CODI, Thailand Case Study

Thailand's Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) was established in 1992 to provide tenure security and infrastructure services to communities. In 2000, UDCO merged with its rural counterpart, the Rural Development Fund, to create the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). CODI's approach fosters improvement processes driven by CBOs to enable the poor to participate in shaping the projects intended to support them, builds the communities' strength as well as their relationship with local authorities. CODI reinforced UCDO's approach of organizing community based savings groups which were viewed as key to building community capacity to determine priorities, manage finance, negotiate with other local groups and formulate their own strategies. Both UDCO and CODI have been leaders in using land readjustment/re-blocking to enable the poor to live on well located urban sites they occupy through negotiated agreements with the municipalities. In 2003, CODI launched the Baan Mankong Collective Housing Program, which sought to address housing and land insecurity issues of the slums on a city-wide scale by linking CBOs with local authorities and creating city wide networks of CBOs better able to carry out larger scale programs. The process has involved slum surveys, community plans and designs, infrastructure subsidies, and housing and land loans. As of June 2015, the program has reached nearly 96,000 families in 1,800 communities.

Besides describing CODI's evaluation and working modalities, I want to raise an important issue because CODI has been widely used as the model for similar initiatives not only in Asia, but also in Latin america and Africa. I want to point out that CODI's success rests on a combination of sustained national support, committed bold leadership and solid institutional capacity to manage and coordinate a national program supporting community based initiatives. If these requirements are not present or eroded through local circumstances the process collapses. I will show one illustrative example from Brazil.

2004 – national policy for city-wide slum upgrading

Community development fund – pass the funds and let the community organize themselves

City-wide upgrading – start with the community link to the city, link to other development actors, develop a survey to understand baseline situation, undertake joint planning to develop possible solutions i.e. on site upgrading, reblocking, resettlement, reconstruction

Community survey – settlement profile at the city scale, community mapping – put every house on the map, household survey – household info including registration, city wide land survey- all vacant land- who owns what land

UCDO History/Background:

Thailand's Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) was a leader in working in partnership with communities and instituted community led approaches to local development. It was established in 1992 as a poverty reduction agency under the National Housing Authority, and was mandated to

provide tenure security and infrastructure services to communities. It was evident to the Thai government that the country's success of the 1980s and early 1990s did little to benefit lower-income and vulnerable groups. Housing conditions had deteriorated and households were in constant risk of eviction as both land prices and demand for central city sites increased. Additionally, a major need existed for the development of participatory models of support for lower-income groups with the possibility of carrying out this endeavor by supporting community- based saving and credit groups.

UCDO was given a capital base equivalent to US$ 50 million so that it could provide organized communities with loans to undertake a range of activities relating to land acquisition and housing construction, housing improvement, and income generation. It recognized that in order activate development, the current relationship between the lower-income groups and the state needed to change. Thus, the necessity existed for the establishment of representative and accountable local citizen organizations.

Accordingly, to scale up its community support program, UCDO needed to decentralize its operations. It organized savings groups in the communities and fostered the establishment of networks of these community based groups (CBOs) to share experiences and cooperate on problems of livelihoods, access to services, and housing. Within the communities, UCDO channeled funds through the networks to lend to their member CBOs. Through this approach, it managed to institute a national policy promoting community led development at the municipal and regional levels. UCDO forged bonds between a wide range of community organizations, savings groups, NGOs and government agencies.

Thailand's Urban Community Development Office (UDCO) established in 1992 as a poverty reduction agency was a leader in operationalizing community led development and using land readjustment/reblocking to enable the poor to live in the locations they occupied and participate in shaping the improvements that affect them. To work throughout the nation, it decentralized activities by creating savings groups in target communities and networking them to foster cooperation on common problems. The systems' strength derived from the fact that UDCO channeled funds through the networks to lend to member CBOs.

UCDO to CODI transition:
In 2000, UDCO was merged with its rural counterpart, the Rural Development Fund, to create the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), as an independent public agency outside the Ministry with its own board and budget. CODI reinforced UCDO's approach by linking the CBOs with local authorities to create city wide networks better able to carry out larger scale programs. It diversified the components of the support it offered and created linkages between urban and rural communities. UCDO had been a leader in using land readjustment/re-blocking to enable the poor to live on the sites they occupy through negotiated agreements with the municipalities. CODI continues this approach and ensures that land is held in collective ownership or long term leasehold for a minimum of 15 years. In 2003, CODI began implementing Thailand's *City without Slums* program, a

national community upgrading program. CODI has been helping local networks and communities to develop these programs. An upgrading program at this scale requires the infrastructure of community processes and networks to be in place. Cities prepare three-year action plans and slum communities are at the core of every step of the process including the selection of project components and standards and the prioritization of activities.

2000 Proposed in new law to make CODI- emphasized why city-wide program would have a bigger impact than slum by slum program. Couple the scattered experience of community projects on the ground with change at the policy level to ensure more flexible funding support so that the community can be the initiator of the development process by themselves

Supply (public and private sector) housing approach leaves out last 30%. Demand driven – needs the tools and the space. Need a space for people to get together – the collective process can compensate the economic weakness in of the individual experience

No one wants to stay in slum and informal settlement- CODI creates a horizontal platform to share and define solutions to address land tenure, housing issues, etc

CODI's key strategies are:

- To support and enhance the role of community organizations and of local mechanisms in development
- To emphasize on the role of community organizations as the core of the development process
- To develop the learning process, body of knowledge and information technology systems
- To promote the efficiency and transparency of CODI's management systems to allow partners to participate and engage in its activities

In respect to credit and loan facilities:

- To support integrated loan packages used by community organizations and networks to improve their members' quality of life
- To develop the community financial and savings system that enables the self-reliance of community members
- To promote community businesses and link the production, processing and marketing functions between community businesses.

CODI's five main strategic plans[1].

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[1] See Strategic Plans following the bibliography

Projects/ Achievements:

The **Baan Mankong Collective Housing Program,** which launched in 2003, sought to solve housing and land insecurity of slum dwellers on a city-wide scale. The process has involved slum surveys, community plans and designs, infrastructure improvement subsidy, and housing and land loans. By 2004, CODI had provided housing loans and technical support to 47 housing construction projects (on same site or alternative land) benefitting 6,400 households. Additionally, grants were provided to communities to make small improvements to infrastructure and living conditions for 301 projects, benefitting 68,208 families in 796 communities (Satterthwaite, 2004). The Cabinet then approved the upgrading of 200,000 housing units by 2011.

CODI has encouraged local authorities and community organizations to be the major players in solving the problem of city-wide slums. Families are granted loans of about 3,000-7,000 USD (average about 5,000 USD per family). Presently, implementation of the city-wide upgrading has covered 71 (of 77) provinces, 850 projects have been approved, and the program has benefited nearly 91,758 families from 1,660 communities.

By creating space for poor communities, municipalities, and NGOs to collaborate on the issue of housing, the Baan Mankong Program has forged new ground regarding the way in which low-income housing is addressed, regarding it as an integral structural issue that can be resolved at a city level.

Community Welfare

In 2002, CODI began supporting provincial elderly funds and sub-district welfare funds in 2005. CODI encourages each sub-district to set up a community welfare fund to provide basic care for its community members. Community members, local administrative offices and the Thai government make contributions to the funds. By 2011, over 3,500 sub-district welfare funds have been created and efforts continue to be made for every sub-district and municipality will have their own fund.

Land and Housing Issues in Rural Areas

Beginning in 2004, CODI continues to support communities to find solutions for land and housing insecurity in rural areas. Through the use of data collection, surveys, and map-drawings, rural communities, assisted by CODI, have been successful in redesigning and rebuilding their own communities, specifically through the Rural Baan Mankong Program. The solving of 500 cases is currently underway.

Community Master Plan

Community networks began collecting data on household economic and social conditions in 2003. Based on these statistics, community organizations have been encouraged to create community master plans addressing issues on a sub-district level. Community master plans are important tools for developing sustainable solutions and for outlining long-term strategy for community networks.

Development Credit Facility

CODI also offers credit facilities to community organizations and networks for further development and problem solving in accordance with their community master plans. This is seen in instances where housing loans are available for solving housing insecurity through the Baan Mankong Program, whereas holistic development and community enterprises loans are purposed to serve the need for economic and financial improvement.

In 2000, UDCO, was merged with its rural counterpart to create the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI). CODI reinforced the approach by linking the CBOs it had created with local authorities to undertake city-wide cross sectoral programs. To avoid displacement in reblocking projects, it ensures that land is held in collective ownership or long term leasehold for a minimum of 15 years.

Reflecting on these examples and other experiences, it is clear that the success of urban resilience initiatives hinges on the degree to which city authorities understand that partnerships and collaborative action requires participation, empowerment, and accountability. CBOs also have to understand that they must remain inclusive and fend off attempts at cooption by one group in the community even when it is the dominant political party. On their part, national agencies must develop an institutional capacity to implement community led development programs. It took CODI over 10 years to build up this capacity.

Lessons Learned:

CODI's success rests on a combination of sustained national support, committed bold leadership and solid institutional capacity to manage and coordinate a national program supporting community based initiatives. If these requirements are not present or eroded through local circumstances the process collapses.

CODI, not unlike its predecessor UCDO, aims at supporting community-run inclusive processes which requires much flexibility. CODI's experience illustrates the feasibility of revising development delivery to improve the outcomes in favor of lower-income communities. In order to effectively achieve this goal, it must bolster these groups to become key actors in the process.

The conventional housing approaches no longer solve the emerging housing demands. A new approach is essential where lower income and poor communities can work to secure their own affordable housing. The concept of a people driven-housing development process, in which the key players are the poor themselves, has become the core principle of the CODI upgrading program.

CODI's approach to the programs it implements, of bringing its mode of operation, which focuses on fostering social inclusion processes driven by CBOs to enable the poor to participate in shaping the projects intended to support them, builds the communities' strength as well as their relationship with the local authorities. Community-based savings and loan activities are important because they build community capacity to determine priorities, transparently manage finance, negotiate with other

powerful local groups and reformulate their own strategies. As long as CBOs are truly representative and inclusive to prevent their cooption by one group or partner, this approach remains one of the best models to tackle the very complex housing problems in the Middle East and Asia.

Sources:

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5 Strategic Plans:	Projects:	Project Description:	Results:
1.Support urban and rural housing development and land dispute resolution	Community Land Planning	-In order to involve communities in land rights dispute resolution, CODI trained community members to use GIS technology to survey land -Community members collect data about how many people reside in the area and how long they have been there -Residents present this data to the relevant government agencies and negotiate a resolution together	-600 land dispute projects
	Collective Housing	-Launched in 2003, the Collective Housing Program centers the development process on slum dwellers by allowing them to plan and manage solutions to their housing problems; -CODI channeled government funds in the form of infrastructure subsidies and soft loans directly to poor communities. -Communities then purchase land or negotiate long-term leases and upgrade the housing stock	-Collective Housing Program has reached 270 cities and 1500 urban poor communities - CODI has worked with 86,000 families
2. Achieve financial self-sufficiency	Community welfare fund	-Communities set up a welfare fund to take care of community members in need and prevent loan defaults. -Community members contribute one Baht per day, and the government matches this contribution. -They can withdraw funds in cases of birth, death, illness, natural disaster, etc.	- 3,100 welfare funds set up in urban and rural areas
	Micro-credit	-CODI offers government-subsidized loans to communities for housing development, environmental projects, land purchases, and small businesses. -The interest ranges from 4% to 6%.	- 657 community organizations have received micro-credit loans totaling $147 million (USD)
	Capacity building for savings groups	- CODI assists community members in forming savings groups to accumulate the capital necessary for land and housing projects, as well as long term projects	-Nationwide, approximately 50,000 savings groups, 20 million ppl and USD $760 million in assets
3. Strengthen community organizations councils to tackle development problems on the city or sub-	Community Organizations Council	-The Community Organization Councils are comprised of all community organization in a sub-district or municipality -Representatives from each community organization meet regularly to discuss local problems and develop policy recommendations for the local	- 1586 community councils in place

		government	
district level.	**Community Master Plan** –	Through surveys and group discussions, community members create a Master Plan that addresses issues at a sub-district level. The Community Master Plan is an important tool for developing sustainable solutions, outlining long-term strategy, and informing local and national leaders –	
4. Increase capacity of community networks and create links between relevant stakeholders.	**Accreditation program** –	-CODI is responsible for developing standards for the accreditation of community organizations; - When community organizations receive accreditation, they are legally recognized and can participate more easily in the development process –	- 70,000 community organizations have been accredited - CODI estimates that there are over 250,000 community orgs in Thailand
	Good Governance Project –	-CODI teaches good governance principals to community organizations, ranging from transparency to financial management –	
	Community Learning and Information Centers –	-In order to document and implement best practices from past projects, CODI organizes learning and information centers. Successful community organizations teach about their experiences and lessons learned	- 500 learning centers -120 community information centers
	NGO Grants –	-CODI provides grants to NGOs that work in the field of community development and the environment community organizations teach about their experiences and lessons learned –	- CODI granted $1.2 million (USD) to NGOs in 2009
5. Policy advocacy based on community experiences and knowledge	**Knowledge Management** –	-CODI and community members research project progress and impacts - By documenting lessons learned, the information can be used as a resource for other communities and to teach policy makers about community based approaches –	
	Democratization of the Policy Process –	- Through workshops, rallies and public events, CODI encourages community members to develop and advocate for pro-poor policies –	
	Educate Policy Makers –	-Through publicity events, dialogue and rallies, CODI educates politicians and bureaucrats about the issues affecting communities and how government can aid solutions –	