

# Supporting Global Campaigns in the Asia-Pacific Region 10

*Recognising that the problems of inadequate housing and poverty in urban areas are partially caused and seriously aggravated by forced evictions and outmoded, corrupt, and incompetent forms of local government, the ROAP-Fukuoka is currently supporting UN-HABI TAT's two global campaigns in the region: the Good Urban Governance Campaign (GUGC) and the Secure Tenure Campaign (STC). Both of these issues were highlighted in the Habitat Agenda, the continuing blueprint for UN-HABI TAT's work.*

## **Good Urban Governance Campaign (GUGC) Objectives**

The main objective of the GUGC is to improve the quality of life in cities, especially for the poor and marginalised, through promoting accountable, transparent, and responsible practices, as well as equitable and responsive policies. Good urban governance ensures that all city residents, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, economic circumstances, or physical or health handicaps, have equal access to adequate shelter and urban services, as well as equal rights and treatment under the law.

## **Secure Tenure Campaign (STC) Objectives**

The STC was born from a widespread recognition that forced evictions, besides being a brutal abuse of the human rights of the poor, often actually make them even poorer and leave them in even worse housing conditions than before the eviction. So eviction only aggravates the problem of urban poverty, the root cause of squatting and the formation of slums. In this sense, eviction contributes to homelessness, exacerbates or deepens poverty, and puts poor families further out of reach of affordable decent housing and living environments.



*Before community-based upgrading.*



*During upgrading process.*

*After community based upgrading.*



To achieve these goals, the campaign encourages local governments to adopt inclusive strategies and participatory decision-making processes to ensure that all voices are heard, thus, helping ensure their needs can be duly met. ROAP-Fukuoka has launched and supported activities in support of the GUGC campaign in Fiji, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

The STC advocates the granting of secure tenure to communities living in squatter settlements as an essential and catalytic element in an effective, pro-poor shelter policy. With security of tenure, the poor willingly invest in improving their housing and community environments. When coupled with strategic supports, such as community savings and loans schemes and community networks to promote intercommunity learning and cooperation, as in Thailand's Ban Mankong Programme, secure tenure can generate good housing for tens of thousands of families.



*Squatter communities on the edge of Bangkok.*

The primary function of the STC is to give a voice to the hundreds of millions of people living in slums and shantytowns known by different names, such as *katchi abadis* in Pakistan, *kampung*s in Indonesia, and *favelas* in Brazil, as well as to the hundreds of thousands of homeless living in temporary shelter.

Naturally, the STC actively promotes equal treatment for women, particularly with access to property titles and inheritance rights. That all people have a right to adequate housing and security of tenure is among the most basic of all housing rights. ROAP-Fukuoka has launched and supported activities in support of the campaign in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

*Thailand's Ban Mankong provides secure tenure and loans for house construction through community savings groups.*



### **Putting Campaign Principles into Practice**

Campaigns are intended, first, to promote awareness of existing obstacles to the achievement of socially desirable goals and, second, to develop viable local solutions in partnership with local actors within particular contexts. In practice, that has meant disseminating consensus-based principles and norms about these issues that can feed into more effective policies and management tools to overcome such obstacles and to improve prospects for human settlements as a whole and for cities in particular.

UN-HABITAT is aware, however, that global campaigns and other "top down" approaches can never fully achieve their goals, unless they awaken and engage the participation and commitment of the intended beneficiaries and their partners in municipalities, national government agencies, and civil society, in real activities and projects that realise the campaign goals in practice.

Therefore, in recent years, the ROAP-Fukuoka has concentrated on developing good urban governance- and secure tenure-related activities, wherever possible, within all its projects and programmes in the region to "operationalise" the principles and norms of the campaigns. In some countries, such as Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Thailand, the ROAP-Fukuoka has been linking the two campaigns to achieve more security of tenure through better urban governance.

## Getting more security of tenure through better urban governance

The *Secure Tenure Campaign* (STC) in the Philippines was launched in 2002 after a long, broad-based preparatory process. The *Philippine Urban Forum* (PUF) is a UN-Habitat supported coalition of national and local government institutions, research institutes, shelter agencies, community based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and international support agencies. PUF took the lead in coordinating the STC with other stakeholders in the urban sector and with the *Good Urban Governance Campaign* (GUGC).

The main organisers of the STC itself are a consortium of NGOs within the *Urban Poor Coalition*, and CBOs, such as the *Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines*. This inclusive process has created strong and mutually beneficial linkages between the STC and the *Good Urban Governance Campaign* (GUGC), which was led by the National League of Cities in the Philippines.

One of its major achievements has been to sensitise national and local government officials, as well as the public at large, to the enormous potential of poor communities to improve their housing and settlements at very little cost to the state, when they are granted security of tenure.



*Communities have united behind the Secure Tenure Campaign in the Philippines.*