

## **“What can vulnerable groups do to afford sustainable housing”**

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### **Community participation, why necessary**

Community participation is easily founded in many areas of community development effort in Thailand e.g. community planning, OTOP, saving groups etc. In an area of housing has also adopted this principle. This study would look at community participation and the effort of vulnerable groups towards affordable housing in related to climate change.

In term of vulnerability to affordable housing, vulnerable groups comprise the poor, unemployed and vagrants. This study would focus at housing for the poor only while the rest need more different measures which will not be mentioned.



## Concepts addressed

### Vulnerability

refers to the inability to withstand the effects of a hostile environment.

(Wikipedia)

### Participation

“A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them”

The World Bank’s Learning Group on Participatory Development (1995).

The process by which individuals, families, or communities assume responsibility for their own welfare and develop a capacity to contribute to their own and the community’s development.

In the context of development, community participation refers to an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects rather than merely receive a share of project benefits.

Oakley and Marsden (1987)

**Kinds of participation** that warrant major concern are ;

- (i) participation in decision making, (ii) participation in implementation,
- (iii) participation in benefits, and (iv) participation in evaluation.

(Cohen and Uphoff, 1980)

## Participation's Contribution

5 objectives to which community participation might contribute are:

1. Sharing project costs: participants are asked to contribute money or labor (and occasionally goods) during the project's implementation or operational stages.
2. Increasing project efficiency: beneficiary consultation during project planning or beneficiary involvement in the management of project implementation or operation.
3. Increasing project effectiveness: greater beneficiary involvement to help ensure that the project achieves its objectives and that benefits go to the intended groups.
4. Building beneficiary capacity: either through ensuring that participants are actively involved in project planning and implementation or through formal or informal training and consciousness-raising activities.
5. Increasing empowerment: defined as seeking to increase the control of the underprivileged sectors of society over the resources and decisions affecting their lives and their participation in the benefits produced by the society in which they live.

(Paul, in Bamberger, 1986).

## A case study of Chao Khampong neighborhood, Ubonratchatani Province

Chao Khampong neighborhood is an over 200 yrs old compound lying alongside Moon river. It's an original place of Ubonratchatani Province which formerly governed by Chao Khampong, their leader. Nowadays, this neighborhood is in Muang district, comprising of 5 communities ; Wat luang 1, Wat luang 2, Langsanjao, Wat Klang, and Wat Tai with around 70 households. Land ownership in a neighborhood is solely belongs to government, the treasury department. This neighborhood is based on a low land like a deep pan. Every year, during rainy season, it faces with problems of flood and polluted water.



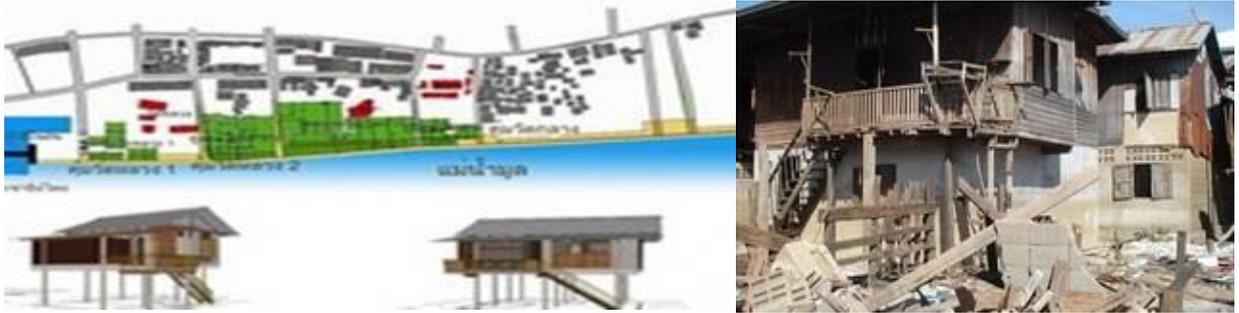
Year 2006, the municipality established a road construction project alongside the river as an embankment. The project was about to construct 18 metres width of a 1 km-length road together with a public park by the river. The project reclaimed land alongside a river and began to fill up the land higher upto 4 metres from its origin. Some housing areas in communities would be taken to construct a road and the communities would lie lower than a road. The road would block their air ventilation, and create dusty pollution. Water drainage would also get worse. Agricultural activities along the river would be gone.

Therefore, the communities were resistant and fought back by reporting to a prime minister at his visit to Ubonratchatani Province. They proposed 6 requests ; information sharing about the project and what the project would deal with the affected, to have their parts in project planning, an open meeting between agencies concerned and vulnerable groups, chaired by a provincial governor, a study of environmental affected to communities, double check of previous public hearing about the project affect and lastly, to inspect the project auction and transparency of budget spending.

A prime minister accepted the case and assigned the province to proceed. The province, then, conducted a meeting with all vulnerable groups included the communities affected from the project to find out a better resolution. A month later, a prime minister made another visit at the location to hear the result. Each vulnerable group made a 5 minute-presentation of their problems to a prime minister. After hearing the presentation, a prime minister assigned a province to form a fact finding team to solve a problem immediately.

And the facts finding are 13 households from three communities would be taken their housing to construct a road and another 59 households would lie lower than a road. The road would block air ventilation, create dusty pollution and also block water drainage.

The government, then, held the municipal project to make another study for a less affect as possible to communities.



Finally, a new project came out as a solution called the project of social and life quality development for alongside river moon-communities. It's an integrated project among 3 parties, a province, Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) and a Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. This means municipality integrated its road construction with Banmunkong project which led by CODI and a Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The project objective was to improve city scenery and environment. It aimed to complete it within 14 months.

There are 6 agencies supported the project ;

1. Thai Tobacco Monopoly, Ministry of Finance	20,000,000 Bht.
2. CODI	3,340,000 Bht.
3. Province Administrative organization	3,500,000 Bht.
4. Toyota company	500,000 Bht.
5. Ubonratchatani Municipality	13,679,500 Bht.
6. Ubonratchatani Red cross	300,000 Bht.
Total	41,319,550 Bht.

## **Get to know CODI**

Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI) is a public organization belongs to Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. It was established since 2000.

## **Banmunkong Project**

Banmunkong is a project to solve a problem of housing. A project was approved by a cabinet in 2003 to 2011 for 200,000 target units. By 2009, the project has produced already 88,000 households for

1,457 communities. Government subsidy is done through CODI. There are 2 kinds of subsidy. First amount is for public utility improvement ; 25,000-35,000 Bht. per hh. to community and 20,000 Bht. per hh. to each hh. Second amount is 300,000 Bht. per hh. for a 15 yr-mortgage with 4 percent of interest.

## **Project procedure**

Banmunkong project comprises 8 steps ;

1. Tune all opinions into the same direction, find an agreement as well as develop ownership
2. Establish a saving group and a housing cooperative
3. Share the tasks
4. Survey/Collect Community Information
5. Organise housing title
6. Make a Housing Plan

7. Develop housing and public utility

8. Develop a stable/sustainable community

### **Eligibility Criteria**

1. Be vulnerable for housing and really live in a community for at least 2 yrs.
2. Be an extended family within a community.
3. Own a legal job.
4. Belongs to and follow the rules of a saving group.
5. Be well cooperate with group/community activities.
6. No gambling and be free from drugs.
7. Be a peaceful person.
8. Those who are not qualified but having a good relationship with and well contribute to community would be considered under a committee's discretion.

### **Rules**

1. The title could not be sold to anybody but community cooperatives.
2. Transfer is only allowed within a family.
3. No rent away. Only community cooperative could do.

## **Project implementation**

During the implementation process, there were consultations and negotiations along the way between a municipality, an architecture design team and the vulnerable groups especially about the road construction and anything related to it.

## **Project completion**

The project was started in 2007 and completed in 2009. Nowadays, 59 households have already occupied the new housing units. They have to pay for a 15 yrs mortgage with 4 percent of interest. And they all are satisfied with the new environment.

At present, Banmunkong project is implementing in 300 cities all over a country. It became a model study for visitors from other countries. Last yr, there are more than 250 visitors came to study Banmunkong project in different places in Thailand. Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) has already extended Banmunkong model (principles and measures) to more 165 cities in 19 Asian countries with initial budget support 58,000 us dollars per city.

## **Success factors of the project /what learned**

### **1. Communities**

Community citizens are very active and strong. They are well united and have a good leader. They are fully aware of risk to their existing housing. In the same time, they are democratic and opened to change. They are ready to participate and share their input. With this project, they could successfully intervene in every stage of project cycle ; planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

## 2. Community management mechanisms/tools

The communities have powerful mechanisms. These mechanisms could well contribute to a project ie. saving groups, community committee, community forum. CODI applied the principle of participation with communities through 8 steps of Banmunkong procedures. Besides the saving groups for housing, they also initiated the housing cooperative to strengthen housing management in communities.

## 3. Participation and Communication

Also there were good participation and communication among all parties.

## Conclusion

1. Vulnerables always have a potential to share and contribute in sustainable housing as long as the state provides them opportunities.
2. In an area of housing conflict, there are many necessary things to be aware of, especially between environment and the right to housing of communities. This project presented a well model of good negotiation between such conflicts.

