



## two-way learning . . .

In the modern development world, projects are usually assessed by high-level professionals or academics from outside, who are hired to fly in for a couple of days, put you through their x-ray to measure the worthiness of the work you are doing, according to all the prevailing development theories, pronounce judgment on that work and then fly home again. Most of the time, that kind of external x-ray of an internal process ends up missing most of the real substance and the real qualities of a complex, community-driven development process, which these high-flyers from far away usually can't understand.

We're trying to change that model of assessment, and turn it into a more horizontal process, in which it is community people, their partner NGOs and sometimes even a few supportive government officials (all of whom are actively involved in implementing their own ACCA projects back home - none of them are armchair observers!) who take on the task of assessing the work of their peers in the region.

As they visit each other, see each other's projects, talk with each other and travel together, they advise each other, learn from each other's mistakes and breakthroughs and help each other to make their process stronger. And what actually happens is that in the process of assessing others, these active groups are assessing themselves too. So the ACCA assessment process works in two-ways, with lots of learning on both sides.

### A NEW KIND OF HORIZONTAL, PEOPLE-DRIVEN ASSESSMENT :

A striking part of the ACCA Program's implementation has been the assessment process, in which we have been trying to build a new, intense and horizontal system for comparing, assessing, learning from and refining the ACCA projects in different countries. All the participants in these assessment visits are actively involved in their own ACCA projects, and they come with all kinds of questions, doubts, problems and ideas. Suddenly they're in another country, seeing other poor community people doing projects also - some similar, some different. Some of the things they see they may be critical about, and other things they will learn from and be so inspired by they'll take the idea back home. In these ways, besides helping adjust and correct problems in the implementation process in various cities, the assessment trips are opening up a big new space for learning and sharing across Asia, and helping to expand the range of what community people see is possible. This is not an assessment process that comes only at the end of projects, but happens constantly, and most of the projects being visited are still messily *in process!* The objective is not to assess the neatly finished project, but to bring a rich element of communal learning and communal adjusting and sharing into the process of implementation - as it happens.

**1 PHILIPPINES (January 24 - 29, 2010)** On this first assessment trip, we visited eight projects being implemented by five different groups in six cities around the country, traveling by van, airplane and even overnight ferry! The 35 team members (17 from other countries and 18 from the Philippines) visited projects in Manila, Navotas, Quezon City, Iligan, Mandaue, and ended up in the city of Iloilo, where the group visited the citywide upgrading process that was one of the inspirations for the ACCA Program.



**2 VIETNAM (April 2-6, 2010)** On this second assessment trip, the team of 42 people (22 from 7 other countries and 20 from Vietnam) visited ACCA projects in four cities (Viet Tri, Vinh, Hai Duong and Lang Son). All those projects are being implemented by the CDF / community savings networks in those cities, with support from the Associated Cities of Vietnam (ACVN), the National Women's Union and the NGO ENDA-Vietnam.



**3 MONGOLIA (July 24-29, 2010)** This was the third assessment trip, and the 43 people in the group (13 from other countries and 30 Mongolians) travelled by train and bus across this vast and almost empty country to visit big and small ACCA projects being implemented in four cities (Ulaanbaatar, Tunkhel Village, Dharkan and Bayanchandmani). These ACCA projects are all being implemented by small savings groups in the informal "Ger areas", with support from two Mongolian NGOs (the Urban Development Resource Center and the Center for Housing Rights and Development).



**4 CAMBODIA (September 14-17, 2010)** Our hosts in Cambodia (the National Community Savings Network and the UPDF) organized this fourth assessment trip a little differently, dividing the large group of visitors from six countries into three groups. One group visited ACCA projects in the northern cities of Serey Sophoan, Samrong and Siem Reap, and another group visited projects in the southern coastal cities of Khemara Phoumin and Preah Sihanouk. The third group visited the Southwestern cities of Bavet, Peam Ro District and Kampong Cham. All three groups then converged in Phnom Penh at the end for a reflection session on the trip.



**5 NEPAL (November 22-25, 2010)** During this fifth assessment trip, the 56 participants (including 27 visitors from other countries and 29 Nepalis) visited ACCA projects in only two cities (Bharatpur and Birgunj), and returned to Kathmandu afterwards for a reflection session. The ACCA projects in Nepal are all being implemented by community federations and Women's Savings Cooperatives in those cities, with support from the NGO Lumanti.



**6 SRI LANKA April 26-29, 2011)** During this four-day assessment, the 125 participants (including 25 from other countries and 100 Sri Lankans) visited Women's Bank savings groups and ACCA projects in two cities together (Colombo and Moratuwa) and then two more cities in smaller separate groups (Galle and Nuwara Eliya). The visits ended with a half-day summary and reflection on the ACCA process in Sri Lanka back in Colombo, and another half-day discussion about the ACCA process in Sri Lanka with government officials and mayors from several of the ACCA cities. The assessment visit was jointly hosted and coordinated by the Colombo-based NGO Sevanatha and the national Women's Co-op savings movement.