

## How Can Slum Communities Leverage Global Networks? The Case of Yogyakarta, Indonesia

### Abstract

Indonesia is one of the countries that have supported the in situ upgrading of informal settlements at the state level. The country's alarming urbanization rate — 4.2 percent between 1970 and 2010, which is even higher than China and India (3.8 and 3.1 percent, respectively) (Samad, 2012) — failed to be matched by adequate provision of housing for rural-to-urban migrants. This caused the formation of informal settlements in all Indonesian cities. The new urban poor usually settled on public land, such as along rivers, canals, and railway yards, which are vulnerable to natural disasters (floods, in the Indonesian context). These informal settlements are called *kampung* (urban village) and account for the majority of a city's total area. In 1969, influenced by the World Bank's "Sites and Services Program," the Indonesian government launched the world-famous Programs (KIPs) in the two largest cities, Jakarta and Surabaya, and soon expanded to other cities. Since then, there have been tremendous efforts by the government even after the termination of the KIPs. Existing literature, however, indicates that these state-led, top-down approaches demonstrated several limitations: overemphasis on infrastructure rather than on housing itself; no dialogues on land tenure; supply-driven site selection; insufficient community participation; limited time-frames; one-size-fits-all options; and difficulties in scaling up (Garr, 1989; Shalizi, 2003; Some, Hafidz and Sauter, 2009; Tunas and Peresthu, 2010; and World Bank, 2012).

Recent literature has shed light on the role of global networks in helping slum communities address insecure land tenure through their vast cross-national experience (Boonyabanha *et al.*, 2012; Herrle *et al.*, 2015; Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 2014). The Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) program, initiated since 2009 by a Bangkok-based international NGO, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), is one such global network. Its "support for collective processes, partnership, finance, and land tenure" (Boonyabanha *et al.*, 2012: 441) has reached more than 1,000 slum communities across 165 cities in 19 different countries. ACCA aims to demonstrate communities' capacities to local governments by showcasing community-driven infrastructure upgrading projects and community savings. Through this, they will request support and interventions from the local governments.<sup>1</sup> However, little is known about the ways in which such global networks effect far-reaching and fundamental changes in local governments' attitudes and policies. In most developing countries, such institutional changes are not easily implemented. Even on publicly owned land, other catalysts are needed to change governmental land policies (Mitlin, 2015). According to my

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<sup>1</sup> To establish this "precedent setting (d'Cruz *et al.*, 2014: 41)," ACCA provides various forms of support with high flexibility in their use: up to five small projects in each city (\$3,000), one big project in each city (\$40,000), one city process support in each city (\$3,000), and one national coordination support in each country (\$10,000), as well as community development funds (the amount varies depending on situations).

preliminary research, for example, in some ACCA projects infrastructure improvement can lead to the perception of security of tenure; in others, moratoriums on evictions rather than legalization of land tenure can provide a sense of security (Handzic, 2010). The specific logic of these strategies, including how they are selected, gain public support, and the role of global networks remains unexplained. I propose to examine this through empirical research in Yogyakarta (locally called *Jogjakarta*).

The objective of my research is to identify the ways in which informal settlement communities have approached and addressed their vulnerable situations with the support of global networks. I will explore this through a case study of Yogyakarta, where people in informal settlements have strategized the upgrading schemes, with the support of a local architectural NGO Arkom Jogja during and after the ACCA support. External global support has also played a supportive role. My paper will examine how communities internalized the experience and created locally suitable schemes in order to produce far-reaching and fundamental changes, of which little is yet known. I hypothesize that in contrast to the government's conventional upgrading programs, the globally supported and community-based ACCA programs exhibit several key values that address the limitations of the government's initiatives. The presentation of this research will illustrate ways of overcoming or, where necessary, compromising on local contexts and realities, including cultural practices, institutional structures and budget constraints.

The research sites are two *Rukun Tetangga* (RT, a division of *kampung*, and also an association of households) that were provided with the ACCA support during 2010–2014, Ciptomulyo (under Sidomulyo *kampung*) and Tegalan Asri (under Jatimulyo *kampung*), in the city of Yogyakarta. These two RTs are located along the Winongo River, which passes the western part of Yogyakarta. The land is classified as *Wedhi Kengser*, which means riverbank land that was formed by the river's flow change and in nature owned by the state. The selection of the two RTs was purposively guided after discussion with Arkom Jogja due to easier access to key informants and visible achievements through ACCA. The selected RT communities are part of a total of 6 RTs in the city that benefited from the ACCA small infrastructure project, and also are part of a total of 30 RTs that have been identified as the informal riverside settlements under environmentally vulnerable conditions from the ACCA projects. The local NGO Arkom Jogja received ACCA funding for preparing “a city process support,” and conducted city-wide mapping and surveys to identify these settlements. In addition to the improvement of small infrastructure in the communities, Ciptomulyo and Tegalan Asri also received a substantial portion of the ACCA big housing project. Many houses in these two communities were renovated by utilizing part of the USD 40,000 of ACCA big housing project. Although the two communities are the main site of this research, other ACCA and post-ACCA project communities will also be considered to provide a broad picture. The communities still have a long way to go in fully addressing their insecurity of land tenure which should be backed by related policy changes, but there has been noteworthy progress on improving their living conditions even after the termination of the ACCA projects. Yogyakarta has now become an

example for its adjacent areas like the city of Solo (also called Surakarta), which also explored ACCA projects recently.

I collected data through observations and open-ended, semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders, including: community residents, staff of Arkom Jogja, civil society organizations like Kalijawi, and local government officials. Some of the interviewees were predetermined before the fieldwork, but others were identified through snowballing. Over 10 informants were asked to participate in one one-hour, in-person interview, possibly followed by additional one-hour visits during August–September 2016. Although interviews were pivotal in investigating the dynamics of the whole process, field observation was also important for grasping nonverbal contexts and supplementing the interviews. All of the qualitative data gained from interviews and observations were analyzed by comparing the investigator's handwritten notes, video/audio recordings and photos, and documents and other written materials from the local government and Arkom Jogja.

The findings are twofold: first, the four core components of the ACCA support — financial resources, technical expertise, knowledge and experience, and peer connections — were successfully utilized by the informal settlement communities in Yogyakarta, with collaboration with the local NGO, Arkom Jogja. The informal settlers, by breaking the long-standing deadlock over the local government's support for settlement upgrading, have become active agents for change by restoring their pride and motivation; second, by internalizing the external support, the communities have established more people-oriented collaborative platforms, and partnerships with the local government, and are promoting further upgrading activities even after the termination of the external support. Through the knowledge and experience gained during the ACCA process, the informal settlement communities in Yogyakarta mobilized to promote their own project, connected with each other, and worked more strategically for large-scale approaches. In addition, the mobilization of the informal settlement communities through ACCA also made possible the formation of more collective and up-scaled post-ACCA activities. These findings provide implications about better ways to form and deliver this global support to local communities in the Indonesian decentralized and bureaucratic setting. However, these improvements also exhibit limitations. First, the ACCA financing in Yogyakarta still remains limited in its operation in terms of geography and capacity. Next, land tenure issues have not been effectively addressed, nor have they even been brought to the table with the government. Under strict regulations on land, land titling was extremely difficult for the people to achieve through the ACCA project. In a similar way to the World Bank's evaluation (2012) generally, the ACCA projects implemented by local communities in Yogyakarta were also on a relatively small scale to address all problems of informal housing and infrastructure. This might require a combination of heterogeneous housing approaches ranging from upgrading to redevelopment, and on further to more innovative strategies (Mukhija, 2016; Setiawan, 1987).

Keywords: Indonesia, kampung, informal settlements, ACCA, Yogyakarta