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The Dynamic Roles of the State as a Provider, a Supporter and a Catalyst in Community Development? Case Studies from Thailand

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The transformation of the global housing policy from a providing paradigm to a supporting paradigm defines new roles and relationships amongst the state, the private sector, civil society and the experts. This paper focuses on the dynamic roles of the state, with case studies from Thailand. The paper explores 4 community development cases which the state plays different roles – a provider, supporter and catalyst. First, mainly as a provider, the state launched a nation-wide housing programme for the low-income. Second, mainly as a supporter and slightly as a catalyst, the state supports a nation-wide participatory slum upgrading. Third, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a capacity building workshop for architectural students related to community development. Finally, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a seed fund programme for catalytic community projects. Challenges of each role are discussed.

Keywords: Participatory design, Community architecture, Community development, Empowerment, Participation

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Introduction: the role of a provider, supporter and catalyst

“[T]o carry out a revolution *for* the people... is equivalent to carrying out a revolution *without* the people, because the people are drawn into the process by the same methods and procedures used to oppress them”.

(Freire and Ramos, 1972: 108)

In 1950 the only 2 cities that could claim more than 10 million inhabitants were New York and Tokyo (United Nations, 2004). Today there are 20 such mega-cities. Unlike before, most of them are in the poorer parts of the world including Mexico, India, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria and the Philippines. In the next 30 years, the global number of slum dwellers is expected to increase to about 2 billion if no firm and concrete action is taken to address that trend (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003). UN projections have suggested that over the next 30 years all of the world's population growth will be in the urban areas of low- and middle-income countries (Garau et al., 2005).

The term ‘slum’ had been introduced in the 1820s and was used to identify the poorest quality housing and the most unsanitary conditions, also a refuge for crime, ‘vice’ and drug abuse, and a source for many epidemics that ravaged urban areas.” (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003) At the end of the 19th century, slums continued to be perceived as having the ‘vicious’ characteristics. Between the 1890s and 1930s, slums were authorized to be eradicated through the imposition of technical and legal standards. At the same time, social movements tried to rename the socially stigmatised characteristics of ‘slum’ with words such as ‘neighbourhoods’ or ‘communities.’ (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2003)

Table 1-1 (Tovivich, 2011: 12) below illustrates the changing paradigm in global housing policies for the urban poor. Different perceptions of the government and the experts around ‘slums’ reflect different approaches of urban poor housing policies in the transition from a ‘providing’ to ‘supporting’ paradigm. The early stages of the supporting paradigm concern the withdrawal of control by the government and more participation from civil society and the market. The current stage of the supporting paradigm concerns the partnerships amongst the state, civil society and the market. The transformation of global housing policies for the urban poor since the 1970s from a providing paradigm, in which the state and the experts perceived themselves as providers and the urban poor were the passive recipients, to a supporting paradigm defines new roles and relationships amongst the state, the private sector, civil society and the experts (Fiori et al., 2000, Hamdi, 1995).

In short, the state, the private sector and the experts become supporters and the poor become active agents, solving their own problems and making decisions for their own situation and future. People-participation and empowerment in the process of community development are central. Blackburn and Holland (1998) proposed that in the participatory planning process, development practitioners should act as ‘catalysts’ and ‘supporters’, although with ambiguous definitions. The author’s previous research (Tovivich, 2011) explores the dynamic roles of community architects as the provider, supporter and catalyst. In conclusion, first, the values of an architect as a provider focus on ‘controlling’. Their roles are to determine basic infrastructure and facilities for communities, design community houses and site planning according to building regulations and standards. Second, the values of an architect as a supporter focus on ‘supporting and learning’.



Their roles are to facilitate dialogue amongst stakeholders, balance individual and collective needs of community members with inputs of architects under their organizational policy in a participatory design process, build up local capacity of community members towards basic architectural design principles, support people-organization development and support community bonds and expanding community networks. Third, the values of an architect as a catalyst focus on ‘empowering and learning’. Their roles are to raise awareness and self-confidence of community members, encourage community members to collectively act for themselves and encourage community members to reflect on their action.

Developing after the author’s previous research (Tovivich, 2011) this paper focuses on the dynamic roles of the state, with case studies from Thailand. The paper explores 4 cases related to community development, which the state plays different roles. First, mainly as a provider, the state launched a nation-wide housing programme for the low-income. Second, mainly as a supporter and slightly as a catalyst, the state supports a nation-wide participatory slum upgrading. Third, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a capacity building workshop for architectural students related to community development professionalism. Finally, as a supporter and a catalyst, the state support a seed fund programme for catalytic community projects.

1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	Present		
Conventional Housing Policy Context •Modernization (If you are like me, you are good) 'Slum' •Negative definitions •Passive recipients Architect •Provider and controller designer Approach •Top-down •State-led (and control), subsidizer, provider •Mass housing and eradication of irregular housing •Standardization Challenges •Mainly for middle class •Didn't address/ reach the needs of the poorest •The crisis of the state welfare State Housing		Dematerialization of housing Non-conventional Housing Policy Phase 1 Context •Crisis of modernisation •Basic needs 'Slum' •Active agents •Slum of hope/despair Architect Supporter Approach •Bottom-up •People-led (and control) •Housing as a "verb" •Advocacy and community participation Challenges •Exploitation of free labours, •Sub-standard housing quality •Scale-up Sites and services/ self-help Slum upgrading The return of poverty = lack of growth or lack of income The return of the importance of "design"		Non-conventional Housing Policy Phase 2 Context •Structural adjustment + globalisation (Let the markets rule) 'Slum' •Disappeared from the debates Architect Entrepreneurial manager Approach •Market led: enabling housing market through institutional reform and minimising the role of the state •Deregulation, privatization, competition •Free market, freedom of choices Challenges •Inequality •The poor got excluded from the markets •Trickle-down didn't work Private Developer Housing The return of poverty alleviation debates in housing policy		Non-conventional Housing Policy Phase 3 Context •Crisis of SAPs and a search for integrated and sustainable development •(The return of) poverty reduction strategy 'Slum' •Active agents (again) •Ambiguous definitions Architect The new professionalism of community architects? Approach •Agents= state, people and markets •Public-private partnerships •Institution reform beyond unlocking market. Institutional reform with participation and 'informality' •Revalorization of "design" as instrument of physical and social integration •Multisectoriality Challenges •Scale-up •Win-win solution or co-opted rhetoric? •Different agenda from different Agents	

Sources: Fiori, J., Housing Policy, Programme and Project Alternatives, Module ENVBU04, 2005
 Hamdi, N., Participatory Processes: Building for Development, Module ENVBU02, 2005

Table 1. Housing Policies for the Urban Poor (Tovivich, 2011: 12)

***'Baan Eua Arthorn'* Programme and National Housing Authority (NHA)**

The *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme is implemented by the NHA aiming to provide 600,000 ready-to-occupy housing units for low-income people across Thailand at subsidized rate within 5 years. The programme was launched in 2003 by the Royal Thai Government at the same time with the *Baan Mankong* Programme, which is a participatory nation-wide slum upgrading programme implemented by the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). The CODI aimed to reach 300,000 low-income households around Thailand within 5 years. Focusing on the NHA background, the housing supply provided by the state and private sectors in Bangkok could not meet the housing demands of the rapidly increasing urban population in the city. In 1960, there were an estimated 740,000 people living in overcrowded communities in Bangkok (Askew, 2002). The first eviction took place in 1963. Slum eviction was a part of the second Thailand National Economic and Social Development Plan (1967-1971). Despite the political will of the Thai Government to set up four separate agencies responding to the emergence of slums – the Public Welfare Housing Division (1940), the Housing Bureau (1951), the Government Housing Bank (1952) and the Central Office for Slums Improvement (1960) attached to the Bangkok Municipality (Senanuch, 2007, Chiu, 1985) – the problem of inadequate housing provisions for the urban poor remained. One reason was because each unit was attached to different departments and their work was isolated from one another. Therefore, the government established the NHA in 1973 in order to respond to the housing demands of the poor and lower-to-middle income groups. Clearing slums and resettling community members affected by the clearing operations was one of the original objectives of the NHA (Chiu, 1985).

From the early 1970s to the mid-1970s, the aim of the NHA remained the same since it was originally established in 1973 – to build ready-to-occupy low-cost housing for the urban poor with intensive government subsidies. Afterwards, the NHA experienced financial problems. By 1978 the NHA stopped its subsidized housing programmes because of a lack of government funding, and slum upgrading and sites-and-services were incorporated into NHA's Accelerated Plan for 1979-1982. However, the NHA's slum upgrading projects in 1978 focused mainly on physical improvements. As a result, the appearance of slums began to change, yet the insecurity of land tenure remained the same (Askew, 2002). Sites-and-services was introduced and promoted by the World Bank. During 1979-1982, the NHA received loans from the World Bank and applied its policy through the promotion of sites-and-services housing programme in Thailand. The NHA encountered numerous failures because the projects were not appropriate to the lifestyle of Thailand's urban poor who actually did not want to invest their energy, money and time in unfinished structures. The location of the projects was also too far from the city centre.

In parallel, from 1978, NHA proposed hire-purchase housing schemes for middle-income-earners, especially civil servants, and conducted resettlement and flat building projects for the poor. "The NHA's forced abandonment of the high-subsidy approach to low-income housing... did reflect the state's capitulation to the forces of the urban land market..." (Askew, 2002: 66). However, the efficiency of the NHA was low, constructing only approximately 6,000 low-cost housing units per year. At the same time, after the early 1980s when Thailand was hard hit by the oil crisis, the economic growth was incredibly improved in 1986. Therefore, the government decided to decrease financial support for the NHA and shifted support to the private sector to build houses for low-income and middle-class groups.

Referring to Dowall (1992), between 1984-1988 the public housing built by the NHA accounted for only 3.3% of the housing stock. Large scale / developer built housing produced nearly the half of the housing stock.



However, the supply of low-cost housing by private developers could be described as being relatively insignificant for the urban poor.

The demand for low-income housing in 1988 was 130,000 units and the output of low-cost housing by developers in 1988 was estimated at close to only 4000 units: 600 units of row houses and over 3000 low-cost condominium units. Therefore, the supply gap was about 70% of the demand. At the same time, there was an over-supply of medium- and high-income houses. This is not surprising since only 10% of the developers built low-cost housing given the financial constraints of land prices and building materials (Seik, 1992).

From 1973 to 2004, the NHA provided 451,222 residential units. Amongst these, 71.8% were in the Bangkok metropolitan and greater Bangkok area and 28.2% were in regional areas.

With respect to the types of housing projects, 56.5% were slum upgrading, 30.5% were housing community projects, 11% were for governmental officers and 0.71% were 3,221 units from the *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme. In 2003, in response to the great demand for low-income housing, the NHA primarily focuses solely on the *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme.

It is important to note that it took the NHA approximately 30 years to develop approximately 450,000 residential units. Comparing the figure with the quantitative aim of the newly launched *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme which aimed to produce 600,000 residential units within five years, it is not surprising why the programme could not accomplish its aims qualitatively and quantitatively.

The *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme aimed to provide standard residential units for low-income, junior civil servants and government employees earning less than 22,000 Baht per month per family.

The programme aimed at land ownership rather than house/room renting. The rent-to-own per month was supposed to cost approximately 10% of the family's income, with a flat-rate price of 390,000 Baht per unit. The government provided subsidies of 80,000 Baht per unit to cover the construction cost and public utilities. It cost approximately 420,000 Baht to build each unit.

The margin was NHA's administration cost. There were four types of houses – the detached house, the attached house, the row-house and the condominium (24 and 33 square metres.) A financial feasibility study was conducted to specify which house type was affordable in a given location. After the clients passed a financial credit check, they received loans from two commercial banks. In 2009, the whole programme had been stopped by the new government due to many problems – efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. By the year 2007, 348 projects and over 600,000 dwellings units under the *Baan Eua Arthorn* programme were planned.

Three problem themes were identified (NHA, 2007):

- 65,293 completed projects encountered problems, because either the clients did not pass the banks' credit check or the projects had too many empty units.
- 334,352 units were under construction. More than 40% of this is due to delay. There were many problems, such as inappropriate location, fake demands in the pre-sale period, overlapping demands from other nearby *Baan Eua Arthorn* projects, inefficiency of private contractors and many clients failing to get loans from banks.
- 209, 417 units were not yet signed and contracted by the house owners. The NHA was afraid that if it took responsibility for all of these units, it would lead to organizational bankruptcy. There were plans to decrease the amount of units and to transfer responsibility to local authorities.



Figure 1. Example of houses in *Baan Eua Arthorn* Programme

***'Baan Mankong'* Programme and Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI)**

In 1990, there were approximately 1.55 million residential units in Bangkok. The majority or 55% were constructed by the private sector, 22% by ordinary people, 12% were slums, and only 8.5% were provided by the NHA and 2.5% by others. It was clear that the NHA could not meet housing demand. Government policies during 1992-1996 focussed more on low-income groups especially for those living in slum areas.

As a result, in 1992, the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) was established under the NHA and became the CODI in 2000. The UCDO started with a US\$50 million capital budget to make loans available to organized communities. The interest rate was much lower than other loan sources pursued by the urban poor, but high enough to sustain administrative costs. With the establishment of the UCDO, there was an attempt to bring together different groups of people into its executive boards – senior governmental staff, academics and community representatives.

The Eighth Thailand National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) aimed at sustainable development by shifting the focus from economic development to human development (Viengsang et al., 2005). The slum dwellers' struggle was transformed from having to deal with *ad hoc* solutions to setting more sustainable long-term plans that drove changes at policy levels. By the 1990s, it was evident that slum dwellers negotiated their survival space with a more complex approach through continued lobbying, networking and partnerships.

In 2000, the UCDO merged with the Rural Development Fund to become a new public organization called the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). The CODI continued the programme of the UCDO but had its own legal entity as a public organization. The organization is no longer under the NHA.

The work of the CODI primarily dealt with the poor's problems on a large scale and at the policy level. In 2004, the CODI had a fund of approximately 2.8 Billion Baht (US\$ 70 million) of which 1.9 Billion Baht (US\$ 47.5 million) was directly loaned to community members through four types of loans for community organizations (1) loans for housing and land; (2) loans for community enterprises; (3) loans to networks for holistic development; and (4) flexible revolving fund loans to savings groups or networks.

In 2007, the density of Bangkok reached almost 30 times that of Thailand as a whole. In many ways, Bangkok continuously reflects the dichotomy between itself and the countryside. From 1990s, the problem of slums and urban poor housing became serious and continues to grow. Referring to data from the year 2000 (CODI, 2004), there were 5,500 urban poor communities in Thai cities (7.75 million people, 1.5 million households). Of this total number, 1,750 urban poor communities (1.62 million people, 0.36 million households) had no serious tenure problems while 3,750 urban poor communities (5.13 million people, 1.14 million households) had problems with their tenure (37% located on private land, 36% located on public land and 26% located on mixed land). There were 1.5 million poor people (0.37 million households) living outside established communities (labourers, room-renters, homeless and temple dwellers). In total, there were approximately 8.25 million urban poor people in 1.87 million households. This comes to about 37% of Thailand's total urban population of 22.3 million people.

CODI (2004) stated that after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, approximately 62% of the working members in Thailand's urban poor communities earned less than 10,000 Baht a month. Twenty six percent of the urban poor communities paid nothing at all for their housing and those who paid spent an average of 12% of their monthly income on housing. Access to the lowest level of private sector housing options cost at least 2,000 Baht a month, but the ability of the urban poor to pay for housing was that 54% could afford to pay 1,000 Baht a month or more (CODI, 2004). The figures clearly show a big gap between what the market could provide and what the urban poor could afford.

Therefore, the focus of the *Baan Mankong* programme is on the people's empowerment with an emphasis on the people's power to make decisions for themselves. The programme aims to liberate poor communities from a bilateral patron-client relationship. This involves three levels of dialogues in the *Baan Mankong* programme process. First, the programme allows communities to see their problems related to the city structures within the bigger picture. Second, the programme changed the usual negative perception of the outsiders towards slums. Third, and most importantly, the programme allows poor communities to see their own capacity and believe in their own power and potential. This involves a self-actualization process of oneself (Boonyabancha, 2005). The third aspect relates greatly to Freire's *conscientisacion* and it supports the poor to develop their 'power from within'.

CODI offers the following five options for community improvement (1) on-site upgrading; (2) reblocking; (3) land sharing; (4) reconstruction; and (5) relocation (CODI, 2004). CODI's (2008) *Baan Mankong* progress between January 2003-March 2008, 512 projects were fully completed or were being implemented. This figure covers 1,010 communities in over 260 cities involving 54,000 households. It is important to note that 78% of the households were upgraded in the same place or on land nearby. In addition, 83% of the households secured long-term land tenure security; 44% of them had cooperative land ownership; 39% of them had long-term leases for community cooperatives; 9% had permission to use land; and 8% had short-term leases (less than five years) for community cooperatives

Not only does the *Baan Mankong* programme aim to bring benefits to non-financial outcomes, but it also attempts to employ this pro-poor housing approach to trigger many other sorts of economic investments. As one of the keys of the programme is to support genuine partnership, the programme aims to be a win-win solution benefiting all partners – civil society, the government and the market.



First, the programme generates money flow into the local economy. The CODI estimated that only 20% of economic activity came from government capital. The other 80% came from communities. Second, the people receive more valuable assets when they get access to land tenure security. Third, the land value in near the area being upgraded also increases. Fourth, in many cases local authorities invest in infrastructure improvements (CODI, 2008).

The *Baan Mankong* project employed five main tools in an attempt to uncover the energy and creativity of the urban poor communities (CODI, 2008). The first is flexible and accessible finance in the form of housing and land loans and infrastructure subsidies. The second is the use of a savings group as a crucial catalytic force. These were employed to link people together and to support them to work and think collectively. Third, collective decision making and acting collectively in land, finance, management and welfare matters is key. Fourth, horizontal information exchange amongst poor communities is important and information on such activities as project visits, workshops and inaugurations needs to be accessible. Pilot projects are closely linked to self-empowerment for the poor because tangible changes are what the poor need to see. Fifth, *Baan Mankong* provides technical support by involving community architects, planners, architectural schools and design students to assist communities in developing their new settlement plans.



Figure 2. Example of houses in *Baan Mankong* Programme

‘Sweet Dreams Community?’ Workshops and Office of Contemporary Art and Culture (OCAC)

OCAC, under the Ministry Of Culture, funded ‘Sweet Dreams Community? Workshop.’ The workshop aims to build up capacity – values, knowledge and skills – of architectural students related to participatory design and community development work. Conducted over a short period of 3 days, the 40 people participating in the workshop were architects, and architecture and urban planning students from various educational institutes, each playing a role of a member of a community to help create their own ‘Sweet Dreams Community’ under different briefs of limitations. The workshop employed seminar, small-group working, role-playing, collective decision making, model making and action planning as tools, which are the actual design methods of many architects when working on community projects.

The workshop began with a lecture and a discussion session. Afterwards, participants were divided into small groups to exchange their own definitions of dreamed 'house', 'community' and 'city'. It was interesting to see how each group projected images of their ideal community that distinctively reflect romanticized fantasies of the bourgeoisie - from the peaceful green rice fields, farming, backyard gardens, with animals and pets, living together under a considerate agricultural community, and the presence of an electric train for a glimpse of urban comfort. The task was later adjusted where the 40 participants were placed in a simulation situation, in which they were role-playing the lucky community members chosen by a make-believe government to design and create a prototype project called 'Sweet Dreams Community'. The participants had to create a model with the scale of 1:75 in 2 hours, and figure out the planning of a community on a make-believe piece of land where on one side is a beautiful canal and on the other side is a dumpster.

The result was that the groups who finished the planning first choose the plots next to the canal, while the latter groups unwillingly took the plots located next to the dumpster. The participants questioned the reality of the situation of how no one would want to live next to a dumpster unless it included other compensations, such as a bigger piece of land, or the location was nearer to a communal garden. The romanticized notion of the concept of 'community' was questioned continually. The final task was the expropriation of some of the land in the community to build a new expressway announced by the make-believe government. The participants had 5 hours to create new models and readjust the plan. It was interesting to see future architects and urban planners, who were playing the roles of members of a community, deciding to throw away their 'dream house' models and readjust the whole plan to suite a more limited space. The participants organized themselves into groups to make decisions about the new planning of the community and the new rules that everybody has to live under. Representatives were chosen, people sounded out their opinions and sub-groups were created, to find as many solutions as possible. Increasingly, it became obvious that the participants were immersing themselves more and more into their roles as the community's members. The tasks, the pressure and problems became the force that pushed everybody to think and figure out solutions together, which is no different from actual community development work. It is very common that a community that is under some sort of pressure can be united much more powerfully than a community where people live their lives separately in peace.

The final plan was a banal looking, with small, equal plots of land and straight lines of street and roads. Two prototypes of house were made to create a more harmonious appearance, and the space under the expressway was turned into a green area. Everyone agreed not to follow the existing set-back regulations as there would not be enough space. It turned out to be interesting to see how architects and urban planners take off their professional 'hats', and while they don the hat of a community member laws become more negotiable if a particular case holds appropriate reasons. Many of the participants said that they spent most of the time designing the process rather than designing a house. The complexity of the adjustment lay in the negotiations between different individuals and sub-groups, as well as discussion, arguments, exchanges of ideas, collective decision-making and design process, and categorization of working groups according to each person's interest and expertise.

There is no doubt that community development work contains many complex issues, and it requires the knowledge, abilities and creativity to design a practicality of the outcome as much as the process. The period of 3 days for a workshop cannot do more than stimulate future architects and urban planners to start to question the knowledge and the tools they are accustomed with when they design a 'house', 'community' and 'city'.



At the very least, what they have gained in return is the ability to learn how to work with a community through a simulated situation where they became a member of a community, as well as the ability to question the romanticized notion of what so called ‘community’. After all, a community is not a place where everybody is considerate, loving, harmonious and agreeable, so all the challenges lie in the ability to create the right balance of different needs and finding the most compromising space where everything can meet.

Finally, wearing a hat and playing the role of the ‘other’ should somehow open new perspectives and expand the existing frames of how one thinks about and answers questions with more possibilities. It is not that the confidence and skill of experts are not important, but learning to listen to what other people have to say might take a longer time, and in the long run it may help to find more diverse alternatives of designs that can provide answers to the problems in a much more sensitive and effective manner.



Figure 3. ‘Sweet Dreams Community?’ Workshop

‘Design Hero’ Workshop and Thai Health Promotion Foundation (THPF)

THPF is an independent state agency set up according to the Health Promotion Act 2001 and funded by 2% surcharge tax of tobacco & alcohol excise taxes. It funds over 1,000 projects a year, including a project ‘Design Hero’. The project is a design competition initiated by the THPF and Art4d magazine. The project encourages young designers who wish to develop local communities using ‘design’ as a tool with dedication and sincere spirit for the greater sustainable good. The project lasted for almost 6 months, welcoming ideas and proposals submitted from students from various fields of design. The selection process resulted in 20 teams who had the chance to participate in a workshop led by an experienced staff of architects and designers, with a support of professional connection from the art4d magazine. The proposed ideas and designs showed great enthusiasm to initiate developments in the environment, products, media and small-scale architecture. Each team displayed great attention to detail and invention to suit the community environment of their choice.

A budget of 10,000 Baht (approximately 200 Pounds) was given to each of the 10 finalists who had to create prototypes. The winners would receive 100,000 Baht (approximately 2,000 Pounds) and the opportunity to bring their proposed ideas into reality. The award is not merely money but a chance to create something in action.



During a 4-5 week period the 10 final teams went to the actual working sites, got to know the physical and social environments of the community they choose, initiated discussions and formulated exchanges between members of the community and themselves.

The finalists were all students from different educational institutions and their projects covered a wide range of ideas such as Bangkok Yai community guidebook which aimed to transform banal reality of its physical environment into beautiful hand-drawn images and a walking map of Chakrabongse Mosque which was collectively conducted with local children and teenagers in the local community. Both turned local tales and stories into interesting information design projects. Another example is a design proposal to support Don Gratai community's products from recycled waste. The 'Trading the Surplus' project proposed a fun and creatively interesting activity for a local market with the aim to reduce problems of unsold products from the daily fresh market.

The decision for choosing the winning team was based on the level of possibility the project could achieve by being a part of the community and its practicality and sustainability. The eventual winner was 'The Ground of Union' by the 'Like Sa Ra' team. Their project proposed the development of an empty space in front of the market in Jom Somboon Community which plans to turn the site into a multifunctional activity ground for the community.

The design was not the most architecturally complex design, however, within a few weeks their project was able to persuade members of the community, who were once strangers to one another, to participate in several communal activities such as cleaning the site, art workshop from scrap materials, cooking competition and collectively designing the communal space. What the designers of the 'Like Sa Ra' team achieved was the ability to unite the spirit of the people and initiate collective contributions from the community.

An interesting aspect about the 'Design Hero' design competition is that it gives a great deal of consideration to the participation of the community. Such a challenge requires designers to have great time management skills throughout the design process and still be able to come up with interesting and practical designs. Their contributions to the competition will be a significant part of every participants' experience as a designer, enhancing their ability to work in the actual world of community design. It is a challenge to create designs that resonate with communities and society as whole.



Figure 4. 'Design Hero' Workshop

Conclusion

The four examples from Thailand show how the state can play various roles when dealing with community development – a provider, supporter and catalyst. Each role has its opportunities and challenges. First, as a provider, the government through the NHA body provides nation-wide standard infrastructure and facilities for communities. The challenges are in the intensive subsidy versus the scale of slum problems and how to create a sense of community after the houses are finished. Second, mainly as a supporter and slightly as a catalyst, CODI believes in capacity of community members and promotes nation-wide slum upgrading. CODI plays a role as a ‘coach’ providing platforms and facilitating dialogue amongst stakeholders, balancing individual and collective needs of community members with political and technical supports from CODI networks, building up local capacity of community members, supporting people-organization development and community bonds, expanding community networks and also coordinating with local universities and local authority in order to solve the slum problems at scale. At the same time, CODI’s accomplished projects also work as a catalytic force. Third, OCAC and THPF play the roles as a supporter and catalysts by initiating short-term workshops which aim to promote community participation and empowerment in a longer term by educating young professionals related to the issue. The workshops aim to raise awareness and support young professionals to learning in action and encourage them to reflect on their learning, with an attempt to transform their professional values of controlling to enabling.

The current approach of community development is complex. Partnerships mean more than a collaboration of different stakeholders who play a rigid role. The four examples show how the government can play dynamic roles. At the same time, the government collaborates with other stakeholders who can also play dynamic roles. Further studies and practices which explore the relationships and professionalism of other stakeholders should be conducted, in order to understand how to solve low-income community problems at scale.

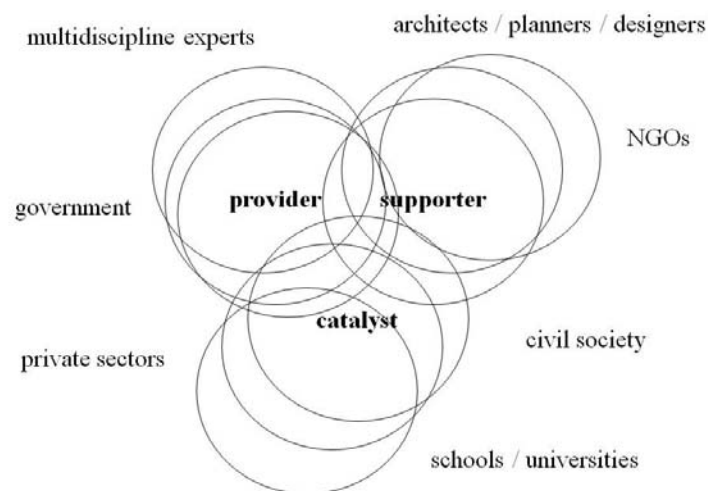


Figure 5. Dynamic Roles of Different Actors in Community Development

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