

12 The ROAP-Fukuoka's Partnership Role in Promoting Sustainable Urbanisation

The ROAP-Fukuoka was established to enable UN-HABITAT to increase its technical cooperation in this most populous region of the world and to promote a shared vision of how human settlements in general, and cities in particular, can be developed in a people-friendly and environmentally-sustainable manner. Over the first 10 years of its operations the ROAP-Fukuoka has deepened its understanding of the diverse and complex challenges that countries in the region face. Being located in the region, the ROAP-Fukuoka has also been able to respond to country and city demands in a more timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. As a result, the annual budget for the ROAP-Fukuoka's portfolio of assistance projects has grown from an annual budget of US\$12.4 million for 1997 to US\$58.1 million for 2006.

The turbulent economic, political, and environmental events over the last decade graphically underscore the need for the expertise and assistance of the ROAP-Fukuoka in the region. The 1997 financial crash in Southeast Asia that spread around the world; the 9/11 attacks in the US and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq; and the December 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean: these are just some among the many cataclysmic events that have brought about huge, unanticipated, and urgent demands for the ROAP-Fukuoka's expertise and technical assistance.

In each of these circumstances, the ROAP-Fukuoka has been able to respond effectively through creative partnerships with local communities, local civil society actors, and local municipal and national authorities in helping people regain access to shelter, basic services, and their livelihoods.

Partnerships of ROAP-Fukuoka

The ROAP-Fukuoka's 10-year presence in the region has enabled UN-HABITAT to deepen and consolidate its relationships with its partners at all levels: national governments, research institutes, and local authorities and their national and regional associations, as well as urban communities and their city and national federations. Much of this partnership building has been achieved through working directly with various partners in projects and programmes, along with other initiatives. One of the ROAP-Fukuoka's major partners is the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand. The two UN regional agencies are working together on projects and programmes, as well as on a wide range of workshops and seminars on economic, social, and environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region.



ROAP-Fukuoka staff member Jan Meeuwissen at a village celebration in Myanmar.

Poverty is still the major obstacle to sustainable development in the poorer countries of the region.

One recent example is a project on *Housing the Urban Poor* funded by the UN Development Account. This project, which is operational in four countries (Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste), is preparing a set of guide books



Former ROAP-Fukuoka staff member Mariko Sato with children in a slum on the edge of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

to help policymakers and national and local government officials better understand low-income housing and urbanisation issues.

The ROAP-Fukuoka also works closely with NGOs at the regional level. The *Asian Coalition for Housing Rights* (ACHR), a broad coalition of community networks, NGOs, and professionals, has been an inspiring partner in a range of community-based projects, as well as in advocacy campaigns. These include cooperation on the *Global Campaign for Secure Tenure*, on community exchange programmes for mutual learning, and on joint projects, such as the post-tsunami support to a people-centred recovery process in Thailand.

On urban issues, with a focus on the MDGs, *CityNet*, based in Yokohama, Japan, and ROAP-Fukuoka have been working together on the capacity building of local governments in the region. A recent example is the project *Localising the MDGs*, which operates in 50 cities in the region.

Partnerships with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are increasing with joint activities in Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. The major partnership with ADB is in the *Water for Asian Cities* programme, which is being

implemented in China, India, Laos PDR, Nepal, and Vietnam.

At the country level, with advocacy and operational activities in development and post-disaster projects, ROAP-Fukuoka has supported communities, local and national governments, and worked together with a large number of national and international NGOs. These NGO partnerships have been fruitful and created a better understanding of human settlements issues among all involved.

Gathering, Managing, and Sharing Knowledge

Through its active and sustained contact with this still expanding network of partners, the ROAP-Fukuoka has come to know who is doing what in a particular city or country and what is working effectively and what is not. This has greatly increased ROAP-Fukuoka's relevance and value to the region.

In 2004, the ROAP-Fukuoka initiated its *Sharing Knowledge for Better Cities: ROAP Strategy for Optimizing Knowledge Resources in Asia Pacific*. Following a systematic and critical review of projects and activities in the region, its Knowledge Management Unit (KMU) has documented best practices covering diverse issues, ranging from micro-credit for shelter construction in Indonesia to bio-gas production in Sri Lanka. In addition, the KMU has commissioned research studies on rural-urban linkages in the Asia-Pacific region; a comparative survey of policies towards urban homeless people in Europe, the United States, and Asia; and sustainability indicators for cities in Asia. Capturing knowledge and sharing learning are now important elements of all the ROAP-Fukuoka's operational projects.

A vital and growing part of the ROAP-Fukuoka's role is to listen and learn about poor people's problems and what their communities are doing to solve them. It then disseminates that information to others, such as other communities or local governments in other countries facing similar problems, that have no clear idea how to proceed. In some cases, the "others" are funding agencies or governments that do not fully comprehend such problems, nor fully perceive the potential of

poor communities to solve them on their own, when provided with sufficient legal and administrative facilitation and financial support.

Part of the ROAP-Fukuoka's strategic role is to improve regional, national, city, and local capacity building and cooperation to enable sustainable local solutions and constructive partnerships within and among various stakeholder networks. To support this partnership-based approach, the ROAP-Fukuoka also promotes appropriate policy and legal frameworks to enable these innovative solutions to be mainstreamed and adopted on a wide scale.

The ROAP-Fukuoka sees the increasing importance of systematic knowledge management, timely information flows, coherent awareness campaigns, and efficient sourcing of funding and know-how for locally defined development actions as crucial to the ongoing challenge of accommodating present and future generations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Scope and Scale of ROAP-Fukuoka's Projects

Over its first 10 years the ROAP-Fukuoka has broadened the range and increased the scale of its projects in response to the needs of countries in the region. The growth of the ROAP-Fukuoka's project

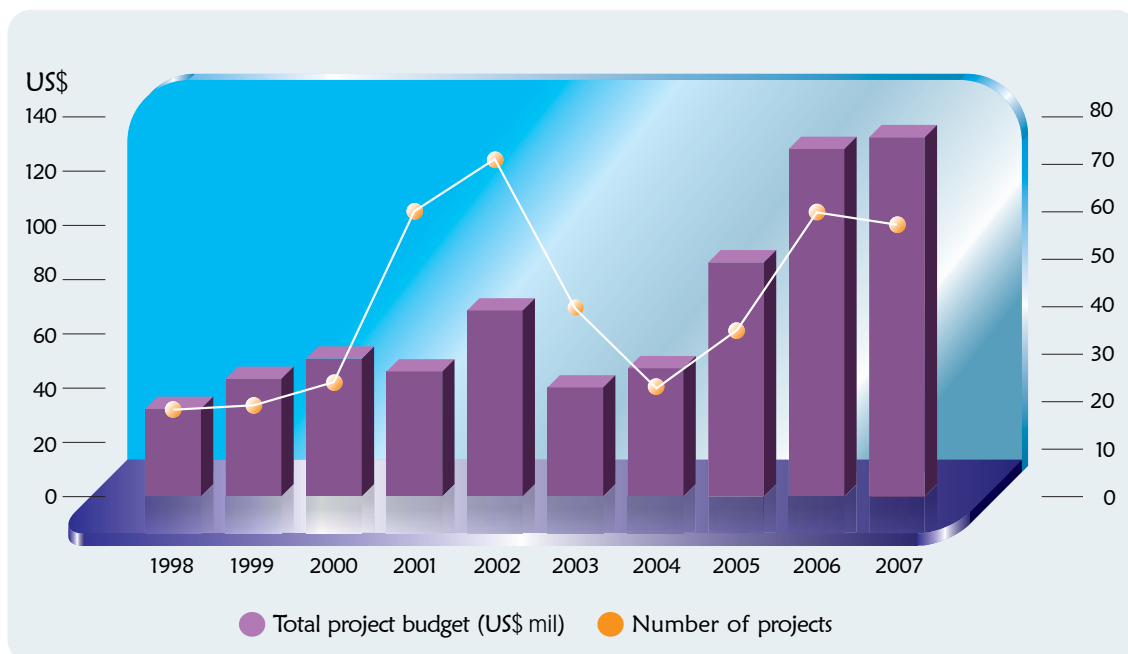
portfolio had been steady, but increased dramatically from 2004, when it got involved in helping people to rebuild their housing after the Indian Ocean tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan.

At the end of 1997, the ROAP-Fukuoka had 19 projects with a total budget of US\$ 31.8 million, while at the beginning of 2007 the portfolio had increased to 57 projects and a total of US\$ 131.8 million.

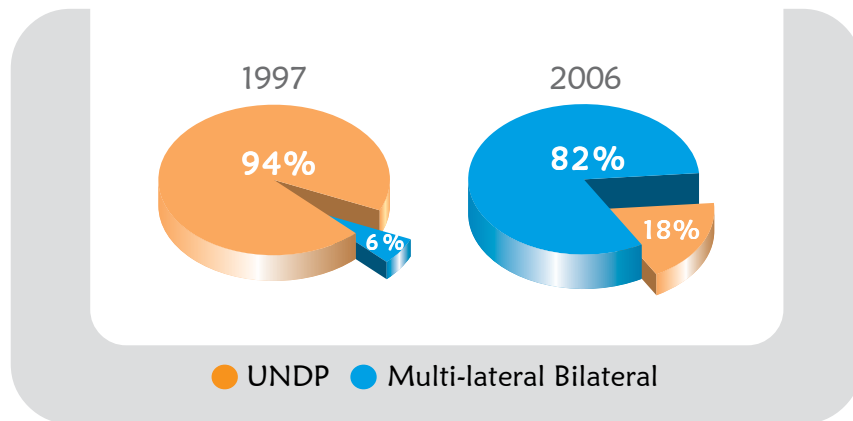
The ten years of operations in Fukuoka also marked a big change in the funding trend of UN-HABI TAT projects. In the 1970s and 80s, UNDP had been the funding agency for most development projects of the United Nations system. When this changed in the mid-90s, UN-HABI TAT sought new funding sources for its technical cooperation projects.

The ROAP-Fukuoka has succeeded remarkably in finding new sources. In 1997, 15 out of 19 projects, or 79 percent, were funded by UNDP, some US\$9.7 of the US\$12.3 million annual budget. At the end of 2006, just 14 out of the 57, or 25 percent, of projects were funded by UNDP, amounting to US\$3.7 million, or just 6 percent, of the US\$58.1 million annual budget. All other projects were funded from bilateral or multilateral sources negotiated by ROAP-Fukuoka staff.

Trends of UN-HABITAT ROAP Project Portfolio (1998-2007)



ROAP-Fukuoka Broadens Funding Sources



ROAP-Fukuoka's Partnerships in Fukuoka and Japan

Established with the support of Fukuoka Prefecture, Fukuoka City, and the Cooperating Committee comprised of a group of private sector supporters, the ROAP-Fukuoka has also partnered with interested local citizens in promoting understanding of its work and in coordinating voluntary donations to support initiatives for very poor or disaster-stricken countries in the region. The Citizens Net for Habitat Fukuoka (CNHF), established in 1999, is a group of local citizens volunteering to support the activities of the ROAP-Fukuoka Office and serves as an interface with the people of Fukuoka. CNHF arranges regular meetings for the citizens to learn about the activities of ROAP-Fukuoka. In 2000, for instance, they organised a study tour to Cambodia and Myanmar to see the work of UN-HABITAT first-hand.

At national level, ROAP-Fukuoka works closely with the government of Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MLIT) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). These agencies also serve as windows for emergency appeals with the government of Japan for reconstruction and recovery work in afflicted countries of the region and for research. The Japan Habitat Association, based in Tokyo, through a series of fund-raising campaigns and newsletters fosters among the general public in Japan a better understanding of living conditions in Asian countries and how ROAP-Fukuoka's activities are contributing to improving these conditions.

The Japan Parliamentarians on Habitat and the UN-HABITAT Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Mari Christine, a TV personality, also provide invaluable support in raising the profile of UN-HABITAT-related issues and in promoting the ROAP-Fukuoka Office.