

Study on the Process of Community Development

— A case study of Arkansongkroh community in Ayutthaya —

Kimihiro AKIYA*, Kazuo TAKAHASHI**, Toshinobu FUJII**

Abstract

The paper discusses one facet of community development project, examining the community network activities aimed at rebuilding housing and environment in the slum community “Arkansongkroh” in Ayutthaya. These are pointed out: firstly, the saving group and housing association have took a central role of activities which has assured empowerment of residents and enabled residents to acquire their new houses, secondly, residents could get confidence for community activities by implementation of the project, thirdly, community organizations have changed dynamically related with the process of implementing the project.

Keyword: Community Development, Community Network, Community-Based Organization (CBO), Saving Group, Housing and Environmental improvement project (On-site Project)

1. The urbanization of Bangkok and the rise of the urban poor

Bangkok has experienced a rapid expansion in population during the period since 1960, caused by the flow of immigrants into the city. Construction of housings and infrastructures could not keep up with the demand of increasing populations so that squatters and slums quickly multiplied. According to Sapon's report¹⁾, the number of slum areas in Bangkok already exceeded 2,000 in the 1970s.

Most of slum people are belonged to the low-income class which depends on the informal sector for their livelihood. They have necessarily to cope with the problems of unemployment, congested housing, and dilapidated environment. In

*Graduate School of Regional Development Studies, Toyo University

**Professor, Faculty of Regional Development Studies, Toyo University

the 1970s, slums were targeted for eviction or forced removal to other areas. In 1973, the National Housing Authority (NHA) was established and began to play a central role in the construction of public housings for the urban poor families. However, the projects had met some difficulties to let great number of slums increase. From the latter half of the 1970s, the focus of policies to the urban poor shifted to improving the areas where low-income families were living or enabling them to build their house by themselves. These were related to cooperative efforts to carry out a slum improvement program involving the NHA and City of Bangkok under the guidance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In 1978, NHA launched a new policy which consisted of rebuilding slum areas, slum relocation projects and public housing projects. The inhabitants in slum areas were encouraged to form organizations that ensured means for local residents to be involved in the improvement programs. At the same time, foreign NGOs related with inhabitant organizations began to establish local offices in Bangkok.

2. CODI network support for development projects

NHA, in 1992, established Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) and began to promote improving urban poor communities. It had provided slum residents with economic support, and supported them for housing improvement. Specifically, community oriented projects, managed by the Community Committees under UCDO, had been aimed at getting each community to organize saving groups to provide small loans for improving housings and living environments.

Later, in 2000, UCDO merged with the Farm Community Development Fund to Community Organization Development Institute (CODI). This merger bought a new mission that aims at not only creating saving groups in communities (covering around 30000 communities) to promote their activities but also supporting for building and strengthening networks in-between various communities and loaning money for housing construction and other purposes to help members of the communities in the network to achieve a higher level of self-reliance. Various kinds of information and training programs are also provided to them by CODI.

CODI is supporting network activities and playing the role of a catalyst in the process of making it possible for various slum communities to find their decent place in a society through their own initiatives.

3. The Ayutthaya network activity

Ayutthaya is a small city with population of around 60,000 in 2000. The city is located approximately 75km from Bangkok. Its advantageous location has caused to develop industrial parks in outskirts of the city. The heart areas of the city have been designated as World Cultural Asset since 1991 to be preserved for the protection of the historic environment. Ayutthaya Island is located in the center of the city and most of this area belongs to the national government. According to a joint survey carried out by the NHA, CODI and an NGO in 2000, there are 53 informal communities existing in the city. Most of the communities are located in leased land under a fear of eviction. Their housings are old and dilapidated. The densities of communities are growing up as seen in slums. Especially in the slums within the special protected area, there are some possibilities of resettlement or eviction based on the slum removal policies. In addition, the funds available for improvement of the residential environment are scarce in most of communities, and in order to get enough money to live, slum people had borrowed at usurious rates from local, private moneylenders. They are having difficulties in paying off such loans. Given these hard situations, in 1998, in order to pay off such loans and to make improvements in the housing, a savings group in Arkansongkroh community was established ahead to other communities. This was the birth of the Ayutthaya network. To support this activity, CODI made efforts to connect this community with other communities. In 1999, 8 additional savings groups were established in their respective communities. By connecting the respective communities to each other, the network increased the strength of their collateral for borrowing money. Construction of sidewalks and other joint projects for their community environments were carried out. In this way, the local network achieved a good reputation and the participating communities/groups became able to get funds from outside government organizations.

4. The environmental characteristic in Arkansongkroh community.

Arkansongkroh is surrounded by the historical roads in rectangular city block in Ayutthaya. 66 households (250 residents) settle on the public land in 2004. After the fire suffered 40 years ago, Ayutthaya municipality built two public row houses for the community for accommodating people (Fig. 1). As population had in-

creased since 1987, the residents continued to build houses in the vacant place. As a result, total number of housing unit increased to 68, which caused congestion of housings and environmental deterioration (Fig. 2).

There had been the issues as follows : 1) improvement of housing and environment, 2) housing secure for a long duration, 3) upgrading of pave walk way and drainage system, 4) fire precautions.

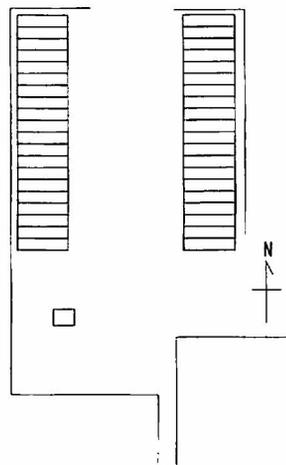


Fig. 1 Early period in Arkansongkroh

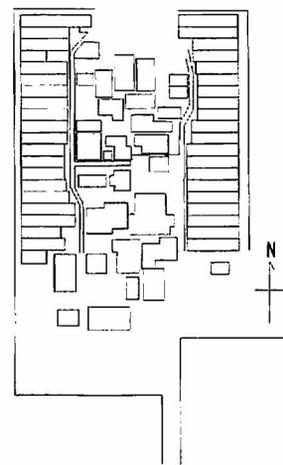


Fig. 2 Arkansongkroh before housing project

5. The community activities in Arkansongkroh

In 1995, the residents discussed how they could solve debts problem and elected a community leader by vote. Soon after the election, a group in the community had set up finance association for a solution of debt and started saving activities. Member of the group increased to cover most of households and took part in saving activities that they continued to save 100-1,000 Baht per household each month. At the beginning, the group had not aimed at improvement of entire community because they had focused on individual problem of debt.

With the flood damage in 1998, the community had to cope with how they improve housings and environments. They had set up the housing association on the basis of the saving group to aim at implementing the housing project on site. The cooperative association had been built up to ask the fund from CODI. Finally, 64 of 68 households of the community had participated in and started the saving activities.

In 1999, CODI had worked on communities in Ayutthaya to support commu-

nity activities by suggesting them to be involved in the network. Arkansongkroh had played active roles in the network activities and had been appreciated by members of the network as to designate the leader of the community to the chairman of the network. To become a leading community, cooperative activities in Arkansongkroh had been encouraged. Consequently the amount of saving had reached to 48,500 Baht. In 2000, the community had received loan the total amount of 7,800,000 Bath from NHA and CODI made it possible to launch the rebuilding project on site.

On the process of implementing the project, the residents participated in the workshops to make the plan. They were divided into several groups in meetings to discuss what plan they made for new housings and living environments. Architects sent by CODI took in the request of the residents and made out the plans. Finally, the residents had agreed to the block plan of 12 terrace housings surrounding the wide open space (Fig. 3). A block housing consists of two-story units each with frontage 3 m, depth 7m. The characteristic of the block plan is that it has the common open space in the center.

As officially, the construction cost of units in both ends were 92,000 Baht and other units were 79,000 Baht, the cost of the units has reduced actually if they were delivered with no interior decoration to 84,000 in both ends of the units and 70,000 Baht of others. The amounts of monthly payment of units are 890 Baht (the units of both ends), 790 Baht (units of middle), 720 Baht (no interior decoration of both ends) and 620 Baht (no interior decoration of middle) for 15 years.

Rights of ownership for the new houses (units) will transfer to the residents after 15 years of loan payment.

Through implementing the project (Fig. 4), the residents had been encouraged and community activities became intensified. The project has evaluated as a model

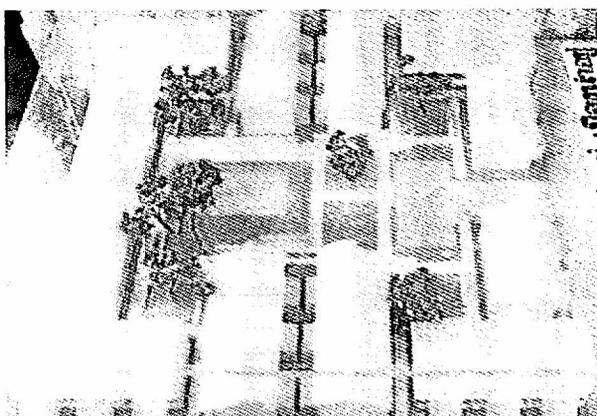


Fig. 3 Arkansongkroh housing proposal



Fig. 4 Arkansongkroh after housing project

of collaboration between the residents and the agencies, and the community has many visitors from outsiders. However, on the process of repayment, the amount of loans had come to hit lives of the residents who belonged to the informal sector. Around 2/3 households had faced with problems not to pay back to CODI. That situation had caused them to discourage in the network. Community activities had seemed as if they turned to be inactive.

6. The social and economic characteristics

The residents of Arkansongkroh community can be calcified into 17 kinship groups. Their relationship with each other is rather intimate because most of the residents has been lived there from the beginning the community. However, in electoral occasions, the opinion of the majority of kinship tends to influence on decision-making.

Resident's occupations are shown in fig. 5. The factory worker's monthly income (fig. 6) is between 6,000-9,000 Baht. On the other hand, the monthly income of massage, which belongs to the informal sector, is between 5,000 to 10,000 Baht. The gap of income has tended to connect directly to the individual performance in activities. Working hour in the informal sector and the monthly income are usually unstable.

Fig. 7 shows the ratio of workers in both the formal and the informal sector in the community. The informal sector worker occupies around 65%. In the community, unemployment and the gap of income between the high-income and the low-income household (Fig. 8) have been serious issues.

Fig. 5 Ranking of resident's occupation

Ranking	Occupation	Male(Number)	Female(Number)	Amount(Number)
1	Factory worker	0	27	27
2	Massage	0	12	12
3	Day workers	5	4	9
3	Small business	3	6	9
5	Tuk-tuk driver	6	0	6
6	Driver	5	0	5
6	Garageman	5	0	5
8	Motorbike driver	4	0	4
9	Variety shop	1	2	3
9	Samuro	3	0	3
11	Guard	2	0	2
11	Carpenter	2	0	2
12	Doctor	0	1	1
13	NGO	1	0	1
13	Bus company driver	0	1	1
13	City hall helper	1	0	1
13	Building enterprise	0	1	1
13	Milk product delivery	0	1	1
13	Thai dance instructor	1	0	1
13	Cook	1	0	1
13	Food shop	0	1	1
	Total	46	56	102

Fig. 7 The rate of formal sector workers and informal sector workers

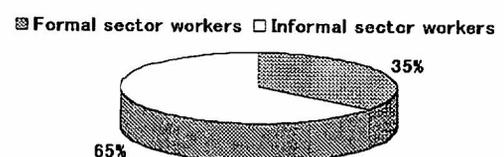


Fig. 6 The household compositions of Arkansongkroh community residents

Number	Number of household members	Blood relationship	Occupation of householder(A)	Occupation of other people(B)	Number of labor B	Monthly income:A(Baht)	Monthly income:B(Baht)	Total of A and B(Baht)	Participated in project or not
1	1	C	Factory laborer	Non	0	6,000	0	6,000	○
2	0	D	Doctor	Non	0	Unknown	0	Unknown	●
3	2	E	Factory laborer	Factory laborer	1	9,000	6,000	15,000	○
4	4	H(A)	Factory laborer	Non	0	9,000	0	9,000	○
5	4	M	Bus company	Non	0	4,500	0	4,500	○
6	3	L	Non	Factory laborer	1	0	9,000	9,000	○
7	3	O	Non	Factory laborer	1	0	6,000	6,000	○
8	2	Q	Non	Factory laborer	1	0	9,000	9,000	○
9	3	Q	Factory laborer	Factory laborer	1	9,000	9,000	18,000	○
10	2	A	Garage man	Factory laborer	1	4,500	6,000	10,500	○
11	4	A	Massage	Factory laborer	1	5,000	6,000	11,000	○
12	5	(A)	Factory laborer	Small business	1	6,000	4,000	10,000	○
13	4	A	Factory laborer	Motorbike driver	1	6,000	4,500	10,500	○
14	4	A	Small business	Factory laborer, Carpenter	2	4,000	10,500	14,500	○
15	3	(B)	Factory laborer	Driver	1	4,000	3,000	7,000	○
16	3	B	Tuk-tuk driver	Factory laborer	1	8,000	6,000	14,000	○
17	3	B	Massage	Factory laborer	1	10,000	6,000	16,000	○
18	4	A	Tuk-tuk driver	Factory laborer	1	8,000	6,000	14,000	○
19	4	F	Small business	Factory laborer	1	9,000	6,000	15,000	○
20	5	(F)	Massage	Factory laborer	1	6,000	6,000	12,000	○
21	7	G(A)	Massage	City hall helper, Factory laborer	3	10,000	17,000	27,000	○
22	4	I	Factory laborer	Garage man	2	6,000	4,500	10,500	○
23	4	(H)	Factory laborer	Motorbike driver	1	9,000	4,500	13,500	○
24	3	K	Cook	Factory laborer	1	6,000	9,000	15,000	○
25	4	K	Day workers	Factory laborer	1	2,000	6,000	8,000	○
26	10	J	Non	Day workers, Factory laborer	2	0	16,000	16,000	○
27	9	N(E)	Day workers	Factory laborer	2	3,000	18,000	21,000	△
28	2	O	Day workers	Factory laborer	1	3,000	6,000	9,000	○
29	3	A	Garage man	Factory laborer	1	4,500	6,000	10,500	○
30	2	A	Variety shop	Non	0	3,000	0	3,000	○
31	6	A	Variety shop	Small business	1	1,600	3,000	4,600	○
32	4	B	Small business	Day workers	1	3,000	3,000	6,000	○
33-34	8	C	Non	Driver	1	0	4,000	4,000	○
35	3	A	Massage	Non	0	6,000	0	6,000	○
36	2	E	Tuk-tuk driver	milk product delivery	1	4,500	4,000	8,500	○
37	4	A	Building enterprise	Carpenter	1	4,000	4,500	8,500	○
38	2	B	Non	Non	0	0	0	0	○
39	5	A	Non	Garage man	1	0	4,500	4,500	○
40	5	F	Motorbike driver	Massage	1	4,500	9,000	13,500	○
41	5	(H)	Driver	Massage	1	※	5,000	5,000	○
42	1	A	Massage	Non	0	6,000	0	6,000	○
43	2	A	NGO	Massage	1	Unknown	10,000	10,000	○
44	8	I	Massage	Day workers, Motorbike driver	2	7,000	7,500	14,500	○
45	1	I	Thai dance instructor	Non	0	2,000	0	2,000	○
46	2	F(J)	Small business	Non	0	3,000	0	3,000	○
47	2	H	Variety shop	Variety shop helper	1	4,000	0	4,000	○
48	2	K	Driver	Non	0	3,000	0	3,000	○
49	4	J	Non	Driver	1	0	3,000	3,000	○
50	4	M	Day workers	Small business	1	3,000	3,000	6,000	○
51-52	4	M	Small business	Non	0	3,000	0	3,000	○
53-54	4	M	Non	Factory laborer	2	0	12,000	12,000	○
55	5	N	Non	Tuk-tuk driver	1	0	5,000	5,000	○
56	2	O	Tuk-tuk driver	Non	0	5,000	0	5,000	○
57	2	O	Samuro	Non	0	2,000	0	2,000	○
58	4	P	Small business	Non	1	4,000	0	4,000	○
59	4	P	Samuro	Non	0	2,000	0	2,000	○
60	3	Q	Massage	Day workers	1	6,000	3,000	9,000	○
61	4	Q	Guard	Non	0	4,500	0	4,500	○
62-63	5	(A)	Tuk-tuk driver	Massage	1	5,000	5,000	10,000	○
64	2	G	Food shop	Non	0	4,500	0	4,500	○
65	4	O	Guard	Non	0	4,500	0	4,500	x
66	3	A	Samuro	Day workers	1	1,000	3,000	4,000	x

Fig. 8 Average monthly income of residents

	Household (Number)	Total of income (Baht)	Average of income (Baht)
The households which one person has a job	31	140,500	4,532
The households which some people has a job	35	385,500	11,014
Total of community	66	526,000	7,970

7. The changing process of organizations in the community

Development stages on the process of the project are divided into the following sixth stages (Fig. 9, 10).

- 1) 1st stage : Organizing of the saving group. From the settlement of community in 1957 to establishment of the saving group for the purpose to solve dept problem in 1995.

- 2) 2nd stage : Organizing of the housing cooperative association. From establishment the saving group to organizing of the housing cooperative association to implement the on-site rebuilding project in 2000.
- 3) 3rd stage : Implementing the construction. From implementation of on-site project in 2001. Several committees for managing to the project were organized in the community. Residents had moved to temporary houses near the site.
- 4) 4th stage : Completion of the construction. From completion of the construction to extension of community activities to have visitors from outsiders.
- 5) 5th stage : Repayment. From starting repay to deferment of paying that caused to stagnation of community activities.
- 6) 6th stage : Reorganization. From the election of a new leader in 2004 to the improved situation in repayment to CODI.

Fig. 9 Time-line of community activities in Arkansongkroh community

Development stages on the process of the project	Year	The main events in the community	The movement of residents
1st stage: Organization of the saving group	1957	Completion of rental housing	Residents began to live in rental housing.
	1979	The village office had been started dormitory construction	Leader was elected in the community and opposition movement for officer had been developed residents.
	1980	Come to a composition with the village office	
	1987	The community had caused congestion of housings and environmental deterioration.	Residents continued to build houses in the vacant place.
	1995	• A community leader was elected by the residents • Finance association was set up for a solution of debt and started saving activities.	The saving group was established for the purpose of repaying debt and was directed at individuals having problems. Therefore, the community solidarity and community consciousness was low.
2nd stage: Organizing of the housing cooperative association	1998	• Residents were suffered from flood damage. • Housing and cooperative association were established.	The consciousness to housing and environmental improvement of residents has improved and they had come to community activities in the whole community.
	2000	The community had received loan the total amount of 7,800,000 Baht from NHA and CODI for the rebuilding project on site.	
3rd stage: Implementing the construction	2001	• Obtained the finance from Miyazawa fund. • Residents made the plan of new housing by the support of the architects send by CODI. • Implementation of Housing environmental improvement project started by the support from CODI and HNA. • Residents moved to temporary housing • The housing construction was interrupted by Department of the Treasury for a while.	The community leader and residents had tackled together to the project. However, some residents stopped joining community activities because of discrepancies in the vision of community activities.
4th stage: Completion of the construction	2002	• Completion of the new housing. • Supported for the activities out of the community. • Started education loans for child.	Residents gained confidence in their ability and extended their activities in and out of the community.
5th stage: Repayment	2003	• Started repayment to CODI. • 2/3 households faced problem for pay back to CODI.	The household economy was tight for loan payment. The dissatisfaction to a leader and community activities became large.
6th stage: Reorganization	2004	• New leader was elected by the residents • New leader has worked to reform relationships within the network and he negotiated the loan reduction with CODI.	More 2/3 households could pay back to CODI.

1st stage : Organizing of the saving group

Since the saving group was established for solution of debts problem, the resident's concern with the housing and environment had been low because the aim of the activities had focused on the individual matters. Activities of the saving group, though they led to organize the network, were so limited that the knowledge and understanding for the community development were not informed to residents.

Community activities in the stage were solely directed by the community leader.

2nd stage : Organizing of the housing cooperative association

After the flood, the community had to cope with the congested housings and disastrous environment. They had set up the housing association on the basis of the saving group to aim at implementing the housing project on site. The cooperative association had asked the fund from CODI. As a result the central role of activities has gradually transferred from a community leader to the association.

3rd stage : Implementing the construction

On the process of implementing the project, the residents participated in the workshops to make the plan. They discussed on new housings and living environments and at last selected one plan among several plans that architects send by CODI made on resident's requests. The block plan has the common open space in the center so that it reflected the characteristic of the previous settlement pattern. The cooperative association collaborated with the network, CODI, NHA and local government had carried on main part of activities for implementing the project. Several committees for managing to the project were organized in the community. During the construction the community leader and the residents had tackled together to the project, which relationship brought certain unification in the community. The residents moved to temporary houses when the project started.

4th stage : Completion of the construction

When the construction had completed successfully, the residents could get proud of implementation the project. The project implemented for one year has a good reputation because of its participatory way, collaborations with agencies concerned and activities by the resident's association. The residents have many visitors from outside to see new housings and the wide open space in the settlement and shared their experience with them.

5th stage : Repayment

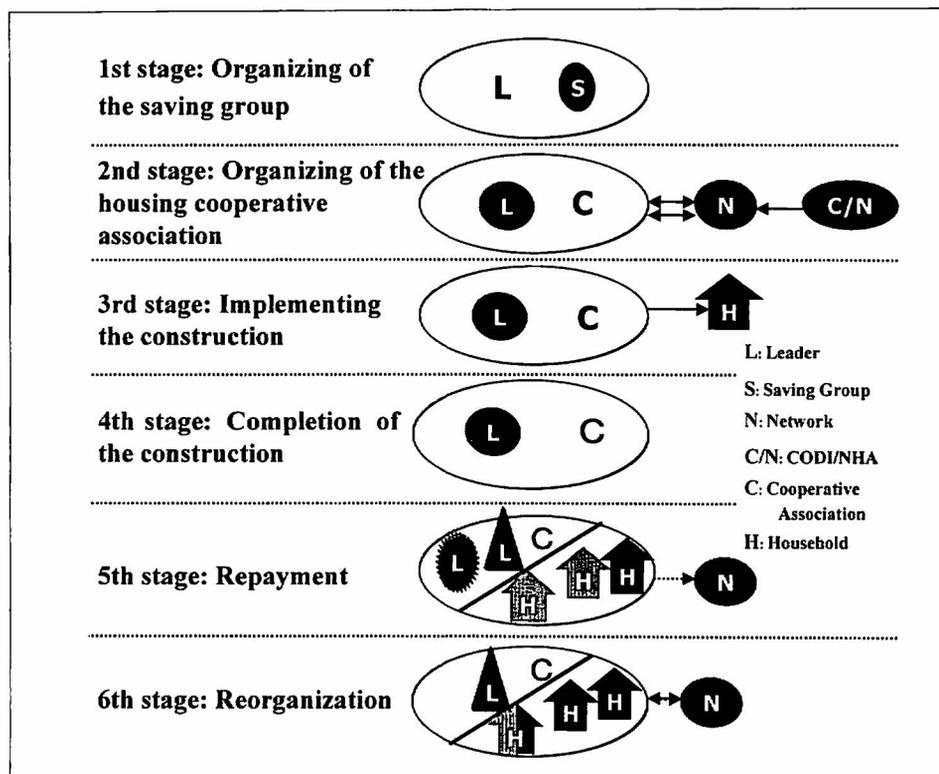
On the process of repayment, the amount of loans had burdened on the residents. Most of households had faced with problems of default. That situation had caused them to discourage in the network. Community activities had seemed as if they turned to be inactive. Leadership of the chairman of association who had

held it during the construction had declined in among residents.

6th stage : Reorganization

Problems of repayment bore on the members and despotic characteristic of the leader had led to the election of a leader. Calling for the residents to strengthen again the relationship with network and reorganizing committees, a new leader was elected. He immediately negotiated the loan reduction with CODI to enable more 2/3 residents to repay to CODI.

Fig. 10 The changing process of community-based organization in community development.



On the process of implementing the project, the Arkansongkroh community has showed dynamically changes both in organizations and activities. In the first stage, the saving group was established for the purpose of repaying debt of individuals. Community activities remained in a fragile state. The housing cooperative association organized in the 2nd stage and came to focus on community-wide issues which connected with the activities of the network. The network, CODI and local government had collaborated with the association and supported the project. Then the participations of the residents in the activities were improved. The leadership of the community activities had transferred from the community leader to the

association as a whole group which had turned from the previous saving group. The activities of the community have changed the aim of the housing improvement project. The participatory way and a sort of collectivism had made the community possible to plan by itself and implement such a big and unique on-site project successfully in cooperation with the network and other agencies. In the term of housing construction, community activities had improved and expanded in and out of the community. But when the construction was completed, these problems occurred as a consequence : the discontinuation of saving activities, distrust on the community leader, trouble of repayment to CODI, and the declining influence of community networks. However, the residents already had known how they got the way to break the deadlock as they implemented the project with their initiative. The residents elected a new leader and asked him to reorganize the committees/groups in the community ensuring relationships with the network. As a result, the community has shown signs of solving the problems such as repayment of housing.

8. Conclusion

On-site rebuilding project in the Arkansongkroh community is examined as a case study. These factors are pointed out as implementing the projects successfully : establishment of the network, organizing the saving group/association in a participatory way, making the plan by the resident's initiatives and adopting the administrative system of collaboration with other agencies. The network in Ayutthaya has supported the communities to organize the saving group and to enable residents to improve housings and the environment. Activities of both the saving group/association and the network have made it possible to empower residents and extend activities.

The findings on project of Arkansongkroh community are the following.

- 1) Activities of the saving group/association made it possible to empower the residents.
- 2) The dynamic process has divided in 6 stages from the saving group to the housing association and reorganization in the community according to implementing development.
- 3) The network and other agencies collaborated with the community to support the project in the systematic ways.

However, the following is recommended for the resident because most of them can not still get stable living ways even after the project.

- 1) How to continue community activities for empowering them.
- 2) How to encourage them to catch up with the formal sector.

Acknowledgement

The authors appreciate deeply to the residents of Arkansongkroh community, Prof. Sutum, Chairman on the Ayutthaya network, Prof. Boonyong, Chulalongkorn University, Prof. Sang-kyung An of Toyo University, and thank to Mr. Yasuhiko Sasaki and Mr. Atsushi Kawasumi, Graduate School of Toyo University and Mr. Vannasopha Khamsaath graduated from faculty of regional development studies of Toyo University.

Note and Reference

- 1) Sapon Pornchokchai, Bangkok Slums : Review and Recommendations, Agency for Real Estate Affairs 1993
- 2) Toshinobu Fujii, San kyong An, Kazuo Takahashi, Study on community network activities in Ayutthaya, Regional development studies, No, 5, Toyo University, 2002
- 3) Toshinobu Fujii, Living Environment in Asian Cities, Center for Sustainable Development Studies, Toyo University, 2003
- 4) Yasuhiko Sasaki, Study on Activities of the Community Network in Ayutthaya Thailand, Toyo University master's thesis, 2003
- 5) Yasuhiko Sasaki, Study on Activities of the Community Network in Ayutthaya, The City Planning Institute of Japan 2003
- 6) Kimihiro Akiya, Community development and social structure -A case study in Ayutthaya-, Toyo University master's thesis, 2004
- 7) Kimihiro Akiya, Study on the changing process of community based organization in on-site development -A Case Study in Ayutthaya-, The Meeting of the Asia Area Studies of City Planning, Winter 2004 Proceedings, 2004
- 8) Kimihiro Akiya, Kazuo Takahashi, Suggestions for poverty reduction from a case study on community network activities in Ayutthaya : In the case study of Arkansongkroh community, Third Joint Seminar Organized by AIT and Toyo University, 2004
- 9) CODI, CODI'S presentation document