land under its ownership.

Despite the existence of this exchange agreement dating back to the 1970s, the residents firmly believed that they still had a rightful claim to the land since it remained unregistered. According to the constitution, individuals who have resided on the same plot for more than 20 years are entitled to priority consideration in the land ownership registration process. While this does not guarantee a land title, the constitution does provide favorable conditions for long-term occupants, which the residents of Akuarium were. However, they were not even given an opportunity to apply for and assert ownership over the land they had occupied and purchased decades ago. In fact, the Jakarta government only completed the long-overdue ownership registration after the eviction had taken place.

Adding to the complexity of the land status was the issue of zoning. Authorities argued that the spatial planning regulations for the area did not permit residential use. However, even this claim was far from straightforward. There were two different spatial planning regulations in effect. The first, implemented in 2012, classified the area as a green zone, allowing for parks or natural infrastructure. A more recent regulation from 2014 designated the site as a red zone, primarily reserved for government buildings, but with some potential for housing under certain circumstances.

Government support:

This project has received various forms of government support throughout its development, including policy accommodations and implementation assistance. Here are the key contributions of the government to the realization of Kampung Susun Akuarium, presented in chronological order:

Facilitating on-site reconstruction: In 2018, Governor Baswedan issued Decree No. 878, which prioritized 21 kampungs in Jakarta for a collaborative kampung upgrading program. This decree provided the initial groundwork for the reconstruction of Kampung Akuarium on its original site, although the specific implementation details were yet to be defined at that time.

Construction of temporary housing: Governor's Decree No. 878 also mandated the construction of temporary shelters for the families that had reoccupied the Akuarium land after their houses were demolished, ensuring they had a better place to reside while awaiting a long-term solution. Utilizing funds from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions by PT Jaya Construction, a government-owned company, the Jakarta government built these temporary shelters. Essential amenities such as access to clean water and electricity networks, washing facilities, and green gardens, were also provided to the residents.

Restoration of identity cards: In 2016, following the eviction, the residents of Kampung Aquarium had their identity cards invalidated due to the change in their listed addresses. However, in 2018, the DKI Jakarta government agreed to reinstate these annulled identity cards, ensuring that the residents regained their official identification, which was essential for their access to various services and rights.

Cooperative registration: Recognizing the significance and urgency of formalizing the cooperative established by the residents with support from UPC, the government provided support and covered associated expenses to facilitate the registration of cooperatives. This support eliminated the financial burden associated with the registration process, making it accessible to the families of Kampung Aquarium that already had enough on their plate.

Community Action Plan (CAP) program: In 2018, the Jakarta government launched the CAP program, aiming to enhance community participation in urban and infrastructure development. Responding to proposals from communities and their allies, the DKI Jakarta government adopted the CAP as a program for the upgrading of targeted kampungs, including Kampung Aquarium. This program served as a platform for the voices of the people to be heard, with their priorities and aspirations being considered in the planning and implementation processes. The CAP involved studying, analyzing, and detailed planning to provide concrete recommendations before implementing projects like the Kampung Susun Aquarium.

Collaborative Implementation Program (CIP): The introduction of the CIP by the government allowed communities to access municipal budgets, irrespective of their legal land status. This program enabled them to implement projects based on the proposals that emerged from the CAP, ensuring that the residents' ideas and visions were transformed into tangible actions.

Agrarian Reform Task Force (GTRA): President Joko Widodo's Decree No. 86 in 2018 focused on agrarian reform as a means to address land ownership gaps, resolve conflicts, and utilize land for the betterment of the people. As part of this initiative, GTRAs were established at the national, provincial, and city levels. In Jakarta, a Task Force was formed in 2019, comprising representatives from the DKI Jakarta administration and national-level land authorities. Supporting the Task Force, a Special Team of legal experts, academics, and community organizers conducted a comprehensive study of the 21 kampungs involved in the upgrading program, including Kampung Aquarium. The study aimed to align the aspirations of the kampung residents with existing regulations, providing recommendations that would contribute to their well-being and the project's success. Two aspects emerged from that study: that the land should continue to be owned by the government, and that the community should be reconstructed at its original location—both of which got approved by the Task Force and provided assurance to the residents who had been harboring doubts until that point.

Tenure agreement: Building upon all these studies and proposals, the DKI Jakarta government reached an agreement with the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative in October 2022. This landmark agreement defined the tenure terms for Kampung Susun Aquarium, signifying an exceptional level of trust and recognition bestowed upon the cooperative. In a departure from conventional low-cost housing projects, the operations and management of this housing project will be delegated to the cooperative, empowering the residents to take charge of their community's development and welfare.

Modification of the land use plan: Another turning point emerged when a new spatial planning regulation, outlined in Governor's Decree 31/2022, was implemented in October of that same year. This new decree brought about a significant change to the land use plan of the Aquarium site, designating it as a settlement zone. This adjustment effectively addressed one of the primary concerns that had initially prompted the eviction in 2016.

Land tenure:

Prior to Governor Anies Baswedan's term coming to an end, the Kampung Susun Aquarium cooperative raised concerns about the tenure status of the land and buildings. The residents of Kampung Aquarium proposed a solution for long-term security by acquiring land rights and ownership of the Kampung Susun buildings. However, the DKI Jakarta provincial government expressed hesitance in disposing of assets due to the complex procedures involved in getting permits from Jakarta's Regional Parliament (DPRD). Additionally, the Jakarta government could only allocate funds for projects situated on government-owned land—which meant that relinquishing ownership of the land would impede the utilization of government budgets for the construction of Kampung Susun Aquarium.

Recognizing these limitations, the GTRA and the Special Team conducted a study and recommended that the DKI Jakarta government grant land use rights to the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative while retaining ownership of the assets. This would be achieved through a land use cooperation agreement between the Provincial

Government of DKI Jakarta and the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative, with the cooperative serving as the beneficiaries and managers of the Kampung Susun. The recommendations put forth by the Special Team were discussed and approved during the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government Leadership Meeting, with the Governor's support.

In October 2022, an agreement was signed between the Jakarta government and the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative, outlining the terms and conditions of land and building tenure. The agreement highlights two stages: the transition period and the transfer period. The transition period spans five years from the time of the agreement (2022-2027), while the transfer period occurs after the completion of these five years. According to the agreement, the land will continue to be owned by the DKI Jakarta government, while land use rights will be transferred to the Cooperative after the transition period. As for the buildings, ownership will be transferred to the Cooperative upon the conclusion of the transition period.

The transfer of building ownership to the Cooperative is subject to specific conditions, including the following:

- 1) Throughout the transition period, the cooperative will lease the buildings from the Jakarta Provincial Government at a symbolic rate of 34,000 rupiahs (roughly US\$ 2.50) per unit per month, totaling 2 million rupiahs (US\$ 140) per family over the course of five years. While this rental rate is considerably lower than the prevailing rates for flats in Jakarta, it is important to note that the cooperative will be responsible for the costs of maintenance and repair of the buildings—unlike conventional public rental housing.
- 2) The cooperative must demonstrate financial capacity by establishing a sinking fund of 1 billion rupiahs (US\$ 67,000) as collateral for major repairs and maintenance, such as structural issues or building damage.
- 3) The cooperative must showcase technical capability by assembling a team with the necessary expertise to maintain and repair equipment as needed.

Should these conditions be met, the cooperative will become eligible to seek an ownership grant from the Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta. The fulfillment of the first requirement has already been realized for the first 107 families, as they have dutifully remitted five years' worth of rent to the Jakarta government upon signing the agreement in 2022. Once the next cohort of families takes up residence in their finalized units, they, too, will enter into an analogous rental agreement, leasing the apartments for a duration of 5 years, starting from their respective move-in dates. Throughout this transitional phase, the cooperative functions as the lessee of the buildings, while individual families hold the right to inhabit their units based on the designation of the buildings as "cooperative assets." After the transition period, when the cooperative owns the buildings, individual agreements will be made between the Aquarium cooperative and each family to formalize their apartment usage rights.

PROJECT FINANCING

1 US\$ = 14,500 Indonesian rupiahs (approximate rate during the project term)

Project costs and who paid for what?

Land costs: The DKI Jakarta government allocated a 10,384 square meter (2.56-acre) land plot to the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative at no charge.

Site development, infrastructure, and housing construction costs: Kampung Susun Aquarium consists of five towers, comprising a total of 241 units. These towers were constructed by private development companies in exchange for securing permits to acquire substantial plots of land for their own commercial projects. When a land transaction involves a parcel of land exceeding 5,000 square meters (approximately 1.2 acres), a stipulation comes into play, mandating that the buyer cedes a portion of the land to the government. This allocated land is then to be developed into public facilities, such as parks, road networks, or other vital infrastructure. However, in practice, adherence to this requirement is rare, given that companies are often reluctant to relinquish part of the land earmarked for their own development.

To address this, the government modified the condition, mandating that companies declining land allocation opt to pay fines instead. These fines are subsequently used to undertake analogous "public benefit" projects in alternative locations. In this case, the DKI Jakarta government ensured that these companies fulfilled their obligation and directed the funds resulting from these fines toward the financing of the construction of Kampung Susun Aquarium. This pragmatic approach allowed for faster progress, as the necessary funds were readily available. Relying solely on public budgets would have caused delays, leaving the Aquarium families in limbo.

The construction of Towers B and D (107 units) was financed by PT Almaron, a subsidiary of Lippo Tbk, with an investment of 62 billion rupiahs (approximately US\$ 4 million). The remaining three towers are being constructed by Greenwood, Pondok Indah Land, and Trimitraland. Currently, towers A and C (80 units) are under construction, and the final phase, Tower E (53 units), is expected to be completed by the end of 2023. The total cost of housing and infrastructure development for Kampung Susun Aquarium is estimated to be approximately US\$ 10 million (148 billion rupiahs). Thanks to this innovative financing model, the construction progress remains on track, bringing the community closer to their dream of permanent homes.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Design process:

The design process for Kampung Aquarium spanned three transformative years, marked by the active participation of Kampung residents and community architects from Rujak. Regular design workshops were held on weekends, where the community architects collaborated closely with a working team comprising community members from diverse backgrounds. These workshops unfolded in three distinct stages, each with a specific focus.

Stage 1: Preparation and context analysis

During this stage, the working team conducted a comprehensive SWOT analysis, dissecting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Kampung Aquarium. They also delved into the kampung's historical significance and mapped the surrounding heritage sites and landmarks, using this community-driven data to shape their overarching vision. Simultaneously, Rujak architects facilitated spatial planning workshops, acquainting residents with zoning regulations and land use plans.

Stage 2: Developing a vision

Once the residents gained a collective understanding of the kampung's history and context, they embarked on developing a shared vision. Their aim was to create a vibrant "marine tourism kampung" that harmonized with the local environment and incorporated nearby landmarks within the heritage area. Preserving the social cohesiveness that characterized the community was also a crucial aspect of their vision. Initially, there was resistance to a vertical housing typology, similar to the public rental housing blocks (*rusunawa*) favored by the Indonesian government. This resistance stemmed from negative experiences with remote housing blocks that lacked social infrastructures, resulting in adverse effects on livelihoods and social cohesion. After negotiations, a compromise was reached to redevelop the site with mid-rise apartment blocks known as "kampung susun" (vertical kampung), provided that the design accommodated the kampung lifestyle and included ample communal and green spaces. Ultimately, preserving the existing land and securing tenure took precedence over the specific building typology.

Stage 3: Design and planning

Guided by the collective vision, architects and residents proceeded with the schematic design, focusing on the placement, features, and details of the buildings and apartment units. The residents actively participated in workshops, using creative materials like thread, bricks, and water bottles to design their own units and bring their ideas to life. Full-scale plans of apartment units were drawn on the ground to assess room sizes and spatial organization. This collaborative design process ensured that the voices and aspirations of the kampung residents were thoughtfully integrated into the design. However, when the design was submitted to the Housing Agency in early 2019, it underwent a slow and complex bureaucratic process that required the involvement of "formal" planners. As a result, multiple revisions were made to align with non-negotiable building regulations, with the architects from Rujak and the working team making efforts to preserve important design decisions that reflected the residents' perspective in the final plan.

House design and layout plans:

After an extensive and intricate process of planning and negotiation, the final scheme for Kampung Susun Aquarium emerged as a vibrant and dynamic living space. This innovative development encompasses five apartment buildings of varying sizes: Block A (48 units), Block B (55 units), Block C (32 units), Block D (52 units), and Block E (53 units), totaling 240 apartment units and one unit designated as a funeral room.

Throughout the concept design stage, the residents and architects remained steadfast in preserving the kampung's essence as a way of life. Embracing this spirit, they created split-level floors and wide hallways, fostering social interactions and a profound sense of community among the residents. All the apartments have identical sizes and layouts, offering a comfortable living space of 36 square meters (387.5 square feet). Each

unit is thoughtfully arranged, featuring a living room, one bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a small balcony. In larger families, the living room often serves as a multi-functional space, adapting to the residents' needs.

Kampung Susun Aquarium also offers an array of communal infrastructures, enhancing the residents' living experience. These include dedicated parking spaces for motorcycles, a gallery space that doubles as the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative's office, a community center, and public toilets. Additionally, facilities such as a funeral home, a local government office, a clinic, and a library are currently being integrated into the buildings under construction. Each building also incorporates space for a few small shop units on the ground floor, providing entrepreneurial opportunities for residents who can rent these spaces for their businesses. The rental fees collected by the cooperative contribute to the management, maintenance, and various activities organized for the benefit of the residents. Recently, the compound has also welcomed a few additional street shops, whose owners pay rent to the cooperative for the spaces they occupy. Moreover, future development plans include a mosque, a playground, and a park within the compound.

Construction process:

Since the demolition in 2016, the site of Kampung Aquarium has undergone several rounds of construction. Initially, the residents who chose to stay erected flimsy temporary shelters, put together from debris and donated tents. For over two years, they endured these conditions until the government intervened in 2018, providing temporary housing to accommodate them while awaiting the completion of Kampung Susun's construction. The government built 90 units, housing 88 families, with the two remaining units transformed into an office for the cooperative and a playroom for children. Despite these efforts, not all families could be accommodated, and some temporarily moved to public rental housing.

As the actual construction of the Kampung Susun got underway, the temporary housing had to be dismantled to clear space for the new construction site. The DKI Jakarta government suggested moving the 88 families to flats, including in Rusunawa Pesakih Daan Mogot, situated in West Jakarta, approximately 14 kilometers away from Kampung Aquarium. However, many residents resisted this idea, wanting to actively participate in and oversee the daily progress of construction. After extensive deliberation, a compromise was reached and all temporary shelters were shifted to the edge of the construction site, closer to the sea wall. The resettlement process was executed collectively by the residents and funded through a combination of contributions from the community and assistance provided by the construction company. This arrangement ensured residents' proximity to the construction site while facilitating the effective progress of the new Kampung Susun.

Before commencing the construction, the site underwent examination by the cultural heritage team, given its heritage area status. No significant findings were uncovered, allowing construction to proceed smoothly. The construction work was undertaken by a company chosen through a tender process by the private developer. Additionally, several residents participated as paid laborers, primarily overseeing the construction to ensure it aligned with the approved designs. For any modifications, the developer required a signed agreement from the cooperative. To fulfill this, the community appointed two individuals to inspect and monitor every detail, granting approval or rejection accordingly. This empowered genuine community engagement, and not just mere observation.

To support the workforce during construction, the cooperative established a canteen, providing sustenance to all workers involved in the construction process. The first two buildings were completed in August 2021, marking the beginning of construction for the subsequent two blocks shortly thereafter.

COMMUNITY AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

How was the community process organized?

In the initial months following the eviction, the kampung residents took a proactive step by establishing a kampung committee. Comprising 15 members, this committee represented the diverse demographics of Kampung Aquarium, including women, men, youth, the elderly, homeowners, and renters. The kampung committee took on the vital role of closely collaborating with all stakeholders engaged in the project, which included governmental bodies, NGOs like Rujak and UPC, the JRMK community network, and individuals who had been unwaveringly supporting the Kampung Aquarium cause since its inception. The committee's activities involved organizing weekly gatherings, during which residents discussed updates concerning the ongoing struggle, particularly matters necessitating collective decision-making.

A significant step toward the reconstruction of Kampung Aquarium was the establishment of a cooperative, a crucial legal entity that would facilitate negotiation and organization within the community. The Aquarium

cooperative was officially formed in 2018 and comprised 103 members out of the total 240 households within the Kampung Susun. Notably, the Aquarium community was among the pioneering kampungs in Jakarta to create such a cooperative, alongside the Komunitas Anak Kali Ciliwung (KAKC), which included Kampung Tongkol, Krapu, and Lodan. This cooperative framework fundamentally contributed to the successes achieved by Aquarium's residents in their reconstruction journey, particularly on the same land plot. A distinctive aspect of this cooperative model is the delegation of building management responsibilities to the cooperative itself, diverging from conventional practices where such responsibilities were usually entrusted to governmental bodies or developers.

After the project was finished:

The completion of the first project phase coincided with the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, compounding a host of challenges that disproportionately impacted low-income residents in many ways. In response, the Aquarium cooperative once again assumed a leadership role, orchestrating community efforts, coordinating relief measures, and formulating livelihood initiatives to alleviate the burdens faced by the community.

One such endeavor was a cooperative-run laundry service designed to ease the domestic workload for women within the community while generating income for those involved. This laundry enterprise, managed by three women who are members of the Kampung Aquarium Cooperative, operates full-time and adeptly handles the washing and ironing of up to 60kg of clothing daily. The comprehensive service, encompassing washing, ironing, and home delivery, is priced at 6,000 rupiahs (\$0.42) per kilogram—15% below the standard fee charged by women who usually launder clothes in the kampungs. In its initial two weeks of operation, the pilot service managed to launder 720kg of clothing, serving 147 customers across nine kampungs in the JRMK Network, Kampung Aquarium included!

Aside from the laundry service, the cooperative has since pursued other avenues for generating income. Their resourcefulness has led to revenue generation through catering services, the provision of homestays, a water refill service, and the collection of nominal rental fees for small businesses and kiosks operating on the ground floors of buildings or within the compound's streets.

Alongside these income sources, cooperative members regularly contribute to specific funds:

- A **monthly savings fund** earmarked for cooperative operations and activities, set at 20,000 rupiahs (US\$ 1.37) per unit.
- A **sinking fund**, amounting to 100,000 rupiahs (US\$ 6.90) per unit per month, established for long-term contingencies, for example, to address significant structural issues that might arise with the buildings.
- A **monthly maintenance fee** of 310,000 rupiahs (US\$ 21.38) per unit, allocated for the routine upkeep of the buildings, encompassing water and electricity bills, and compensating technical personnel responsible for managing water supply, CCTV systems, waste disposal, and related matters.

The proceeds generated by the cooperative contribute to building management and maintenance, as well as the organization of collective activities by and for the residents. In addition to the business endeavors mentioned earlier, the Aquarium community tends to a communal garden and organizes activities catering to preschool-aged children.

Project timeline:

- 1905:** During the colonial era, a marine research laboratory is constructed in Northern Jakarta, followed by the construction of the first aquarium in Southeast Asia.
- 1949:** After Indonesia gained independence, the management of the site is transferred to the Oceanography Institute, under the Indonesian Research Institute (LIPI).
- 1970:** As the Oceanography Institute relocates to a different area in the late 1970s, the former aquarium site gradually becomes occupied by newcomers who informally purchase small plots and build their houses. Over the next three decades, Kampung Aquarium grew to house 386 families, including both structure owners and renters.
- 2012:** During his gubernatorial campaign, then-candidate Joko Widodo makes a promise to Aquarium residents that they would not face eviction but would have their tenure legalized.
- 2016:** Under Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama's term, in April, the residents of Kampung Aquarium receive consecutive eviction notices. Despite their resistance efforts, all structures are bulldozed under heavy security presence on April 11th. Many families relocate to public rental housing or their hometowns, while a few remain and rebuild temporary shelters.
- 2017:** On February 15th, a political contract is signed between JRMK and the then-Governor of Jakarta, Mr. Anies Baswedan, signifying a shift in the treatment of kampung residents in the city. The Aquarium

residents begin collaborating with architects from Rujak and other allies to develop their reconstruction proposal.

- 2018:** A decree secures the construction of Kampung Aquarium on the same site. Simultaneously, the authorities agree to construct temporary housing on the disputed land to accommodate families until the reconstruction is completed. Meanwhile, the residents of Kampung Aquarium register as a cooperative with 103 members, becoming one of the first cooperatives focused on housing mobilization.
- 2019:** In January, community architects from Rujak, along with the community's working team, submit the design documents to the Housing Agency. Several rounds of revisions follow to comply with building regulations. Based on the community's proposals and requests, the GTRA produces an academic paper with recommendations for the future management of the land and buildings.
- 2020:** The temporary housing is relocated to the edge of the plot to allow for the commencement of new construction. On August 17th, the construction finally begins, with the Governor of Jakarta inaugurating the construction of the first two towers.
- 2021:** Exactly one year after the start of construction, on August 17th, the first two buildings (Blocks B and D) are completed, and 107 families begin moving into their new apartments. Immediately after the completion of the first two buildings, the construction of the next two commences. Amidst the pandemic, the Aquarium cooperative launches a series of income-generating activities in the community in collaboration with JRMK.
- 2022:** In October, an agreement is signed between the DKI Jakarta government and the Aquarium Cooperative, outlining the housing project's scheme and defining the tenure terms for the land and buildings.
- 2023:** The construction of Blocks A and C is nearly complete, with only some administrative tasks pending for the final handover to the Aquarium residents. A new rent agreement covering the transition period of 5 years will be signed between the next batch of residents and the DKI Jakarta government.

IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

Problems:

While the Kampung Susun Aquarium project stands as a groundbreaking achievement in the realm of housing provision and the approach towards slums, its progress hasn't been devoid of challenges. One of the main hurdles lies in the bureaucratic realm, where a "business as usual" mentality prevails, often hindering the recognition of kampung residents as active agents in the process. Historically, urban poor communities have been relegated to mere beneficiaries of development projects, with limited involvement in decision-making processes. However, the dynamics between kampung residents and bureaucrats have evolved over the years. Recently, there have been encouraging signs of a shift, with some bureaucrats recognizing the residents as empowered citizens, capable of contributing significantly to their own development. Overcoming these deeply ingrained patterns and embracing genuine collaboration remains an ongoing journey, but the evolving perception of kampung residents as proactive stakeholders marks a promising step towards more inclusive and equitable urban development.

Successes:

The struggle of Kampung Aquarium stands as a remarkable example of collective action and resilience, as its residents have persistently fought for over five years to rebuild their community after their eviction in 2016. Their success can be attributed to a range of strategic approaches and the extensive networks they established over time. Collaborating with organizations like JRMK, UPC, Rujak, Jakarta Legal Aid, researchers, journalists, and politicians, the residents utilized rallies, protests, class actions, political contracts, alternative proposals, and negotiations to advocate for their rights.

One particularly effective strategy was the decision to remain on-site throughout the eviction and construction phases. This unwavering commitment proved crucial, making Kampung Aquarium one of the few kampungs rebuilt on-site after eviction, alongside Kampung Kunir and Kampung Bukit Duri. The rebuilding process embraced a participatory approach, with the residents advocating for collective ownership and management of the land and buildings. Working together with the other kampungs, they demonstrated remarkable agency and empowerment throughout the entire process.

Social impacts:

The social impacts of the Kampung Susun Aquarium project have been profound. The kampung residents have embraced communal living and management since the beginning of their reconstruction process, and this spirit of commoning became the foundation for collective action during their struggle. The experience of residing in temporary shelters for two years introduced them to the potential of collective decision-making and management, nurturing a strong sense of community cohesion that continues to thrive and deepen over time.

Political impacts:

Politically, the case of Kampung Aquarium has become a shining example of participatory approaches to "slum" improvement. It serves as an inspiration for numerous local and national government agencies, demonstrating that inclusive and sustainable urban development is achievable through collaborative efforts. Governor Anies Baswedan's unwavering support, as demonstrated through the political contract, has been instrumental in driving significant positive changes for kampungs affiliated with the JRMK network. Notable achievements include granting temporary building permits to 7,000 houses in 15 kampungs, effectively legitimizing their built structures, and designating kampungs as legal residential areas in the city's master zoning plan. These actions have fortified the residents' tenure and protected them from future evictions due to encroachment on designated zones.

The government's growing commitment to inclusive urban development and community empowerment has played a pivotal role in realizing the vision of Kampung Susun Aquarium. By providing policy accommodations, implementation support, and long-term assistance, the government has shown its dedication to uplifting the lives of residents and fostering sustainable growth in the city. The success of Kampung Aquarium serves as a testament to the power of collective action and the transformative potential of participatory approaches in addressing urban challenges and promoting social equity.

Economic impacts:

The security of tenure in Kampung Susun Aquarium has emerged as a transformative enabler for upward mobility within the community. The residents' liberation from the constant fear of eviction has provided them with the opportunity to focus on their lives and strive for economic progress. With the lingering threat of displacement no longer haunting them, the residents can now channel their efforts into initiatives aimed at improving their local economy. The establishment of the cooperative has opened new avenues for engagement and growth, serving as a platform for residents to actively participate in various businesses and uplift their livelihoods collectively. Through collaborative efforts and shared responsibility, the cooperative has fostered a sense of economic empowerment, stimulating a wave of positive change in the kampung's economic landscape.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

This case study was written in August 2023 by Dian Irawaty, at the Rujak Center for Urban Studies in Jakarta, and by Gugun Muhammad, who works with the Urban Poor Consortium.

A good article about the struggle of the Aquarium community to rebuild their houses after the eviction:
Sari, Amalia Nur Indah; Andesha Hermintomo; Dian Tri Irawaty; and Vidya Tanny. 2023. "Participation within the Insurgent Planning Practices: A Case of Kampung Susun Aquarium, Jakarta." In: Routledge Handbook of Urban Indonesia, pp. 58-72.

A blog post about the Kampung Aquarium laundry service that took off during the pandemic:
<https://www.iied.org/unexpected-cooperative-project-lighten-womens-pandemic-clothes-washing-burden>

A short clip with a digital walkthrough of Kampung Susun Aquarium ("Wajah Baru Kampung Aquarium" means "The new face of Kampung Aquarium"): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyPUekCHzLM>

Another short clip of the upgrading process of Kampung Susun Aquarium (in the Indonesian language):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bLBUBvBq_s

For more information about the Kampung Aquarium Project, please contact:

Dharma Diani
Kampung Aquarium Cooperative (Koperasi Jasa Serba Usaha Aquarium Bangkit Mandiri)
Kampung Susun Aquarium
Phone: +62 81293955511
e-mail: koperasikabm@gmail.com
Instagram: [@kampung_akuarium](https://www.instagram.com/kampung_akuarium)

PHOTOS



On the northern coast of Jakarta, a semi-permanent laboratory for marine research was established back in 1905.



In 1922, the compound was enriched with the construction of an aquarium—the first of its kind in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.



After the laboratory's relocation to another area in the 1970s, the empty buildings were informally repurposed as dormitories for police officers.



Over time, more and more families arrived and constructed their homes on the former aquarium site, resulting in a dense settlement.



By 2016, what had become known as Kampung Aquarium had grown to include some 386 families living both as “owners” and renters.



Having official ID cards indicating their Aquarium addresses and access to certain municipal services gave residents a sense of legitimacy.



However, in 2016, the Aquarium residents received back-to-back eviction notices stating that their settlement was violating regulations.



Many succumbed to the authorities' pressure and started moving their belongings to public rental housing out of fear of becoming homeless.



Just days after the initial notice, on April 11th, public order officials, police and military personnel arrived at the kampung.



Determined to defend their homes, the residents united in forming a human chain, led by women and children, while joining in communal prayers.



However, their efforts to appeal to the officers' sense of compassion proved futile, as the security forces forcefully advanced through the crowd, and the bulldozer swiftly transformed the once-vibrant settlement into a mere heap of debris in a matter of hours.





While many departed for their villages or opted for a spot in public housing, several families chose to stand their ground and reclaim the site.



In a matter of months, a growing number of resolute residents returned, resulting in a community of 128 families.



These families pieced together small, precarious huts using salvaged remnants from their former homes.



On one hand, the community persisted in its protest, organizing regular press conferences and demonstrations to denounce the eviction.

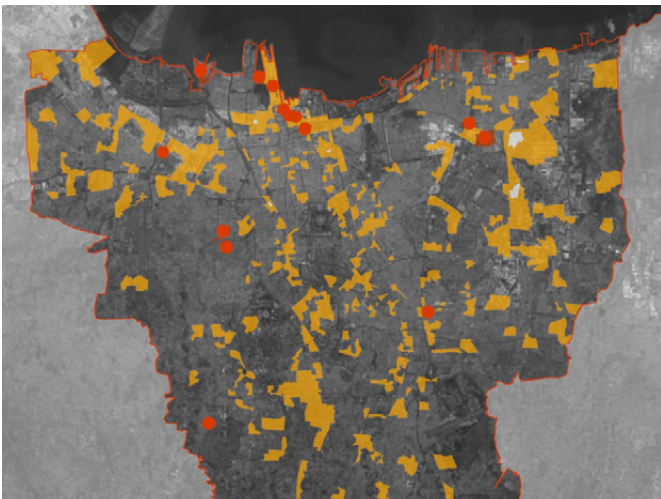


On the other hand, they realized that protests alone would not do much to improve their living conditions. With help from organizations like the Urban Poor Consortium and the Urban Poor Network (JRMK), they installed public toilets, a community kitchen, a temporary mosque, better tents, and organized activities for the children.





One year after the eviction, a breakthrough finally occurred with the signing of a political contract between gubernatorial candidate Baswedan and JRMK. The decision brought a profound sense of relief and hope to the Aquarium community, which had been enduring significant challenges.



One of the outcomes of the political contract was the designation of 21 kampungs (in red) to be upgraded, with Aquarium being among them.

Meanwhile, the government began constructing temporary shelters for the families living in tents, as they awaited a more permanent resolution.



A total of 90 units were erected along the site's perimeter—88 rooms for families, one office for the cooperative, and a children's playroom.

The temporary shelters included access to clean water and electricity networks, washing facilities, and green gardens.



At the same time, architects from the Rujak Center for Urban Studies began collaborating with the Aquarium residents to design their new housing. The community's aim was to create a vibrant "marine tourism kampung" that harmonized with the local environment and incorporated nearby landmarks within the heritage area.



Architects and residents participated in workshops every weekend, often discussing their ideas and priorities until dusk.

Although there was initial resistance to apartment blocks, the community eventually embraced the concept of a mid-rise housing complex.



In order to visualize the apartment's dimensions and the functions of each room, a life-size floor plan was created on the ground using bricks, paint, mats, and other materials. This collaborative activity allowed everyone to simulate how they would utilize their new apartments.

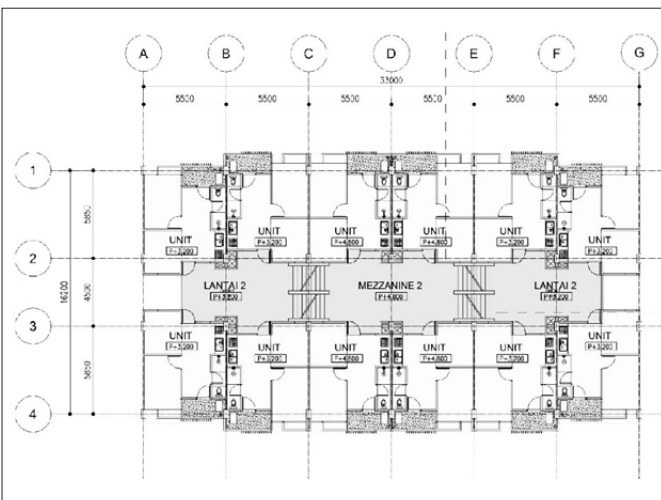


The designs developed by Rujak through an extensive participatory process with Aquarium residents underwent multiple rounds of revisions by architects from the Housing Agency to comply with building codes and standards. After these revisions, the final design received approval from the DKI Jakarta Government.



The complex comprises five apartment blocks of different sizes, surrounded by common amenities such as a mosque, park, and playground.

Here is a computerized visualization of Kampung Susun Aquarium, with its apartment blocks nestled within abundant greenery.



Every apartment building is designed with split-level floors and a spacious hallway in the center, promoting social interactions and a strong sense of community among residents. The apartments provide a cozy living space of 36 square meters, including a living room, one bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a small balcony.



On August 17th, 2020, a ceremony took place in the presence of Jakarta's governor to mark the beginning of the construction process.



The construction was executed by a construction company chosen by the private developer through a tender process.



Several residents took part as paid laborers, primarily supervising the construction process and communicating any issues to the developer.



Until the end, the cooperative's leader regularly convened with representatives from the construction company to review the progress.



A few months into the construction process, the first building of Kampung Susun Aquarium started taking shape.



Exactly one year after construction began, on August 17th, 2021, the inauguration of the first two towers took place amidst a grand celebration.



Governor Baswedan, a dedicated supporter of the Kampung Susun, presents the key to the new housing project to the leader of the cooperative.



An agreement on Kampung Aquarium's tenure and management rights was signed between the cooperative and Jakarta's government.



The residents were allocated their respective apartments through a collaborative process, accommodating everyone's needs.



Without delay, the initial batch of 107 families started their move into the new apartments. The staircases buzzed with residents ascending and descending, carrying their belongings to their fresh homes and organizing their living spaces.





All 240 apartments have identical sizes and layouts, but their interiors look and function differently, tailored to the unique needs of each family. The living room serves as a versatile space, accommodating extra sleeping areas, study corners, and storage solutions.



The wide, split-level corridor was conceived as one way to preserve the kampung lifestyle in this vertical housing project.



Floor mats are swiftly arranged on the corridor, transforming the space into a venue for gatherings or workshops.



The ground floor of the building features a spacious hall that serves as the primary meeting area for residents. This multifunctional space hosts a variety of workshops, cooperative group meetings, and celebrations, rendering it a lively and dynamic entrance to the Aquarium community.





The cooperative is responsible for the routine upkeep of the buildings, which includes the weekly cleaning of all communal areas.



Each ground floor comprises 1-2 shop units that residents can rent for their businesses, such as convenience stores or small restaurants.



Beyond the buildings, within the Aquarium site, vendors can lease spaces from the cooperative to establish kiosks for their businesses.



Yet another initiative led by this busy cooperative was the launch of a laundry service, aimed at alleviating the domestic workload on women.



The laundry service quickly gained popularity even among nearby kampungs, with residents bringing their clothes for washing and ironing.



Among the various business initiatives that the cooperative has undertaken since its establishment is also a catering service. Women members of the cooperative prepare delicious meals that they pack in lunch boxes and sell at events in Kampung Akuarium and beyond, even reaching nearby local government offices.



Another initiative that quickly gained momentum in Kampung Akuarium was the establishment of a communal garden next to the buildings.



Residents cultivate flowers and vegetables using different innovative techniques, and are transforming their settlement into a green oasis.



Several cooperative members pose in front of their building after having finished one of their many collective activities.