

*Application form submitted by the initiatives to participate in the Transformative Cities People's Choice Award (2021-2022)*

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<b>Location:</b>	Kirtipur Municipality, Nepal
<b>Title of the Transformative Initiative:</b>	Kirtipur Sambriddha Awas – Relocation of Road Construction Project Affected Slum Dwellers
<b>Name of organization:</b>	Lumanti Support Group for Shelter
<b>Type of organization:</b>	NGO
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.lumanti.org.np">www.lumanti.org.np</a>
<b>Category and Edition:</b>	HOUSING. Transformative Cities Award 4 <sup>o</sup> edition (2021-2022)
STORYTELLING	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>Kirtipur Sambriddha Awas is an effort to relocate the slum dwellers who were affected by the government-initiated road project. It is a first of its kind, a Collaborative Planned Relocation effort in an urban locality in Nepal. Joining together were the communities, Local Government (Kathmandu Metropolitan City) and Lumanti with support from Asian Coalition for Housing Rights and Slum Dwellers International.</p>	
<b>Context and problem definition</b>	
<p>The communities have been living in the public land for several generations since it was closer to their livelihood opportunities. The Government proposed a Road Project that was passing right in the middle of the community with the assumption that the land belonged to the government and therefore they have the right to evict the community. They were given 3-day notice which led to a lot of hue and cry. The government was even ready to enforce forced eviction when they saw that the community was not willing to move.</p> <p>Lumanti stepped in, in an attempt to find a solution and they started a series of dialogues with the officials aiming to provide the people of the community a decent place to live. While</p>	

there were initial setbacks and resistance from the government, the dialogues generated positive results with the officials willing to work out a mechanism to help out the 150-households (750 persons) community who were mostly landless men, women and youth with most of them belonging to the Dalit caste.

## Design and Implementation

### The Design Process

Lumanti brought in the regional network of ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights) and SDI (Slum Dwellers International) for suggestions and communicated the same to the KMC (Kathmandu Municipal Corporation). Lumanti also organized a meeting with the leaders of the two above mentioned Federations (ACHR and SDI) with the Mayor of KMC. ACHR and SDI were the primary supporters and funders with the KMC agreeing to support as well. The initiative provided an opportunity for the KMC, and Mayor was to benefit from the votes and build credibility for himself and the political party.

A model which was implemented in Thailand was then selected. Thereafter, it was modified to benefit the Nepal requirements and was customized to the needs of the local community. A UCSF (Urban Community Support Fund) was established at the municipality level as an autonomous body headed by the Mayor with Lumanti managing the fund flow. It had its own board of trustees and was entrusted to look after the relocation project. The KMC provided 8 Million Nepali rupees and the same was matched by the ACHR and SDI with Lumanti holding the fund.

Once the fund was organized, the hunt for the land began. Kirtipur land parcel, at the time, was with the bank as a collateral and was placed on tender at the time. Lumanti applied for 6 ropani which is a little over an acre and procured the land from the bank with the UCSF fund. With the help of a housing consultant, the design for the houses was prepared. A big event was organized with a display of a live sized model of the house built using fabric. This gave an opportunity for the people of the community to see how the house would look and with their approval, the construction work commenced. The foundation stone laying event was celebrated and the construction commenced with the community having a say/ participation in the entire process beginning with design, implementation, monitoring, supervision and ensuring the quality all along. The people in the community were encouraged to participate and engage with the design process and everything was explained to them in detail.

The primary concern was whether the KMC would deposit the agreed amount as it was very crucial for the project to kickstart. The proposed land was only 6 ropani which meant it could support only the most vulnerable and genuine households. Explaining that to the community

was a challenge. To our surprise, those of them who had another property were willing to move elsewhere and they did not even come to claim compensation.

At this point, the Ward Office was also involved as they had records of the most vulnerable families. They validated and finalized a list for relocation. With a lot of effort, the second major hurdle was passed.

The people were then allowed to demolish their houses themselves which allowed them to either sell or reuse the materials. The municipality agreed to bear their rent amount during the construction process and this continued for a few months.

### **Results achieved and Evaluation**

In total, 44 housing units with two bedrooms, a kitchen and a toilet were constructed and people have been relocated to Kirtipur. A large open space for community sharing was also envisaged in the design for the community.

The affected community belonged to Kathmandu Municipal Corporation (KMC) but they are relocated to Kirtipur municipality which was 5 km away. Lumanti worked with the Kirtipur municipality, had dialogues with them and they were welcoming in accommodating the relocated families to their community.

#### **Agreement signed with each beneficiary**

An agreement was signed with each beneficiary for a house that cost 350000 NR for construction. They were allowed to pay back the amount in instalments for 15 years at a 5% interest rate. After 15 years, they will own the house but the land will be owned through collective ownership and will be registered under the UCSF (Urban Communities Support Fund).

#### **Measurement of Impact**

In terms of quality it is a huge transition in the living condition of the people. They now have a good house at a good location with no congestion, a play area for kids etc.

Direct beneficiaries of the project include 43 families. It also houses an office and a library for child literacy classes.

Indirect beneficiaries: The families other than the above said 43 received rental support for a while.

This model can be used as an advocacy tool in cases of participatory housing, cost-effective design etc. Recurring visits from Government officials have made it a departure point for housing projects in Nepal. This helped shift the minds of the stakeholders while addressing housing issues. This was the first of its kind implemented in a collaborative manner which has in spite of pitfalls shown people that a solution is possible. It has given hope and a positive outlook for the concerned stakeholders including the governments.

Since this is a participatory/ collaborative process there were other donors such as Water Aid, and UN-Habitat who also contributed.

Lottery method was used while allocating houses to keep it transparent. During the event of house-key distribution, donor participation was high.

## Political Strategies

Meeting of the ACHR and SDI with the municipality was very crucial as it involved the two parties getting along and sharing past examples. Visits of municipal officials to the project sites in other countries such as Thailand was arranged so that they can learn from them and this has proved to be highly beneficial.

There were no Obstructive aspects in this initiative. The municipalities (both of Kathmandu and Kirtipur), the community members, ACHR, SDI other local NGOs were all extremely supportive of the initiative.

This is a collective housing project both in terms of execution and ownership. It is not a free housing scheme but provides flexibility and affordability in its payment. In this way, it is unlike other low- income housing projects.

The initial challenge was that their livelihood was in Kirtipur from where they had to take a bus which meant an increase in expenses. Also, the buses were not available at night and therefore the working members of the community had difficulty in returning late in the night and had to wind up their jobs earlier than usual. Eventually, they got used to it and the issue was managed. With the city expanding, there were opportunities in the same municipality itself. So, the issue was primarily of adaptability to new circumstances which were resolved over time. On a broader scale, it has changed the mindset of the government officials which has further influenced several other policies both directly and indirectly.

Agreeing to set up this kind of fund with an autonomous body was a change and a big one in that.

It is completely a rights-based approach from start to end some of which include the right to the city, right to decent housing, etc.

### **Communication and Cultural Strategies**

Some of the strategies that we have employed include;

1. These include model houses which were used as a means to communicate the strategy and include participation.
2. There were also meetings and exchange visits to other countries to see best practices.
3. Three reports were drafted documenting the process and disseminated.

We have spoken and presented it a number of times at several meetings. The media had positively covered the initiative and everyone has appreciated the idea, the concept and the effort. Like any project, there were flaws and areas for improvement but overall the project was positively received and appreciated.

### **Resources, Financing and Transformative Economy**

Lumanti acts as the secretariat of the Urban Community Support fund (UCSF) and was technically managing and providing the fund as loans based on collective decision making. Technical help was taken from consultants and the rest of the major help was from the Lumanti staff and the community.

The fund is now supporting women's cooperatives and other livelihood opportunities. There is a proposal for constructing 3 more houses in the same area from this fund.

### **Related legislations**

There is an indirect effect on the Janta Awas Yojana which is a government initiative where the government builds houses for the most vulnerable ethnic communities in remote Nepal.

This initiation had contributed to strengthening and building the confidence of the Federation of the Slum Dwellers in Nepal for advocating the right to housing and standing against forced eviction without agreeable alternatives.

Few municipalities like Bharatpur, Ratna Nagar, Kohaplur, Dharan, Sundar Haraicha, Birgunj and Kalaiya made decisions for the implementation of the affordable housing projects in collaboration with Lumanti to improve secure tenure and housing condition of the urban poor. Successful housing projects were initiated in these municipalities.

There was no clarity around the concept of setting up an Urban Community Support Fund or the legalities associated with it at the time. Lumanti researched the mechanism around the support provided by law for such a fund (UCSF).

At that time, there was no law at the national level to support a fund like this, so the only possible solution was to fit it at the municipality level at KMC. Now the same fund has been set up in Bharatpur, Kalaiya, Ratna Nagar municipalities taking inspiration from the Kirtipur project. The process has started to set up such a Fund in Sundar Haraicha municipality.

### **Ecological Transitions**

Lumanti has always been concerned with providing eco-friendly settlement and explored and incorporated components with the same in mind. The area was facing a water shortage so a facility for rainwater harvesting was provided. An onsite sewage treatment plant was also set up which unfortunately is not functioning as smoothly as the rainwater harvesting facility, the reason for which is lack of technical know-how. Other construction materials such as bricks, corrugated sheets etc. were all locally procured.

- Cooperative land ownership: As mentioned earlier, the land is owned by the community and the houses are individually owned. If a person wants to sell a house, it is sold back to the UCSF trust which then sells it to the next owner. This ensures that there is always an availability of the housing unit for the future poor and this reduces speculative price rise. It also reduces the inequities in the community and society.
- Lottery system for allocating houses was another mechanism to reduce inequality. This led to a fair allocation of the housing units across the community.
- There are 2 types of houses, one for 3.2 lakh Nepali rupees and the other for 3.5 lakh Nepali rupees). The lottery system picks the owners for both houses.

### Lessons learned

The initiative has shown that participatory and collaborative efforts always produce results. It was also observed that the effort was sustained for a longer period only because of its collective land ownership. If on the other hand, the houses were given individually they would have become slum dwellers elsewhere by now and the land would have gone into the hands of the higher classes of the society. If at all someone needs to sell the property, the same will be made back to the community organization which can then provide the facility to another deserving family. This approach thus limits gentrification. The revolving fund model has led to good fund management and efficient use of it for longer periods and for deserving purposes.

The UCSF fund model is now being adopted in other municipalities for providing loans for housing, projects, livelihoods etc.

No there were no lessons you learned from other initiatives that later were incorporated into your own initiative

Since Lumanti was very clear in what it wanted, we were able to implement it to the best of our abilities. Looking back, this was a unique experience for us because it is a collective ownership model, unlike our other projects which are usually individual. So, it was a good example for us.

We also had a lot of exchange visits from students, government officials etc. both from Nepal and abroad for thesis purposes, and reports for future references.

We wish we could have given more effort to make this project more climate/eco-friendly. More meetings and discussions could have been organized for the adaption of the best possible alternatives.

We presented the reports in many meetings and seminars and so the word went around to share these lessons more widely.

### EXTRA INFO

#### Timeline of Kirtipur Housing Project

**March 2002:** People demolished the house after understanding made with the mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan city.

**April – June 2002:** The households began to receive compensation for rent.

**May 2003:** Levelling of the ground continued by the municipality

**June – August 2003:** Challenges in receiving rent compensation due to the instability of the government

**30<sup>th</sup> May 2004:** Inaugural ceremony to launch Urban Community Support Fund attended by national and international participants

**December 2004:** Kathmandu Metropolitan City approved setting up of Urban Community Support Fund for the implementation of relocation project

**January 2005:** Construction of Kiritpur Housing began

**April 2007:** Handover of housing in Kiritpur to the road project affected families

### Supporting documents

[Asian Coalition for Housing Rights website](#)

[Lumanti website: Kiritpur Housing](#)

[Understanding political capabilities - A review of the participatory approach of the Kiritpur Housing Project](#)

[Squatters & the City: Reflecting on Kiritpur Housing Project](#)

[Kiritpur Housing Project](#)

[Kiritpur Housing Society, Nepal](#)