

# บทเรียนจากการจัดหาที่อยู่อาศัยภายหลังเหตุการณ์ธรณีพิบัติภัยในประเทศไทย Learning from Post-Tsunami Housing Programme Delivery, Thailand

นัฐวุฒิ อัครวิศิษฏ์

คณะสถาปัตยกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีปทุม

E-mail : nattawutu@gmail.com

## บทคัดย่อ

ภายหลังจากธรณีพิบัติภัยสึนามิได้เกิดโครงการเพื่อฟื้นฟูที่อยู่อาศัยจำนวนมากเพื่อบรรเทาความเดือดร้อนของชุมชน รูปแบบการฟื้นฟูที่อยู่อาศัยสามารถจำแนกได้เป็นสองแนวทางโดยสังเขป ได้แก่ รูปแบบการบริจาคโดยตรงจากแหล่งทุน เพื่อสร้างที่อยู่อาศัยใหม่ และรูปแบบการสร้างที่อยู่อาศัยที่เน้นความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมผ่านการออกแบบกายภาพ ซึ่งได้รับการสนับสนุนจากองค์กรไม่แสวงหากำไร จากประสบการณ์ในปฏิบัติการภาคสนามในพื้นที่จังหวัดพังงาผ่านกรณีศึกษา จำนวนหนึ่ง ผู้เขียนได้สะท้อนถึงกระบวนการและผลลัพธ์ของการแก้ปัญหาที่อยู่อาศัยของทั้งสองแนวทางในด้านการจัด ลักษณะกายภาพโครงการ การจัดการองค์กรชุมชน และความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคม โดยผู้เขียนสรุปว่า โครงการส่วนมากที่ลงไปให้ความช่วยเหลือให้ความสนใจเพียงแค่ผลลัพธ์ในเชิงกายภาพที่เป็นรูปธรรม โดยละเลยการผสานแง่มุมทางสังคมสู่ กายภาพนั้นๆ (ซึ่งโครงการเพื่อการฟื้นฟูที่อยู่อาศัยสามารถเป็นเครื่องมือชั้นดีในการก่อให้เกิดกระบวนการพัฒนา) บทความ นี้นำเสนอในสามประเด็น คือ 1) รูปแบบการฟื้นฟูที่อยู่อาศัยภายหลังจากเหตุการณ์ธรณีพิบัติภัยสึนามิในประเทศไทย 2) การ เปรียบเทียบแนวทางการฟื้นฟูที่อยู่อาศัยทั้งสองรูปแบบว่าส่งผลต่อความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมและการสร้างความเป็นชุมชน ใหม่อย่างไร 3) การอภิปรายผลกระทบทั้งด้านบวกและลบของโครงการฟื้นฟูที่อยู่อาศัยที่เกิดขึ้น พร้อมทั้งบทเรียนที่ได้รับ

**คำสำคัญ:** เหตุการณ์หลังธรณีพิบัติภัยสึนามิ / การจัดหาที่อยู่อาศัย / การออกแบบและวางผังที่อยู่อาศัย / ประเทศไทย

## ABSTRACT

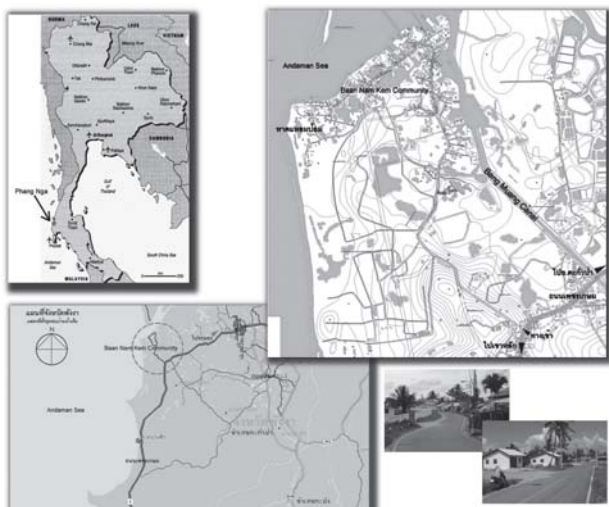
After the Tsunami aftermath in Thailand, many housing projects were instigated with partially or fully supporting the alleviation of communities' accommodation and, indirectly, underpinned community-based housing design and planning concept. There have been two obvious approaches; the fully donation-based housing programme, delivered directly from the donors, and the social-based housing programme based on communal reciprocity with the assistance from local/national non-government development organisations (NGOs). Having taking part in a couple of change to the number of case studies in Phang Nga province on housing programme delivery, the author mirrors their processes and results in different settlement characteristics in terms of physical configuration, community-based organisation, and the social-relation of the community members. The author argues that most housing programme delivery patterns have only emphasized the physical output and abandoned the issues of social integration (for which housing programmes could potentially be a development tool). The paper presents three issues; 1) The patterns of housing programme delivery in post-Tsunami, Thailand; 2) a short compari-

son of how different housing programmes affect social relationships among the dwellers and how neighbourliness may be re-established; and 3) a discussion on positive and negative impacts of post-Tsunami housing programme delivery as well as on lessons to be learned.

**Keywords:** post-Tsunami / accommodation allocation / housing design and planning / Thailand

## 1. Background

In Thailand, six provinces suffered in the 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 coastal Tsunami catastrophe: Phuket, Phang Nga, Ranong, Krabi, Trang and Satun. The most severely affected area was the ‘Baan Nam Kem’ community in Phang Nga, where more than 4,200 lives were lost - or one-fourth of the area’s population (Damrongsathean, 2005:1).



**Figure 1:** Location and configuration of the Baan Nam Kem community in Phang Nga province, Thailand

Source: Usavagovitwong et. al (2007: 15, 17, 21)

The Baan Nam Kem community, comprised of almost 50 neighbourhoods and with a population of around 4,500 inhabitants<sup>1</sup>, is located in the Takua Pa district, Phang Nga province (See Figure 1); 60% of the inhabitants are involved in the small fishery-based economy. The Tsunami affected area covers around one-third of the overall area and many houses were immediately wiped away. After the Tsunami, temporary housing - subsidized by Thai military force and subsidized by many na-

tional and international donors/supporters - was built to alleviate the immediate need of shelter. Support was delivered to victims in many forms, ranging from highly ad-hoc to middle/long term programmes. One of the core priorities in elevating the living conditions of the adversely affected communities, therefore, has been accommodation - the housing delivery programme.

## 2. The scenario of housing delivery programmes and patterns after the Tsunami

After the Tsunami, aid and support flowed into the region to alleviate the housing scarcity. Many international and national donors supported various patterns of housing stake. The regular national housing programme was, therefore, temporarily suspended and had no relevance to the post-Tsunami housing programme. The government and NGO housing programmes existed independently and without coordination. Figure 2 illustrates the pattern of support and help carried out via the administrative and non-administrative structure after the Tsunami as well as their working mechanism. The aid via administrative system is mostly transformed to financial compensation (left). Or with regard to housing delivery, it is the ‘instant shelter’<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, the aid via non-administrative structure is holistically more organised (right). An informal organised group, so-called ‘Tsunami’s Community Coordinating Center’ (TCCC), represents the Baan Nam Kem community. It allocates help and support based on hierarchical priorities being closely checked and balanced by community and NGOs’ network. From Figure 2, in summary, there are at least two housing delivery patterns based on the agent-receiver relationship, which are the donor-Thai government-dweller<sup>3</sup> and the donor-NGO-dweller<sup>4</sup>.

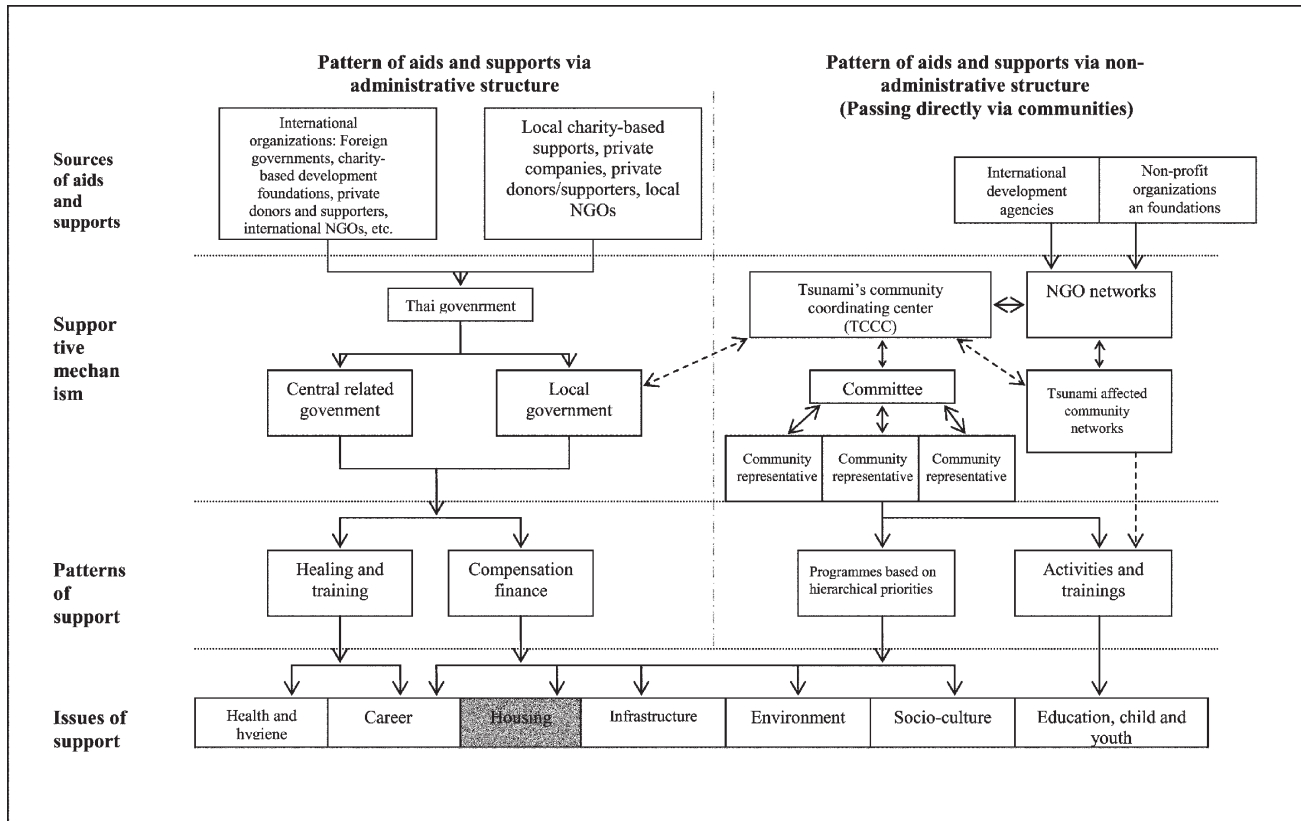


Figure 2: The patterns of aid and support manipulated into the 'Baan Nam Kem' community  
 Source: Usavagovitwong et.al (2007: 34)

The first pattern, 95% of total housing programmes<sup>5</sup>, was proceeded based on the donation given to Thai government, which was then manipulated to fit the affected communities. It simply implies that the donors allocate shelters to the victims via Thai administrative structure. It can also be called 'fully donation-based' housing delivery approach. The second pattern, conversely, was based on the donation given to both local and international NGOs. Even though this pattern represents much less number of housing units, it highly embraces the grassroots and community network. For instance, TCCC engages around 40% of inhabitants to become savings members<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, some parts of housing programme are instigated by 'social-based' approach which allocates the victims' living accommodation on communal reciprocal basis<sup>7</sup>. Social capital enhancement and grassroots programme development is introduced. Central to this paper is a discussion on the second pat-

tern of housing programme delivery in comparison to the first or, on 'social-based' to 'fully donation-based' housing delivery scheme.

### 3. Learning from the case studies

For further insights, two cases of housing subsidy programme in the Baan Nam Kem community are herein discussed.

#### 3.1 The fully donation-based housing programme: The Pru Teaw neighbourhood

The case study represents fully donation-based pattern. The Pru Teaw neighborhood was immediately constructed after the Tsunami in a plot of land in Takua Pa district donated from a Thai national foundation. This neighbourhood was financially supported by many international and national charities/

foundations. By this programme, the shelter was rewarded to the victim whose property - with sufficient evidence - was lost in the Tsunami. The Pru Teaw neighbourhood is comprised of 50-60 households. Most dwellers are associated with fishery industry. Therefore, adversely affected by the Tsunami, it is a collective neighbourhood and consists of the dwellers who are former victims from diverse origins. The donors supply them the accommodation based on the mass-oriented design scheme<sup>8</sup> regardless of the dweller's family size and requirement. The housing programme neglects also the cultural- and occupational background associated with the architecturally and communally occupied space. The donated elevated houses do not match dwellers' way of living, since this architectural style does not belong to the typical southern house. Hence, the spatial interaction among dwellers is not factored into the programme. Consequently the constructive neighbourhood is absent. For instance, the dwellers have since modified many living spaces according to their preferences (Figure 3). No communal rules and regulations with regard to housing construction are specified. The definition of neighborhood is unfortunately given only by spatial proximity. There has been no apparent social development activity because place-based social bond has never been interwoven into the housing programme.

The difficulty of fully donation-based housing delivery, in the Pru Teaw neighbourhood, is the absence of housing rights control. After the donors terminated the programme, some dwellers start selling their houses and move to more suitable places. The only success of fully donation-based housing delivery in the Pru Teaw neighbourhood is that it could fulfill the donors' objective in assisting mass number of victims and their families. The scheme mainly considers on the number of units allocated or, in other words it is only interested to respond the impromptu individual/family demand without any mindset for further communal cohesion.



*Figure 3: The mismatch between the architectural characteristic and dwellers' living space*

*Source: The author's survey*

### 3.2 The social-based housing programme: The Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood

The Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood differs from other donation-based housing delivery schemes since it is social-based housing approach supported by Community Organization Development Institute (CODI). CODI's national housing programme, namely 'Baan Man Kong' Programme (Boonyabantha, 2005; Usavagovitwong and Posriparasert, 2006; Usavagovitwong, forthcoming) supports grassroots and community-based development processes via low-income housing programme. As being a gathered group of homeless as Pru Teaw Neighbourhood, for 50 households, the programme participants at Baan Nam Kem Mankong Neighbourhood are demanded to cluster themselves either in a cooperative or an informal savings group<sup>9</sup> to initially guarantee their current social bond and capital's existence. CODI does not donate accommodation to the free-riders but, only to those actively engaging in the programme's neighbourhood-based process (Figure 4). After 6-12 months, the participants are allocated the housing soft loan by lower interest rate than the market rate. In addition, the neighbourhood infrastructure is also fully subsidised.



**Figure 4:** Participatory housing design and planning at Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood.

Source: The author's survey

In contrast to the Pru Teaw neighbourhood, the Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood is made up of former homeless/renters, while in the Pru Teaw neighbourhood, the members are the former homeowners. This social-based process encourages members to contribute their labors into broader civil societal activity namely, Tsunami's Community Coordinating Center (TCCC). These activities include environmental awareness, job creation, post-disaster tourism management programme, and etc. Because of this collective neighbourhood bond and network, it attracts many international and national donors/supporters<sup>10</sup> to incrementally contribute for wider development programmes and projects.

Table 1 highlights some differences between the two housing delivery patterns. In general, the Pru Teaw neighbourhood has fewer underlying social ties compared to the Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood. In the Pru Teaw neighbourhood, the donor supplies the instant shelter, completed in a shorter time span, if the victims express their wills. Conversely, in the Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood, the inhabitants compulsorily contribute their savings to community-based organization's (CBO) savings group to benefit from neighbourhood infrastructure and service<sup>11</sup>. The programme is underpinned by a grassroots development NGO that helps hand-in-hand to configure TCCC. The NGO encourages the inhabitants to participate in housing design process as a part of neighbourliness building strategy. The NGO conveys to donors the importance of social cohesion but, this process is time-consuming compared to other donation-based programmes. The outcome has rendered a good learning lesson from social-based housing programme to both the donors and other neighborhoods. Significantly, the social-based housing pattern not only alleviates housing scarcity, but it could also shed a further path to someone who never owns a shelter.

**Table1:** The comparison of housing programme delivery and its outcomes in the Baan Nam Kem community

	The Pru Teaw neighbourhood	The Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood
Type of housing model	Fully donation-based	Social-based
Donors	Charities/ Foundations/Private donors	CODI/NGOs
Pattern of subsidy	100% Donation	Soft loan for houses by 3% of interest rate and 100% subsidy for infrastructure
Characteristic of the dwellers	(Former) homeowner	(Former) homeless/renters
Number of households	200	50
Condition for getting houses	None/individual	Must be via cooperatives or savings groups
Social welfare and social development programme	None	Periodical as compulsory condition from the donors
Sustainable housing policy	None	Community, civil society and NGOs' network

	The Pru Teaw neighbourhood	The Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood
Turn over of housing tenure	High	None
Housing configuration/ spatial formation	Rigid, inflexible, given equal module regardless of dweller's occupation, family size and desire	Dweller's own design programme of spatial arrangement, more responsive to spatial requirement of each family
Resource input for accommodation	High (Only money)	Low (Compensated by self-made neighborhood labor and social capital)
Time consumption for housing construction	6-8 months	More than 1 year <sup>12</sup>
Level of neighborliness	Low	Moderate/High

Note: CODI = Community Organization Development Institute; NGO = Non-government organization

#### 4. Discussion

Some key points depicted from the case studies can be hereby highlighted.

##### 4.1 Mass production approach VS Tailor-made approach

A fully donation-based model is a top-down approach where incoming dwellers do not demand an intensive participation for housing configuration. The donors determine what kind of living space and size is appropriated. In contrast, the social-based model focuses more on the participatory process and welcomes incoming dwellers to design and configure their living spaces (Hamdi, 1990; Sanoff, 2000). In Figure 5, it portrays some differences of communal spatial arrangement between social-based housing in the Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighborhood (left) and donation-based housing in the Pru Teaw neighborhood (right). The former allows and empowers incoming dwellers to shape both private and communal living spaces while the latter does not. Nevertheless, the limitation of such a tailor-made approach is housing quantity delivered to the victims. Only 50 shelter units for the Baan Nam Kem Mankong

neighbourhood were completed in over a year whereas, it was quicker in the Pru Teaw neighbourhood. According to the discussion, it becomes about quantitative versus qualitative dilemma which has currently been unsolved.



Figure 5: Communal space at the Baan Nam Kem Mankong neighbourhood (left) and mass-oriented housing style at the Pru Teaw neighbourhood (right)

Source: The author's survey

##### 4.2 'Juxtaposing together' VS 'Living together'

Housing programme is absolutely not only a matter of housing construction. By being mass-oriented housing programme, the Pru Teaw neighbourhood is hardly supplemented by other development programmes. As aforementioned, 'juxtaposing together' housing scheme is the approach to assist the victims regardless of their place-based origins. Dwellers are



strangers to one another and, no neighbourhood-based organisations are founded. Other underpinning programmes targeting youth development, environmental safeguard, or job creation programmes are detached from the dwellings aspect and are not intertwined to one another. Whereas, social-based housing programme attempts integrating living condition to other undertaken development activities in order that the neighbourliness will reciprocally be re-fabricated.

### 4.3 Output VS Outcome

The basis of fully donation-based housing delivery focuses more on output than outcome. While some donors/supporters expect a large number of units, others are concerned with the quality of housing programme and social development issue. Many programmes, by fostering too much, last only as charity-based support. The conditions for implementing programmes are manipulated by intermediary agents who receive funding via NGO, foundation, charity, government, and academic institute. Therefore the non-heterogeneous agent's support, and thus the benefit to victims, does not transcend simple compensation. For example, the government tends to focus on number of shelters deserved. NGO overrides housing programme as a grassroots development tool. Academic institute is interested in pioneering fresh idea and in conveying back new knowledge when, housing serves as an experimental field. Therefore, these scenarios of agent-programme relationship should be more provoked and altered because the agent, as mediator, always influences and outlines the outcome that how housing programme will become.

### 5. Dichotomy in housing delivery approach

Fully donation-based housing delivery programme brings on the decline of neighbourliness. Obviously, the donors/supporters unintentionally undermine it by romantic token of neighborhood unity. This pre-assumption is derived from notion that when people experience the same natural disaster, they will help each other on the basis of communal goodwill. Several controversial examples show that the lack of pre-mutual societal

foundation at deep-rooted level can fail neighbourliness. For the social-based model, NGO plays a rigorous role as a mediator to bridge the support between donors/supporters and victim families. On one hand, the donors/supporters mainly consider housing as a physical entity regardless of whether or not an internal social relation could be generated via housing delivery programme, or could have potential for neighbourliness improvement. In the end, the quantity of delivered shelters is at stake. On the other hand, neighbourliness quality is a time-consuming process, which in many occasions fails to fulfill the anticipated volume of housing units. The dichotomy because of diverse yardsticks among the actors has always been unspoken. This means that in the past few years, most housing programmes were not holistically projected but, rather they were attached to a single comprehensive development direction because they were not emancipated from donor's purposes. Even if every stakeholder acts with goodwill, the lack of comprehensive development dialogue often causes conflict among them - donor, local/central government, community people, and NGO.

Theoretically, a housing provision is neither about building an accommodation nor about getting the dweller into a property. How the dweller bears on each other and how the programme is capable to financially survive are also the inevitable aspects. One could not take it for granted that the inhabitants will automatically fabricate a fine-grained relationship based on individual goodwill, rather other associative deep-rooted programmes, such as, housing finance, cooperative building, savings group, or even social bond-based development activities are critical. To do so otherwise would mean that the housing programme solely juxtaposes people together but does not encourage them to live together.

How can we escape from such a dilemma of housing delivery programme where the yardstick of diverse stakeholders is hardly reconciled whereas, the donor/supporter or even the policy-maker emphasizes volume, but fails housing neighbourliness? On the other hand, the grassroots development practitioner concentrates on housing livelihood, but fails also upscaling. This is the first question.

And how do these circumstances cease to be a dilemma when no comprehensive solutions arise? How may various stakeholders dialogue? This will be a core discussion to shed the further light for the housing programme delivery to the catastrophic urgency. How could the fully donation-based and social-based housing programme delivery be accompanied by being not a zero sum game, perhaps, to overturn the ‘either-or’ choice of housing delivery scheme? This is another additional question and both questions need extensive studies.

## 5. Summary

The Tsunami not only scattered away dwellings but, it also irreversibly changed the social bond that once wove in and among neighbourhoods. The antecedent neighbourliness was untied. Although some new neighborhoods have settled and slowly have started re-fabricating, many have not because the inhabitant’s mindset is permanently converted. People, therein, are increasingly dependent on the outsiders’ assistance<sup>13</sup>. Evidently, psychological damage is one of the reasons discouraging them to engage in ‘social-based’ housing programme, which instigates neighbourliness. However, the activity that encourages neighborliness can also be induced to a fully donation-based housing programme. The key point is that there has never been such a programme.

In order to regain neighbourliness, housing is one of several tools that needs an immediate policy dialogue to be integrated into a comprehensive development plan (Damrongsathean, 2005; Ministry of Finance and Asian Development Bank, 2005; Smith et. al., 2005; Usavogitwong and Khwansuwan, forthcoming).

No matter the reason given for the imbalance outcome of housing programme delivery, there is still time for better correction and modification by holistically speculating at housing stake as a living organism. For further practice, many integrating programmes should be interwoven into the current housing programmes. It is not only by outlining the universally associative programmes, but it must also be more demand-

based than supply-based. Multilevel and cross-agency networks are the core mechanisms to help manipulate and exchange necessary information and to help configure suitable programmes and courses of action.

Housing provision is no longer a core concern. What remains a core concern is a subordinated social-based programme to re-interweave social bonds. Although place-based neighbourhood could not be fully fixed and reversed, many organisations and agencies are still working for community betterment so that, at the expected end, the inhabitant could be self-sustainable. The faster this is recognized, the better living environment becomes.

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## เชิงอรรถท้ายบท

- 1 This number is only the registered population regardless of disguised and foreign-labored population.
- 2 It means the shelter that is well furnished and includes everything inside. One does not need any further construction.
- 3 Originated by donors and handed to Thai government, then later it is delivered to the victims (in this text, called 'fully donation-based').
- 4 Donated to the NGOs/foundations and then it is delivered to the victims (in this text, called 'social'based').
- 5 Personal interview with Mitri Jongkrajak, the manager of Baan Nam Kem Community bank and he is currently a council committee of local administrative authority.
- 6 Data derived from interviewing the general manager of Baan Nam Kem Community Bank, TCCC
- 7 The participant in this programme has to maintain savings behavior and has to formulate community-based organisation for housing stake as well as other related development activities. Therefore this programme is unlike donation-based housing.
- 8 The housing design scheme is the elevated house. It comprises of a small balcony at the front, a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom and two bedrooms.
- 9 It depends on size and financial management system of neighbourhood.
- 10 Donors/supporters, such as, UNDP, HABITAT, EU Commissions, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for many pilot and demonstration development interventions.
- 11 Land and shelters were donated by Danish government and a few private charities. However, to get communal infrastructure, the neighbourhood residents must be organised as a group in order to be able to receive such a subsidy from CODI.
- 12 It depends on the readiness of neighborhood in terms of financial management and decision, made on the community-based participatory housing scheme.
- 13 The adverse impact after the Tsunami causes the victims to become more demanding on anything and many no longer work instead, they survive by donation and compensation.