

Community Meeting in Chiang Mai

The Thai City-wide upgrading program



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Dear Friends,

The Thai Government has approved CODI's nation-wide slum upgrading program for next year which will involve 174 communities in 42 cities. This year approval, hopefully, will be the first batch of city-wide slum upgrading process targeting 200 cities in a period of about 4 years.

This new program will concentrate on building local partnership where community network in each city will be the core actor working with Municipality, academicians, NGOs and others in all the cities. They will organize a form of joint committee or joint working team together. This local joint committee will survey all communities in the city together and plan to develop upgrading process covering all communities in the city in the period of 3-4 years. CODI will facilitate the process and pass budget for development from the government to this local mechanism or to

community directly. This will be a new process of city-wide community-driven upgrading and trying to build local partnership and development capacity together as a team at the same time.

The budget for development approved for CODI are as following :

1. subsidy for infrastructure/ environment/ social infrastructure,
2. management cost for local development work,
3. subsidy for housing loans (2%, enable community to get loans as group at 2 % per annum) and
4. development budget for building capacities, exchanges, meetings, documenting, mapping etc.,.

Budget 1 and 2 will be passed to the local groups to manage together. Total budget of about 25 US\$ million has been granted from the government and about 2.5 million from CODI Fund.

The important elements of this upgrading program is getting land-tenure security, physical improvement of the community from on-site upgrading to total reconstruction or land-sharing or resettlement by communities, building strong and legitimate community social and economic unit with community own management system, integrate new community environment initiatives, building legitimate and stronger relationship with others in the city. So it will be much more than just the infrastructure upgrading as in the past.

So it will keep me busy to hell throughout the next year process since there will be so much work to do to make it possible to demonstrate new way of development by people in a large scale in our city and society. I hope this going to be very hard work will also help contribute to the work you are all doing in different places , different parts of the world. I strongly feel that this work with urban poor communities that many of us have been doing all our lives or more than ten -twenty years have come to an important turn in many places, in the world, at different paces and development stages, but they all have great potentials to develop into this direction. It is the new direction of large scale development by the poor people as key development actors with support from local partners and development actors. It is very important that we have clear vision along this direction then we can help strengthen it rightly which could lead to powerful change process in large scale. The change, of course, will not only affect the quality of housing or infrastructure conditions but so much more impact to many other aspects of people lives and their relationship with city as a whole, not those narrow sectoral development by outsiders that governed our field and ways of work for decades, and still.

Regards
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