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1998-04-01

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The Effects of Relocation on the Well-Being of Families  
Evicted from the Slum Communities of Klong Toey

by

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B.S. Marquette University 1990  
M.S. University of California, Berkeley 1998

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Master's in

Health and Medical Sciences

in the

GRADUATE DIVISION

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

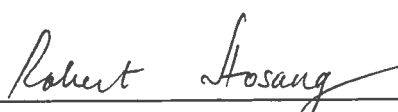
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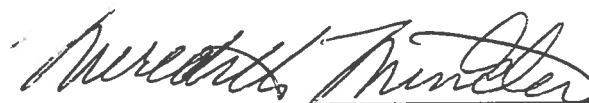
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Spring 1998

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\_\_\_\_\_ Date 5/20/98

  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date May 19 '98

  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date May 19, 1998

University of California, Berkeley

Spring 1998

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the people of Klong Toey who shared with me their valuable time and personal stories. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone at the Human Development Center. Without their assistance this study could not have been conducted, and their warm welcome and friendships made our time in Bangkok particularly special.

I am especially grateful to Father Joseph Maier, Director of the Human Development Center, both for the opportunity to pursue a topic which I found fulfilling and for constantly challenging me to push myself one step further. I would also like to personally thank Thanyaporn Sangkatawat, the interpreter for this study, for her exceptional dedication, extremely hard work and friendship.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### *The Effects of Relocation on the Well-Being of Families Evicted from the Slum Communities of Klong Toey*

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of this study is to examine the current relocation policies and practices of Thai government institutions and nongovernmental organizations and their effects on the well-being of families evicted from the slum communities of Klong Toey in Bangkok, Thailand. This study is based on the premise that these institutions often implement relocation policies without fully considering the needs of the residents living in these communities.

#### *Overview*

This study was conducted from June-August of 1997. Support in making initial contacts was provided by Dr. Kritaya Archavanitkul of the Institute for Population and Social Research at Mahidol University. The research itself was carried out through the Human Development Center (HDC). The methods used in this study were qualitative in nature with the exception of basic demographic data collected on each participant. In-depth interviews were conducted with fifteen randomly selected families in four different communities. Three of the communities had been relocated. One community was not relocated and was selected to serve as a baseline. Interview questions were designed to gather information about the impact of relocation on the family's physical, social, emotional and financial well-being.

Before discussing the study in further detail, background information will be provided. Chapter Two discusses the relationship between housing, health and human rights in order to provide a larger context for understanding the issues of those living in the slum communities of Klong Toey. Chapter Three describes the issues facing slum communities including eviction and relocation. Chapter Four contains background information on the problems of inadequate housing in Bangkok and describes issues faced specifically by those living in Klong Toey. The study methodology and limitations are then presented in Chapter Five with results and a discussion in Chapter Six. Conclusions and recommendations follow in Chapter Seven.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Housing, Health and Human Rights

*“Civilization can be judged, at least to some extent, by the minimum housing conditions which a society will tolerate for its members...”*

*~Louis Wirth, 1947  
(as quoted by Scott Leckie)*

#### INTRODUCTION

Like food, water and clothing, shelter is a fundamental human need. Without shelter one's physical and psychological health are at serious risk. Depriving an individual of basic needs constitutes an injustice and, therefore, access to adequate housing has been included as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. Article 25 (1) states that:

*“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of [themselves] and [their] family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond [their] control.”*

The UDHR was “the first major international effort to create a legal structure whereby nation-states would be responsible to one another concerning the treatment of their own citizens” (Leckie p.91). Since 1948 numerous other pieces of international law have firmly enshrined the right to adequate housing into the language of human rights. Even so the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights estimates that over 100 million people are homeless and one billion do not have access to safe or healthy



shelter (UNCHS p.2, Murphy p.56). The problem is clearly not simply a function of national poverty. As of the year 2003, it is estimated that the United States, a country which embodies 4.5% of the world's population and 25% of its wealth, will have 18.7 million homeless citizens if current trends continue (Stren p.179). This is an extremely complex problem stemming from a maldistribution of wealth and conflicting value systems, and leading to dramatic consequences in the well-being of a huge percentage of the world's population.

## HEALTH AND HOUSING

### *What constitutes health?*

The constitution of the World Health Organization states that "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being." Health is broadly defined by WHO as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO 1986). This definition contains an implicit assumption that an individual's health is a result not only of his or her own ability to ward off disease, but dependent on the individual's societal interactions. This point is more explicitly made in the Declaration of Alma-Ata (1978) which describes health as "a social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector."

So what are the factors required of these social and economic sectors? According to the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, certain "fundamental conditions and resources" are required for an individual to enjoy optimal health. These include "peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity." Many of these factors are not traditionally measured when assessing a community or individual's health. Jonathan Mann, a former professor of Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health, proposes that "the extent to which human rights are realized may represent a better and more comprehensive index of well-being than traditional health status indicators" (Mann p.21).

In order to achieve a goal of 'good health,' as defined by WHO, a society must insure access to certain basic needs. All citizens must have access to both physical and mental health services along with adequate shelter. If we think of 'adequate shelter' in its broadest sense, access to health care can be subsumed within. The concept of 'adequate shelter' refers not only to a physical structure, but to the social and environmental conditions of the area in which one lives. Thus access to education and health care, a source of food and clean water, job opportunities and an environment free from violence and unnecessary hazards are all part of an 'adequate shelter.'

### *Accepted Wisdom*

Traditionally, the physical impact of inadequate housing has been more fully focused on than the psychosocial impacts. Many health problems of the poor are associated with overcrowding. The number of household accidents tend to increase with crowding as well as airborne infections such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and meningitis. Diseases which are transmitted by the oral-fecal route are also increased including bacterial and viral gastroenteritis and worms. For example, a survey of 238 slum children in the Philippines found that 92% had whipworm, 80% roundworms and 10% with hookworm (WHO 1992).

Poor sanitation and environmental conditions also contribute to disease incidence. Lack of access to clean water leads to the spread of water-borne illnesses. This is a particular problem for infants who are not breast fed and may be given bottles which were rinsed in contaminated water or filled with powdered formula reconstituted with contaminated water. Inadequate sewage and drainage systems mean that both domestic and industrial waste can accumulate in pools of contaminated water. Flooding can exacerbate the problem by bringing the contaminated water directly into people's homes or causing the overflow of latrines. The poor are most often relegated to areas with the poorest environmental conditions--marshy, mosquito-ridden plots, ribbons of land along fetid, anaerobic canals, or under interstates with heavy air fuming from thousands of passing cars each day. Clearly, living day after day under such conditions also has an impact on psychosocial health.

### *More Recent Thoughts*

Only more recently has the psychosocial component of the WHO definition of health begun to receive significant attention. Mental health is an extremely important, yet much neglected aspect of total health. WHO recognized its importance officially with its call for "The Introduction of a Mental Health Component into Primary Health Care." This document, published in 1990, states that "the stress of bereavement and the depression that may follow have been associated with measurable reductions in the efficiency of immune mechanisms, and with increased vulnerability to infectious disease, neoplasia, and acute cardiac failure" (WHO 1990, p.13). It can be argued that the majority of physical illness is in some way influenced by an individual's mental state, but a clear link has been established for such diseases as hypertension, angina pectoralis, acute myocardial infarctions, asthma, irritable bowel and dysmenorrhea. A recent study conducted in Thailand found that "subjective aspects of housing and of crowding, especially housing satisfaction and a felt lack of privacy, have detrimental effects on health...psychological distress is shown to have a potent influence on the physical health of Bangkokians" (Fuller). This conclusion that a *subjective* dissatisfaction can strongly contribute to an individual's health implies that not only absolute poverty, but relative poverty can play a profound role in both mental and physical health.

WHO identifies numerous physical characteristics common to low-income housing of the urban poor which lead to poor mental health. These include "stressful factors such as noise, air, soil, or water pollution, overcrowding, inappropriate design, inadequate maintenance of the physical structure and services, poor sanitation, or a high concentration of specific toxic substances." Besides contributing to physical health problems, such stressful conditions often lead to or exacerbate serious psychosocial health problems such as "depression, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, child and spouse abuse, delinquency, and target violence" (WHO 1992).

## HOUSING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Housing is inextricably intertwined with health and both are basic human rights. Even though these rights are firmly embodied in international human rights law, violations in the form of forced evictions continue in the majority of countries around the world affecting millions of people annually.

### *Continued Violations of Human Rights: Forced Eviction*

In addition to the clear declaration of housing rights in the UDHR, the right to housing is contained within numerous other laws relating to a broad range of topics such as the elimination of discrimination, the rights of refugees, women's rights, the rights of children and laws relating to development. Of these documents the most legally binding is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11 (1)). This covenant acquired the force of law when it was ratified in 1976. At present 92 nations have signed the covenant and are now legally bound to uphold the rights contained within, including the rights to adequate food, clothing and housing (Leckie p.91).

In August of 1991 the UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities created a resolution which unequivocally stated that forced eviction is "a gross violation of human rights." The resolution also noted that there are many "disguised terms which governments employ to hide the violence often associated with forced evictions such as 'cleaning the urban environment', 'urban renewal', and 'progress and development' (Housing by People in Asia). Even though this resolution was later adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights, millions of people throughout the world are forcibly removed from their homes each year. In most cases very little, if any, warning is given and relocation or provision of alternative housing is clearly the exception and not the rule. (Murphy p.53)

Habitat International Coalition publishes a series of biannual publications on forced evictions as violations of human rights. The following well-documented examples have been taken from their publication in order to demonstrate a few of the various nuances surrounding forced evictions.

•Since 1987 more than 18,000 households were forcibly evicted from their homes in the cities of Santo Domingo and Santiago, in a publicly avowed attempt to 'beautify' these cities in association with the 500th year celebrations of Columbus. These government sponsored evictions were deemed so severe that the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has twice declared the Dominican Republic to be in violation of article 11 (the right to adequate housing) at its fifth and sixth sessions in 1990 and 1991.

•Throughout 1991, more than 8,000 homes were destroyed by a series of fires--most of suspicious origin--affecting a range of slum communities in New Delhi.

•On the morning of 11 February 1993, official authorities using bulldozers demolished and forcibly evicted fourteen houses in [Indonesia]...this was the fifth instance of forced eviction faced by these dwellers since 1991.

•The community of Extencion La Primavera [in Nicaragua] is currently threatened with forced eviction. 450 families (+/- 2,250 people) have lived here for over two years, with the so-called relocation site lacking water and electricity.

•A comprehensive survey carried out by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in 1992 estimates that 120,000 people (20,000 families) are forcibly evicted from their homes every year in Metro Manila alone. The study also demonstrates the random nature of many of the evictions carried out in Manila by showing that between 80-90% of all public and private land cleared of squatters remains vacant and idle. In nine out of ten cases, neither relocation sites nor compensation are provided to those evicted in Metro Manila.

•Plans surrounding the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta [threatened] the forced eviction of several communities...threatening thousands of residents with homelessness--in a city with already more than 10,000 homeless people and which, along with Dallas and Denver, recently passed laws against "the crimes of the homeless" such as sleeping outside.

(World Conference for Human Rights, 1993)

### *Human Rights and Value Systems*

So why do such injustices continue in direct opposition to international law? Why haven't the rights to health care and adequate housing received as much attention as various other human rights? This is in large part due to the political implications of recognizing economic, social and cultural rights which are sometimes seen as being in direct conflict with civil and political rights.

Civil and political rights are those rights which protect citizens from arbitrary arrest or torture, allow freedom of speech and right to own property. Economic, social and cultural rights include the right to adequate shelter, education and health care. Which

category of rights is more highly valued is in many ways arbitrary. Many socialist countries place a somewhat greater value on the social, economic and cultural category. For example “while implementing a massive production of housing to meet collective needs, socialist countries deny some cherished although not always attainable rights for Western cultures; the right to own a house, the right to choose the location, the right to participate in its design or at least in the selection of the appropriate kind of house.” On the other hand, in many Western countries “housing left to the free forces of the market bring up the problem of accessibility, particularly for the poor and the disadvantaged neglecting a much more substantial right than ownership or freedom to choose, that is the right to solve a fundamental problem” (Ortiz p.11).

On one extreme, the Bush administration (1988-1992) “did not even accept the idea that citizens can have economic, social and cultural rights” (Leckie p.92). In such countries property rights are often wrongly assumed to be the highest and most sacred of rights, but at least with respect to internationally agreed upon human rights law, housing rights are recognized far more explicitly than are property rights (Murphy p.53). Certainly both sets of rights are extremely valuable, but if they are thought of as occupying opposite ends of a see-saw then where the fulcrum is placed depends on cultural and societal values which in turn decide on which side the balance falls. If the fulcrum is placed too far to either side, no one gets to enjoy the ride.

The use of human rights law to prevent such atrocities as torture, disappearances, government execution and false imprisonment of its citizens seems obvious. Often forgotten is the fact that both the homeless and those living in extreme poverty are frequently subject to intense physical and mental suffering as well. “Their rights are just as important as those whose civil and political rights are abused. Far more people die or are seriously disabled as a result of officially tolerated poverty than by direct acts of brutality by the state” (Leckie p.93).

### *Benefits of Using Human Rights Language*

Housing rights are already an integral part of international human rights law, but there are benefits to actually using this language when discussing problems of inadequate

shelter. Housing as a right implies government responsibility in its recognition and implementation (Ortiz p.11). The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements was adopted by the UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1976, Section III (8) states that:

“Adequate shelter and services are a basic human right which places an obligation on governments to ensure their attainment by all people, beginning with direct assistance to the least advantaged through guided programs of self-help and community-action. Governments should endeavor to remove all impediments hindering attainment of these goals.”

By defining a specific goal as a ‘right’ it is elevated “above the rank and file of competing societal goals, and gives it a degree of immunity from challenge, and generally endows it with an aura of timelessness, absoluteness and universal validity” (Philip Alston quoted in Leckie p.94). This also helps to put the right to housing on more equal footing with other well-accepted rights. For example, the American Convention of Human Rights (OAS) states that “Everyone has the right to use and enjoyment of their property. The law may subordinate such use and enjoyment to the interest of society.” A housing rights perspective allows limitations to be set so that the existence of these rights do not prevent large segments of society from attaining adequate shelter. In addition, the housing rights approach shifts the burden of proof to the state who now must prove that it is truly unable to implement a previously guaranteed right of its people (Leckie p.95).

But it would be wrong to assume that housing rights create obligations only for governments. Enrique Ortiz, Executive Secretary of Habitat International Coalition (HIC), has defined obligations with respect to housing rights for three sectors including national governments, the international community, and the individuals themselves. The government’s obligation is to create the conditions necessary for individuals to attain adequate housing. This can be accomplished in part by protecting housing rights in national constitutions and laws, removing obstacles to enjoying the right to adequate housing, introducing urban and building codes which are appropriate to the needs of the urban poor, and providing the infrastructure and basic services inherent in the right to housing.

The obligation of the international community involves ensuring that the international economic, political and social system is such that all people are able to attain

adequate housing. Ortiz emphatically states that “this includes an international obligation to undertake the reallocation of resources between countries.” The international community is also responsible for prohibiting multinational corporations from displacing people from their housing and for ensuring that refugees receive adequate resources.

In order for individuals or communities to enjoy the right to housing they must contribute economic, human and material resources in accordance with his or her capacity. They must be willing to stand up for their right to housing and to hold national and international bodies responsible for following through on their obligations (Ortiz p.17).

International human rights law is increasingly important in today’s world. The value of urban land is rapidly growing and, as a result, slum communities are more often faced with the difficulties associated with eviction and relocation. The following chapter addresses these issues.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Overview of Slums, Eviction and Relocation**

#### **URBANIZATION AND POVERTY**

Throughout the developing world, urban population growth far exceeds national population growth and, as a result, urban poverty is increasing more rapidly than is rural poverty. According to the World Bank 45% of Asians living in poverty will be urban dwellers by the turn of the century (World Bank). This is a result of migration from rural to urban areas stimulated by political, social, cultural, or economic factors. Government policies may encourage or discourage the movement of populations. Younger generations may leave rural areas in search of independence and freedom from traditional constraints, and educational opportunities are generally urban-oriented (Prasad p.33). Paved roads and televisions may make urban life ever more visible to rural people who often migrate urban centers in search of better lives. In some cases migration proceeds in response to an expectation of greater earnings rather than the reality of greater earnings (Miah 1990b, p.3).

Thailand provides a classic example of ways in which economic factors have contributed to migration. Over the last several decades Thailand has shifted from a rural-based to an urban-based economy. National development plans of the 1960's and 1970's emphasized an export-oriented policy along with the building of infrastructure for industrialization. The major sources of capital were agriculture and foreign loans and investments. Profits were used for urban expansion and the gap between the rural and urban sectors grew rapidly. These economic changes contributed dramatically to an increase in the number of people migrating from rural to urban areas in search of better paying jobs and means to escape the ever-increasing financial insecurity of subsistence farming. More often people were 'pushed' from rural areas by lack of opportunities rather than 'pulled' by dreams of bright lights and greater amenities (Miah 1990b, p.3).

The majority of those who migrated went in search of wages and soon the supply of unskilled laborers greatly outweighed the number of available jobs. "The depressed rural sector provided a ready supply of recruits into this labor force, and also harbored the 'reserve army' which kept down the price of labor" (Phongpaichit p.72). Low wages, coupled with increasing competition for inner-city land has lead to a situation where there is a dearth of low-cost housing. As a result "the poor are often forced to put up their shack on steep erosion prone slopes, close to overflowing rivers, mosquito-infected wetlands, along railway lines or close to sources of heavy air or water pollution" (UNCHS 1994 p.2). Thus, rapid urbanization is a major factor contributing to the growth of slum communities in developing countries. The fact that these communities are often built illegally on public or private land, along with high and rising land values, sets the stage for conflict .

## **CLARIFICATION OF TERMS**

Before beginning a discussion of the conflicts which often arise between the urban poor and landowners, several terms need to be clarified:

### ***Slum***

There is no general agreement in the literature on the definition of the word 'slum.' This is due, in part, to the fact that what constitutes a slum is culturally relative. The word 'slum' is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as "a heavily populated urban area characterized by poor housing and squalor." Other definitions include a lack of utilities and infrastructure, but any definition of slum "must be viewed in light of sociocultural, political-economic, geographical, and psychological factors that make up the residential environment in question. What can be considered a slum settlement in one culture may be considered an adequate shelter in another culture" (Obudho in UNCHS 1994 p.21). Slums can be broadly divided into two categories. Low-income housing produced as a result of decay and subdivision of structures originally intended for higher-income households or

non-residential purposes comprises one category. The other consists of housing units originally intended for low-income households (UNCHS 1991 p.11). In some cases, slums arise on large or small plots of unoccupied private or government land, and in other cases they form along railroad tracks, interstates or canals creating what are known as 'ribbon communities.'

### ***Squatter Settlement***

A squatter settlement can be defined as an informal development taking place on empty land or in an empty building without legal tenure. In order to avoid immediate removal, squatting often occurs on government land instead of private land (UNCHS 1991 p.11). Some slum communities are also squatter settlements, but others either pay rent to occupy the land or have been given permission by the land owner. For the purpose of this paper, squatter settlements can be assumed to be slums, but slum dwellers are not squatters unless they are illegally occupying land.

### ***Relocation***

Relocation refers to the physical removal of an individual, family, or community from one living location to another with the provision of land or housing. This may be voluntary or involuntary following an eviction. The term is often used synonymously with 'resettlement.'

### ***Eviction***

Anytime an individual, family, or community is forcibly removed from a location. Eviction may occur without any compensation, there may be monetary compensation, or families may be relocated to another site.

### ***Renters vs Owners***

These terms can be misleading because the majority of slum dwellers who are not squatters are renting the land on which they have built their houses. Thus the terms 'renter' and 'owner' are referring to the status of the individual with respect to the shelter, not the

land. Rental units provide a major source of income to many slum dwellers. Some add units to their existing houses for rental purposes thereby increasing an already dense living arrangement. Others live elsewhere and rent out their entire house. In many slum communities greater than 50% of occupants are renting the house in which they live. Significant differences in socio-economic status have been demonstrated between renters and owners. "Owners are older in years of age, have attained a higher level of education, have been staying in the slums for a longer period, have larger household size, have higher income, expenditure and saving, have higher dependency ratio, and enjoy higher level of utilities and environmental quality as compared to renters." In general, renters have often migrated from rural areas more recently than owners and thus tend to remit money to rural homes more often than owners (Miah 1990a p.85).

Renters and owners are also treated differently with respect to eviction and relocation projects. Those who own houses are often compensated after eviction and those who are renters are usually left on their own to find 'low income housing' in urban centers with ever-increasing rental costs.

## **EVICTION AND RELOCATION**

### ***Reasons for Eviction***

The fundamental problem which leads to conflict between low-income communities and landowners is the inevitable scarcity of land which arises from urban growth without urban planning. This conflict usually involves three central players: the inner-city poor, private landowners, and the government which can act as a landowner and an urban developer. For low-income families inner-city living is crucial because it provides a wide variety of both formal and informal income-generating opportunities. These include employment as factory workers, small-scale manufacturing, taxi drivers, vendors, porters, and guards.

Along with urban growth comes the increasing need for infrastructure. A larger population means expansion of existing transportation networks requiring land space for

the construction of interstates, airports, bus terminals and subways. Land for the construction of public facilities such as schools and hospitals also is required in order to meet the needs of a growing population. Governments also may reclaim land which they had previously left unused in order to create 'green space' or simply remove slums in order to 'beautify' the city.

Basic rules of supply and demand dictate that as land becomes more scarce it also becomes more valuable. As a result, owners will be more likely to pursue the eviction of squatters so that the land can be sold or developed for more profitable purposes. Not only are squatters more likely to be removed, but low-income families who may have been paying rent to the landowner for decades are also evicted. In both cases the inhabitants often are left uncompensated for homes which they were forced to leave (UNCHS p.9-14).

This competition of interests has resulted in a situation where the urban poor suffer not only from the effects of actual eviction, but from repercussions of living under a constant threat of involuntary removal. Such uncertainty of tenure "creates problems for capital improvement in the physical structures and social commitment to the larger neighborhood and community" (Angel p.2-3). Why should a community improve itself if it may be destroyed whenever the landowner has the inkling? One solution to this problem is to implement a policy providing some sense of security for these low-income residents, but this could prove to be a 'catch-22' situation. Such a policy could "dissuade landowners from renting out vacant land on a temporary basis to low-income households thus further reducing opportunities for accommodation" (Yap p.273).

### *Stages of Eviction*

Somsook Boonyabancha, Secretary General for the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, describes seven stages in the eviction process. Since eviction is a constant worry of most slum-dwellers, rumors about an impending eviction abound. Triggers for such rumors are the appearance of a survey team, advertisements in the newspaper for sale of the land, or rents not being collected. In some cases these rumors prove to be the first stage of an actual eviction. Stage two involves the landlord informally conveying to the community leader that eviction is a possibility, but not actually name a date. Later, an official

announcement will be made either by posting a billboard in the community or going door to door and an actual date will be set. Especially if resistance is anticipated, threats will be made at this time regarding the use of police, violence or arson.

If the community does resist, a legal struggle in court may ensue. This may lead to a rather long delay and provides the residents with time to search for a new place to live. Such a delay may not be acceptable to an unscrupulous landowner and fire is often used as a means of clearing the land immediately. For this reasons, many slum communities facing eviction hire a 'fire guard' and take additional fire prevention measures.

The final stage of eviction involves the actual demolition of the houses. If resistance continues the landowner may call in the police, military forces or hired thugs to force the people out with violence. In some situations no compensation is provided, but in other cases the community receives monetary compensation or is relocated to another site. Relocation is more likely if the landowner is the government. Once the land is vacant, the new project begins or, as is often the case, the project falls through and new residents begin to move onto the land (Boonyabantha).

### ***Relocation***

Beginning in the 1940's and 50's large scale migration to cities and insufficient low-cost housing was beginning to result in the formation of slum communities. In many countries governments would bulldoze settlements in the hopes of "eradicating the squatter problem...Through the eviction of squatters and other urban poor they hoped to build up psychological barriers against the permanent influx of impoverished rural migrant." In some cases residents would be returned to their home districts. This strategy was a distinct failure and the number of slum and squatter communities continued to grow. Soon epidemics and fires lead to a more paternalistic removal of residents to the outskirts of cities. Generally no compensation or support was provided, but residents were allowed to rebuild their shelters on these peripheral sites (UNCHS 1991, p.23).

Through the 1950's and 60's issues of land scarcity and high land values were not yet major reasons for evictions. The main reasons at that time had to do with the resident's illegal status and negative perceptions of the impoverished. Removal of the slums was in

the interest of “beautifying” the cities and it was not until the early 1970’s that governments began to see housing issues in the context of larger social and economic problems.

At this time it was realized that many of those who had previously been relocated had not been able to adjust either financially or socially to their new situation. Sites located peripherally were nearly without exception “inadequate in terms of the infrastructure and services. Most of the time they were very distant from the jobs held by the residents. The families were often split up with some members living in other slums or squatter settlements near their work and commuting on weekends“ (Aldrich p.27).

Other communities were relocated to high-rise flats still within the city center. In many cases, such completed shelters were not designed with the resident’s cultural or economic needs in mind. Women who had previously used their home as a workplace or as a small shop for vending food were no longer able to do so because of reduced size or inappropriate location. Often high-rise flats with communal toilets at the end of a hallway were extremely over-crowded and rapidly became unsanitary (UNCHS 1994, p.102). In other cases facilities in the relocated community were of a higher standard, but quickly became unaffordable for the new inhabitants due to higher rent or other associated costs.

Because these projects were designed without the input of the community and without taking their economic hardships into serious consideration, families were often unwilling or unable to remain in the relocated site. Many residents returned to the increasingly densely populated slum and squatter areas of the city-centers. As a result, numerous countries abandoned the policy of relocation in favor of ‘slum-upgrading’ with an emphasis on environmental improvements. Relocation was only carried out if a lowering of density was necessary for improvements to be made (UNCHS p.25, Miah 1990b p.12). In 1980, the World Bank came out with a policy statement that relocation projects “must be development programs as well, and that measures must be taken to improve the conditions of those relocated and prevent them from becoming impoverished and destitute” (Cernea p.90).

The idea of land-sharing was also born out of this new way of thinking. “Conventional housing strategies had not worked in Bangkok, where market forces have resulted in accelerating land values and continuing evictions from even upgraded slums in

the interests of commercial redevelopment. A concept of land-sharing emerged in Bangkok whereby the landlord gives up half a holding to former tenants in exchange for the right of unimpeded development of the other half.” Generally such compromises are the result of a long process of negotiations and struggle. Even in Thailand, a country whose culture strongly values compromise, only about ten sites “have actually been subject to land sharing, but these have resulted in a degree of mutual satisfaction--both to landlords and tenants--that promises well for the future” (Yap p.269).

With land-sharing both parties must forfeit something, but both parties gain as well. The landowner is able to recover some part of his land for further development without becoming embroiled in a long and potentially costly and embarrassing battle with homeowners. In addition, according to Buddhist tenets such an act of charity is a way of ‘making merit’ thus paving the way for a better life in one’s next incarnation. For the community members, they gain security of land tenure, at least for the time stated in the contract, and this creates an opportunity for both private and governmental upgrades (Aldrich p.269).

In situations where eviction is still unavoidable, the role of the government is often seen as that of enabler or facilitator of self-help initiatives. Government support is limited to basic infrastructure, access to land and credit, and greater leniency regarding building standard requirements. In this manner the relocation process has in many cases become more flexible in order to meet the needs of community members. Encouraging the participation of the community has in most cases lead to dramatic positive change. Unfortunately, this ideal is often not achieved and in many countries the reality is still forced eviction without compensation or with inappropriate relocation schemes similar to those described above.

### ***Who is Involved in the Relocation Process?***

In most relocation projects the major players are the public sector, the community undergoing relocation, and in many cases non-government organizations (NGOs). The private sector and international development agencies often participate as well. Even when the eviction and relocation process is initiated by the private sector, the public sector (ie: a



national housing agency) is generally responsible for the actual design and implementation of the relocation program.

It is important to recognize the heterogeneity of the communities undergoing relocation. There is considerable variation tenure (renters or squatters), socioeconomic status, a community's level of internal organization, and access to the support of NGOs. These factors have major implications for the potential success or failure of a given relocation project and must be taken into consideration when designing a particular scheme.

NGO support has been a major factor in the positive revision of many relocation policies. In addition, NGOs often play a role in community development, act as mediators between communities and public agencies, assist communities in obtaining political support, facilitate community reestablishment at the relocation site, and help the community to obtain loans and manage a repayment system. International development agencies may also provide financial and professional support in the planning and implementation of relocation projects (UNCHS p.35).

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has described three decision making models for relocation projects. In the first model the community is not encouraged to participate in the development of the plan. This can be considered a non-participatory model with the government acting as leader. Such models have the tendency to breed discontent among those relocated because success is dependent on the government taking the effort to address the needs and priorities of the community. The second model is a participatory model with the government acting as leader. In this case communities are encouraged to participate in the development of the plan. Generally, the amount to which a community is able to take advantage of such a situation depends on both their level of internal organization and on the support available from NGOs. The third model is a participatory model with an NGO or community-based organization (CBO) taking on the leading role during the planning and design phase of the relocation project. Clearly, the problem of inadequate housing cannot be dealt with by government authorities alone. Community involvement and the appropriate intervention of NGOs is essential.

The issues of eviction and relocation described in this chapter provides a context in

which to begin discussing the specific issues facing residents living in the slum communities of Klong Toey in Bangkok, Thailand.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Bangkok and Klong Toey

#### BANGKOK

Krung Thep, meaning 'city of angels,' is the Thai name for the city known to foreigners as Bangkok. The city was founded in 1782 by King Rama I when he decided to relocate the city from Thonburi on the western side of the Chao Praya river to the eastern side in order to provide the capital greater protection from invasion (Appendix A, Map #1 and #2). Over the last two hundred years the city has continued to grow both in physical size and in terms of population. As of the 1990 Population and Housing census conducted by the National Statistical Office, the population of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area (BMA) was 5,876,000 inhabitants (Pornchokchai p.26). Because of Bangkok's rapid growth the urbanized area now extends well beyond the BMA and includes several adjacent provinces. This area taken as a whole is known as the Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR) and has a population of over 8,500,000 inhabitants.

With rapid economic growth over the last several decades Bangkok has become an overcrowded metropolis which "suffers severely from many environmental and social problems--traffic congestion, air pollution, noise, inadequate water supply, water pollution, flooding, a poor garbage collection system, slums, rapidly rising costs of living, and a growing gap between rich and poor." Many urban dwellers who have the resources are leaving Bangkok for the suburbs because of increasing land prices, traffic congestion and air pollution. All of these problems have a greater impact on the urban poor because they have less capacity to adapt to these challenges (Poungsomlee p.424).

There are an estimated 1,500 slum communities in the city of Bangkok. According to a 1990 study by the National Housing Authority (NHA), these communities were home for approximately 1,260,000 million people. This means that over 20% of Bangkok's population do not have adequate shelter. Since 1976 when census studies of the slums were first conducted the number of slums has increased by ten fold. This is due in part to

increasing migration from rural to urban in search of jobs and a better life, and also due to the fact that although there has been unprecedented growth of the Thai economy over the last three decades and most notably the last decade, the gap between the rich and poor has grown ever greater. If one were to divide the statistics into growth of wealthier individuals and growth of poorer individuals you would see that the share of income of the top 10% of the population increased from 33% in 1975 to 43% in 1992, while the lowest 10% decreased from 2.43% to 0.9% during the same period (Anzorena p.105). In addition, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights found that the poor work an average of 239 hours a month and the wealthy only 176 hours per month. It is a common misconception that the poor are generally unemployed and do not contribute to the economy. The reality is that although unemployment is certainly a problem among the urban poor, they provide an enormous source of low-cost labor which has had a major impact on the Bangkok economy both locally and in terms of the city's attraction to multinational corporations.

Living in the city center is often essential in terms of employment opportunities. It is estimated that 80% of the urban poor work within the informal sector while 20% are formally employed. The major types of informal sector employment include those hired on a daily basis for general labor, microenterprises such as food or beverage vendors, small grocery stores, fresh flower vending, sewing wholesale garments, laundry and making artificial flowers. Recently there has been a shift in the percentage working as hired labor to those running microenterprises. Because women tend to dominate the micro-enterprise activities this implies that poor women are playing an increasing role in income-generation for families living in Bangkok's slum communities (Ard-am 1991b, p.4).

### ***Bangkok's Slum Communities***

Two myths regarding the slum communities in Bangkok are that they are rapidly expanding and that the expansion is mostly a result of migration from the rural areas. Although rural to urban migration did play a major role in the initial formation and growth of slum communities in Bangkok through the 1970's, it has been shown that the most recent increase in the number of slum residents is a result of internal growth. If only household heads are asked about their place of birth it appears that the majority of slum

dwellers have migrated from rural areas, but when all members are asked it is found that 65% were born in Bangkok in many cases over thirty years ago. In addition, the internal growth is under the use of conscious birth control and is not occurring at a particularly explosive rate (Pornchokchai p.30).

The majority of slums in Bangkok are located on rented land. Prior to the relatively recent and substantial increase in land values in Bangkok, the renting of land for housing was considered a profitable utilization of resources. As of 1992 only 19% of Bangkok's slums were considered squatter settlements. Unfortunately, as land values continue to increase, landowners are deciding that it is no longer financially sound to provide housing to the poor, no matter how profitable it has been in the past or how long communities have been living on the land. Consequently, land tenure is becoming increasingly less secure whether a community is renting or squatting. It must also be noted that in Thailand there are no laws protecting the rights of either tenants or squatters.

Land rental slums and squatter settlements are located on both private and government land. Often the land has not previously been used because it is poorly accessible or marshy. In general, squatters tend toward government land since it reduces the risk that they will be removed. Besides forming on vacant, often swampy plots of land, squatter settlements also grow in narrow 'ribbons' along railroad tracks, interstates and *klongs*. A phenomenon known as 'mini-squatter settlements' are small and hidden clusters of about 30 units usually located under the many bridges in Bangkok. According to the 1990 BMA survey, there were a total of 76 settlements underneath bridges with a total of 2,082 people. The inhabitants of these communities tend to be more recent migrants and to have the least financial resources. Unlike western slums, Thai squatters very rarely occupy a building, but just move onto land and build their own structure (Pornchokchai p.60).

### ***National Housing Authority and Urban Community Development***

Since its inception in 1973 the National Housing Authority of Thailand (NHA) has been evolving in an attempt to solve the problems of low-income urban communities. The initial objective was to provide walk-up flats for the resettlement of evicted slum residents.

It soon became clear that not only was this plan financially over-ambitious, but that it was not meeting the needs of those who had been relocated. Since 1977 the NHA has shifted to a policy of 'slum upgrading' which has had significant positive results in a somewhat limited number of communities. Between 1977 and 1990, about 50,000 families in 130 communities were assisted through upgrades (Asian Cultural Forum). From 1982 a Land Tenure Security Program was implemented embracing such ideas as land-sharing, reblocking and resettlement, partially in recognition that without land security, improvements are difficult to implement. For example, the NHA "cannot improve a slum unless the landowner agrees and many landowners fear that upgrading will give the slums and squatter settlements a permanent character. Upgrading is also not a guarantee against eviction: 13 settlements which had been upgraded by 1984 had been evicted by 1988" (Yap p.268).

In 1992 the NHA established a revolving fund of 119 million baht (US \$4.7 million at the time) to assist in providing adequate relocation for those who face unavoidable eviction. The NHA has continued to demonstrated a sincere commitment to the upgrading of slum communities both through upgrading physical structures and by promoting the election of community leaders in order to improve the community's capacity to organize if threatened with forced eviction. In addition, the NHA has recognized the importance of working closely with NGOs to achieve a similar goal of improving the lives of individuals residing in the slum communities of Bangkok.

### *Rationale for Improvements*

What are some of the reasons which the Thai government has taken both financial and political steps toward improving the lives of the urban poor? The reasons a government (and in some cases private landowners) may become involved in assuring adequate access to housing for their citizenry are numerous and may include humanitarian, cultural, political or utilitarian rationale.

As discussed in chapter one, in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) brought housing into the language of human rights. But not until more recently have these rights become an actual part of the political dialogue in Thailand. In 1988 the

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), the Asian network of Habitat International Coalition, was set up in order to make the words of the UDHR a greater reality throughout Asia. As a result of this housing rights campaign and the grassroots efforts of numerous NGOs (The Human Development Center, Duang Prateep Foundation, Human Settlement Foundation), both media attention and public awareness of the problems facing those living in the slum communities of Bangkok have dramatically increased. For example, in 1991 a World Bank/IMF Meeting was held in Bangkok and resulted in the eviction of nearly 600 families. These families were living on land next to the Sirikit National Convention Center (named after the Queen) and officials declared that such communities were “good hiding places for terrorists” and further justified the evictions with the statement that World Bank and IMF officials should have “good scenery.” The public outcry and media attention against this eviction was tremendous and the government appeared to have lost a good deal of ‘face,’ a value which is held very high in Thai culture.

Thai culture is also given as a major reason that the concept of landsharing was able to both arise and find success in Bangkok. “Being a culture that values compromise, despite some uncompromising laws and regulations, the increased participation of the communities in finding solutions to urban problems has been accepted more easily in Thailand than perhaps it would in cultures where compromise is not valued so highly” (ACHR p.2).

With 95% of the Thai population considering themselves Buddhist, it has been suggested that the Buddhist concept of ‘merit-making’ has also had a positive influence on landowners. The *bun* (merit) or *bap* (demerit) which was earned in past lives to a large degree determines an individual’s present lot in life. In addition, a person can improve their karma by purposefully performing meritorious acts (Meucke). By influencing the formation of a societal structure which is conducive to merit-making, Buddhism has helped to establish the foundations of philanthropy (Pongsapich). That is to say that Buddhist philosophy actively promotes the concept of not only thinking ‘good’ thoughts, but transforming these thoughts into a meritorious action of performing a kindness for one’s fellow beings. Kioe Sheng Yap, a professor in the Human Settlements Department of the Asian Institute of Technology, states that “the landowner’s acceptance of land sharing is

often either an act of charity and merit-making, or it is a peaceful way to resolve a potentially embarrassing conflict between the land-owner and slum dwellers” (Yap p.269).

From a more utilitarian perspective, it has been argued that by providing adequate housing a government maintains a healthy workforce and consumer population. The military is increasingly aware of the dangers to stability of pushing slum dwellers (over 20% of the population) into desperate situations. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) states that “the city in developing countries is strikingly full of the young, and it is among the young that dissatisfaction may be highest. Like their parents, they will share a profound desire to be treated as people rather than problems but, unlike their parents, they may not be ready to accept a future that promises little more than miserable rewards and, at best prolonged survival” (UNCSH 1994, p.22). Finally, elected officials cannot afford to ignore one-fifth of their urban constituents and many have begun to take up the role of advocate on behalf of those living in slum communities.

## **KLONG TOEY**

The name Klong Toey brings two thoughts immediately to mind -- the Port Authority of Thailand and the Slums. Low-income urbanites have been building their homes on the land of the Port Authority since its establishment in 1937 when the Chao Praya River was first dredged making the harbor accessible to ships (Thorbeck p.34).

### ***The Port Authority***

The Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) is a semi-autonomous branch of the government which occupies 2,256 rai (1 rai = 1600m<sup>2</sup>) of centrally located land along the Chao Praya river (Appendix A, Map #3 and #4). In addition to functioning as a major passageway for imported and exported goods, the PAT provides a marshy home to some 68,000 people who are members of the Klong Toey slum communities.

The PAT has depended on these families for nearly fifty years to provide inexpensive wage labor, but the recent surge in the land's value has created even more



profitable options. Time and again these communities have been forcibly evicted causing residents to dismantle their homes and move them into increasingly dense areas.

In 1981 and 1982 the NHA built 1,512 units of five story walk-up flats for rent in the north western portion of Klong Toey. A large number of the slum dwellers who moved into the Flats later sold their rights and returned to the slums. Over the last 16 years the Port Authority has been trying to evict slum dwellers living in the eastern portion of the port especially those living in the communities known as Locks 7-12 in order to build a container holding area. After much heated debate a land sharing compromise was reached in 1983 with some of the residents of these communities. These occupants agreed to move their homes onto a 70 rai plot of land so that the port could reclaim the land that they were currently occupying in exchange for a contract guaranteeing tenure for twenty years. Occupants were required to pay a minimal rent for the use of the land and the relocated community was named Jet Sip Rai (70 Rai). This plan was hailed as an example of successful compromise and it was, but 12 years later with only eight years left on the lease, residents are again beginning to once again feel the burden of an uncertain future for their homes and their families. Although about 600 families were relocated from Locks 7-12 to Jet Sip Rai, many other families remained. More recently the PAT has offered to relocate these remaining residents to Wat Charapon, a site located on the periphery of Bangkok. This deal is appealing to some community members because they will be given their own piece of land, but to others the distance and expense of a long commute make this option either undesirable or impossible and each day the likelihood of forced eviction becomes more and more likely.

### ***Community Organization***

Many of the families who live in Klong Toey have been there for generations extending back as far as World War II. Over the years many of the communities have been extensively upgraded either with the help of the NHA, local politicians or NGOs. Generally, the houses are wooden structures with piped water, toilets and electricity. Often the pathways have been upgraded from narrow wooden planks to cement walkways, but they still provide minimal protection from the waste water which stagnates underneath the

majority of Klong Toey homes.

In the 1980's the NHA began requiring that communities organize themselves in order to be eligible for slum upgrading. Thus the communities of Klong Toey generally have well organized committees. The residents elect a community leader and ten to fifteen committee members who assist the community leader. The role of the community leader is to organize the community in addressing its needs. Some of the major issues of concern are eviction, land tenure, fire protection, drug problems, and rubbish collection.

Over forty slum committees have been brought together under the umbrella of the 'United Slum Confederation' which was initiated by the community in 1990 and assisted by the Human Development Center. One goal of the Confederation is to provide an opportunity for community leaders to come together and discuss both the problems facing their communities and possible solutions to these problems. Such an organization also creates a sense of solidarity so that the communities feel more powerful in fighting both against eviction and for improved housing conditions. In addition, the Confederation has a liaison who maintains a line of communication between the communities and the NHA and BMA. There are other similar organizations such as the United Slum Development Organization which is well-known for its support of communities struggling against forced eviction.

The organization of slum communities has lead to some major benefits for the residents. One of these benefits is the formation of community cooperatives. Generally, the poor do not have the means of obtaining loans for activities such as home improvement, rebuilding following relocation, or for business ventures. But recently, there have been numerous examples of well-organized communities, generally with the support of an NGO, forming successful savings and loan cooperatives. Through the work of the United Slum Confederation, community-based savings and loan associations were formed in over 28 communities.

Probably the most well-established community cooperative is the Klong Toey Credit Union Cooperative which was started with the assistance of Dr. Somporn Surarith who runs a health center serving the Klong Toey community. This cooperative has given out thousands of loans to cooperative members for such needs as income generating

activities, clearing debts, health care, housing repair and construction, family issues, education, and more. The organization has also assisted other cooperatives which are being formed by poor urban residents or factory workers to get their start.

The formation of a cooperative is especially important when a community faces eviction or relocation. The formalization of a community organization into a legal community cooperative allows the residents to play a major role in the resettlement process. In general, a cooperative can play many roles and is able to meet some of the following objectives:

- to serve as a legal body in obtaining a loan both for the purchase of a plot of land to serve as the relocation site and to provide additional loans to residents for housing construction or repair
- to allow the community as a whole to remain at the center of the decision making process regarding all aspects of the relocation process
- to act as a formal community body to manage the system of repayment
- to create a savings system to facilitate savings activities among community members and to seek funding to enable loans provision
- to instill a sense of community security and control for the well-being of the community members
- to coordinate with both national and international agencies to obtain assistance in developing the infrastructure and human resources of the community

Besides allowing for the organization of community cooperatives, there are many other benefits of community organization. “The growth of strong community organizations...has been the most significant factor contributing to the emergence of a healthy change in a good number of land-housing projects in Bangkok” (ACHR 1994). Through organizing, many communities have avoided eviction all together because it costs a landlord a great deal more money to evict an organized community than a disorganized community. When a community cannot avoid eviction, they have much more power in obtaining a resettlement agreement that truly meets their needs if they are well-organized.

Communities which have a structure in place for implementing plans are more successful in making improvements in their lives and in addressing problems which arise within their neighborhood. One study demonstrated psychological benefits in women who have organized themselves against eviction by increasing self-esteem and their sense of control over their own lives (Green).

In addition to promoting community organization and activism, the numerous NGOs working in Klong Toey are also involved in welfare programs. These NGOs include the Human Development Agency (HDC), the Duang Prateep Foundation (DPF), the Human Settlements Foundation (HSF), Foundation for Slum Child Care (FSCC) and many others. The services provided range from education and health services for slum children to occupational trainings and assistance with income-generating activities. HDC runs a hospice for those dying from AIDS and a shelter for street children. Several groups have sponsored programs for the elderly such as exercise groups. Finally, the NGO's commonly provide housing materials at cost or below for communities involved in rebuilding their homes either after a fire or relocation.

### ***Major Problems Facing Klong Toey Residents***

In spite of growing numbers of community-based organizations and the assistance of both government organizations and NGOs, the people living in the slum communities of Klong Toey still face many seemingly insurmountable hardships.

#### **Poverty**

It is important to recognize that all people living in the slums are not 'poor' in a strict economic sense. Very few slum dwellers suffer from 'food poverty' or absolute poverty in which their income is unable to cover their basic nutritional needs. A 1991 survey conducted by the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand indicates that a large percentage of slum dwellers have an income below the average for the city, but that the majority do not fall below the poverty line. For slums located in the BMR less than 12% of residents live below the poverty line.

This should not lead one to the conclusion that the resident's of Klong Toey do not suffer economic hardship. Their incomes are usually equivalent to their expenditures for their basic needs as city dwellers meaning electricity and water bills, education, health services, and certain 'modern' expenses such as televisions, motorcycles, water filters and small refrigerators. This leaves very little leeway for unexpected household needs such as home repairs, or illnesses which may lead to increased expenditure for health services on top of lost wages due to missed work days. As a result many families must borrow money at exorbitant interest rates from money lenders and are caught in the poverty of perpetual indebtedness. Gambling is often seen as the one hope of escaping this cycle of debt, but more often than not this hope only leads to greater debt.

Besides a general sense that many slum residents are walking a tight rope to keep their income greater than their expenses, the cost of many services are greater for the poor than the general population of Bangkok. For example, a homeowner is required to obtain written permission from the landowner before the Metropolitan Electricity Authority or the Metropolitan Water Works Authority will provide official services. Many landowners are not willing to give such permission out of fear that access to such services will create a greater sense of permanency for the slum residents. Due to this problem along with the often prohibitive initial cost of obtaining metered utility services, many families end up pirating electricity or water from neighbors and pay four to ten times greater fees than they would legally be charged. A similar situation of the poor paying more arises with respect to health care expenditures as well. A study conducted in Thailand examining health expenditures of the underprivileged versus the more privileged groups concluded that "the underprivileged were more likely to pay out of their own pocket for their health problems, and to pay out of proportion to their household income when compared to the more privileged groups" (Pannarunothai).

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the poorest members of any given slum community tend to be the renters. In Klong Toey up to 50% of residents in some communities are renters who are often newcomers and tend to be blamed for other community problems such as fire and drugs.

## **Fire**

Two of the most ubiquitous fears in slum communities are the fear of fire and the fear of eviction. Often the two are linked. The use of fire to evict a community which has refused to leave their homes is so common that when rumors of eviction begin, many communities create a system of 'fire guards.' An additional risk of living near the Port Authority is the risk of chemical explosions which have led to the destruction of several Klong Toey communities over the years.

Houses are almost invariably wooden structures with metal roofs separated from each other often by a hair's breadth and at most by a foot or two. The pathways are usually too narrow to allow fire trucks and equipment to get anywhere near the source of the fire. The narrow pathways also contribute to the chaos as families rush to remove their loved ones and possessions before the rapidly spreading fire engulfs their homes.

The actual level of fear with which these residents live was not clear to me until the night I witness a small fire in the community of Jet Sip Rai. One evening I returned to the Human Development Center and the smell of smoke and sound of sirens were in the air. As I walked down the road toward Jet Sip Rai, people were yelling and running with sheets piled high with all of their family's clothing. Others were running along narrow pathways carrying televisions and other prized possessions. At the edge of Jet Sip Rai is a home for street children and an AIDS hospice run by HDC. All thirty children who live in the home were standing at the front of the building holding on to each other and watching with a quiet fear. Even the children who usually seem so hardened by their lots in life had tears on their faces. It turned out that the fire was quickly contained and only superficially damaged three houses. But the reactions of the people in the community made the depth of terror and the horrible memories associated with fire much more tangible. When a family's income is virtually equivalent to their expenses, it can take them years to recover financially from the destruction of their home and possessions.

The government does provide some benefits to fire victims whether they are renters or home owners. Thus, renters are often blamed for fires by the cynical who say that they start them in order to receive these benefits from the government. Or those who are wary of newcomers fear that they came to this slum because previous neighbors saw their

drunkenness or drug addiction as fire hazards and chased them from their last community. Although either of the above scenarios are feasible, it is more common that the renters are the ones who are the most tragically affected by fire or eviction because although they may be given a small per diem to survive the period immediately after the fire, they are rarely relocated or provided with any additional compensation as are homeowners.

The law says that no one, not even the landowner, can move back to an area where a fire occurred for forty-five days or until after the police investigation has been conducted. If residents do try to rebuild their homes, they can be fined up to 40,000B and sentenced to three years in prison. For the slum residents this has two consequences. First, that they will have to spend a month and a half without a shelter guarding whatever possessions they managed to rescue from the fire. Secondly, this delay gives the Port Authority additional time to consider alternative uses for the land thus reducing the possibility that they will ever be able to rebuild their homes on a particular location. In order to avoid these problems, NGO's have often encouraged the people of Klong Toey to return to the land as soon as it has cooled, and begin to rebuild their structures so that they may prevent eviction. When a community has acted as an organized whole, the authorities have not imprisoned all 1500 community members. Often the communities which have been devastated by fire end up becoming some of the most socially active and well-organized slums. They become more aware of their rights and more likely to assert their rights. Recently such community activism has lead to concessions by the government to provide social welfare funds for homeowners to begin rebuilding their homes even before a community has been given official permission from the landowner to rebuild. Such changes make eviction by fire a less definitive way for a landowner to reclaim land and thus perhaps make the risk a little smaller.

### **Pollution**

Although pollution is an enormous issue for the entire city of Bangkok, the problems of air, noise, litter, and water pollution are all exaggerated in Klong Toey. The communities of Klong Toey are located near the interstate, the railroad track, or beside the industrial facilities associated with the Port Authority.

Much of the air and noise pollution is the result of Bangkok's incredible traffic congestion which is in part due to the rapid growth in population and in greater part due to poorly planned roadways, many of which do not interconnect. The number of vehicles in the metropolis is estimated to increase by about 5.7 per cent annually and if this rate continues, by the next decade the number of vehicles will have doubled (McGee p.331). Currently, there are number of large projects underway to cope with the severe traffic problem including the construction of expressways and a rapid transit system. However, there is the fear that "these mega-projects could be underused if there are not enough secondary and feeder road networks to link them. It is believed that land acquisition is the main constraint" (McGee p.332). The rapid transit project is proceeding more slowly than expected and its construction has greatly disrupted traffic on the roadways surrounding the areas of construction. When riding the bus bad days, which are most days, one could easily read this entire chapter and look up only to be on the same block as when you started reading.

Thousands of vehicles pass by leaving only their exhaust fumes for those living underneath and around the interstate in Klong Toey. Thailand still has leaded gasoline and the lead by-products released into the air are particularly dangerous to developing minds. Recently, a group from Chulalongkorn University conducted a study measuring the toxin levels in the blood of children attending the HDC kindergartens. Of the 150 children randomly tested, fifty had moderately high levels of toxins and five had an exceedingly high level. Besides air pollution, noise pollution is also a major problem for many of the Klong Toey communities. Noise pollution not only can take its toll psychologically, but physically. The World Health Organization has set the tolerable limit of noise to be 45 decibels. Between honking horns, motorcycle engines roaring, industrial activities and the pounding of the ever present construction site, the noise levels in Bangkok virtually always exceed this limit. "The high pitched noise of motorcycles is the worst of the noise effects. But they fill an important niche in the transport system because of their ability to weave around heavy traffic. They are cheaper than a car to purchase and to hire. Despite being illegal and dangerous (although the allocation of routes is run by the police), hiring is a popular informal-sector economic activity" (Poungsomlee).



In addition to the hazards associated with traffic pollution within their communities, low-income commuters tend to travel by public transport or motorcycle and are exposed to the worst air and noise pollution for longer periods of time than their wealthier counterparts who travel by private vehicle or air-conditioned bus.

For many residents the interstate is not their greatest source of pollution. Many of the homes are built so close to the train tracks that their houses rattle day and night in accordance with the train schedule. Parents are continuously worried that their children may be playing near the tracks when a train is passing. Other communities are built along the canals in Klong Toey all of which run thick with industrial waste and rubbish. For those not accustomed to the odors of the canals, the fetid smells can literally cause one to gag. The bacterial counts taken from these canals was recently measured as nine times higher than that in human excrement. In 1990 the National Environmental Board found that water taken from canals networking with the Chao Praya River contained numerous pathogens causing hepatitis A, skin diseases and diarrhea diseases. Seafood caught in the river has been found to contain heavy metals such as lead and mercury. After consuming contaminated seafood, the toxins accumulate in one's organs leading to serious health problems.

Slum dwellers face many other water related problems. Bangkok is located on the marshlands of the Chao Praya and much of the city regularly floods during monsoon season. Industries often fulfill their large water requirements by tapping directly into the groundwater which, along with the filling in of canals to serve as roadways, has led to increasing land subsidence. In order to prevent flooding many landowners fill their land with dirt, but this is expensive and often these swampy plots are turned into informal settlements. The majority of houses in Klong Toey are built on wooden or cement posts over such wetlands. Underneath each house is a cesspool from which the sewage soaks into the subsoil and pollutes the water under the houses (Yap p.263). Upgraded communities often have cement drains which are designed to carry away rainwater, but these often become blocked with rubbish. When heavy rains raise the level of the waste water beneath them, many homes are flooded. In some communities people can easily demonstrate how high the water goes during the rainy season using the watermark on their living room wall.

The pollution described has been mostly of the macroenvironment. On the micro level, the overwhelming majority of families living in the slum communities keep their homes impeccably clean despite many challenges.

## **Health**

As expected, those living in poor urban housing have more physical illness and less mental well-being than other city inhabitants. These families are also less likely to be hospitalized or seek treatment and tend to self-medicate with drugs purchased from the pharmacy. The major constraint does not appear to be access, but the prohibitive cost of services and medications and the inability to afford time away from work (Pannarunothai).

Traditional health indicators such as incidence of tuberculosis or diarrheal disease are increased in slum communities. Although infant and child mortality are lower in urban than rural areas of Thailand, the incidence among the urban poor is estimated to be significantly higher than the average for the country at 30-35 per 1,000 live births (Ard-am 1991b). While malnutrition based on a lack of quantity of food is rare, there are certainly children living in Klong Toey who suffer from malnutrition as a result of a poor quality diet. The percentage of children falling into this category is estimated at 8-10%. (Ard-am 1991b p.10). Even marginal malnutrition has been clearly demonstrated to cause a decrease in mental capacity (UNCHS p.4). Worms can also contribute to malnutrition and the incidence of worms in children living in Klong Toey is so high that the children attending the kindergartens run by HDC are given deworming medication at the beginning of each term.

Thailand is known for having a high level of contraception use and thus a relatively low fertility rate. The percentage of women of child-bearing age using contraception is around 75% nationwide and "it is believed that this figure is also applicable to urban poor women since accessibility of family planning services is no longer considered a problem in Thailand" (Ard-am 1991b p.7).

The majority of Klong Toey houses are well-ventilated and dry when it is not raining. Because the majority of these homes are built on unfilled swamps, moisture becomes a serious issue during the rainy season. This leads to damp and moldy conditions

which are closely associated with an increased risk of not only respiratory diseases, but many nonspecific ailments such as nausea, vomiting and joint pain (Platt).

The majority of those living in Bangkok do not consider the tap water to be potable. Many residents purchase bottled water or install water filters which connect directly to the tap. For many living in Klong Toey both of these solutions are out of their financial grasp. A few boil their tap water and others fill large clay containers and let the water settle mistakenly believing that if the visible particulate matter is removed that disease transmission is minimized.

The high incidence of drug use and HIV infection certainly pose serious health concerns and these topics will be considered separately.

### **Drugs**

The numbers of illicit drug users in Klong Toey is not known, but observation leads to the conclusion that the numbers are high relative to the general urban population. A study conducted through the Institute for Population and Social Research at Mahidol University, found that among urban male youth living in Bangkok 20% reported having smoked marijuana, 11% reported amphetamine use and about 8% reported glue sniffing. With the exception of alcohol and cigarettes, the vast majority of substance abuse is within the male population (Podhisita). Because these numbers were self-reported, it is possible that the actual numbers are even higher. In addition, these numbers are for the entire urban population. Because many of the factors contributing to the abuse of drugs are more profoundly felt within the slum communities, the numbers in Klong Toey are certainly greater. A number of reasons for the increased drug use among slum residents include:

- a lack of educational opportunities and higher rates of unemployment creates a situation where the selling of drugs becomes an important means of earning an income
- the stress of overcrowded living conditions and greater traffic and environmental problems
- the deterioration of the traditional family structure and family problems such as domestic violence

- television and other media promotion of Western consumer culture, violence and drugs
- an increasingly wide socio-economic gap which creates a sense of failure and disillusionment in youth living in slum communities

The role of urbanization and progress in the propagation of drug abuse is “sadly illustrated by slum children inhaling [paint] thinner and petrol, otherwise symbols of development. These modern drugs are used by transient drug abusers who are not on the winning side of development” (Speilman). Organic solvent sniffing first became a problem in Thailand in the 1980’s. The substances involved (paint thinner, lacquer and glue) usually contain toluene and can be easily and legally purchased. The use of heroin has a longer history going back to a peak of opium smoking among rural older men in the 1950’s. But by the end of the 1980’s up to 90% of heroin users injected with nearly 50% residing in Bangkok (Speilman). Amphetamine use is popular among slum youth and wage-laborers and has become very common among long-haul truck drivers in an attempt to stay awake and make their delivery deadlines. The use of amphetamines is reported to have become one of the leading causes of road accidents in Thailand (Podhisita p.82).

Drug abuse is particularly dangerous to young minds which are still in the process of development, but their toxic effects can cause permanent damage at any age. The use of intravenous drugs has become an even more serious health risk with the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Reduced inhibitions increase the likelihood of unprotected sex and also the incidence of youth or gang-related violence. Impaired cognition from drug or alcohol abuse commonly leads to injury or even death. Slums can be very dangerous places particularly if one is intoxicated. Physical obstacles such as open drains, low-hanging electrical wires, and unstable walkways and structures are the rule in most of Klong Toey slum communities.

The repercussions of substance abuse affect everyone living in Klong Toey in one way or another. It is difficult to spend much time in these communities without seeing someone, usually under 15 years-old, inhaling heavily from a paper bag full of toxic fumes. Or someone behind a semi-closed door sticking a needle into their arm. Or someone heating some little orange pills on a piece of aluminum foil.

Alcohol abuse and cigarettes are also extremely common in these communities. Volumes have been written on the enormous negative health consequences of both alcohol abuse and cigarette smoking. There is also clearly a link between alcohol abuse and domestic violence.

## **HIV/AIDS**

Infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is another reality of the slums. In Bangkok the lower-income groups are at highest risk for HIV infection and housewives are one of the top ten largest groups currently being affected by the deadly virus (Ard-am 1991b, p.8). It is thought that the epidemic in Klong Toey was originally spread through intravenous drug use and continues through both drug use and sexual contact. An accurate estimate of the number of people who are positive for HIV has not been determined for Klong Toey itself, but it is not unusual when visiting a community to see young men, women and even children whose bodies have the ravished look of someone dying from AIDS. Some of these victims are fortunate in the sense that they have been able to remain in their homes with someone to care for them, but others have no one who is willing to take care of them once they are diagnosed with AIDS.

Although a great deal of HIV/AIDS education has occurred over the last several years, particularly due to a survey conducted by a group of approximately 300 women of Klong Toey known as the Women's Group, a lot of fear still exists. When HDC first constructed an AIDS hospice actually within the slum community, many people disapproved because they feared that the water coming through the drains from the hospice would contaminate others, especially the nearby kindergarten, with the deadly virus. When the Women's Group conducted the survey and found out exactly what people's concerns were, they were able to seek out correct information and address some of the myths on which people were basing their fears. Now the hospice is a well accepted part of the community and those people who, for whatever reason, are not able to be cared for at home have a place to spend their final days with dignity.

## **Prostitution**

Although sex work can be considered a legitimate form of income generation, it is mentioned as a problem because of the high risk of HIV for these women. In addition, prostitution can be seen as an indication of the limited employment opportunities available for poor urban women to earn a decent salary. Certain communities within Klong Toey such as Wat Klong Toey Nai are well-known for their sexual services.

## **Eviction and Relocation**

Kaew Promporcheunbun, a community activist in Klong Toey, expresses the sentiments of many living in his community: “Just as our lives were getting better, we are now being evicted. For the people in the slum, this means that our life will go back to the way it was when we first got here...With no money, no work, no home, it will be difficult...If we were asked, “Do you want to move?” Most people would answer “no.” This is our home and we love it. Lots of people were born here, raised here and have relatives here.”

Unfortunately, the reality is that future evictions of slum residents from Port Authority land are inevitable. As described previously the NHA has demonstrated its willingness to participate in the upgrading and relocation process. The economic boom of the last few decades has given the government greater resources to contribute to these projects in order to make them more successful and growing community organization has provided a means for slum residents to have a say in their futures.

Assuming that there will be cases where eviction itself is going to be unavoidable, the question becomes: What is the impact of relocation on the evicted families and what can be done to make the resettlement process as successful as possible? Although many different organizations, both government and non-government, have very strong opinions about which type of relocation efforts are ‘best’ for evicted families, very few studies have actually asked those who have been relocated how the process has affected the well-being of their families. This question is the basis for the study described in the following chapters.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **Study: Research Questions, Methodology and Limitations**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What, if any, was the impact of relocation on the physical health of the family?
- How has the relocation affected the social, emotional and economic well-being of the family?
- How satisfied are participants with their new community? How does this compare to their satisfaction with their previous community?
- What relocation strategies appear to have been most successful in terms of preserving the well-being of these families and which appear to have been most destructive?
- How do these perspectives presented by the relocatees differ from the accepted wisdom and the beliefs of social workers, local NGOs and those who find themselves similarly faced with eviction?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methods used in this study were qualitative in nature with the exception of basic demographic data collected on each participant. Interviews were conducted with fifteen randomly selected families in each of four different communities to be discussed below. Both logistical and informational assistance were provided by the Human Development Center.

### *Human Development Center*

Support in making initial contacts was provided by Dr. Kritaya Archavanitkul of the Institute for Population and Social Research at Mahidol University. The research was carried out through the Human Development Center (HDC). This organization provided an infrastructure through which to gain a greater understanding of issues concerning families living in the Klong Toey slums.

The Human Development Center (HDC) was founded in 1971 by Father Joseph Maier who was sent to Klong Toey to serve as the parish priest for Vietnamese Catholics employed at the nearby slaughterhouse<sup>1</sup>. Since its inception the organization's efforts have been directed not only towards the Catholic minority, but towards the mostly Buddhist inhabitants of these slum communities. With the exception of emergency situations, such as fire, HDC aims to provide education and guidance rather than handouts. Their emphasis is on education, social development and community activism. Over the last 25 years HDC has grown from a single kindergarten to an umbrella organization for 30 kindergartens located throughout the slums, twelve self-help housing schemes, vocational training programs for adults, a free community health care center, a powerful women's group, an AIDS hospice, a community education program, and an outreach program and shelter for street children. The teachers, social workers and staff are almost entirely members of the community which they are serving. Often rising up through HDC schools and programs, they have remained in the slums to become leaders and role models for the next generation.

During a one month period prior to beginning the interviews, I visited families with social workers, spoke with teachers and visited kindergartens located in the slum communities, learned about health issues from workers at the AIDS hospice, and spent time with street children in the shelter. In addition, HDC provided me background information in order to select communities for the study of different relocation experiences.

### *Communities Selected for Study*

Three of the communities (Rong Moo Flats, Wat Charapon and Jet Sip Rai) were

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<sup>1</sup> Because Buddhist beliefs do not allow the killing of animals, Catholics, who are often ethnic Vietnamese, are employed in the slaughterhouses.



selected to represent various types of relocation experiences. Each of these communities was originally a squatter community on the land of the Port Authority in the Klong Toey slums. One community (Wat Klong Toey Nai) was not relocated and was selected to act as a baseline. This community is still living on the Port Authority's land. The following is a brief discussion of each of the communities studied.

### **Wat Klong Toey Nai**

Wat Klong Toey Nai (WKTN) is so named because it is located next to the inner temple (*wat*) of Klong Toey. It is divided into two sections named WKTN 1 and WKTN 2. This study focuses on WKTN 1, a very old community in which generations of some families have been living since World War II. Over the years these families have experienced many large fires. The most recent of which occurred in December of 1995 and destroyed approximately half of their homes. The half which did not burn was neither evicted nor relocated and will be used as the baseline community (Appendix A, Map #4).

### **Rong Moo Flats**

Rong Moo Flats are also referred to as Flats 23 and 24. *Rong moo* means 'place of pigs' and the Flats are so named because they were built in the area of the Port where the slaughterhouse was located before the government closed the facility for public health reasons. In 1995, the Port Authority allowed this piece of land to be used for the construction of two five-story walk-up flats. These Flats were then used to house those evicted from other areas of the port. Around the time the buildings were completed, a fire swept through WKTN. The Port Authority told the fire victims that they could not rebuild on the original land, and that they must move into these Flats which are located approximately 3 kilometers from WKTN at Rong Moo. Approximately half of those who had lost their homes moved to the Flats and about half remained behind. The half who moved to Rong Moo served as an example of relocation into low-rise Flats in this study.

With the assistance of local NGOs, the half of the community who refused to move entered into two years of negotiations with the Port Authority. Eventually they were given permission to rebuild their homes on about half of the original land. A brief questionnaire

was also administered during this study to these people looking into why they had chosen not to move into the Flats (Appendix A, Map #4).

### **Wat Charapon**

Several years ago the Port Authority decided to reclaim land from families living in Locks 7-12 of the Klong Toey slums. Since then, over 700 families have been evicted and those who owned homes in these areas were offered small plots of land in Wat Charapon. This new community is located in the suburb area of Bang Khen about 25 km away from their original community (Appendix A, Map #3). The group of families who have accepted the land offer in Wat Charapon over the last two years served as a community which has been relocated to the outskirts of the city.

### **Jet Sip Rai**

Jet Sip Rai (70 Rai) is so named because the community is built upon 70 rai (1rai = 1600m<sup>2</sup>) of land. In 1985 the Port Authority evicted approximately 600 families from areas scattered throughout the Port area. As a result of much bargaining on the part of the community and local NGOs, these families were allowed to rebuild their homes on grid-like plots in a nearby marshy area which is now known as Jet Sip Rai (Appendix A, Map #4). This community served as the third relocated community. It is an example of relocation by landsharing.

Residents of both the Flats and Wat Charapon have been relocated since 1996 and, therefore, the effects of the relocation process are in many ways comparable. In Jet Sip Rai the relocation occurred in 1985 and this community was studied as a means of looking into future issues which may arise for those living in the Rong Moo Flats and particularly Wat Charapon.

### ***Procedure***

After it was determined which communities would be asked to participate in the survey, permission was obtained from the community leader of each area. Information

regarding community utilities and facilities located both within and around the community was obtained through interviews with the community leader and members of an elected community committee.

The questionnaires were created with the help of many people. From HDC, the Women's Group organizers, social workers, and the director all contributed ideas and constructive criticisms. Dr. Somporn of the Rama IV clinic also assisted in the formulation of questions. She has an exceptionally broad perspective on the issues facing the slum dwellers of Klong Toey. Not only has she worked as a physician in the community, but also as an activist for housing rights and in the formation of the Klong Toey Credit Union.

A preliminary questionnaire was pre-tested with the help of five members of the Women's Group living in the community. As a result of the pre-testing, several questions were modified or eliminated because they were not clear, too difficult or were interpreted in a manner not intended. The pre-testing also served as a means for the establishing the accuracy of the questionnaire's translation into Thai which was carried out by the interpreter who ultimately conducted the interviews. Extra care and time was taken to be sure that the interpreter fully understood the purpose and implications of each question. The final version of the questionnaire addresses income source, financial concerns, perceptions of physical health, psychological concerns, and views on the positive and negative aspects of the community. If the participant was from a relocated community, comparisons of their old and new communities were also included (see Appendix B).

In August 1997, the actual interviews were conducted. Households were randomly selected by a means which insured even distribution throughout the community. If members of a selected household were not available, the interview team would return at another time. If, after two attempts, a head of household or spouse was not available, the household to the immediate right would be selected. Due to time constraints the interviews in Wat Charapon were conducted on the weekend, whereas all other interviews were conducted during the week. For the communities interviewed during the week, the interview team visited both during the day and in the evening to ensure the inclusion of families where both the head of household and spouse worked during the day.

Once a household was selected they were required to meet certain criteria in order to

participate. First, the family selected has to be the owners of the house or hold the lease to the flat. Renters and subletters were not included. Secondly, the family had to have been given the land or the lease directly from the Housing Authority or Port Authority in compensation for being evicted and cannot have purchased the land or lease from another family. Finally, the family had to be willing to participate. If a selected household did not meet the criteria the next house to the right was selected.

In general, people were very willing to participate in the interviews. In WKTN and the Flats, two households refused to be interviewed. The overall participation rate of interviewees was 86.6%. In Wat Charapon only one family refused to participate, creating a participation rate of 93.3%. In Jet Sip Rai, three families declined participating and one household was disqualified because they were in the act of injecting heroin. This resulted in a participation rate of 73%. The number of renters was quite high in all communities.

Information was also obtained through interviews with employees of HDC including the director, organizers of the Women's Group, and social workers. In addition, social workers were accompanied on visits to the homes of families who are renting in the Lock 7-10 area of Klong Toey and face imminent eviction.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Whenever research is conducted in a culture different from that of the researcher, numerous limitations are inherent. Constraints specific to this study are as follows:

- Every slum and every relocation project differ from each other in their specific characteristics. Therefore, the communities studied cannot be considered representative nor can their situations be generalized.
- Due to unavoidable time constraints, the sample size is relatively small ranging from approximately 15% in WKTN and the Flats to 10% in Wat Charapon to less than 5% in Jet Sip Rai. Although the sample size restricts the ability to generalize, the random

design increases the likelihood that these results may represent the feelings of others in the community.

- Because of the time constraints, some of the information given by participants could not be followed-up in order to ensure its accuracy or provide explanations for the information. For example, when participants gave contradictory views on the comparative costs of different markets, researchers were not able to compare prices. In any case, this study is based on the assumption that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's community is a result of one's perceptions and all efforts were made to accurately portray a participant's perception of a given situation.
- The lower participation rate in Jet Sip Rai (73%) may skew these results toward those who are more satisfied and are, therefore, more willing to help with a study they see as potentially beneficial to their community.
- The interpreter assisting in this study is a Thai national who is completely fluent in both Thai and English. She grew up in Thailand and completed her A levels in England. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the University of Bath. Unfortunately, the researcher herself was not able to communicate directly with the participants.
- Participants occasionally contradicted themselves during interviews, and efforts were generally made to clarify information in these situations. Even so the interpreter felt that according to Thai culture if we were to challenge participants too much it may cause them to 'lose face.' Therefore, ambiguities were occasionally left unresolved.
- Participants were clearly informed before beginning the interview that neither their decision to take part in the interview nor their answers would in any way influence services they may receive from HDC. Even so the research team's association with this organization may have influenced participants responses.

• Because researchers did not have a previous relationship with those interviewed, some participants may not have been comfortable revealing their most serious or personal concerns. However, it was the researcher's sense that assurances of complete confidentiality and the interpreter's interpersonal skills put the participants relatively at ease and created a comfortable atmosphere. In addition, many of the participants have had positive experiences with HDC and the research team's association with the organization set the stage for some level of trust.

• Much of the information collected is presented in the form of case studies in Appendix C. This method was chosen because without the broader context of the participant's situation, the responses lose much of their meaning. On the other hand it is particularly difficult to reduce bias when presenting the information in this form. When writing the case studies all possible care was taken to use only answers which were directly given by the participants in order to paint an accurate picture of a particular family's situation. The researcher was as diligent as possible in reserving her own opinion until the discussion section.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Results and Discussion

This chapter is organized by community. A brief description of each community studied is presented including history, location, general housing type and quality, utilities, and the percentage of renters in the area. After each description follows basic demographic information on the participants, the results gathered during the interviews and a discussion. Case studies based on individual interviews are presented in Appendix C.

#### WAT KLONG TOEY NAI

##### *Description*

Wat Klong Toey Nai (WKTN) is an old community which has burnt down and been rebuilt many times over the last 50 years. The community is located on a piece of Port Authority land wedged between the Expressway and the Shell Oil Company. The benefit of this location is that it is not considered to be a particularly valuable piece of land and thus evictions are less likely. On the other hand, residents are exposed to the continuous exhaust produced by the thousands of vehicles passing daily, many of which still run on leaded gasoline. Whether or not there is a real possibility of chemical explosion from the Shell oil tanks, many residents live in fear of such an occurrence. WKTN is considered a squatter community and community members do not pay rent (Appendix A, Map #4.)

As one of the oldest and most well-established slum communities in Klong Toey, Wat Klong Toey Nai has a reputation as a place where one can buy or sell most anything. The community, which is located next to a major international port, is said to have more gambling, drugs, smuggling of black-market goods, and prostitution than any other slum in Bangkok.

Although the houses in WKTN still stand on swamps of stagnant waste water, most have been extensively upgraded over the years. Usually upgrades occur after a fire has destroyed a section of the community. Therefore, housing structure and quality vary from section to section as well as with the resources which individual families have to maintain and upgrade their homes. The quality of the houses range from an unsteady looking shacks patched together with scrap wood and corrugated metal to a carefully constructed two-story homes with a stucco outside and nicely finished walls and tile on the inside. The average or 'standard' house in WKTN is a two-story home constructed of wood with a corrugated metal roof and approximate dimensions of 6 X 4 meters. The walls can vary from a single layer of plywood to finished inner walls with wooden siding on the outside. Floors are generally wooded planks covered with a large sheet of linoleum. (see case studies in Appendix C for more detailed descriptions of the specific households interviewed).

All houses in the area have access to both piped water and electricity. Although it is difficult to get a telephone line installed anywhere in Bangkok, there are both public and private phones in WKTN. At the back of the community is an area along the railroad tracks (60 X 120 meters) which is meant to be used as open community space. However, many people use the area as a storage area or place to park their vehicles. Whenever the community has been rebuilt and upgraded after fires, the houses have been rearranged from a haphazard lay-out with many dead-ends to a grid-like pattern. As a result, the majority of families now have two routes of escape should a fire breakout. The pathways have also been upgraded from narrow wooden planks to cement walkways wide enough in most areas to provide access to non-vehicular fire equipment. In addition, the community has approximately 15 large fire extinguishers located at the center of the community and crystal balls<sup>2</sup> at the head of every *soi*<sup>3</sup>.

WKTN enjoys a central location in the heart of Bangkok's Klong Toey district. Most children in the community are able to walk to school and there is a kindergarten located within the community. The large Klong Toey market is only one kilometer away

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<sup>2</sup> a 'crystal ball' is a glass tube filled with fire retardant material; the tube is thrown into a fire with enough force to break the glass thus releasing the fire retardant

<sup>3</sup> a side street or pathway



and the community is located near a major Bangkok thoroughfare (Rama IV) on which run numerous bus lines.

Although it is not known with certainty what percentage of those living in WKTN are renters as opposed to home owners, both the community leader and social workers from the Human Development worker estimate the number to be up to 50%. Many of the houses which are rented out are owned by the mafia who divide the houses up into five or more rooms and rent each as a separate unit.

WKTN is divided into two sections, WKTN 1 and WKTN 2, each with its own community leader and committee. In December 1995, 209 houses in WKTN 1 burned down after a candle which was being used to heat drugs tipped over. Interviews for this study were conducted in the area which did not burn during this fire. It includes 160 houses.

After the fire most of the families pieced together small shacks underneath the adjacent expressway where they lived in unsanitary conditions during several years of negotiations with the Port Authority. During these negotiations, 98 of these families accepted the Port's offer allowing them to lease rooms at a subsidized rate in the Rong Moo Flats. The remaining families refused to accept this offer and after another year of negotiations were finally given permission to rebuild on two-thirds of the communities original land. Brief interviews were also conducted with these families in order to better understand their reasons for choosing not to move to the Flats.

### ***Demographic Information***

Fifteen household were randomly selected for interview. Of those participating 73.3% were women and the average age was 45 years. The average length of time which the respondents have lived in Bangkok is 37 years and only one family had migrated to Bangkok within the last 20 years. It should be recalled that only those who own their own home were eligible to participate and, therefore, renters, who tend to have migrated to the city more recently, were not included. The mean length of time which interviewees have been living in Wat Klong Toey Nai is 28 years.

The average household consists of 4.8 individuals. The mean, self-reported

household income was approximately 10,500B (25B = 1U.S. \$) per month and the average family paid 600B per month for water and electricity. Two of the families interviewed were headed by women with no adult males present in the household (see Table 6.29 for a comparison of demographics between the four communities studied).

**Results-- Part I: Community Satisfaction**

The following section discusses the participants satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of their living situation. Only the percentage satisfied is provided, but the remaining percentage have described themselves as dissatisfied with the particular factor.

**Housing Structure**

<b>WKTN</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>
QUALITY OF HOUSE	100
SIZE OF HOUSE	73.3
BATHING FACILITIES	73.3
TOILET FACILITIES	73.3
KITCHEN FACILITIES	60

**Chart 6.1 WKTN**

The majority of those living in Wat Klong Toey Nai are satisfied with the basic construction and size of their homes. These homes have been improved over the years through a series of upgrades generally occurring after fires have wiped out a section of the community. With regard to bathing, toilet and kitchen facilities those dissatisfied were generally unhappy with the available space as opposed to quality. Dissatisfaction with kitchen size was not related to whether or not the kitchen was used as a place to prepare food to be sold.

## Community Infrastructure

WKTN	% SATISFIED
WATER SUPPLY	60
DRAINAGE	53.3
PATHWAYS	100
FIRE PROTECTION	80

*Chart 6.2 WKTN*

All of the families interviewed were satisfied with the quality and cleanliness of their tap water, but, like the majority of those living in Bangkok, 66.6% either filtered the tap water before drinking or drank only bottled water. About one third of families drink the tap water after boiling or letting it settle in large clay jars for several day. Most of these families could not afford to purchase a water filter or bottled water.

Those who reported dissatisfaction with their water supply were unhappy with the water pressure. At least once a week no water comes out of the tap during the day. Several families filled jars in the evenings for use during the days when water was not available. One respondent pointed out that although she owned a filter in order to give her family clean water to drink, she often was not able to use it because of the low pressure. The problem tended to increase during the months of March to May and several families felt that the problem was exacerbated after the most recent fire in the other half of WKTN.

Over half of the families were satisfied with the drainage system in WKTN. Because the community is built on a swampy, unfilled piece of land, the drainage system is often inadequate to deal with the rainy season. Most respondents said that serious flooding only occurred about every five years when the country experiences a heavy monsoon season. But one family, whose house was built lower than most, was very dissatisfied because nearly every year when it rained hard some water came into his house. "There is waste water under our houses" he said, "and if it rains a lot the water rises up ankle high on some pathways and up to your knees in other places." Another respondents complained:

“there are snakes under my house and when it rains a lot the pathway floods and the snakes come out onto the pathway.”

Several people blamed the problem not only on the high water table and the already saturated nature of the land on which their community rests, but on the fact that there was often rubbish blocking the drains and thus preventing them from taking away the rain water as it falls. One respondent stated, “The drains are fine, its the rubbish in them that really annoys me...I have to clear it out everyday to prevent flooding near my house.” Another woman added, “The problem is getting worse and worse...the drains are now blocked more often and have more rubbish in them.”

Everyone interviewed was satisfied with the pathways in WKTN. Local politicians recently provided the community with funds in order to upgrade the pathway from wooden planks to “nice cement pathways which are a lot better than before...now they are smoother and safer.” There were still a few areas where the pathway narrows down to a dead end and one respondent who lived at the end of such a pathway wished that they could be wider so that fire equipment could have access to her house.

The majority (80%) of those interviewed in WKTN were satisfied with the fire protection in the community. These individuals were pleased with the number of fire extinguishers located at the center of the community. They appreciated the fact that these extinguishers along with two fire hoses and a battery powered pump are checked weekly by the community leaders and nearly every week the committee members teach people what to do in case of a fire. In addition, they felt comfortable in the knowledge that there is a crystal ball at the head of every soi. But one family pointed out that even though they were satisfied with what the community has done to protect itself, they certainly did not feel 100% safe. Whenever the community has been upgraded or rebuilt after a fire, attempts have been made to arrange the new plots to allow for pathways which are wide enough to allow access to fire equipment. In the areas where upgrades have not occurred recently or such an arrangement was not possible, there are several families who could be trapped on a dead-end soi with their only exit blocked by fire.

A respondent who was not satisfied with the level of fire protection in the community stated that “there should be more extinguishers and we need to have a more

modern means of fire protection...there is not enough equipment if there is another big fire.” Another mentioned that the community needs to have fire hydrants “like the ones that WKTN 2 got after the big fire in 1987.”

### **Rubbish and Pests**

<b>WKTN</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>
RUBBISH DISPOSAL	66.6
RUBBISH AROUND COMMUNITY	33.3
CONTROL OF RODENTS	20
CONTROL OF MOSQUITOS	13.3

*Chart 6.3 WKTN*

The majority of families in WKTN are satisfied with the actual rubbish collection system. They paid 20B per month and rubbish collectors from the district office come by to pick it up. One respondent felt that if they came more often then there would be less rubbish around the community. One particularly financially strained family complained “we can’t afford the 20B so I have to carry all of our rubbish to the central bin and I am not satisfied with this.” Most feelings of dissatisfaction were related to the fact that “although there is a proper place to put rubbish most people don’t use it and instead just throw their garbage anywhere especially into the waste water under the houses.” One respondent attributed this to “people are just being lazy” and another noted that “since the fire people in this area have to walk further to dispose of their rubbish and this has lead to more litter being strewn around the community.”

Even when satisfied with the system of rubbish collection, few people were satisfied with the amount of rubbish around the community. The majority of shops and restaurants are located at the edge of the community near the railroad tracks. Those houses located near this area were always dissatisfied with the rubbish that accumulates as a result of the heavy flow of people visiting these establishments and purchasing products in the

ubiquitous plastic bag. Those respondents who were satisfied with the amount of rubbish around the community usually specified that they were satisfied with the cleanliness of their particular soi because “everyone on this soi helps to keep the area clean.” Conversely, those who were dissatisfied with the cleanliness of their soi tended to be less unified with their neighbors either blaming the problem on the renters living in the area or the fact that “people living around me do not help to clean up in front of their houses.” One respondent complained during the interview that “people don’t dispose of garbage properly...they often throw their rubbish into the water across from my house.” But at the end of the interview the same woman dropped some fruit peels onto the pathways and kicked them into this same water. There does not appear to be a strong connection between one’s actions regarding littering and the result. Most likely related is the fact that several families mentioned that they had made attempts in the past to keep the area clean, but other people continued to throw their rubbish everywhere so they gave up.

Eighty percent of families were dissatisfied with the numbers of rats in the community. One woman who felt that the situation was satisfactory believed that it just depends on how clean you keep your house and another woman complained that she had to be sure that all of the dishes were clean every night before she went to bed or the rats would come. Another participant worries that “if you fall asleep near the wall, small rodents will come and bite you between the boards.” Several respondents volunteered that cockroaches are even more common. One man whose home appeared to be very clean said in frustration that “of all the houses in WKTN, I think that the cockroaches have chosen mine as their favorite.”

Only two families felt that the mosquitoes in the area were not a problem. One of those satisfied said that “as long as you have screens its okay.” But the majority of people in WKTN do not have screens and mosquitoes are a huge problem because as one man pointed out “there is always water under my house...this is not a drainage problem, but the house is built over water.” Several participants noted that although people have come in the past to spray chemicals in order to kill mosquitoes, they did not believe that it was done properly because the mosquitoes never seem to die.

## Pollution

This section includes air pollution, dust, and smells around the community. Noise pollution in the Klong Toey area is quite high, but when participants were asked about the noise in their community most responses were focused on the social environment. As a result, the discussion of noise issues, both environmental and social will be included below under social environment.

WKTN	% SATISFIED
AIR POLLUTION	66.6
DUST AROUND COMMUNITY	40
SMELL AROUND COMMUNITY	80

*Chart 6.4 WKTN*

Those interviewed in WKTN felt that dust around the community was a larger problem than air pollution. This is likely due to the fact that the dust was a more tangible problem. Some of the dust problem as well as air pollution was attributed to traffic both on the nearby expressway and motorcycle traffic on the main road running through the community. Others saw the problem as having a seasonal pattern with increasing dust during the dry season. One respondent recalled that after the last fire in WKTN the dust was extremely bad for many weeks afterwards. One respondent blamed her inconsiderate neighbors for her lack of clean air. "The house opposite us has an air-conditioner which blows out bad air all day long...they are rich and selfish and I can't say anything to them." Another participant who was more satisfied with the air quality near his house said, "I like that my house is located in the center of WKTN because here I am not next to any of those [nearby] factories."

Although nearly everyone mentioned some aspect of the community that smelled bad at least occasionally, only three families interviewed were disturbed enough by the problem to consider themselves dissatisfied. One man worries that his children may be harmed by the chemical odors he noticed coming from the nearby Shell petrol facility since they have to walk past it everyday as they go to school. The other two families lived in

areas where the waste water under the houses was particularly full of rubbish and nearly always emitted a bad odor. One woman noted that “the only time it smells in my area is when my neighbors get drunk...then the whole area stinks of spirits.”

### Local Infrastructure

WKTN	% SATISFIED
EDUCATION FACILITIES	100
JOB OPPORTUNITIES	100
TRANSPORTATION COSTS	100
MARKET/FOOD BUYING	100

*Chart 6.5 WKTN*

A major benefit of living in WKTN is the convenience of the location in terms of local infrastructure. Everyone interviewed in WKTN was quite satisfied with the local market, education facilities, job opportunities, and transportation costs. There are numerous schools nearby many of which are within walking distance. These include a kindergarten located in the center of the community which run by the Human Development Center.

The location of WKTN allows for many job opportunities both within the port and at other local businesses. The fact that the average family has been living in WKTN for 28 years also means that those who vend food or do casual labor have been able to build up a large clientele.

Several main bus lines pass very close to the community allowing people to go most places they need to go for only one bus fare. This includes the local Klong Toey market which is known for being one of the least expensive and largest markets in Bangkok. In addition, people occasionally drive through the community selling fruits, vegetables and other wares.



## Social Environment

WKTN	% SATISFIED
COMMUNITY NOISE LEVEL	60
COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS	80

*Chart 6.6 WKTN*

Out of the fifteen households interviewed nine of them were satisfied with the level of noise around WKTN. It should be noted that all nine of the satisfied respondents qualified their satisfaction as being 'in general' and all pointed out that on occasion they do find the noise level to be annoying. These disturbing noises fall into two categories: about half were annoyed by noises from traffic in and around the community and the other half were disturbed by noises being made by their neighbors.

A similar ratio holds for the six respondents who were dissatisfied with the level of noise in the community. Three disliked either the constant noise of traffic coming from the expressway or the sounds of cars and motorcycles moving in and out of WKTN at all hours of the day and night. The other three dissatisfied participants were bothered by the noises made by their neighbors. "Several times per week some of my neighbors get drunk and play loud music and sing and shout until very late," one woman complained. Another pointed out that, "sometimes people play their radios too loudly and babies cry, but there is nothing you can do about it, so I should just be satisfied, but I'm not."

The majority of those interviewed (80%) stated that they were satisfied with their sense of community togetherness, but this was generally not said with a lot of enthusiasm. Comments were qualified with statements such as "I am satisfied with my friends, but about the others I am dissatisfied", "its okay but its not very good", "its 70% good but not as good as before with the old community leader...he was 100% good" and "my neighbors help with the small stuff, but if a big fire came I know that no one would help."

In general, the community's sense of togetherness seems to be connected to a sense of how well the community leader is able to bring the community together. One woman who is happy with the situation noted that "when something needs to be done [in the

community] the community leader speaks through the loud speaker and asks everyone for help...people usually help.” A man who was not happy with the situation also attributed his dissatisfaction to the community leader. “The community has split into two different groups, those who like the community leader and those who don’t...there is a lot of political posturing.”

Another aspect of the social environment is one’s sense of safety within that environment. Responses to questions regarding violence in the community, sense of safety when walking alone at night, and fear of burglary are recorded in the following chart.

<b>WKTN</b>	<b>% YES</b>	<b>% NO</b>
Do you worry about violence in this community?	53.3	46.6
Do you fear walking around this community alone at night?	26.6	73.3
Do you worry that someone may break into your house?	60	40

*Chart 6.7 WKTN*

Although only slightly over half of those interviewed reported worrying about violence in their community, everyone reported that there was violence in the community. One woman summed up the main types of violence discussed during the interviews with the comment, “in WKTN there is both fighting<sup>4</sup> within families and youth fighting...sometimes youth from other areas come in and there are fist fights and knife fights by the railroad tracks.”

It is important to note that six of the fifteen respondents mentioned domestic violence as a problem within their community even though no specific reference was made to this particular form of violence by the interviewer. This implies that violence within families is a serious problem in this community and one which must be further addressed.

Although 53% of participants worried about violence in their community, only 26.6% felt unsafe walking through the community alone at night. This implies that

<sup>4</sup> for translation purposes the word ‘fighting’ was used to imply physical violence whereas the word ‘arguing’ is in reference to verbal exchanges

although they worried about violence as a social problem, they did not fear that it would be directed towards them. The main fear of the 26.6% who would not feel safe walking alone in the community at night was the fear of being mugged. The 73.3% who reported feeling safe walking at night explained their lack of fear as a result of “being used to the place” and knowing many people.

Several families mentioned that they do not lock their doors and nothing bad has ever happened. One woman expressed the general sentiment of the 60% who worry that their homes will be broken into when she said, “I worry a little bit because these days a lot of new people who I don’t know have come to WKTN to rent... I can’t trust like I used to.” Another man stated, “Of course I worry, I live in a slum and many new people from different places are always coming in and out.”

### ***Results--Part II: Well-Being of Family***

The following cases are presented in order to provide a more integrated view of how families who were interviewed in WKTN feel about their current living situation. The cases are based on interviews with four of the fifteen respondents who participated in the study. These particular cases were chosen in an attempt to represent some of the differing opinions expressed during the interviews. The responses of all fifteen participants will be considered in the discussion which follows the case studies.<sup>5</sup> The discussion will include financial issues, physical health concerns, psychological concerns and overall satisfaction with the community.

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#### **WKTN CASE STUDY #1**

Khun A is 43 years old and has lived in WKTN his entire life. He lives with his wife, his brother and his sister in a somewhat worn, but well put together standard home. The lower half of the house has been painted with designs and scenes of a woman in a jungle. The upper level has a balcony and many plants decorate both the upper and lower levels. The space between the pathway and their house has been covered with cement, but

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<sup>5</sup> case studies for all participants can be found in Appendix C

underneath their house is waste water which emits a mild, unpleasant odor.

Khun A pays 120B per year for an identity card which allows him to enter the Port Authority dock area where he works. Unlike many port laborers who are hired on a part-time basis, Khun A works a steady five days per week unloading cargo for a private company and earns about 3,400B per month. His wife does odd jobs around the neighborhood or if extra help is needed at the docks, Khun A can get her access to the port on his ID card. He says that his brother contributes very little financially to the household because he is "drunk all day, everyday." His sister works in the food court at a department store and commutes bus for 3.5B each way unless it is late in which case she takes a motorcycle for 40B. Khun A has no savings and occasionally has to take a loan from a money lender at 20% interest in order to pay the family's bills. He also has a few friends in WKTN from whom he can sometimes borrow 200-300B without interest.

Khun A does not worry much about his family's health. His only health concern is a work-related problem. He notes "when I carry certain bags of fertilizer or chemicals I get a severe rash and swelling on my hands especially if there is a cut...this makes it very hard for the wound to heal."

Khun A says that he is happy living in WKTN and believes that "it depends on the person, if you make yourself happy, you are happy." His greatest fear is that there will be a fire in the community because "you never know when a fire will happen." He feels that his family's biggest problem is a financial one and regrets that his job is not better paid. Sometimes he worries about not having enough money and feels irritable. He quietly admits that "when I am irritable I may be bad and even hit my wife."

Khun A feels *sabaijai*<sup>6</sup> when there is peace in his house with no arguing (verbal) or fighting (physical). What makes him *mai sabaijai* is that the cost of food and other basic needs are becoming more and more expensive. When he is feeling stressed he "just sits and does nothing, and it will go away...nothing you can do about it." He finds it easy to relax in WKTN because it is "quiet and peaceful."

Khun A feels that the best aspect of living in WKTN is that everything is convenient and near his workplace. He has no complaints about the community because he "is used to everything here." Khun A feels that the biggest social problem of the community is the heavy use of drugs, but notes that on his *soi* there is very little drug use. Khun A generally does not like the idea of living in a Flat because they make him feel like he "is living in a cave." Even so if he was given an opportunity to move to a flat he would like to take a look and if he liked it he would go as long as it was close enough to the port that he could still ride his bicycle to work. He would not like to go to Wat Charapon because it is too far.

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<sup>6</sup> *sabaijai* means 'comfortable at heart' and refers to a sense of contentment; *mai sabaijai* is the opposite meaning 'not comfortable at heart' or discontented

## WKTN CASE STUDY #2

Khun B is 37 years-old and was born in WKTN. She lives with her husband and two of her children in a two-story house that is well-kept but constructed almost entirely of scrap wood including the table and chairs. Many of the houses in this area of WKTN are shack-like and are located adjacent to the railroad and interstate. As a result there is a lot more noise from the traffic than in other parts of the community. In the space between Khun B's house and the railroad tracks, there were many people selling food or hanging out and numerous young men could be seen using drugs. This was the only family interviewed, in any of the four communities, who did not own a functional television.

Khun B and her family survive on a relatively meager income. Her husband is the sole provider and works as a day laborer in the port. Neither she nor her 20 year-old son are employed and her older son is in prison. Her youngest daughter attends the local government primary school and is able to walk to school.

The family is not able to save any money and have to borrow between 500-1000B per month from a money lender at 20% interest in order to pay for their basic expenses. They pay off the interest every day, but are never able to decrease the balance.

Khun B's only health concerns revolve around her daughter, whose "legs swell up sometimes for no reason....she coughs a lot and cannot see properly." When her daughter is seriously ill, Khun B takes her to Chulalongkorn Hospital and she is satisfied with the service, but feels that it is too expensive. After the last fire in WKTN the social service department came and gave free social medical cards to 'poor people' which entitled the family to free medical services, but the card only lasted five years and has now expired.

Khun B's biggest worry at the moment is that her family will not have enough money for their basic needs. Her husband works hard but is not paid well. She often feels anxious, worried, irritated and depressed. There is nothing in her life which makes her feel particularly *sabaijai* and she finds the beginning of each school term to be particularly stressful because she has to buy her daughter new stationary, uniforms and pay school fees. She finds that the breeze which blows at the back of her house helps her to relax.

Overall, Khun B is happy living in WKTN because of its convenient location. She believes that the biggest social problem in WKTN is the heavy use of drugs.

Khun B would not like to move to a Flat because "I would not own it and, therefore, I would not have the freedom to do what I wanted with it." She would not like to go to Wat Charapon even if given free land because she would still have to take a loan in order to build a house and she could not afford that.

## WKTN CASE STUDY #3

Khun C has lived in WKTN for the last 37 years ever since his family came to Bangkok from a rural area in the Central region. He lives with his three sons, daughter-in-law, two grandchildren and his wife in an older, but sturdy two-story house. The front of their house has a small covered cement patio decorated with plants. Khun C's house is very neat and clean, but front door looks out at a swampy rubbish heap which has formed underneath his neighbors's house.

Khun C is retired but he sometimes helps his wife with the housework. He receives a 4000B per month pension and his children also contribute to the household finances. Three of his children are formal employed and commute to work on the bus for 3.5B each way. His other son is in prison for a drug related crime. His youngest grandchild walks to the local primary school and the older granddaughter takes the local bus to a government secondary school. The mother of these children 'ran away' from the family several years ago. The family has no savings, but Khun C never has to take loans. If he needs extra money one of his children always helps out. Khun C does not worry about his family's health because they are generally well. He is one of the very few men we interviewed who does not smoke.

Khun C is not happy living in WKTN. He blames his son's drug problem and imprisonment on the bad influences of the neighborhood. He states "I do not feel comfortable here because people here are not good." His greatest fear is the risk of fire and he also worries about the current downswing in the economy. He worries that the family's income will decline as taxes and living expenses increase and that there will not be enough money for his granddaughters to finish their education.

The only time Khun C feels *sabaijai* is when he stays in his own house and does not think about all of the communities problems. He sometimes feels annoyed when the neighborhood children make a lot of noise and when this happens he goes to play chess with friends. Khun C used to enjoy the open space near the railroad tracks which was at that time used as a space for children to play and for older people to exercise. Unfortunately, now many people park their vehicles there and because the community does not own the land there is nothing they can do to make these people park elsewhere.

Khun C feels very strongly that drugs are the biggest social problem in this community and wishes that he had been able to raise his children somewhere else so that his son would not be in prison. If he was offered a piece of land in Wat Charapon he would very much like to move there because it would be very nice to own his own land. He is less interested in an opportunity to live in a flat because it would be too small for his family, but he says if he was evicted he would go because he "has been invading the Port Authority's land for a long time and it is not right to do so."

## WKTN CASE STUDY #4

Khun D is 71 years old and has lived in WKTN for over 40 years. She currently shares her home with her son, his wife and the two young children of her older son who died several years ago. Their home is a standard two-story constructed mostly of plywood. Like many of the houses on this *soi*, the family has decorated their small front porch with large ceramic tiles. Some of her neighbors have created colorful patterns with the tiles and the *soi* has a sense of pride about it. Khun D's house has a comfortable, grandmotherly feeling with numerous plants and impeccable cleanliness. The voices of young children reciting their lessons can be heard from the nearby kindergarten.

Khun D's son is a motorcycle messenger and his wife a typist for the same private company. They ride to work together on their motorcycle. Together they earn a comfortable salary of 10,000B, but they do not have any savings because they are still paying off the cost of the motorcycle. The family never has to take loans in order to meet their monthly payments.

The only time Khun D worries about her family's health is during the rainy season when she fears that her children or grandchildren will get the flu because they have to either walk to school or ride to work in the rain. She herself is often ill, but she feels this is normal for someone her age.

Khun D often worries when her son and daughter-in-law are late returning from work because she fears that they may have been in a motorcycle accident. She considers her biggest problem at the moment to be the fact that "I am sick and cannot help me family earn extra money....it bothers me that she I have to rely on my son." She often does not sleep well because she worries about her expenses. As a result she sometimes feels depressed because "it is not normal for old people to think too much and worry about being old, but I do."

Watching television makes her feel *sabaijai* because it helps her to forget her problems. She finds it easy to relax in WKTN because it is "quiet and peaceful and the noise does not begin until after school, but that is okay." Khun D is very happy living in WKTN. She has been living here a long time and appreciates its convenient location. "It is near the market, the bus stops, everything and my son can stop by the house whenever he is free...you can get food 24 hours a day....Nobody at WKTN wants to leave because everybody is happy here. Its near the temple and if you are poor you can ask for food and the monks will give you nice food, soap, toothbrushes and other things."

Khun D would not like to move to the Flats and explains "I am too old to walk up all of those stairs and I thinks it would be more noisy." As for Wat Charapon she would not like to live there either because it is too far and it would be inconvenient for her son and daughter-in-law to get to there jobs. They have "good jobs and good pay with health insurance; if they went to Wat Charapon they would not be able to get to work on time."

## **Financial Situation**

Of the families interviewed in WKTN, 60% reported feeling worried, anxious or depressed as a result of financial problems (see Chart 6.32 for a comparison of communities). 100% of participants were satisfied with the job opportunities available in and around their community. Khun B and Khun C expressed the views of many when they blamed their worries on the worsening economy and not on their living situation. Khun B mentioned that he feels *mai sabai jai* because the cost of food and other basic needs has become more and more expensive. Khun C worried that the family's income will decline as living expenses and taxes increase, and the result will be not enough money for his granddaughters to finish their education.

The other major financial problem is the issue of indebtedness. Khun B's family was the lowest income family interviewed in WKTN at 3000B per month. Her husband was the only wage-earner in the family. He worked very hard but is not well paid and the family must borrow 500-1000B at 20% interest per month from a money lender. She stated "we just pay everyday, but are never able to decrease the balance." The viscous cycle of indebtedness does not only affect the poorest families. Another family of a similar size earns 11,000B per month but still has to borrow up to 3000B at 10% in order to buy the food which they prepare for selling by the railroad tracks. Several other families also mentioned loans and indebtedness as major problems (Case #8, Case #15).

Of the 40% respondents who did not report concerns of financial insecurity, several reported savings of several thousand baht per month. One such woman appeared disgusted with other people's extravagances and stated that, "people need to save their money and not spend it like water." Another participant, whose family does not have a monthly savings, stated that a benefit of living in WKTN is that "I can get credit from the shops if I need to ...I have lived here a long time so people trust me and I don't have to pay interest" (Case #12). Were she to leave WKTN and this 'security net,' she too could quickly fall into the too often endless cycle of indebtedness.

## **Physical Health**

Respondents were asked if they felt that their families were ill more, less or the



same amount as people living elsewhere. Nine of the fifteen participants felt that their families were ill the same as others and five felt they were ill less often. Only one respondent felt that his family was ill more often than the average Thai family. He suffered from diabetes and had recently had a stroke, while his wife had severe high blood pressure.

With children most families worried about colds during the rainy season which they attribute to walking to school in the rain, but one woman reported that her infant daughter had increased skin rashes for several weeks after the last fire. Older adults tended to suffer from diseases which are commonly found in older people everywhere such as diabetes, thyroid problems and high blood pressure.

Although no one mentioned lower respiratory problems or asthma as actual health problems in their families, many worried about the effects of pollution on members of their families. For example, Khun C worried that his son breaths in too much polluted air in his job as a motorcycle messenger and fears that this will lead to health problems. This is a common concern and another respondents expressed his worries about his daughter and niece breathing polluted air as they go to school. His daughter spent a lot of time sitting on the bus in traffic and his niece had to walk by the Shell Oil facility where he fears she will breath toxic fumes (Case #15). Khun A mentions his work related health problem and states "when I carry certain bags of fertilizer or chemicals I gets a severe rash and swelling on my hands especially if there is a cut...this makes it very hard for the wound to heal."

Everyone interviewed in WKTN was satisfied with both the distance to and the quality of the health facilities available to them. But most wished to avoid the cost of seeing the doctor if possible and the majority mentioned that unless they feel the problem is very serious, they usually self-medicate with drugs purchased from the chemist.

It is possible for a family (up to five people) to purchase a medical card from the Social Services Department for 500B which entitles them to free health care and medicines. In order to apply for such a card a family must have a house registration. None of the fifteen participants currently had such a card. The reasons were varied and included not knowing about them, not being able to afford the 500B fee, not feeling it is worth the expense because the family is generally healthy, and having some degree of health insurance from a formal sector job. Several people also mentioned that the card is

inconvenient it requires that you go to a clinic first before you can be seen at the hospital resulting in having to wait, sometimes all day, twice. Two of the most financially insecure families had received a similar card for the impoverished from the Social Services department after the last fire in their area. The one respondent who felt his family was less healthy than the average Thai family referred to bureaucratic problems making it difficult to obtain the card. He mentioned that they are only available every three months from the district office and he complained that everytime he has gone to the office it had already closed. He hoped that his friend who was running for local office would be elected because then he is sure that he would be able to obtain his family's card. Several others mentioned that it is logistically difficult to get to the office because they have jobs or children to watch.

When asked how they might improve the health of their family, many people stated that although they would like better health, they did not know what could be done to make it better. Others mentioned that you should buy medicine early so that small problems do not become large problems. Many felt that they would be more healthy if they got more exercise and thought that a way to improve the community's overall health would be to have a small park area where adults could walk and do exercises and where children could play. Others felt that the community would be more healthy if "people were more clean and did not throw their rubbish everywhere."

### **Psychological Concerns**

Most people's major worries revolved around financial concerns and family safety. The financial worries of several families were discussed above. In addition, Khun A admitted how his irritability from financial insecurity has at times caused him to "be bad and even hit my wife." Another respondent spoke to the psychological effect of poverty in general when he reports that he feels depressed when "I think too much about things I shouldn't think about like getting old and having been born a poor person so that I cannot get the things I want." Khun B mentioned that she often feels anxious, worried, irritated and depressed about her family's financial problems. She finds the beginning of each school term to be particularly stressful because she has to buy her daughter new stationary, uniforms and pay school fees.

When asked what they most feared happening to their family, the majority discussed traffic accidents, especially those whose relatives take motorcycles to their destinations or are employed as taxi drivers or truck drivers. They felt that Bangkok was not a safe city for driving. Nearly all respondents mentioned their fear of fire because, as Khun A said, “you never know when it will happen.”

Respondents, especially those with teenage boys, often worried about their children becoming involved with drugs. Khun C blamed his son’s drug problems and imprisonment on the bad influences of the neighborhood. Another woman worried about “the future of young people in the community because everyday more people are using heroin and amphetamines.” She has lived in the community a long time and cares about many of the children living here as if they were her nieces and nephews. One respondent said sadly, “my son seems to care more about his friends than his family and I fear that these friends might influence him to take drugs.” One man noted that “I find it very difficult to relax in WKTN because I am constantly worrying that my children will become involved in drugs and I always fear fire” (Khun C, case study #9, #12, #15). One woman expressed the concerns of several participants with smaller children when she spoke of her fear that her three year-old would be hit by a car while he is playing. She understood that the area near the railroad tracks is supposed to be an open space for playing or walking, but many cars use this area as a short cut to the back of the neighborhood. It is notable that no one mentioned eviction as something which they fear happening to their family. One respondent who is related to the community leader stated that “the community leader and everyone related to him has to look after themselves because there is a lot of mafia pressure on him.”

When asked what could be done to make it more easy for them to relax in their community, slightly over half said that it was already easy for them to relax in this community because it is peaceful and quiet. Noise level tends to vary by area within WKTN, and several others suggested that it would be easier to relax if the neighborhood were more quiet. A few participants felt that a park area where people could go to sit or exercise would make it more easy to relax in WKTN.

## **Overall Satisfaction with Community**

When participants were asked if they were happy living in WKTN, 86.6% responded positively. The most common reasons given were the convenient location and “because we are used to it here.” The two respondents who are unhappy in the community both gave the major reason for this as being the influence of drugs in the community on their children. Everyone interviewed believed that drug use (heroin, amphetamines and glue sniffing) was the communities greatest social problem. One respondent said “a lot of people come with posters saying ‘you will die or you will be arrested,’ but it doesn’t work...people are still using every night.”

Respondents were asked to make suggestions about ways to improve their community. Four respondents stated that they thought the community was already good. A playground and park area for playing or sitting was suggested by several participants. Others wanted better fire protection and for the police and community leader to take stronger action against drug dealers. One woman commented “everybody talks about it, but nobody takes action.” One respondent noted that “ever since this new community leader started about two years ago, everything has gone downhill...there are more drugs and less community togetherness.”

Participants were asked if they would like to live in a flat or own a piece of land in Wat Charapon. Prior to the interview it was expected that the community members would give a resounding ‘No’, but responses turned out to be quite varied and was occasionally ‘Yes.’ Four participants said that they would agree to move to a flat, but the reasons were all different. For example, Khun C said that he was less interested in an opportunity to live in a flat than he was in owning land in Wat Charapon because it would be too small for his family, but he said that if he was evicted he would go because he “has been invading the Port Authority’s land for a long time and it is not right to do so.” Someone else said that as long as there was a place for her to vend food she would like to go. A third felt that if the whole community was evicted she would not mind a flat as long as all of her neighbors went as well. The fourth said he would like to go to the flats because “I just want to get my children out of WKTN so that they don’t see drugs everyday.” Two respondents answered that they would possibly like to go and nine would not. Those who did not want to move to

a flat sited reasons such as lack of freedom since they would not be the owner, not wanting to leave WKTN because of its convenient location, or that they would be too small. Khun D makes the point that it would be difficult for elderly people or those with disabilities to live in a flat because of all the stairs and no lift.

Even more surprising were the number of positive responses to the idea of moving to Wat Charapon. Eight of the fifteen respondents said that they would like to move there. One woman included the caveat that her relatives in another house would also be given a piece of land. The others all gave there reason as really wanting to be a landowner. The majority of those who did not want to go to Wat Charapon felt that it was too far from their jobs or they did not want to take a loan.

It should be recognized that these answers were given relatively spontaneously and community members may not have fully considered the problems associated with living in Wat Charapon, but their answers demonstrate that the idea of owning land on the fringe of Bangkok is at least in some cases considered an attractive option.

## RONG MOO FLATS

### *Description*

The Rong Moo Flats (Slaughterhouse Flats) were built in 1995 on Port Authority land in an area which previously held the warehouses and cattle pens for a now defunct slaughterhouse (Appendix A, Map #4). The Port Authority allowed their land to be used with the understanding that the Flats would be used to house those families which the Port wishes to evict from other areas. Such a situation occurred after the December 1995 fire in WKTN 1. As mentioned in the discussion on WKTN, 98 of the 209 families who lost their home in this fire accepted the Port Authorities offer of a subsidized lease in the Rong Moo Flats. The lease guaranteed that the family would have the right to stay in their flat for an indefinite amount of time. The rent at the time of the interview was 300B per month which is well below the market value. Although not allowed by the Housing Authority agreement, it is estimated that approximately 20% of families sublet their apartments for as much as 2,500B per month. It is also possible to sell the right to a Flat for up to 150,000B, and it is thought that the mafia is also becoming a major 'sub-landlord' for many of the flats. For this study only those families who were given a Flat directly from the Port Authority after their home burned down in WKTN were included.

The Rong Moo Flats (Flat 23 and 24) consist of two five-story cement block buildings with 215 rooms per building. There is a parking lot between the two buildings. Flat number 24 is completely full and Flat number 23 still has 160 vacant rooms. Each flat measures 6 X 4 meters and includes a small kitchen with a sink and tiled bathroom with toilet, shower and sink. The back of the kitchen is open to the outside for ventilation and most families have covered this window-like space with bars from which they can hang their laundry. The majority of families have paid extra to have a loft, bars and screens installed in their flats. The additional cost for all three items is 16,000B and 6000B for only the bars and screens. Each flat also has two slatted glass windows which face out into the hallway. The hallways are approximately one meter wide and are open at both ends and have openings at two points along the hallway for both ventilation and increased light. Several of the floors have gotten together and decorated the open areas with plants.

Each flat has its own water and electric meter. There are both public and private telephone lines coming into the flats. There are fire hoses located by all three stairways on every level, but the buildings do not have fire alarms. The Housing Authority does not allow television aerials to be placed on top of the Flat buildings because they feel that it does not look nice. The Housing Authority is responsible for the general upkeep of the area and has hired a cleaner to maintain the parking lot and stairwells. The upkeep of the hallways is up to the tenants. Between the two Flat buildings is a parking lot. This space is considered 'community space' but most residents do not feel it is a safe area for children to play.

On the first and second floors many families use the front portion of their flat as a space for small business activity. There are numerous convenience shops, hair salons, tailors, and several grocery shops including one on the second floor which sells fresh fruits and vegetables.

Although the Flats are located only about five kilometers from WKTN, access to local services is quite different. Because the Rong Moo Flats are located at the end of a dead end road which previously lead to the slaughterhouse, there is very little passing traffic and thus very little available public transport. Community members can walk approximately one kilometer to a more main road, but only one bus line passes along this route and thus long waits and transfers are inevitable.

### ***Demographic Information***

Of the fifteen participants living in the Rong Moo Flats who were randomly selected for interview, 73.3% were women and the average age was 40 years-old. The average number of years that the respondents have lived in Bangkok is 32 years and three families had moved to Bangkok within the last 20 years. Prior to relocation, those interviewed had been living in Wat Klong Toey Nai for an average of 26 years. The mean length of time since these families have relocated to the Flats is one year.

The average household size was 4.6 members and the average self-reported household income was 11,500B per month. The mean cost of utilities for those interviewed was approximately 560B per month which is an increase of approximately 130B per month

as a result of relocation (see Chart 6.29). In addition, families also pay 300B per month rent compared to none previously. Three of the families interviewed were headed by females, but in all three cases an adult son was present in the home.

**Results-- Part I: Community Satisfaction**

The following section discusses the participants satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of their living situation in the Rong Moo Flats. Only the percentage satisfied is provided, but the remaining percentage have described themselves as dissatisfied with the particular factor. Also included is whether the respondent feels that the aspect is better or worse than in their previous community. Since many respondents felt that a particular factor was the same in their old and new communities, the combined total of the percentage of better and worse responses does not total 100%. The remainder found their satisfaction with the factor to be the same in both their old and new communities.

**Housing Structure**

<b>FLATS</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
QUALITY OF HOUSE	100	86.6	6.6
SIZE OF HOUSE	86.6	26.6	66.6
BATHING FACILITIES	100	93.3	0
TOILET FACILITIES	100	93.3	0
KITCHEN FACILITIES	80	80	13.3

*Chart 6.8 Flats*

Everyone interviewed was satisfied with the quality of their house, but several participants complained that the paint used to white wash the cement block walls was water-based and comes off when the walls were washed. Many families had repainted the walls at their own expense and were disappointed because they had assumed that one of the



benefits of renting would be not having to spend any money on home repair.

Although many participants stated that their previous home had been larger, the majority were satisfied with the size of the Flats. The two families who complained about size had an above average number of household members, and yet three families with more family members were satisfied. A family's satisfaction with the size of their flat is determined by many factors beyond the number of household members including ages of family members, members need for privacy, communication skills and more. One participant who was dissatisfied with size of their flat stated that although dissatisfied "its not all that bad because the only time everyone is there is when we are sleeping." Another was satisfied with the size now that her children were under 10 years of age, but worried that as they became older, the place would become too small.

Regarding bath, toilet and kitchen facilities nearly everyone stated that the quality was superior to their previous home and the only complaints were with the size of the kitchen. The kitchen was the only place for hanging clothes to dry and several women who earned a living by doing wash for other families were thus dissatisfied with the size. Another woman who vended food for a living found the kitchen did not provide adequate space for this income-generating activity. Overall, the majority of families appreciated the superior quality, cleanliness and ventilation of their new kitchens.

### Community Infrastructure

FLATS	% SATISFIED	% BETTER	% WORSE
WATER SUPPLY	100	86.6	0
DRAINAGE	100	100	0
PATHWAYS	100	100	0
FIRE PROTECTION	80	93.3	6.6

*Chart 6.9 Flats*

All of the respondents living in the Flats were satisfied with their water supply. Ten of the fifteen families used water filters for drinking water and two drank bottled water.

The remaining three families boil the tap water before drinking. The teenage daughter of one respondent pointed out that “we mostly just drink Pepsi anyway so we don’t have to boil much water.” Several families felt that the water pressure in the Flats is much better than it was when they lived in WKTN.

In the case of the Flats, drainage refers to the area around the outside of the building. Everyone interviewed was satisfied with this and everyone felt that it was an improvement over WKTN where “there was always stuff like rubbish or sand blocking the drains.”

Pathways refer to the hallways in the Flats. Everyone interviewed was satisfied with the hallways. The halls were generally free from rubbish except for the first floor which saw much more traffic than the other floors and was notable for numerous commercial establishments such as beauty salons, tailors, and convenience shops. While conducting the interviews young children were commonly seen playing or riding tricycles in the wide hallways.

The majority (80%) of those living in the Flats were satisfied with the communities fire prevention and nearly everyone felt safer from the threat of fire than when living in WKTN. One respondent stated that “in WKTN if there was a fire you just had to take out your things out and there was nothing you could really do about it.” Several people spoke of the fact that they “prefer having hoses because the extinguishers in WKTN might get used up, but as long as there is water being pumped a hose will keep working.” Those who were not satisfied wished that there were more hoses or extinguishers. One man stated that each apartment should have a small extinguisher and expressed concern that the pumps they have for the hoses run on electricity and, therefore, would not be useful in a fire where the electricity is shut off. Another respondent said that the fire protection “is better than in WKTN, but I worry about a gas explosion because many people in the Flats cook with gas cookers.”

## Rubbish and Pests

FLATS	% SATISFIED	% BETTER	% WORSE
RUBBISH DISPOSAL	93.3	100	0
RUBBISH AROUND COMMUNITY	93.3	100	0
CONTROL OF RODENTS	100	100	0
CONTROL OF MOSQUITOS	93.3	100	0

*Chart 6.10 Flats*

Nearly everyone interviewed in the Flats was satisfied with the system of rubbish disposal. The one respondent who was not satisfied felt that the situation was better than in WKTN, but that the trucks did not come as often as they should to empty the shoots. As a result the people on the first floor sometimes could not put their trash into the shoot because it was already too full and the rubbish began to collect in a pile in the hallways by the shoot opening. Most people were pleased that there was one centrally located and clearly defined place to put the rubbish as opposed to WKTN where "people just throw their rubbish where ever they like...they even throw rubbish out of their windows into the waste water below and sometimes the trash even goes on other people's roofs."

The majority of those interviewed were also pleased with the reduced amount of rubbish around the Flats compared to their previous community of WKTN. They appreciated the fact that the Housing Authority pays a cleaner to clean the stairwells and parking lot daily. The only complaints were regarding the first floor where most of the commercial activity occurs and, therefore, had a heavier flow of traffic and more rubbish.

Everyone spoken with was satisfied with the control of rodents in the Flats. Several people stated that they had never seen a rat in the Flats and also pointed out that there are very few cockroaches as well. One more cautious respondent said that she was currently satisfied, but fears that the low numbers of rats and roaches are only because the Flats are still new and that over time the numbers will increase.

Fourteen out of fifteen families were pleased with the number of mosquitoes in the

Flats. The only family who felt that there were too many of these pests was not able to afford to purchase screens for their windows.

### **Pollution**

<b>FLATS</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
AIR POLLUTION	86.6	93.3	6.6
DUST AROUND COMMUNITY	66.6	86.6	6.6
SMELL AROUND COMMUNITY	100	93.3	0

*Chart 6.11 Flats*

Participants living in the Flats seemed generally pleased with the quality of their air. Several noted that cool breezes kept their rooms fresh and found this to be one of the major benefits of living in the Flats and it even helped to blow the dust away. Two of the respondents who not satisfied with the air quality and both were concerned about the pollution produced by traffic on the nearby expressway or in the parking lot of the Flats.

Although many people mentioned that there was some dust around the Flats, only one third of participants considered this to be unsatisfactory. The source of dust is both from the expressway and from the sand barges which unload at the nearby sand factory.

All interviewees were satisfied with the the smells around the community and felt that a benefit of living in the Flats was the good ventilation. Several respondents pointed out that it only smells if the garbage trucks do not come every week when they are expected. Three of the families randomly selected happened to live near the rubbish shoots and all stated that they occasionally smell toward the end of the week, but did not consider this to be a problem. One respondent expressed the views of the majority when she said, "the Flats are much better than WKTN...there it always smelled really bad due to the waste water underneath the houses."

## Local Infrastructure

FLATS	% SATISFIED	% BETTER	% WORSE
EDUCATION FACILITIES	76.9*	0	66.6
JOB OPPORTUNITIES	53.3	0	40
TRANSPORTATION COSTS	33.3	0	86.6
MARKET/FOOD BUYING	46.6	6.6	73.3

(\*n=13)

*Chart 6.12 Flats*

The reported satisfaction rate of 76.9% regarding education facilities is somewhat misleading. When those families who stated that they were dissatisfied with the education facilities were further questioned, the majority felt that the facility itself was satisfactory, but the distance to the facility and the availability of transport were unsatisfactory.

Although 46.6% of respondents felt that the job opportunities available to them were not satisfactory, 60% felt that their opportunities had not significantly changed since coming to the Flats from WKTN. All but one of the individuals who felt that the move had negatively affected their ability to find work were women who had been food vendors in WKTN. The Housing Authority does not allow people to set up stalls for vending in front of the Flats, because they fear that this will 'de-beautify' the place. Another man felt that his opportunities for work had also been reduced as a result of his families move to the Flats. He wanted to work in the Port as a day laborer, but can only enter the Port area with someone who had an ID card. In WKTN more people offered him chances to enter on their card and also to do construction or repair work on their houses. He stated that "a lot of people would work at the Port if they could...a lot of people want to work but they have no qualifications so they just stay at home waiting for casual labor."

Regarding transportation costs only 33.3% of respondents reported being satisfied with the cost of transportation from the Flats. Thirteen out of fifteen of those interviewed considered the situation to be worse than their previous community. WKTN is located next

to a main Bangkok thoroughfare, Rama IV, and numerous buses passed the area regularly. The Flats were located at the end of a side street which previously lead to the slaughterhouses. The road ended at the Flats so there was very little passing traffic. It was possible to walk the approximate 1 kilometer to the nearest main road, but only one bus passed along this road regularly, so long waits were the norm along with the increased cost of transferring to a bus taking you to your destination. As a result most people hire motorcycle taxis to get out to a major thoroughfare where many buses can be found, but this was a more expensive process. Although it was certainly an option to walk about 2 kilometers to Rama IV, most respondents felt that this is too far to travel when carrying packages from the market or when with small children. In addition, the road leading to the Flats has a tendency to flood during the rainy season and some do not feel that it is safe after dark.

Although the main Klong Toey market is no more than 5 kilometers away, slightly more than half of those interviewed were dissatisfied with the access to food buying at the Flats. This dissatisfaction is again related to increased transportation costs and decreased convenience of access. One man recalled: "when I lived in WKTN, I could walk or ride my bike to the market, now it is too far to carry the packages and I have to pay for a tuk-tuk."

Those who were satisfied with the accessibility to food purchasing near the Flats rely on the smaller, local markets which did not offer as great a degree of variety and tended to be somewhat more expensive. Such qualities made these markets unattractive to those women who make large purchases in order to prepare food for vending purposes. In addition, one family ran a food shop on the second floor of Flat 24 which sold "clean, fresh vegetables and fruit and other groceries and is only a little more expensive than the market, but it is not open as late as the food shops in WKTN."

## Social Environment

<b>FLATS</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
COMMUNITY NOISE LEVEL	80	86.6	6.6
COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS	93.3	33.3	26.6

*Chart 6.13 Flats*

Eighty percent of those interviewed in the Flats were satisfied with the level of noise around the community. Most complaints related to the noise made by the boats carrying sand down the canal or cars and motorcycles in the parking lot outside the Flats. Thirteen of the fifteen respondents felt that the noise level in the Flats was an improvement over WKTN. One woman said, “sometimes in the morning the sand boats are noisy and sometimes there are some drunk people on the first floor, but overall it is better than WKTN...there I often could not sleep because people would play the jukeboxes, gamble and fight all night long.” A neighbor pointed out that “when people argue in the Flats their voices echo, but there is a lot less fighting here than there was in WKTN.” Notably, the first floor tended to have more traffic and thus more noise. People living on the upper levels were the most satisfied with the level of noise in the community and one man on the fourth floor reported with satisfaction “there are no noises at all which I find annoying here.”

All but one person interviewed was satisfied with their sense of community togetherness. The respondent who was not satisfied most likely would not be satisfied anywhere given his matter-of-fact comment, “it doesn’t matter where you are, people always think of themselves first.” Although the majority were satisfied with the level of community togetherness several people did miss certain aspects of their previous community. One woman noted that “people in the Flats do not sit together and chat as much as people did in WKTN because there is no place where we can all sit together...there should be a central place where people can get together.” Several others mentioned that although they were satisfied, they simply do not yet know people in the Flats as well as they did in WKTN. “People will work together if there is an activity, but in general they

live separately.” Most families have been living in the Flats for slightly over a year and the average length of time living in WKTN before coming to the Flats was 26 years. Only one person made reference to the community leader’s role in creating community cohesiveness and she stated that “the head of the community is a good guy...better than in WKTN because he does more work and keeps people better informed.”

Also included in the social environment is one’s sense of safety within that environment. The following chart displays the participants responses to questions regarding violence in the community, their sense of safety when walking alone at night, and their fear of burglary.

<b>FLATS</b>	<b>% YES</b>	<b>% NO</b>
Do you worry about violence in this community?	13.3	86.6
Do you fear walking around this community alone at night?	53.3	46.6
Do you worry that someone may break into your house?	40	60

*Chart 6.14 Flats*

Only 13.3% of those interviewed were worried about violence in the Flats. Both of the two families who were concerned about this problem lived on the first floor which, due to greater traffic, tended to have more problems regarding noise, rubbish, drug use and fighting. Everyone interviewed felt that overall there was less violence in the Flats than there had been in their previous community of WKTN, but four people volunteered that both verbal and physical abuse was a problem within some families.

Over half the participants were afraid of walking around the Flat area alone at night. Most of those who said they were not afraid also admitted that they rarely, if ever, go anywhere at night alone. Several respondents mentioned that they would be wary of walking past the nearby parking lot where all of the Port Authority trucks are parked at night. One woman did not feel safe because, “I am afraid of being mugged or raped



because the streetlights are not bright enough...you never know, there may be bad people near the slaughterhouse or the parking lot.”

Although no one had ever heard of a break-in actually occurring, forty percent of those interviewed feared that someone may try to break into their flat. All except two of the families interviewed had bars on their windows and most felt safe with this protective measure. Nearly everyone felt more secure than they did in WKTN and one woman who worried about potential burglaries explained, “people are always selling things door to door...Buddha images, clothes, food...I worry that they may not be good people so I usually keep my lights off and act like I am not home; but it is less busy here than in WKTN where there were more glue sniffers and people walking around all of the time.”

### ***Results--Part II: Well-Being of Family***

The following cases are presented in order to provide a more integrated view of how families who were interviewed from the Rong Moo Flats feel about their current living situation. The cases are based on interviews with four of the fifteen respondents who participated in the study. These particular cases were chosen in an attempt to represent some of the differing opinions expressed during the interviews. The responses of all fifteen participants will be considered in the discussion which follows the case studies.<sup>7</sup> The discussion will include financial issues, physical health concerns, psychological concerns and overall satisfaction with the community.

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#### **FLATS CASE STUDY #1**

Khun E's has lived in the Flats for the last seven months with her husband, elderly mother, and three sons. Her sister and three year-old niece recently moved in with them because the baby's father left them. Although their house was bigger in WKTN, they are still satisfied with the size of their flat.

The family seemed to be very close and happy, often telling jokes during the interview and asking each other's opinions. Their flat is near the

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<sup>7</sup> case studies for all participants can be found in Appendix C

stairwell and when we arrived they were all sitting on mats near the stairs enjoying the evening sunlight and cool breeze. Khun E's mother came by sweeping the hallway.

Khun E stays at home watching her youngest child and does odd jobs for neighbors to earn money. Her husband does construction work and his boss picks him up for work each day. Her sister earns money washing clothing and ironing for neighbors. They also have a pay phone outside their front door, but Khun E says that often they do not charge and it does not really make any money. Khun E's eldest son has finished school but has not yet found a job. Her middle son attends a government secondary school and pays 7B each way to school. The family's total income is rather low and they sometimes have to borrow money from a money lender at 20% interest.

Khun E does not worry much about her family's physical health, and thinks it is better since moving to the Flats due to the cleaner environment. She wishes that people would keep the hallways even cleaner. She notes that the health center is a little further now, but feels that this is not too much of a problem.

Khun E wishes that there was a playground or a footpath for the children to play. It is too dangerous for children to play in the car park area and just yesterday her niece was climbing on a car fell off onto her face. The little girl's nose and cheek illustrated the danger. But Khun E says that she does not worry about her children anymore here than in WKTN because previously she lived near the railroad tracks.

The family's biggest problem is financial. Her husband is being given fewer hours at work than before the economy began to decline and they have heard rumors of an increase in bus fare. In general, Khun E is not a worried or anxious person. She feels very *sabaijai* when she thinks of her sons and her family. She often relaxes by making swans out of small glittering pieces of folded paper. She says with a smile, "this totally clears my mind and I can sell them."

Khun E's family came to the Flats only because they could not afford to rebuild their house. Before moving in she did not think that she would like the Flats, but now she likes it very much and is very happy with their decision. Khun E prefers living in the Flats because they are peaceful and quiet, there is no waste water, and there is less drug use. Khun E especially likes living upstairs because there is a better breeze and more privacy. Her neighbors all "help each other carry goods from the market up the stairs...we all stay here like brothers and sisters." Khun E cannot think of anything which she misses about WKTN. She has recently gone back to visit friends and no longer likes it at all.

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## FLATS CASE STUDY #2

Khun F has been living in the Flats for the last year and a half with his wife, son and daughter. Their first floor home is simply furnished with a bed, two chairs, a couch and a small cabinet for the television and stereo. They do not have a loft area since they would have had to pay extra for that, but, like the majority of families, they do have screens on the windows.

Khun F works as a driver for a private company and his wife works as a delivery person for a company which distributes birth control pills to pharmacies. They travel to work on their motorcycle. Although both of them receive fewer overtime hours than before the economy began to decline, they still earn about 15,000B total per month. Even so they have not been able save any money for several reasons. Since moving to the Flats, they have to pay 1200B per term for their son's transport to school by school bus plus 300B per month rent. His wife has been hospitalized several times for an eye problem and his company only partially reimburses them for the costs. Khun F also admitted to drinking quite often and noted that this habit can be quite expensive. Finally, since moving to the Flats they have to pay for childcare, whereas in WKTN Khun F's parents would care for them at no expense.

Khun F fears that paid childcare workers may not do as good of a job as his parents and now worries more about his children getting hurt while playing or roughhousing. Regarding his wife and himself, he fears motorcycle accidents. The family's biggest problem at the moment is financial and this problem has increased since moving to the Flats. Khun F says that nothing in his life makes him feel *sabaijai*, and that he feels this way even less often since moving because he has become more worried and irritable since moving to the Flats. Khun F often feels depressed, but he recalls that he often felt this way in WKTN as well. Khun F found it easier to relax in WKTN because whenever he felt stressed, he would just go out drinking with his friends and talk about other things.

Khun F's family chose to move to the Flats because they did not have the money or the time to rebuild their house after the WKTN fire. On an intellectual level Khun F says that this was a good decision because overall the Flats provide a better environment for his family, but on an emotional level he feels it was a bad decision because most of his extended family is still living in WKTN and he misses them very much.

Khun F is pleased to find that the air in the Flats seems more fresh than in WKTN, but he is annoyed that the parking lot is always too full and that there are too many Port Authority trucks on the road leading to the Flats. Although there is less violence overall, Khun F is more disturbed by fighting in the Flats the noise tends to echo in the hallways. Overall, he was happier living in WKTN because that is where his family has lived for 34 years and there he had a two-story house.

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### FLATS CASE STUDY #3

Khun G has been living with her husband and daughter at Rong Moo Flats for the last year and three months. Their home is nicely furnished and decorated with a homey touch. The room is divided in to two sections by a large wood and glass cabinet which holds their television and stereo. The area in front serves as the living room and behind is the sleeping area.

When the family lived in WKTN, Khun G sold food from the front of her house, but she cannot do this at the Flats because she is on the fourth floor and not enough people pass her room. In addition, the Housing

Authority does not allow people to set up food stands in front of the building. Khun G recently retired so the family's income comes from his small pension and their daughter's salary as an office worker at a Mercedes-Benz dealer. Although the family's income has decreased since moving to the Flats, they are still able to save about 2000B per month.

Khun G does not worry about the health of her husband or daughter because they are rarely ill, but she does worry about her own health. Khun G suffers from a nervous condition as a result of the fire in WKTN. Also, because she no longer works as a food vender, Khun G spends her days sitting at home fears that this lack of exercise is making her less healthy. With respect to her whole family, Khun G worries that if someone were to become very sick it might be difficult to get transportation from the Flats to the hospital.

The fire which destroyed their home in WKTN has left Khun G feeling anxious and sometimes depressed. She was not able to save any of her family's belongings from the fire because the pathway to her house was small and there were many people running around. Since moving to the Flats, Khun G worries more about her family members being hit by cars since there are more cars in the parking lot in front of the Flats than there were near her house in WKTN. She considers her biggest problem at the moment to be that the market is too far and that the food nearby is more expensive. Khun G noted that because she now has more free time, she also has more time to worry. Her husband on the other hand is very happy with the fact that he is retired and can stay at home with no hassles.

Khun G and her family decided to move to the Flats because they were told that no one would be allowed to rebuild their homes in WKTN. If at that time she had known that some people would be allowed to stay, she would not have moved, but now she feels that it was a good decision to have come to the Flats.

Khun G feels that the best aspects of living in the Flats are the fresh air and more peaceful and safe surroundings. She comments that "in WKTN things were closer, but I feel more *sabaijai* in the Flats because at WKTN I worried all the time about fire and eviction...here I feel safer." The down side is that in WKTN she owned her own house, she knew her neighbors better and it was easy to sell her food. She says that she is neither more or less happy here, it is just different. She would not like to return to WKTN because "then I would have to take a loan for 100,000B to rebuild a house and I still might get evicted anyway."

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#### FLATS CASE STUDY #4

Khun H has been living in the Flats with his wife, son, daughter and grandson for the past eight months. The family's flat is sparsely furnished and without a loft, but decorated nicely with fancy curtains. This is one of the few flats that do not have bars or screens. Khun H's son who is age 27 also contributed some to the interview.

Khun H works as a driver dispatcher for a taxi company. His wife and son earn money babysitting for neighborhood children and through odd

jobs such as washing. His daughter sells grilled chicken outside the Flats which is not actually allowed by the Housing Authority. She is able to get around this rule because she sells from a mobile cart rather than a stall. Although Khun H and his daughter earn relatively good salaries totaling about 20,000B, the family is financially troubled due to numerous loans. Every month Khun H's company deducts 6,500B from his 12,000B salary as debt payments. The family has additional loans from money lenders at 20% interest. Khun H says that he is repaying these under a system of "floating interest" meaning that he only pays off the interest each month and never reduces the principle. He sees no hope of reducing this debt because his transport and rent expenses have increased since moving to the Flats, and it is more difficult for his daughter to vend her chicken and for his wife and son to odd jobs. In addition, his overtime hours have been cut because of the recent downswing in the economy.

Khun H's son complained that he wishes he had more work to do. He would like to do more work at the Port, but you cannot enter if you are not in a group headed by someone with a Port identity card. He says that he used to try to sneak into the Port in the back of his father's truck, but he was caught several times and had to pay fines. In WKTN individuals with Port identity cards would more frequently ask him to work with them for the day and more people were doing work on their houses and needed assistance.

Khun H feels that his family's health is better since moving to the Flats because of the better environment. His only concern is that if someone were to become ill after 8:00 or 9:00 in the evening it would be difficult to find transport from the Flats and they would have to walk to the main junction about a kilometer away. Even during the day it is more difficult than at WKTN to get to the clinic and occasionally he has had to carry his grandson to the main road.

In addition to better physical health Khun H's son mentioned that he felt that the family's mental health was also better because there are less drugs and amphetamines in the Flats. At this point a neighbor who was in their apartment interjected, "Go ahead, tell them that you used to sell toffee [amphetamines] at WKTN." The son smiled guiltily and Khun H agreed that the mental health was much better in the Flats.

Overall, Khun H felt more stress when living in WKTN because in addition to the risk of fire, when it rained heavily his house would flood with waste water and the roof would leak. Khun H feels *sabai jai* because he now lives in a nice, comfortable house and there are "less drugs and fighting here....at WKTN the people were not as good."

Khun H's family chose to move to the Flats because they were tired of fearing fire in WKTN and they are happy with their decision. His biggest problems are the money issues discussed above and because of this sometimes he fears that he may fail at his responsibility to keep his family happy and well-fed. When he needs to relax he finds transportation to take him to his temple. He finds it easier to relax in the Flats because "there is less annoying noise and the environment is better since it is not next to the expressway." Even though this environment is better he still regrets that "everywhere I turns I sees only bricks...I wants the young children to see flowers and trees."

Khun H feels the best aspect of living in the Flats is the fact that he can sleep through the night without worrying about fire. In addition, there is

greater peace and quiet as a result of fewer drunks making noise. His son agrees that the Flats are more peaceful and cleaner, but he feels lonely and misses his friends in WKTN with whom he was always playing snooker, drinking and smoking. Even so, neither father or son would like to go back to WKTN because according to Khun H's son, "I can still find some people to talk to and life is better here."

### **Financial Situation**

Eighty-percent of the families interviewed in the Flats reported feeling worried, anxious or depressed as a result of financial problems (see Chart 6.32). It should be recalled that only slightly over half of respondents from the Flats were satisfied with the jobs available in and around their community and only 33.3% were satisfied with the cost of transportation.

Similar to those respondents in WKTN, many of those with financial problems felt that these were in part due to the recent downswing in the economy which had led to less overtime work and an increased cost of living. As discussed previously in the discussion on satisfaction with job opportunities, several women such as Khun G, suffered a serious decline in their income as a result of the Housing Authorities rule against stall for vending at the front of the Flats. Other women who have no other option and whose family's are dependent on their incomes seem to get around this rule by using push carts, but like Khun H's wife, these women also complained of a decreased income compared to WKTN. Besides lower income most of the participants with financial problems also complained of increased expenses since moving to the Flats. Khun F mentions several of the factors common to many including the rent expenses (300B per month) and increased transportation costs. Both Khun F and another respondent mentioned that part of their financial problem was due to the fact that they spent a lot of money each month on alcohol. Another respondent pointed out that he preferred paying rent to having to pay for repairs which were unpredictable, but common in his house in WKTN.

Everyone interviewed in the Flats had moved there because they had lost their homes in the December, 1995 WKTN fire. Many were still suffering from financial losses associated with this tragedy. The following example was the experience of one family

whose losses were particularly devastating.

Khun BG lives with his wife and young daughter in an extremely sparsely furnished flat. Just before the WKTN fire Khun BG's family had decided to improve their home. They were able to secure a loan at a good interest rate from the company where Khun BG is employed and they purchased the lumber which they would need for the improvements. When the fire tore through their community, it not only destroyed their home, but it burned all of the newly purchased lumber as well. Khun BG's wife points out matter-of-factly that "now the loan payments are deducted from my husband's salary each month, but we have nothing." Even with this burden the family is able to save several thousand baht each month because they live very frugally (Case #11).

Several families, including Khun BG's, mentioned that they had been told by the government that they would receive 25,000B as compensation for the loss of their home in the WKTN fire. Up until the time of the study they had not received this money.

It seems that virtually any unplanned expense can throw a family off balance and force them into debt. For example:

Khun BF lives with her brother, elderly father and two nephews. Khun BF is a supervisor at a sewing factory and together with her brother and older nephew, the family earns a comfortable salary. They never have to take a loan unless there is an emergency. Two months ago such an emergency occurred when her 14 year-old nephew was in a motorcycle accident and the hospital bill came to 40,000B. At that time Khun BF took a loan from a friend and now she worries a lot about all of her expenses, especially the ones which have increased since moving. She tries to save every penny and sometimes these new financial problems make her feel depressed (Case #10).

Several other families had not been able to escape from the cycle of indebtedness in which they found themselves. Khun H's story was one example of entrapment in a system of 'floating interest' where he only reduced the interest each month and never touched the principal. Another respondent in a similar situation felt trapped because each month she has to pay interest on her old loans, which causes her to not have enough money for her expenses forcing her to take out new loans. Two respondents mentioned that when they were in a financial bind they are able to borrow money at no interest from friends or relatives. No one described having lost such a safety net as a result of the move.

Two families mentioned that the reason which they chose to move to the Flats as

opposed to rebuilding their houses in WKTN were financial reasons. One woman noted that “it would have been too expensive to rebuild [in WKTN] and we have our children to worry about.” Another mentioned that rebuilding would have required borrowing a lot of money and he was worried that the community might get evicted in the future resulting in the loss of his investment.

### **Physical Health**

When asked if they felt that their family was ill more, less or the same amount as people living elsewhere, nine of the respondents felt their family was ill less often and six responded that their families were ill the same amount as others.

Family’s health concerns were similar to those in WKTN. Parents of small children worried about colds and their breathing polluted air on the bus to school. Another woman worried about her adult daughter because she often had nausea and headaches from the vehicle exhaust she inhaled all day while sitting outside the flats selling food. An elderly respondent commented that she had shortness of breath which made it difficult for her to climb the stairs to her flat on the second floor. She believed that “pollution is in the air everywhere you go and this contributes to my illness” (Case #8). Two people mentioned asthma as a concern and several worried about complications of diabetes. In all four communities surveyed, nearly every man spoken with was a cigarette smoker. Only one woman, who lives in the Flats, mentioned being a smoker and she was also the only person to mention any of the negative health consequences of smoking. She said “I know I smoke too much and I worry that I might get cancer” (Case #5).

Several of the respondents spoke of the connection between their mental and physical health. Khun G suffered from a nervous condition as a result the fire in WKTN. Also, weighing on her mental health was the fact that she is no longer able to work. She felt that this stress and her lack of exercise made her less healthy. On the other hand, another respondent commented “I worry about [my family’s health] less since moving here because I have better mental health” (Case #10).

The majority of respondents felt that their physical health has either improved or stayed the same since moving to the Flats. Most who felt that their health had improved



attribute this to the facts that the environment and air in the Flats was cleaner than in their previous community and several mentioned that they felt there was decreased crowding in the Flats. Only three respondents felt that their health had become worse as a result of their move. Khun G was one case as described above. Another man felt that his health was worse now than it was before moving here. Part of this he attributed to the fact that he drank too much which he began doing several years before moving to the Flats. He also felt that his declining health was a result of his becoming less active since moving to the Flats because he had less friends here with whom to play football or other sports. The third respondent felt that the rest of her families health has stayed the same but her own health had declined because she worried more about financial troubles since moving to the Flats.

All of the families interviewed at the Flats continued to utilize the same health facilities as they did prior to the move. Although they were satisfied with these facilities, six of the fifteen participants mentioned that due to transport problems, it was now less convenient to travel to the clinics or hospital. Both Khun G and Khun H mentioned that if someone were very ill, especially after 8:00 or 9:00 at night, that finding transport to the hospital may be quite difficult. Another woman whose daughter had asthma was particularly worried that she may have 'an attack' and not be able to get to the hospital in time. Two of the fifteen families interviewed had purchased the social service medical card. The reasons given for not having one were similar to those given in WKTN.

Several families stated that although they would like to improve the health of their family they did not know how to do so. One woman mentioned "there should be a small park where people could exercise or sit and eat outside to help bring families together and thus reduce drug use." Four others also mentioned that their family members need to get more exercise and felt that the community as a whole would be more healthy if there was a park for walking or a green space where they could sit together outside. Five respondents felt that the community is already healthy and one man commented enthusiastically that "the Flats are a nice place with good air and no waste water, no bad smells, no mosquitoes, and no pollution...here my family is 100% better and no one has been sick since moving here," but several other people felt that the Flats could be kept even more clean and free of rubbish.

## Psychological Well-Being

As in WKTN the most pressing worries of most respondents tend to revolve around financial concerns and family safety. The major financial concerns of respondents were discussed above.

The greatest fear of eleven respondents with respect to their family's safety was that a member of their family would be hurt in a traffic accident. Several mentioned that they feared their children would be hit by a car while playing in the parking lot. Two women with small children also mentioned that they wished that there was a fence at the back of the Flat near the *klong* because they feared that a child will fall in and drown. Another participant voiced her concern that the Flats may collapse.

Four respondents felt that their worries regarding the well-being of their family had decreased since moving to the Flats and this was mostly due to the decreased risk of fire. Nearly all of the other participants felt that their quantity of fear was about the same, but the quality had changed. While living in WKTN their greatest fears were of fire, violence and, for those with children, that they would be influenced to use drugs. In the Flats, respondents noted that they worried more about traffic accidents because the location of the Flats requires increased use of motorcycles. They also worry more about being able to adequately provide for their families given increased financial problems. Several others mentioned that they felt more secure in the Flats due to the better environment and one respondent noted that she worried less about her family because "the environment is cleaner and there are better people here...fewer groups of bad people doing bad things." Another said that, "I sleep better because I feel less nervous here...here I don't have to worry about fire and there is less noise." One participant, who stated she would not like to return to WKTN because the risk of fire another fire was too great, felt that overall she worried a bit more about the general safety of her family because "here there are a lot of new people I did not know before."

Eleven of those interviewed in the Flats found it easier to relax in the Flats than in WKTN. The main reason given was because the environment of the Flats was better and the area is more quiet and peaceful. Three people found that their ability to relax was no different in the Flats compared to WKTN. In fact, Khun F was the only respondent who

found WKTN to be an easier place than the Flats to relax. This was because he previously had more friends and whenever he felt stressed he would go out drinking with them and talk about other topics to take his mind off of his worries. Three respondents mentioned that when they were feeling stressed they liked to relax by chatting with their neighbors.

### **Overall Satisfaction with Community**

Participants were asked if they are happy with their decision to move to the Flats after the WKTN fire. In response, 86.6% stated that they were pleased with their decision. The reasons given for their choice to move to the Flats was either fear of another fire in WKTN or not having enough money or time to rebuild their house. Eleven of the respondents stated that they were more happy living in the Flats than they were in WKTN, two felt that their level of happiness had not changed and two felt that they were less happy. Two respondents wished that they had been able to stay in WKTN, but none wished to go back there now. Khun F remarked that his wish to stay in WKTN is an emotional one and intellectually he believes that moving to the Flats was his only wise choice because he did not have the time or the money to rebuild a house in WKTN. Another respondent did not feel that she had a choice about coming to the Flats nor was she happy about being here. She wanted to rebuild her house in WKTN, but she did not have enough money and commented that, "I would lose face if my new house was not as nice as my neighbors." Therefore, she moved to the Flats and, for this same reason, she would not like to return to WKTN (Case #8).

When asked what they felt the best aspect of living in the Flats to be, the two most common answers were the decreased risk of fire and the cleaner environment. One woman commented, "The wind blows all of the time keeping the house cool and fresh" (Case #5). Six participants mentioned an increased level of privacy which they feel in the Flats to be the best aspect. Three found the best aspect to be that the Flats are "peaceful and quiet."

Respondents gave highly varied answers when asked what they see as the worst aspect of living in the Flats. These included smells from the pigs still living by the former slaughterhouse, having to climb the stairs, not having enough space to hang clothes to dry, transport problems, having to pay rent, noise from cars in the parking lot, occasional noise

and drug selling, and having fewer friends as compared to WKTN.

Although 73.3% of respondents felt that drug use, especially glue sniffing, was the biggest social problem in the Flats, nearly everyone mentioned that this problem was much reduced compared to WKTN. Several mentioned that the problem was mostly localized to the first floor and lower stairwells where young people sometimes sniff glue. One woman commented, “drugs...they are everywhere and it doesn’t matter where you go or live.” The other social problems mentioned were motorcycle theft from the parking lot and the fact that the parking lot was overcrowded leading to conflict between those with vehicles.

Community members were asked to make suggestions about ways in which their community could be improved. Six people felt that a playground and a small green space for sitting was needed so that the children would not have to play in the parking lot where it was very dangerous and families or the elderly could sit together and socialize. Many people interviewed were quite unhappy about the Housing Authorities rule that they cannot put up television aerials on the roof. Therefore, several people suggested that either this be allowed or the Housing Authority provide a one large one for everyone to use. A fence by the canal to reduce the risk of children falling in was also suggested by several respondents.

## WAT CHARAPON

### *Description*

Several years ago the Port Authority announced that they planned to reclaim the land on which the slum communities of Locks 7-12 currently house some 700 families. At first the Port Authority hoped to reach a land-sharing agreement with the families similar to the agreement made with those now living in the community of Jet Sip Rai. The community refused because the land proposed was too soft to properly support houses. After nearly seven years of difficult negotiations between the Port Authority, local leaders, community members and NGOs, another option was set forth. The Port Authority purchased a 92 rai plot of land located approximately 25 kilometers from Klong Toey in order to serve as a relocation site for the 700 families who own homes in Locks 7-12 (Appendix A, Map #3 and #5). Each family has the right to a 9 X 13 meter plot of land and, for the first time ever, the community will not have to pay for the land on a hire-purchase basis, but will be given the land outright at no cost. The downside is that the community is located 25 kilometers away from many people's jobs in the Port with minimal transportation.

Many families considered the different factors and decided that this rare opportunity for them to own their own piece of land and was worth the increased commute time and cost of transport. At the time of this study approximately 500 of the 1003 plots had been claimed and nearly 300 families had completed construction on their new homes. On the other hand, there are approximately 100 homeowners in Locks 7-12 who still refuse to give up their homes and are supported and encouraged in this by a local NGO. These reasons are usually related to fear of lost income, inconvenience of location or inability to afford to take out a loan for building a home in Wat Charapon. Those who have already moved to Wat Charapon believe that if these families do not accept a deal from the Port Authority soon, that they may end up with nothing since the community members will most certainly lose should the case come to court. It is estimated that the rights to as much as 30% of the plots set aside for these low income families have been sold for up to 200,000B. As in the other communities discussed, the mafia has a hand in the profits to be made in Wat Charapon having already purchased an estimated 48 plots.

A community cooperative lending scheme has been set up by the community through the Housing Authority. Each household can take up to 150,000B at 12% interest per month (9% on the actual loan and 3% added by the cooperative for expenses) and a minimum payment of 1600B per month. This can be quite a hefty payment for families who were previously squatting and not paying any monthly rent.

The quality of houses in Wat Charapon vary enormously. At one extreme are homes which look as if they were modeled after suburban middle-class homes in the United States. On the other extreme are families who did not wish to take out a loan in order to rebuild their new houses and, therefore, used second-hand wood provided by the Port Authority and scraps from their previous home. Often these families worry that their houses will not meet Housing Authority standards and that they will not be given their permanent deed to the land and their housing registration which is needed for accessing the majority of Thailand's social services including health benefits and continuing education.

The 'standard' and most commonly seen home in Wat Charapon is a two-story 9 X 6 meter home on a 9 X 13 meter plot of land. The houses are usually constructed with a wooden frame enclosed with either cement blocks or wood and a metal roof. The floors are usually cement or wood and, if finished, are usually tiled. The top level often has a small balcony and each house has a space at the front for a small porch area usually decorated with banana trees and other plants. The majority of houses were carefully constructed and whenever finances permitted much care was taken with the finishing touches (see case studies for more details Appendix C).

The community has been provided with basic utility services (water, electricity, septic tanks) and paved roads by the Housing Authority. They are currently using well-water which is piped to their houses at no cost, but city piped water is being put in and should be available by the end of 1997. The community is laid out in such a way that every house is accessible by road. The paved streets in Wat Charapon are wide, have street lights, low traffic flow, and children are free to play on them with their bicycles or jump ropes. Fire hydrants have been installed around the community, but they do not yet have any hoses. The community leader has been attempting unsuccessfully to acquire hoses from the district office, so he plans to ask local politician to provide them. The community

does not yet have a telephone line. Several of the shops have cell phones for public use at 6B per minute. Community space has been set aside for a playground and park area, market space, future construction of a school and health center, a bus depot, an emergency fire and security center, and a large area for income-generating activity.

Wat Charapon is located 5 km down a poorly maintained dirt road surrounded by rice patties and trees. There is a small market area located 3 km away and two larger market areas each 5 km away, one of which has a department store. The problem with access to these areas related to the poor condition of the road leading to Wat Charapon. Bangkok Mass Transit refuses to put the community on their bus routes until the road is improved. The community leader has been working with the Transport Authority in an attempt to get the road improved, but no guarantees have yet been made. There are public buses which leave the community for Klong Toey at 5:30, 6:00 and 7:00 am and return at 5:00, 5:30 and 6:30 pm during the week. On the weekends there is one bus in the morning and one in the evening and the cost for a one-way trip is 6B. Several private vehicles leave the community earlier in the morning and cost 15B for a direct ride on the expressway. The local primary and secondary schools are one and one and a half kilometers away respectively. The nearest health center is five kilometers away and a mobile clinic provided by the district health office comes with a doctor every few months in order to give medications and basic services.

### ***Demographic Information***

In Wat Charapon thirteen out of the fifteen (86.6%) participants randomly selected were women and the average age was 46 years-old. The average number of years which the respondents have been living in Bangkok is 36.3 years and only one family had migrated to Bangkok within the last 25 years. Before eviction from Port Authority land, the average family interviewed had been living there for 28 years and the mean length of time since relocation to Wat Charapon is one year.

The average household interviewed has 3.8 members and the mean self-reported household income was 7,800B per month. Importantly, the overall income average was

reported to have neither increased nor decreased as a result of the relocation to Wat Charapon. The cost of electricity did increase from an average of approximately 400B to 570B as a result of the resettlement. Twelve of the fifteen families interviewed took loans from the community cooperative in order to finance the construction of their new house and now make monthly payments of 1600B (see Chart 6.29). Four of the families interviewed were headed by women, but two of the four had adult sons living with in the household.

***Results-- Part I: Community Satisfaction***

The following section discusses the participants satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of their living situation. Only the percentage satisfied is provided, but the remaining percentage have described themselves as dissatisfied with the particular factor. Also included is whether the respondent feels that the aspect is better or worse than in their previous community. Since many respondents felt that a particular factor was the same in their old and new communities, the combined total of the percentage of better and worse responses does not total 100%. The difference can be assumed to have found the quality the same in both their old and new communities.

**Housing Structure**

<b>WAT CHARAPON</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
QUALITY OF HOUSE	93.3	93.3	6.6
SIZE OF HOUSE	86.6	66.6	20
BATHING FACILITIES	100	93.3	0
TOILET FACILITIES	100	93.3	0
KITCHEN FACILITIES	100	93.3	0

***Chart 6.15 Wat Charapon***

The majority of participants felt that the quality of their homes was better than in



their previous community. Although all of the family's interviewed were living in their homes, several participants had not been able to finish their homes to their full satisfaction because they ran out of money. One of the most financially strained participants interviewed was given free second-hand wood by the Port Authority in order to rebuild her one-story home and she was somewhat dissatisfied with the quality of her home. She states, "I would really like a second-story like my neighbors, but this house is better than before because the foundation is more secure and the roof does not leak." The families who are not yet satisfied with their homes planned to continue making improvements as they save more money, but this delay can put these families in a difficult situation. Unless the house meets the standard set up by the National Housing Authority, a household cannot receive its housing registration.

Several respondents stated that they were very proud of their new homes. The extra care put into the finishing work on many houses in Wat Charapon clearly demonstrated the strong sense of pride felt by these families to have completed construction on a new home on a piece of land which they own.

Most families also found the size of their new home to be either better or the same than their houses in their previous communities. Even so, several families wished that their homes were larger. Everyone interviewed felt that their bathing, toilet and kitchen facilities were superior in Wat Charapon and were satisfied with these facilities.

### **Community Infrastructure**

<b>WAT CHARAPON</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
WATER SUPPLY	66.6	6.6	66.6
DRAINAGE	93.3	93.3	0
PATHWAYS	86.6	100	0
FIRE PROTECTION	26.6	13.3	33.3

*Chart 6.16 Wat Charapon*

Although the majority of respondents felt that the quality of water was worse in Wat

Charapon than in WKTN, most were still satisfied with the water supply. One participant expressed the views of many when she stated, “the water is okay, but it is not great...in WKTN it smelled of chlorine and chemicals and here it smells of earth and mud.” Several families commented that they can see dirt particles in their water and one person worried because when it came out of the tap the water appeared greenish. Similar to the Flats, twelve out of fifteen families drank either filtered tap water or bottled water. Two of the families collected rain water for drinking and one family boiled their tap water. Most families agreed that the water pressure in Wat Charapon was very good and an improvement over WKTN.

Any dissatisfaction expressed regarding the drainage at Wat Charapon was blamed on the fact that construction was still occurring in the neighborhood and the sand or gravel used to build houses would get in the drains and causes blockages. Most people interviewed also mentioned that when this occurred on their street, the neighbors all would get together to help clean the drain out. It was expected that after construction was completed that the drainage system would function well so long as everyone keeps it free of rubbish. A woman who had lived in the area for over a year mentioned that the pathways had not flooded since she moved to Wat Charapon, but also pointed out that they have not yet been tested by a very heavy rainy season.

Similarly, the two respondents who were dissatisfied with the pathways felt that they were too narrow because family's who were still doing construction often had piles of sand or gravel in the road or were mixing cement on the side of the road, thus making parking and access more difficult. Everyone felt that the pathways in Wat Charapon were a big improvement to WKTN and several respondents mentioned that if there was a fire it would be much easier for fire equipment to get in a families to get out.

Nearly every family interviewed spoke of a greater sense of safety from fire in Wat Charapon compared to when they lived in WKTN. But at the same time most people were dissatisfied by the fact that the community has virtually no means to protect itself from fire and felt that some protection was essential no matter how reduced the risk may appear to be.

## Rubbish and Pests

WAT CHARAPON	% SATISFIED	% BETTER	% WORSE
RUBBISH DISPOSAL	80	73.3	13.3
RUBBISH AROUND COMMUNITY	80	100	0
CONTROL OF RODENTS	73.3	100	0
CONTROL OF MOSQUITOS	6.6	13.3	66.6

*Chart 6.17 Wat Charapon*

Eighty percent of those interviewed in Wat Charapon were satisfied with the system of garbage disposal. Each family took their garbage to the end of their *soi* where several bins are located and the trucks are supposed to come to pick up about twice per week. Most felt that the system was well-organized and convenient, but the 20% who are not satisfied did not feel that this system was as effective as it could be. For example, all of those who felt dissatisfied complained either that the bins were not large enough or that the trucks did not come often enough. As a result, even though people were making efforts to take their rubbish to the bins, the trash accumulates all around the bin areas and sometimes begins to blow around the neighborhood. One woman said with disgust that “the trucks just don’t come every week like they are supposed to even though the community leader pays them 1000B extra so that they will do their jobs properly and not ‘forget’ to come or ‘accidentally’ miss any of the rubbish.”

Everyone interviewed was pleased that there was less rubbish around Wat Charapon than there was around their previous communities. Only three people said that they were dissatisfied with the amount of rubbish around the community and these individuals generally attributed the problem to debris from the construction which is still occurring in Wat Charapon. One satisfied respondent cautiously noted that “right now it is quite clean in Wat Charapon, but I fear that this is only because the community is not yet full and as more people move here the rubbish problems will increase.”

A similar sentiment was felt regarding the number of rodents in the community.

Although everyone interviewed believes that the rodent problem was much less than in their previous community, several were disappointed that the problem appeared to be growing as more people move into the community. Several people appeared to be dissatisfied because they had expected that rats would not pose a problem outside of the city. One woman was surprised to have seen any rats at all in Wat Charapon and explained that “a few must have come in the boxes from Lock 7.” In addition, several respondents complained of ant problems.

Unlike the rubbish and rat problems the numbers of mosquitoes are declining as more people move into the community. Even so nearly everyone was still dissatisfied with the number of mosquitoes in Wat Charapon. Several people noted that the mosquitoes in Wat Charapon were smaller and caused larger and more itchy welts when they bite than the mosquitoes in Klong Toey. One woman mentioned her fear that Dengue fever may be spread by these mosquitoes. Another family joked that “sometimes we feel that we should eat dinner under the mosquito net.” Many of those who were dissatisfied still took an optimistic perspective noting that the situation has improved since they arrived and hoped for a continued decrease in the number of the pests as more families move to Wat Charapon.

### **Pollution**

<b>WAT CHARAPON</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
AIR POLLUTION	100	100	0
DUST AROUND COMMUNITY	73.3	80	6.6
SMELL AROUND COMMUNITY	100	100	0

*Chart 6.18 Wat Charapon*

Since Wat Charapon was located on the outskirts of Bangkok, away from much of the industry and traffic, it was no surprise that 100% of those interviewed were satisfied with the quality of the air in their community. In addition, no one complained of any bad

odors around the community. The fact that only 73.3% of respondents were satisfied with the amount of dust around the community is somewhat misleading. Each of the four individuals who were dissatisfied clearly stated that the problem was due to the fact that some families were still building their houses and everyone expected the problem to resolve once construction was completed. Eighty percent of individuals felt that even with the construction the amount of dust was less than that in their previous communities.

### Local Infrastructure

<b>WAT CHARAPON</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
EDUCATION FACILITIES	61.5*	6.6	60
JOB OPPORTUNITIES	53.3	0	66.6
TRANSPORTATION COSTS	40	0	73.3
MARKET/FOOD BUYING	86.6	33.3	53.3

(\*n=13)

*Chart 6.19 Wat Charapon*

Two respondents were not familiar with the education facilities in the area and did not have an opinion on the topic. Of the thirteen who responded, the majority of complaints were centered around the expense of transportation to the school and not about the actual facility. For example, two of the children whose parents reported dissatisfaction with the education facilities were finishing their final year of primary school in Klong Toey and planned to begin attending the government secondary school near Wat Charapon next year. Both of these parents expected that they will be satisfied as soon as this transition occurs. The one exception in which transportation was not the issue occurred in the case of a mother whose child is of kindergarten age. In Thailand, there is no fee for primary or secondary school, but kindergarten is not similarly subsidized and poorer children tend not to receive the benefits of such early education. In Klong Toey numerous NGOs have addressed this problem by setting up low cost kindergartens within the slum communities. No such facility exists in Wat Charapon and several respondents spoke of the need for such

a school which would benefit not only the children but help to provide the mothers of these children with extra time to engage in income-generating activities.

The majority of children living in Wat Charapon were able to ride their bicycles the 1-1.5 kilometer to school in about 20 minutes. Unfortunately, a rumor had begun to circulate within the community and has created some anxiety regarding these children riding their bikes to school. One respondent explained, "I am satisfied with the schools here, but some people have been talking about a white van which goes around picking up children...nobody has actually been picked up, but it makes me worry about my kids riding their bicycles past the rice fields...in Klong Toey there were more people around so I felt safer about them walking to school." This fear had lead several families to pay 200B per month for a local small bus owner to drive the children to school.

Only one respondent reported feeling that the education facilities were better in Wat Charapon. In explanation he stated, "this school is better for my young daughter because some of the teachers in Klong Toey used to drink and there were always bad people hanging out in the area around her school...sometimes they were using drugs. I am proud that I have brought my children to a safer place."

Slightly greater than half of those interviewed were satisfied with the job opportunities available to them from Wat Charapon. This includes those who do not mind the daily commute into Bangkok and have maintained the job which they held prior to moving to Wat Charapon. One woman who takes the bus every day says, "if you want to work you can, it doesn't matter where you are...I have to travel further to sell my wares but it doesn't bother me." On the other hand five of the seven respondents who were dissatisfied also continue to work in Bangkok, but they find the commute to be unsatisfactory. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the commute was not related to whether or not one's mode of transport was the bus as opposed to a private car or motorcycle. Several of those who were satisfied had changed jobs upon moving to Wat Charapon. One woman noted that "there are several factories in this area... both my daughter and my son-in-law got jobs at the earthenware packing factory and earn more money than they did working in the seafood factory in Klong Toey." Two other respondents had family members who have found jobs at a nearby sewing factory and one woman had secured a

job of making silk flowers which she and several other family members can do at home (Case #9).

Two of the families interviewed earned their entire income from small shops on the lower level of their homes. Both of the women running these shops were dissatisfied with the present earning capacity of their shops compared to what they earned with shops in their previous community, but both felt that this would improve as more families moved in to the community.

The transportation services to Wat Charapon are minimal. Many of those interviewed were hopeful that when the road leading to the community is improved that more bus companies will set up routes which include the community. A special bus service for only 6B each way was available for those who wish to go to Klong Toey in the morning and return in the evening. In addition, there were several privately owned vehicles which left the community earlier in the morning for those whose jobs require an early start. Dissatisfaction results when people wished to either leave or return to Wat Charapon at any other time. Several complained that 40B was too expensive to get a motorcycle taxi out to the main road from where they can catch a bus, and others said that they had to rely on neighbors who have cars in order get out during the day.

A quite unexpected result was that most families (86.6%) were quite satisfied with their access to market goods. Because of the difficulties surrounding transportation to and from Wat Charapon and the communities distance from the inner city, it was expected that most families would find it difficult to make many of their purchases. But this is not the case. Entrepreneurs in the private sector have found Wat Charapon to be a profitable area to conduct business. Clothing and household vendors set up a 'Sunday Market' each Tuesday on the empty field in the center of Wat Charapon. One man commented that he was satisfied with the market but there is less variety than in Klong Toey. Pick-up trucks selling fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, seafood, rice and more continuously pass through the community. From the backs of other vehicles one can purchase televisions, stereos, water filters and fans all on installment plans. Nearly everyone interviewed found this to be a convenient way to make purchases. Several families reported that the cost of goods purchased from these entrepreneurs are slightly more expensive than in the actual

market, but others felt the prices were comparable or even less expensive. It is assumed that this must vary with the item being sold or individual bargaining skills, but overall these costs are relatively comparable to market price. One respondent was able to purchase what she needs at reasonable prices from the trucks which pass through the community, but she said, "I miss going to the market to walk around...people like to shop for new things, to socialize and to gossip at the market." The two women who were dissatisfied with the market were actually dissatisfied with the lack of transport to the market located outside the community.

### Social Environment

<b>WAT CHARAPON</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
COMMUNITY NOISE LEVEL	100	100	0
COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS	100	60	0

*Chart 6.20 Wat Charapon*

Everyone interviewed in Wat Charapon was both satisfied with the level of noise in their community and found it to be an improvement over the noise level in their previous community. The only complaints were regarding noises due to construction and no one considered these noises to be disturbing enough to lead to dissatisfaction. Community members were particularly pleased with the 'good' sounds around the community making comments such as "in the morning I can here the birds singing" and "I enjoy listening to the sounds of the frogs in the mornings and the evenings." Several people spoke of a large improvement over their previous community saying "its a lot more peaceful without so many cars going in and out all day long" and "before I lived by the railroad tracks and the cars were louder and people were always fighting and arguing."

Everyone interviewed in Wat Charapon was satisfied with their sense of community togetherness, although several noted that they still did not know everyone to the degree which they did in their previous community. Even so, sixty percent of respondents had a



sense of community togetherness superior to that which they felt in their previous community and forty percent felt it was about the same. Those who felt an improvement commented that “people in Klong Toey were always fighting” and made reference to a serious conflict which had divided their previous community. On one side there were those who, supported by a local NGO, strongly opposed a move to Wat Charapon. On the other side were those who felt that the deal offered by the Port Authority was a fair one since it gave them an opportunity to own a piece of land. Obviously, those who have chosen to move to Wat Charapon took the latter point of view and tended to have been friendly with each other before the move. One woman pointed out that her sense of community togetherness is “the same as before because I still socialize with all the same people.” Another respondent, Khun CL felt that it is easier to get to know people in Wat Charapon than it was in Klong Toey. She explained:

I have a lot more friends here than before. When I go walking around the community people are more friendly and it is easier to get to know them. If my son is home alone I know that my neighbors will keep an eye on him and sometimes people who have cars ask if I want to go out to the market with them. I am sure that if there was a fire here people would help each other. In Klong Toey none of this would ever happen, my neighbors were very selfish and they wouldn't even tell you if an NGO was giving away free stuff (Case #12).

Observations made during the interviews indicated that the process of building houses together is also a bonding experience. Families were often seen sharing tools, ideas and a hand in building.

The vast majority of those interviewed in Wat Charapon felt safe in their social environment. Responses to questions regarding violence in the community, sense of safety when walking alone at night, and fear of burglary are presented in the following chart.

<b>WAT CHARAPON</b>	<b>% YES</b>	<b>% NO</b>
Do you worry about violence in this community?	6.6	93.3
Do you fear walking around this community alone at night?	20	80
Do you worry that someone may break into your house?	20	80

*Chart 6.21 Wat Charapon*

Only one person interviewed in Wat Charapon worried about violence in the community. Her explanation was “because slum people are like that [violent] and not all of them have a good heart.” Another person noted that the only conflicts of which they are aware are between the community leader and committee members, but the respondents was afraid to elaborate on what these conflict were about. Most respondents had only positive comments regarding the lack of violence in Wat Charapon. Several reported “no violence at all,” and another noted “there is very little violence here...but there are a few cases of domestic violence.”

Eighty percent of respondents felt safe walking around the community alone at night. No one was aware of anyone being attacked or mugged at night, but three people felt unsafe for reasons such as “it gets very quiet around here about 7:00 pm and it gives me the creeps,” or “sometimes I am afraid of the darkness and the silence.”

Eighty percent of those interviewed also did not worry about their house being broken into. No one has ever heard of such a case occurring in Wat Charapon. One more cautious woman stated, “it [burglary] has never happened and I don’t think it will happen now, but maybe as the place continues to fill up such things will occur.”

### ***Results--Part II: Well-Being of Family***

The following cases are presented in order to provide a more integrated view of how families who were interviewed from Wat Charapon feel about their current living situation. The cases are based on interviews with four of the fifteen respondents who participated in the study. These particular cases were chosen in an attempt to represent

some of the differing opinions expressed during the interviews. The responses of all fifteen participants will be considered in the discussion which follows the case studies.<sup>8</sup> The discussion will include financial issues, physical health concerns, psychological concerns and overall satisfaction with the community.

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### WAT CHARAPON CASE STUDY #1

Khun I has been living with her husband and 13 year old daughter in Wat Charapon for the last two years. Sadly, their older son died several years ago. The family's one-story home is simple, but nicely finished with a tile floor, solid wood front doors and a covered front patio. Banana trees are planted on each side of the porch. As we approached her home Khun I and a neighbor were relaxing on the front porch and she spontaneously announced to us that "everything is good here."

Since moving to Wat Charapon Khun I's husband has continued working as a day laborer in the Port Authority. Khun I was not employed before moving, but now she runs a small shop from the front of her house where she sells snacks and basic kitchen supplies. As a result their income has increased a little, but her husband now has to take the bus to Klong Toey each day for 6B so their expenses have also increased. Their daughter completed the 7th grade, but is not currently attending school. Up until a year ago, the girl was receiving a scholarship from the Christian Children's Fund, but for a reason not related to the move, the scholarship was terminated. The family borrowed the standard loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative in order to build their house.

Other than her husband's heartburn and her thyroid condition for which she takes medication, she does not worry about health problems. Regarding the clean air in Wat Charapon Khun I states that "here I breath well and this makes me feel good and my brain works well and quickly...I feel fatter and more healthy than I did before."

In general, she worries less about her family in Wat Charapon because there is less heroin use and glue sniffing. Her biggest worry at the moment is not having enough money to meet her monthly loan payments and it disturbs her that her she cannot afford to pay for her daughter's schooling. Even so, Khun I finds it easier to relax in Wat Charapon than in her previous community because the environment is better and there is less noise. When she does feel upset, she relaxes by strolling around the neighborhood until she feels better.

Khun I's family chose to move to Wat Charapon because in Klong Toey the houses were cramped together and they did not feel comfortable. Her family was able to come to see Wat Charapon prior to making this decision, and she feels that living here is just as they expected it would be.

Khun I finds the best aspect of living in this community to be the

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<sup>8</sup> case studies for all participants can be found in Appendix C

clean air. Nothing about the community makes her unhappy, but she does wish that the main road to Wat Charapon was in better condition and that there was more public transport. She is not aware of any social problems in this community and she believes this is because the police come by on patrol several times per day as does the community leader. For example, she says with surprise, "sometimes I hang my clothes outside and when I come home, they are still there. In Klong Toey even underwear would be stolen if I left it out!"

She can think of nothing she misses about her old community because she is comfortable and happy in Wat Charapon. "In Klong Toey people would urinate in front of my house and many people would drink until 2:00 in the morning and make a lot of noise when they came home. Sometimes husbands would come home drunk and beat their wives for nothing... in Wat Charapon there is less violence and no crime." Whenever she goes to visit friends in Klong Toey she "just wants to get out and go back to Wat Charapon."

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## WAT CHARAPON CASE STUDY #2

Khun J has been living in Wat Charapon for a year and a half with her two daughters, son-in-law and two grandchildren. Throughout this time they have been slowly improving their very simple one-story house which is made of cement and brick. The house has very few finishing touches and appears to have been constructed with the minimum possible financial burden while still adhering to the requirements set by the Housing Authority. Some of the wood used in the frame is secondhand and was given for free by the Port Authority to those with the least financial means. Two papaya and two banana trees decorate the front corners of the plot.

While living in Klong Toey Khun J worked at a fish processing plant, but since moving to Wat Charapon she has taken over the duties of caring for her grandchildren and working on the construction of their home. Her 21 year-old daughter continues to work in the Port Authority doing shipping inventory as she did before the move and uses the public bus for 6B each way. Khun J's younger daughter worked at a fish processing plant in Klong Toey, but since moving to Wat Charapon both she and her husband have found jobs at a nearby factory packing earthenware. The monthly income of the household has increased because both her daughter and son-in-law's new jobs provide higher salaries than before, but nearly all of the son-in-law's money goes into paying installments for the motorcycle which takes them to and from the factory. The family used most of their savings on building their new house, but they did not have to take a loan. They have recently started to save up again and hope to improve the house by the end of the year.

Khun J feels that her family is more healthy than the average family. Her only concern is that her grandchildren often have bug bites from playing in the sand. She believes that, in general, the health of her family is better in Wat Charapon than it was in Klong Toey and personally, she has experienced less colds and headaches since the move. She attributes this

improvement in health to the fact that the air is cleaner and the houses are less cramped together. She explains, "I have more privacy, I feels better and I have more air to breath."

Khun J finds living in Wat Charapon to be "more mentally convenient because I used to have to do all of my work in one place and now I have a separate kitchen, bath, and living area...this is a more efficient lifestyle."

Khun J and her family chose to move to Wat Charapon because they were given free land and Khun J has always wanted to be an owner. She is happy with their decision and does not feel that Wat Charapon differs from her expectations in anyway.

She sees the best aspect of living in Wat Charapon to be that "I now own land which can be kept for my children and grandchildren." In addition, she is very pleased that she no longer has to worry about fire. Once in Klong Toey there was a fire which came close to her house and all she had time to do was to grab her two grandchildren and run. She was very scared and although her house did not burn, if it had she would have lost everything she owned.

Khun J is not aware of any social problems in this community. She thinks that the limited transportation to and from Wat Charapon is the worst aspect of living there, but overall she is happier with this community and would not go back to Klong Toey because it would "be like a slum!"

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### WAT CHARAPON CASE STUDY #3

Khun K, her daughter, two sons and niece have been living in a two-story house of standard size and high quality for a little over a year and a half. The floor is finished with nice tile and and there is a decorative wood banister along the stairs to the upper level. From the balcony on the second level a permanent metal roofed covering extends out several feet to create an extension to their lower level shop.

As in Klong Toey the family's only source of income is Khun K's shop. This shop takes up most of the lower level of their home and has a food counter with table and chairs for eating. Their home is located on one of the main streets of Wat Charapon so their business appears to be frequented by more customers than many of the smaller shops located on side streets. Khun K's income has decreased a little since the move, but she believes this to be due to the fact that the community is not yet full. In addition to taking the full loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative to build their home, Khun K borrowed another 150,000B at 15% interest from an outside source using a relative's land as a guarantee.

Khun K's daughter and older son attend a community college and usually travel to the main road with friends, then pay 7B to get to the school. Her younger son and niece ride their bicycles about 20 minutes to get to the government primary school.

Khun K feels that her family is more healthy in Wat Charapon than they were in Klong Toey because the air is better in the new community. Her major concern regarding the health of her family is that there is no clinic

nearby. She fears that if someone became ill she would have difficulty getting them to the clinic since she does not own any transport. With respect to herself, she sometimes experiences chest pains and worries that she may have a heart condition.

Khun K's family chose to move to Wat Charapon because their house had burned down two different times in Klong Toey and they lost everything they owned. She is happy with their decision because "it is better to have a loan to worry about than to worry about fire again." About Wat Charapon she says that she "knew it would be better here and it is."

Khun K worries about her children traveling to school. Regarding her younger children, she has heard rumors that a white van is going around kidnapping children. She fears that as they bicycle past the corn, someone might grab them. This fear was less in Klong Toey because there were always a lot of people around. Regarding her older children, she worries more about traffic accidents, because now they do not return home until after dark.

Khun K feels that her biggest problem at the moment is financial because her shop is not making quite as much money as it did in Klong Toey. She feels very *sabai jai* when she thinks about the day she will have paid off all of her loans and her family will own their home. Though sometimes she feels irritable around the time the loan payment is due, she worries less in general than she did while living in Klong Toey. When she feels particularly stressed, she has a few neighbors from whom she can borrow money for a few days without interest.

Overall, Khun K is happier in Wat Charapon because "I know that there will not be any chemical explosions and I am no longer afraid of fire." There is nothing which she misses about her old community, but she would like a 24 hour doctor in this area in case of an emergency. She concludes by mentioning "I am proud to have been able to move my family out of that bad area."

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#### WAT CHARAPON CASE STUDY #4

Khun L has been living with his wife and two daughters for the last three months in their nearly finished new home. The house is a standard two-story and extreme care has been taken with the finishing work. The lower level living area has a stone chip and cement floor with a beautiful, geometric flower design in the center. This work is something that Khun L and his wife are very proud of. The kitchen floor and walls are also carefully tiled. The inside walls still need a coat of paint and the outside needs a little finishing work.

Khun L is a construction worker and carpenter. He has a steady job and goes to different sites as directed by his boss and sometimes will be away from his family for up to three weeks. Although his boss usually picks him up for work, he owns his own motorcycle. His wife now stays at home, but when the economy was better she too would also do construction work when extra hands were needed. Their 16 year-old daughter is in her first year at a commercial college and their 12 year-old daughter attends the

local government secondary school. The family's income has not changed since moving to Wat Charapon. Khun L took a 50,000B loan from the community cooperative in order to build their house and he would like to borrow more but the Housing Authority will not sign the paper for the loan until he gets his sister out of the his old house in Klong Toey. She refuses to leave and when Khun L asked the Port Authority to get her out they told him to call the police, and when he called the police they tell him to call the Port Authority.

Khun L feels that his family is healthier in Wat Charapon because the air is better and the area is less crowded. He does not worry much about his family's health except when it rains a lot he fears they will get colds. In general, he feels that his family stays healthy by not worrying too much and staying out of trouble.

Khun L worries less about fire, burglary, and glue sniffers in Wat Charapon than he did in Klong Toey. But as the economy worsens he fears he will not be given enough work to properly support his family and pay back the loan. Another major concern is that his sister will not get out of his old house in Klong Toey. Overall, Khun L finds it easier to relax in Wat Charapon than it was in Klong Toey. About five or six in the evening he showers and then prays and meditates in his prayer room with all of his Buddha images. He did not have space for such a room in his old house.

Khun L's family chose to move to Wat Charapon because he was tired of living on the Port Authority's land and he was given the option to be a landowner. At first he was not going to come because he was listening to a local NGO which was telling people in Klong Toey that moving to Wat Charapon was a bad choice. But later he decided that Wat Charapon was actually a good decision since he would be given land and because he felt certain that in the end he would lose in court against the Port Authority and end up with nothing. He is now positive that this was a good decision.

Khun L feels the best aspect of living in this community is that the environment is good, it is quieter, it makes his family happier and gives them an opportunity for a good life. He prefers the secondary school here because he felt that in Klong Toey some of the teachers drank and there were bad people in the area around the school. He is proud to have brought his daughter to a better school and proud that she is a good girl.

Khun L states that nothing is worse about Wat Charapon because "the Locks [Klong Toey] are getting worse and worse because only the worst people are left." But, he does wish that Wat Charapon had more schools and a health clinic. Overall, he would not go back to Klong Toey because "everything here is better" and he fears that "if I go back my children will be influenced by bad people and may become one of them."

### **Financial Situation**

Of the families interviewed in Wat Charapon, 60% mentioned that they felt worried, anxious or depressed as a result of financial problems (Chart 6.32). Recall that only slightly over half of the respondents from Wat Charapon were satisfied with the jobs

available to them in and around their community and only 40% with transportation costs.

Similar to the other communities most of the respondents who had financial worries attributed these concerns to the recent decline in the economy and not to their loan repayment or increase in transportation costs. Of the 60% who were worried, anxious or depressed about their financial situation, nearly everyone discussed fear that they would not be able to make their loan payments in the future if the economy continued to decline, but only one man voiced serious concern regarding his current payments. This man who took out a lower than average loan of 50,000B stated "I have never in my life owed money and I am not happy about this." He borrowed the smallest amount possible in order to make his house livable and planned to make improvements as he is able to afford them.

Khun J held a similar philosophy as this man and did not take a loan at all. Her family was able to construct a small house from second hand wood provided by the port and pieces of their old home. She too hoped to improve the home as the family saves more money. The majority of family's took 150,000B loan from the community cooperative at 12% interest in order to build their homes in Wat Charapon.

The fact that so many people were able to not only build a house which was livable like Khun J, but to add amenities such as decorative banisters, nicely tiled floors, awnings and the like indicated that these families are doing better than "just scraping by." One woman whose house was of exceptional quality and complete except for tile and paint on the inside walls stated that "everything about Wat Charapon is even better than we expected...except that the loan money ran out before the house was finished...I just want the house to be finished so that I just have to worry about the loan payments and not additional building costs...that will be better." A woman who was initially worried about taking a loan said, "we would not have come [to Wat Charapon] if we had not been evicted because we did not want to take a loan, but now I am glad that we did." Another respondent stated that "the loan is our biggest problem, but I don't really worry about it too much." A woman who has not had a problem making her payments and has a nicely finished with tiled floors, freshly painted wall and plants decorating her front porch says that she feels uncomfortable when she thinks of their loan, but it makes her very *sabaijai* to own a house and land. Although it may require taking some frugal measures, most of the



families interviewed seemed to be getting by financially and to be extremely proud of their new homes.

Only one family appeared to be in a severe financial bind and they originally did not want to take a loan because they did not want to put themselves further into debt. There problems stemmed from series of difficult experiences as explained in the following vignette.

Khun CK has been living with her adult daughter and nephew in Wat Charapon for the last two years. Their house is an unsteady looking structure made of secondhand scrap wood and the window spaces are covered with boards. They have elevated their house on stilts like a traditional Thai home and “when it is windy no one stays upstairs because [they] fear it will fall.” Khun CK’s financial situation has been affected by numerous extremely unfortunate circumstances over the last two years. After their home was burned down during the chemical explosion fire in Rom Glau, the family was given 60,000B as compensation and an opportunity to own a piece of land in Wat Charapon. Just after moving to Wat Charapon Khun CK’s husband became very ill. They used nearly all of this money on his hospital bills, but unfortunately he still died as a result of his illness. Soon after losing her husband, Khun CK’s daughter was struck by a 10 wheel truck while crossing the street in Bangkok. She sustained severe internal injuries and lost part of her intestine. The truck company compensated the family with 100,000B, but the hospital bills have exceeded this amount (Case #15).

As a result the family is embroiled in debt and unless the Housing Authority eases its standards, it is likely that Khun CK and her family will not be able to remain in Wat Charapon.

### **Physical Health**

When asked if they felt that their family was ill more, less or the same amount as people living elsewhere, slightly over half of the respondents felt that their family was ill less often and the rest felt that their family was ill about the same amount as others.

Family’s health concerns were similar to the other communities and included colds for children and thyroid problems, heartburn and atherosclerosis for the older family members. A problem unique to Wat Charapon were infected bug bites in children who enjoyed playing in the sand piles being used for construction.

Fourteen out of fifteen respondents felt that the health of their family had improved since moving to Wat Charapon as a result of the better environment and cleaner air. Nearly everyone made a comment such as “I breath well here and this makes me feel good.” An elderly woman noted that “because I have good mental health here, I feel [physically] stronger than before.” Several mentioned that they felt healthier due to the decreased crowding in Wat Charapon and Khun J commented that “because I have more privacy, I have more air to breath and I feel better.” Another reason often mentioned for feeling healthier is because it is easier to get exercise in Wat Charapon by strolling or riding bicycles on the neighborhood streets which have very little traffic. Several respondents who either returned to Klong Toey themselves for work or had family members who did were still concerned about he health risks associated with the pollution.

Although there is a health center located approximately 5 kilometers from Wat Charapon, the majority of those interviewed have either not needed health services since moving to the community or they have returned to Klong Toey to receive services from their previous facility. Only one respondent had gone to the local government health center, but commented that the doctor was nice and the cost similar to his clinic in Klong Toey. Others felt that this center is too far and difficult to access, especially at night, and wish that there were a clinic in the community. One respondent with a small child stated with such a facility “we would have a place to go if someone gets sick at night...now only people with cars do not have to worry.” This sentiment was also shared by families who had elderly members who feared that the distance would be too great in an emergency situation. Only one person interviewed had used the mobile clinic, but was satisfied with the service she had received.

When asked how they might improve the health of their family six respondents either did not know what they could do or believed that there was nothing they could do saying, “if you are sick, you are sick.” Four thought that their families would be more healthy if they exercised more. One woman said, “I would like to do exercises, but I don’t know how.” Over half of those interviewed felt that the community would be more healthy if there was a health center in Wat Charapon and several noted that the community has set aside space for such a facility to be built. Six respondents felt that the community was

thought of his new house and the possibility that he may actually be given the land permanently was the thought that makes him most *sabaijai*.

When they are feeling stress, fourteen of the fifteen community members interviewed find it easier to relax in Wat Charapon than it was in their previous communities. Nearly everyone attributed this to the better environment of Wat Charapon and the fact that they find it to be peaceful and quiet. Most respondents mentioned that when they needed to relax, they either talked with their neighbors or took a walk around the community. Khun I is happy living in Wat Charapon because there were not as many motorcycles passing by her house. She said, while reclining on her porch with a friend, that “I am able to chat with neighbors and relax all day in front of my shop.” Khun J was the only person who found relaxing easier in her old community. She noted that even though she was more *sabaijai* in Wat Charapon, she had less time to relax because she now looked after her two grandchildren who were born just before the move. Even the man who worried about his family’s well-being more since moving to Wat Charapon noted that when he needs to relax he goes out walking and chats with neighbors, an activity he finds easier to do in his new neighborhood.

### **Overall Satisfaction with Community**

When asked if they were happy with their decision to move to Wat Charapon, 93.3% of participants responded positively. They were also asked to discuss the ways in which living in Wat Charapon was different than how they expected it to be. Only the man who was worried about the land being taken away by the Port Authority or Housing Authority stated that he was not yet sure if it was a good decision or not. He also noted that before coming to the community he thought that there would be more people moving here. Another woman mentioned that she did not realize that it would cost 40B to get to the main road. Everyone else felt that living in Wat Charapon was either exactly as they expected it would be or better. Several families mentioned that they had been able to come to see the place before making their decision. One woman commented, “It is the same as I expected. I thought life would be better and it is.” Another more enthusiastic respondent said, “I think it is even better than I expected...I am happy that I own this house and land and there is

less glue sniffing and heroin and less motorcycles...before I lived by the railroad tracks and the trains shook my house.”

Reasons given for choosing to move to Wat Charapon were varied. Some felt that their old communities were too crowded and others saw it as a way to be forever free of their eviction problems. One man commented simply, “I thought it would be good not to be a squatter anymore.” Another woman expressed the views of many when she stated, “I was sick of drunk people and heroin users all over the place and especially on the path in front of my house [in Klong Toey].” Others saw it as a way to get their children away from influence of drugs and the dangers of fire.

Thirteen of those interviewed stated that they are more happy living in Wat Charapon than they were in Klong Toey and two felt that they were equally happy in the two communities. No one wished to return to their old community and most made comments like Khun L when he stated, “everything here is better and if I went back I would be afraid that my children will be influenced by bad people” or Khun K when she commented “I am proud that I have been able to move out of the bad area.” Others did not want to return to a place with a high risk of both fire and eviction or they were “just fed up with the slum.”

When respondents were asked what they felt to be the best aspect of living in Wat Charapon to be, the most common responses were the better environment, the decreased risk of fire, much less drug use, and being a landowner. An older respondent commented that Wat Charapon “makes me feel happy because it does not feel like Bangkok and sometimes reminds me of my hometown.” She moved to Bangkok from the Northeast province in 1952. The respondent with the most worries about his loan payments felt that the best aspect of living in Wat Charapon is that he does not have to worry about fire all of the time. While living in Klong Toey he had to remove all of his belongings from his house three times because there were fires moving toward the area. Once a fire stopped burning three houses from his. For Khun J one of the best aspects of living in Wat Charapon is that “I own land which can be kept for my children and grandchildren.”

Respondents tended to agree that the worst aspect of Wat Charapon was the bad road leading to the community and the resultant lack of transport and the fact that there is no

doctor in the community. One respondent who had continued working as a cleaner for a company in Klong Toey and complained that her job begins early and, therefore, she has to get up at 4:30 in the morning in order to get there on time. Even so she would not like to return to Klong Toey because "it is much better here even if less convenient" (Case #10). Another woman who still vended small cosmetic items from a basket on the street of Bangkok, said that she could not think of anything worse about Wat Charapon "because there is nothing good about Klong Toey...I only stayed there because I had nowhere else to go." Several respondents missed being able to return home whenever they wanted. At night it was difficult to return to Wat Charapon even by taxi because one woman explained, "after 7:00 at night the taxis will not come here because there is too much crime against the taxi drivers if they go off the main, busy roads." The two women who had shops which provided the entire income for their household both felt that the worse aspect of the community was that they could not sell as much as they had previously.

Nearly half of those interviewed could not think of any social problems in Wat Charapon. For example, Khun I was not aware of any social problems in the community and was pleased that she could hang her clothes outside to dry without them being stolen. "In Klong Toey even underwear would be stolen if I left it out!" Several participants, including Khun I, felt that there are very few social problems because the community leader and police patrolled the area daily and because the community leader often spoke to the community over the loud speaker saying that there will be no drugs or glue sniffers allowed in Wat Charapon. The other half thought that drug use was the biggest problem, but the consensus was that such activity was much, much less than in Klong Toey. One woman stated that she feared that drug use will become more common in the community as more people move here.

Community members were asked to make suggestions about ways in which their community could be improved. Several people want there to be telephone lines to the community so that they can call their relatives who still live in Klong Toey. Respondents who have small children all felt that the community would be much better if there were a kindergarten. Eight respondents mentioned wanting a health center in the community and several want the road to be improved so that more buses would come into the community.

One the benefits of Wat Charapon is that land has been set aside as sports fields and play areas. One man suggested that the community should have a football, badminton equipment and other sports equipment for the children to play with. A woman respondent suggested that some organization should come in and provide work which women and the elderly can do in their homes like sewing or flower making.

## JET SIP RAI

### *Description*

The Klong Toey community of Jet Sip Rai is the result of a land-sharing agreement made twelve years ago between the Port Authority and many small communities totaling 700 families who lived on land scattered throughout the port area (Appendix A, Map #4 and #6). The Port Authority agreed to provide a 70 rai (*jet sip rai*) piece of land in exchange for the land on which these communities were scattered. In addition, the Port Authority agreed to a contract guaranteeing that the occupants would not be evicted for at least 20 years. The communities were then forced to leave their original homes and rebuilt in Jet Sip Rai. The swampy land on which this community was rebuilt was first filled by the Port Authority and was considered by most to be an improvement to the stagnant waste water on which their previous homes had been constructed.

Jet Sip Rai is a large community of approximately 1000 houses. It is estimated by community leaders and local NGOs that only about 50% of houses are owner occupied. As in the other communities discussed a large group of houses at the center of the community have been purchased or mortgaged from their original owners by the mafia. The community is arranged in a grid-like pattern and divided by two roads and 4-5 foot cement pathways between houses. At the center of the community is a large open space which serves as a market area, meeting place and a parking lot. Many people use edges of parking lot for a variety of purposes including clothes drying, storage, vending goods. Several families have constructed small bamboo and scrap wood shelters for sitting and chatting. There are several other smaller open spaces which are designated as playgrounds and trees surround many of the open spaces. Two drainage canals which are about 4 feet wide and waste deep run through the center of the community and are connected to the smaller drains which line the pathways between houses. Many families have constructed small covered platforms over the larger drains and use this as additional storage space or space for a small business operation. Jet Sip Rai can be thought of as several small communities within a larger community in the sense that both the cleanliness, quality of housing structure and attitude of community members appears to change from *soi* to *soi*.

The houses are approximately 4 feet apart and were constructed with wood provided at a low cost by the Human Development Center. Without this assistance many families would have had to take out loans in order to rebuild their homes. Although there is some variation in the quality of the houses in Jet Sip Rai the range is less broad than in Wat Charapon. A 'standard' house has a wooden frame, with cement and wood walls, a metal roof and slatted glass windows. Most houses are built so that a small open space is available between the front of the house and the pathway and many families have enclosed this area with a small fence in order to create a small courtyard. In addition, many families have planted trees or bougainvilleas along the pathways.

Families living in Jet Sip Rai have to pay a rental fee for the use of the land. The cost varies from 120B to 350B per lot depending on its size and location. The lots on the main roads have a higher rent because they are desirable locations for small businesses.

The Housing Authority provided the new community with cement pathways, drainage, water and electricity. Often the electrical wires dangle precariously over the pathways which are wide enough to allow access to fire equipment but not vehicles. Four pick-up trucks equipped with hoses and other fire fighting equipment have been donated to the community by local politicians. There is one extinguisher per *soi* and crystal balls have been distributed throughout the community by the community leader.

The local schools are all located less than 1 kilometer from Jet Sip Rai and the nearest health center is approximately 3 kilometers from the community. The nearest bus stop for the residents of Jet Sip Rai is about a five minute walk. This is the same line used by the residents of the Rong Moo Flats and has only one bus which passes. One kilometer further is the main thoroughfare of Rama IV which has many buses running toward most every destination.

### ***Demographic Information***

Fifteen households living in Jet Sip Rai were randomly selected for interview. The majority of respondents were women (86.6%) and the average age was 43 years-old. The mean number of years which the respondents have been living in Bangkok is 29 years. Prior to eviction and relocation to Jet Sip Rai the average family had been living on Port



Authority land in their previous community for approximately 19 years. If the twelve years they have been living in Jet Sip Rai is included, the number of years they have been living on the Port Authority land is 31 which is roughly equivalent to the other communities. The majority of families interviewed have been living in Jet Sip Rai for 12 years.

The average household interviewed has 7.4 members with a mean self-reported income of 7,500B per month. The mean monthly expenditure for utilities was 815B and monthly rent payments ranged between 120B to 350B (see Chart 6.29). Due to dramatic changes in the Thai economy over the last twelve years, these values cannot be compared to income and expenditure prior to relocation. Four of the households selected were headed by women, but two of the four had adult sons living with the family.

### ***Results-- Part I: Community Satisfaction***

The following section discusses the participants satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of their living situation. Only the percentage satisfied is provided, but the remaining percentage have described themselves as dissatisfied with the particular factor. Also included is whether the respondent feels that the aspect is better or worse than in their previous community. Since many respondents felt that a particular factor was the same in their old and new communities, the combined total of the percentage of better and worse responses does not total 100%. The difference can be assumed to have found the quality the same in both their old and new communities.

### **Housing Structure**

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
QUALITY OF HOUSE	86.6	93.3	6.6
SIZE OF HOUSE	100	80	6.6
BATHING FACILITIES	86.6	93.3	6.6
TOILET FACILITIES	86.6	93.3	6.6
KITCHEN FACILITIES	86.6	80	6.6

***Chart 6.22 Jet Sip Rai***

The majority of respondents living in Jet Sip Rai were satisfied with both the quality and the size of their home. Nearly everyone felt that the move to Jet Sip Rai provided an opportunity for home improvement in terms of the size and quality of the house's structure, the bathroom, the toilet and the kitchen facilities.

Several families stated that although they are basically happy with their houses, they wished that they had more money for maintenance or improvements. A male respondent said that his family was happy with the facilities, but the pipes from his bathroom and toilet are often blocked and did not drain properly. One woman wished "that there was more space between houses for better privacy and also so that if there is a fire only one house will burn instead of the whole area." Many of the families were pleased with their home, but wished that it was on their own land so that they did not have to fear that all of their efforts at improvement may be for nothing when their contract with the Port Authority runs out in only eight more years (Case #6).

Of the two respondents who were dissatisfied with the quality of their homes, one woman complained that because her house was on the edge of the community the "all the noise and vibrations from the Port Authority's machinery have caused my house to crack." Another finds herself in a difficult financial situation and even though she had lived in Jet Sip Rai for 12 years, she had not been able to finish her house or even bring it up to the quality of her previous home (Case #15).

### Community Infrastructure

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
WATER SUPPLY	80	80	13.3
DRAINAGE	53.3	86.6	13.3
PATHWAYS	66.6	80	6.6
FIRE PROTECTION	60	66.6	13.3

*Chart 6.23 Jet Sip Rai*

Twelve of the fifteen families interviewed were satisfied with the water supply in Jet Sip Rai and the same percentage also felt that the water supply was superior to that in their previous community. Those who were dissatisfied spoke of reduced pressure and one family's problem began when a pipe near their house began leaking several months ago, but no one had come to fix it. Nine of the fifteen families interviewed drank either bottled or filtered tap water. The remaining six families either boiled their tap water or allowed it to settle for several days before drinking.

The majority of respondents felt that the drainage system in Jet Sip Rai was superior to that in their previous community, but only 53.3% were satisfied with the present situation. The actual problem was not the mechanics or quality of the drainage system, but the fact that they are constantly clogged with rubbish. Several families commented that when it rained the pathways often flood, but the degree of this problem seemed to vary from area to area within Jet Sip Rai. The families living in the areas where the drains tend to flow well, generally got together for cleaning out drains and picking up rubbish from the pathways. One woman felt particularly proud of her area and reported that "my neighbors and I keep our *soi* cleaner than any other in the community." Unfortunately, many areas were not so well-organized and plastic bags, detergent boxes and candy wrappers turn the drainage canals into stagnant pools more suited to mosquito-breeding than flood prevention. Several community members were grateful that the community leader and volunteers come around monthly to clear the rubbish out of the main drainage canals though they do not usually clean the smaller drains which pass in front of individual homes. Community members who are not helping usually provide the volunteers with food and water.

Most of the individuals interviewed (80%) felt that the pathways themselves are better than in their previous communities. Many were happy with the pathways provided by the Housing Authority and one respondent commented that "these pathways are much better than in my old community because before they were wooden and I often feared that they would collapse as I passed over them." Several of those who were dissatisfied with the pathways actually were displeased by their lack of cleanliness. Comments included "its better that the pathways are cement and not wooden planks, but now they are always

covered with rubbish” and “there used to be a lot more dog crap on the pathways, but the district office came and took away a lot of stray dogs and now there is less, but there are still too many filthy dogs around.” Those who were dissatisfied with the actual pathways felt that they were not wide enough. One woman complained that if a motorcycle came by you had to stop and squeeze to one side so that it could pass and another said that “people often fall into the drains especially when they are drunk.”

Sixty-six per cent of families felt that the fire protection available in Jet Sip Rai was superior to that that of their previous community, but only 60% felt that these protective measures were sufficient. Most respondents felt that the pathways provide adequate access for fire equipment, but one man worried that accessibility was compromised for those families living on the main roads passing through the community because of too many parked vehicles and piles of rubbish. Many families, including several who was basically satisfied with the fire prevention, complained about the method of distribution for crystal balls and extinguishers. The general belief was that instead of strategic distribution, the community leader simply gave these fire prevention measures to his friends. This belief had a tendency to make people feel less safe than they might have if they believed the crystal balls and extinguishers were distributed fairly and in defined places. Several respondents commented that they did not even know where these items were located on their *soi*. Another complaint was that “after a small fire many months ago in this area our extinguishers were used up and they still have not been refilled.” One man expressed the feeling of many who described themselves as satisfied with the communities fire prevention means when he stated that “being satisfied and feeling 100% safe are not the same thing.”

**Rubbish and Pests**

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
RUBBISH DISPOSAL	46.6	93.3	6.6
RUBBISH AROUND COMMUNITY	46.6	73.3	20
CONTROL OF RODENTS	13.3	53.3	26.6
CONTROL OF MOSQUITOS	20	73.3	13.3

*Chart 6.24 Jet Sip Rai*

The system of rubbish collection has recently changed in Jet Sip Rai, leaving many formerly satisfied community members dissatisfied. Up until about one week prior to the interview community members could put their household rubbish in a basket outside their door and the district office would collect it. Now the district no longer comes to individual houses and the community members are supposed to separate their rubbish into wet and dry and put the rubbish in either the green or yellow containers at the end of their *soi*. In addition, if they carry their dry rubbish to the community leader's house, he will give them one egg for their efforts. Most respondents felt that they now have to carry their rubbish too far and one woman complained that people did not dispose of their rubbish properly and they got rubbish all around the bin area. A woman who was basically still satisfied with the system worried that "people who are lazy will empty their rubbish into my basket, so now I just keep it inside."

Less than half of the people interviewed were satisfied with the rubbish around the community, but 73.3% felt that the situation was better than in their previous community. Several of the respondents who felt satisfied spoke of how they work together with their neighbors to keep their *soi* clean. One woman matter-of-factly told us that "when I go out and see rubbish in front of my neighbor's house, I knock on their door and say, 'The pathway is dirty, please clean up.'"

Those who were dissatisfied generally felt unhappy with how those around them are dealing with their rubbish. One woman expressed the general sentiment when she says, "before I used to always pick up the area around my house and put the rubbish in the bin, but no one else does it so I just stopped because it was a waste of my time." Another respondent said with disgust, "people are just dirty...I live near an empty lot and many people just dump their rubbish there. I complained to the community leader and he put up a sign which says not to dump rubbish there, but people still do it and when it rains it really stinks." Other complaints revolved around the new system of rubbish disposal, "as people carry their rubbish to the bins they drop their trash all over the pathways and don't bother to pick it up." Finally, one woman complained that "the renters across from my house throw their laundry water out of their upstairs window and it splashes into my house...once I was giving food to a monk and told them to stop, but they poured the water

anyway and got the monk wet too!”

Nearly everyone living in Jet Sip Rai felt that there were too many rats around the community, but about half felt that there was a reduction in number compared to their last community. Several respondents made a connection between the rubbish problem in the community and the rat problem. Complaints were also made against cockroaches and one woman expressed her sense of defeat by saying “if you spray there will be no cockroaches for about five days and then they all come back again and you have to spray again.”

Three quarters of those interviewed felt that there was a lesser problem with mosquitoes than in their previous community. This was attributed to the fact that their houses are no longer over stagnant water, but were built on a land fill. Most appreciated the fact that the community leader and volunteers came about once a month to spray their houses and the drains, but they were not sure of the efficacy. The three individuals who were satisfied with the control of mosquitoes all lived in areas where the drains were kept relatively free from rubbish and were able to function properly.

## Pollution

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
AIR POLLUTION	66.6	66.6	13.3
DUST AROUND COMMUNITY	40	46.6	33.3
SMELL AROUND COMMUNITY	53.3	46.6	33.3

*Chart 6.25 Jet Sip Rai*

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the level of air pollution in Jet Sip Rai was clearly dependent on where in the community the house is located. Of the five families who were dissatisfied, four lived on either the main roads passing through the community or along the edge of a parking lot. Complaints were related to the traffic passing through the areas and the vehicle exhaust. None of the families who were satisfied with the level of air pollution in the community lived on a main road or at the edge of a parking lot. One woman who was generally satisfied noted that after the chemical explosion several years ago the air

quality was extremely poor for many weeks and numerous people became ill.

A similar pattern was true for the distribution of those satisfied with the amount of dust around the community. Everyone living on a main road or near the parking lot was dissatisfied with the amount of dust in the air. In this case three additional families were dissatisfied, especially during the dry season with the amount of dust blowing over from the Port Authority facility.

Nearly half of the families interviewed were not satisfied with the smells around Jet Sip Rai. Reasons varied and included comments such as “there is a lot of dog shit and dirty animals around making the area smell” and “the drains by my house are always blocked with rubbish and the stagnant water and rubbish stink.” Several other complaints included living near a main community garbage bin and generally bad air from the port industry and motorcycle fumes. Several of those who were satisfied appreciated the fact that they no longer live over stagnant waste water and its accompanying stench.

### Local Infrastructure

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
EDUCATION FACILITIES	100*	33.3	6.6
JOB OPPORTUNITIES	93.3	26.6	6.6
TRANSPORTATION COSTS	100	0	0
MARKET/FOOD BUYING	93.3	66.6	20

\*n=12

*Chart 6.26 Jet Sip Rai*

Nearly everyone interviewed was satisfied with the education facilities, job opportunities and transportation costs associated with living in Jet Sip Rai. In addition, the majority did not feel that their access to these local infrastructures had changed either for the better or the worse with relocation to Jet Sip Rai after being evicted from their old communities.

The one woman who felt that her ability to find work had diminished upon moving to Jet Sip Rai was a casual laborer who earned money by doing odd jobs for people around

the community. She was barely able to make ends meet and noted that, “more people offered me jobs in my old community because I had lived there my entire life and everybody knew me.” Several other people noted that the chance of finding a job while living in Jet Sip Rai were as good as anywhere else but one respondent said with resignation, “these days it is difficult to get a job anywhere in Thailand...in order to get a job you have to know someone on the inside.”

Fourteen of the fifteen people interviewed were satisfied with their access to the market. Jet Sip Rai was a large community and many people had small convenience shops at the front of their homes. Vendors could be seen at any time walking along the pathways pushing carts full of fruit, curries or beverages or with baskets full of Thai sweets or sticky rice. In addition, there was a market located in the open space at the center of the community. Nearly everyone noted that they appreciated having this market so near to their house even though it did not have quite as much variety as the main Klong Toey market. One community member mentioned that only those who purchase food for commercial purposes go to the Klong Toey market. Even though it was only about 4 kilometers away, the distance to the bus stop was too far for many residents to carry their purchases.

**Social Environment**

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% SATISFIED</b>	<b>% BETTER</b>	<b>% WORSE</b>
COMMUNITY NOISE LEVEL	46.6	40	20
COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS	73.3	60	6.6

*Chart 6.27 Jet Sip Rai*

Slightly less than half of the participants living in Jet Sip Rai were satisfied with the level of noise in the community. All of the families living either on a main road passing through the community or at the edge of the parking lot were dissatisfied as a result of traffic noise. One woman who lived in the last row of houses before the Port Authority industrial area complained “I have to listen to trucks and machinery all day...the vibrations from all of the noise has cracked my house.”



More than half of those who were dissatisfied with the level of noise in the community complained of noise created by their neighbors including loud music, people talking loudly or yelling. One woman complained “when it is noisy you can’t tell your neighbors to shut-up or turn down their radio without creating problems.” Another man dissatisfied with his situation did not feel that the level of noise in Jet Sip Rai was any different than the level in his previous community. “When you live in the slum there is just noise everywhere all the time.”

Eleven of the fifteen people interviewed were satisfied with their sense of community togetherness. Several of those who felt that the situation was satisfactory pointed out that they tended to only associate with people in their area. Similar to WKTN, a positive sense of community togetherness was associated with the opinion that the community leaders were effective in guiding the community. Comments such as “the community leader and members are nice and do good work in the community” were common among those who were satisfied with their sense of community.

Those who were dissatisfied rarely made positive comments about the community leadership. One dissatisfied respondent resented the power of the community leader and stated “people are selfish and only think of themselves.” Jet Sip Rai was quite a large community with each sub-section having a somewhat different character. Many of the poorest families live at the back of the community in a row of houses built with assistance by the military because these families could not afford to rebuild their homes after being evicted. One dissatisfied resident who lived in this area believes that the community leaders and police do not patrol her area as much as the other areas and wished that those living near her would be encouraged to work together more often, especially when it come to keeping the drains free from rubbish.

As mentioned previously another aspect of the social environment is one’s sense of safety within that environment. The following chart displays the participants responses to questions regarding violence in the community, their sense of safety when walking alone at night, and their fear of burglary.

<b>JET SIP RAI</b>	<b>% YES</b>	<b>% NO</b>
Do you worry about violence in this community?	33.3	66.6
Do you fear walking around this community alone at night?	53.3	46.6
Do you worry that someone may break into your house?	60	40

*Chart 6.28 Jet Sip Rai*

Although only 33% of those interviewed stated that they worried about violence in their community, but 60% felt that violence commonly occurred in Jet Sip Rai. Comments on the subject varied widely from “no violence ever happens on my soi” to “there is a lot around my house...young people are fighting everyday.” This suggests that the violence occurring in Jet Sip Rai was likely localized to certain areas of the community. Those who did complain of frequent violence made reference to both youth violence and domestic violence. One woman said with resignation, “fighting and arguing within the family occurs everyday...they swear at each other and the whole *soi* can hear, but since it happens everyday there is nothing strange about it and most people don’t worry about it.” While discussing violence during one interview, the seven year-old grandchild of the respondent announced that “grandpa beats up grandma everyday, but she does not fight back” before he could be silenced.

About half of those interviewed who lived in Jet Sip Rai felt safe walking around the community alone at night and about half did not. Those who felt safe made comments such as “I have lived here a long time and am used to the place” and “the lighting around the community is good and many of the shops stay open until late.” Those who did not feel safe were afraid of being mugged or attacked by people who were using drugs or sniffing glue.

Slightly over half of those interviewed were concerned that someone may attempt to breaking-in to their homes. The majority of these respondents had never heard of a burglary in their area, but one woman had her television stolen from her when she was sleeping only two feet away. Several families who did not worry about burglary said that

this is because they did not own anything anyone else would want or that they could rely on their neighbors to watch their houses when they are not home.

### ***Results--Part II: Well-Being of Family***

The following cases are presented in order to provide a more integrated view of how families who were interviewed in Jet Sip Rai feel about their current living situation. The cases are based on interviews with three of the fifteen respondents who participated in the study. These particular cases were chosen in an attempt to represent some of the differing opinions expressed during the interviews. The responses of all fifteen participants will be considered in the discussion which follows the case studies.<sup>9</sup> The discussion will include financial issues, physical health concerns, psychological concerns and overall satisfaction with the community.

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#### **JET SIP RAI CASE STUDY #1**

Khun M lives with his wife and two young children in a two-story house which has been carefully constructed with above average quality materials. The front room of the lower level opens to the outside with a gate and serves as a small convenience store. There is also a small table for eating which is covered by an awning and a telephone for public use at 4B per minute. The house is located on one of the main roads running through the community. This is good for Khun M's business, but also means increased traffic and rubbish.

Khun M and his wife run their shop together and earn about 5000B per month. The family is able to save about 500B per month although the amount has decreased somewhat since moving to Jet Sip Rai because they now have to pay rent. Their two children attend a private primary school and the school bus costs 180B each semester.

Khun M believes that his family's health is better since moving to Jet Sip Rai, but he is concerned that there are too many filthy dogs and dog excrement around which may spread disease to his children. He wishes that his neighbors would keep the areas around their houses cleaner.

Khun M has numerous worries regarding his family's safety. He is afraid that his children may be harmed because there are so many people around his house who use drugs. After 9:00 pm he does not feel that the area is safe. He is concerned that if a fire occurs, the fire equipment will not be able to get close enough to the flames because there are too many cars and too much rubbish piled on the sides of the road. He worries that his

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<sup>9</sup> case studies for all participants can be found in Appendix C

children may be hit by a passing car. Also, he is especially concerned about the mafia and states that "a lot of mafia people control the area...you have to pay to park or whatever and if you don't listen they will beat you up." Khun M says that "all of these things give me bad mental health." He sometimes feels depressed and he is easily irritated because he tends to keep his problems inside. He feels better when he takes action to improve the community by regularly participating in a volunteer neighborhood patrol. When he thinks about all of the problems with his surrounding he feels *mai sabaijai*, but this is the same as in his old community.

Khun M chose to move to Jet Sip Rai because he thought it would be a big improvement over his old community. Unfortunately, he has not found the benefits to be as great as he had hoped, but he still feels that his family is happier in Jet Sip Rai. They have a better quality house and the location allows his shop to be profitable. Regarding his old community he misses the fact that there was less rubbish and many fewer dirty dogs, but the risk of fire was greater and he would not like to go back.

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## JET SIP RAI CASE STUDY #2

Khun N lives in a two-story house of standard quality which is built over two lots. The household consists of 13 family members including her three adult children, their spouses and children along with Khun N's brother and his adult children. The house did not appear to be overly crowded and Khun N stated that the family is satisfied with the size of their home. The bottom level of the house was half enclosed and half open air. During the interview Khun N was sitting in the cool shade of the open air side rocking her grandchild in a hammock and playing with a healthy looking kitten. A cage with a talking bird was hanging overhead.

All of the men in the family work as day laborers in the Port and the women take care of household duties. The children all attend school and Khun N's oldest niece is attending a nearby commercial college. Khun N says that some of her children have their own savings, but as a household there is none.

Khun N feels that her family is healthier than most families. She believes that their health has improved since moving to Jet Sip Rai and sites the reasons as better air, cleaner environment and no waste water under their house. She believes that the community would be even healthier if the neighbors were more clean and everyone would remove the rubbish from the drains more often. Her only concern regarding the health of her family is that as her brother becomes older his chronic joint pain will worsen and may not be able to continue working at the Port.

Khun N's family came to Jet Sip Rai because they did not want to move to the periphery of Bangkok, and they are all happy with this decision. Khun N has no serious problems at the moment and notes that this is generally the true and she is rarely anxious or sad. She feels *sabaijai* because "my children are working and we are not too poor." Her only worry is that one of her grandchildren will be hit by a car passing through

the community because there are more cars here than in her previous community.

Khun N likes living in Jet Sip Rai because she has friendly neighbors and she feels that the community leader and committee members are all nice and do good work for the community. The biggest social problem is the use of drugs and although there are people selling drugs on the corner near her house every morning, she is afraid to do or say anything about it to the officials because she fears that the drug dealers might come and hurt her.

Overall, she is happier in Jet Sip Rai than in her old community and she comments that "when I walks on the pathways here it is easy...in the old community it was a wooden pathway and it was always wet and muddy and dangerous." She says that everything at Jet Sip Rai is better and she misses nothing about her old place.

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### **JET SIP RAI CASE STUDY #3**

Khun O lives with her two young children, two of her brothers, and a nephew. Her husband occasionally comes to stay with them. The families living in Khun O's area of Jet Sip Rai had absolutely no resources to rebuild their home at the time which they were evicted from their previous community. Therefore, the military helped them by providing materials and manpower for reconstruction of small one-story cement houses. There is a particularly abundant amount of rubbish on the pathways and around the houses in this area and there are many flies. Two children around the age of five are playing a game in the rubbish to see who can kill the most cockroaches.

Khun O stays at home taking care of the children and trying to find odd jobs around the community such as washing or cleaning. Her two brothers work as day laborers in the Port. Her husband occasionally provides her with a small amount of money to help take care of the children. Khun O's income is extremely variable and her husband is very unreliable. They have no savings.

Khun O feels that, in general, her family is more healthy than most people, but she does worry about her brother's health because "he is very slim and I does not know what is happening to him." Regarding herself, she sometimes has headaches which she attributes to stress. In general, she has fewer health concerns since moving to Jet Sip Rai because "before we were living in a much dirtier place...our house was over waste water and there were more diseases."

When Khun O and her family were first evicted from their old community, they wanted to move into a Flat but were not given this opportunity. Now she is happy that they moved to Jet Sip Rai because it is closer to both the docks and other business centers.

Khun O's biggest problem at the moment is financial. She found it easier to get work in her old community because she had lived there her whole life and knew everyone. Her family gets by day to day and she

sometimes worries that they will not have enough food to eat. Since moving to Jet Sip Rai she complains that “my husband often disappears, but at least he doesn’t ask for money...he doesn’t usually give us any either.” She is often anxious about these problems and is sometimes depressed. Nothing in her life makes her *sabaijai* because “I have no money, everything I needs to buy is expensive, my husband has left, and my kids don’t listen.”

Khun O says that she is more happy living in Jet Sip Rai because the quality of her house is better and it is a safer place to live because the pathways are more stable. Even so there are many aspects of her old community which she misses. For example she notes that “my old community had more trees and my old neighbors used to stay together and help each other more often...I felt more safe there because I knew everyone.”

One of the worst aspects of living in Jet Sip Rai are that there are a lot of drugs especially around her house where she sees people selling and using nearly everyday. The other negative aspect of living here is that during the rainy season her house sometimes floods all the way up to her knees.

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#### **JET SIP RAI CASE STUDY #4**

Khun P lives with her sister and their five children. The family’s house is built on a double lot and is nearly twice the size of many houses in Jet Sip Rai. The house is of standard quality with a nice tile floor and balcony. The area at the front of the house is enclosed with a carefully constructed cement wall and gate creating a small courtyard where Khun P does laundry. Several large plants decorate the courtyard.

Khun P does laundry for other families as an income-generating activity and her sister works as a cleaner for a local school. All of the children attend local primary and secondary schools. The family does not have any savings and Khun P noted that their expenses increase as the children get older. Khun P and her sister took a loan at 20% interest in order to build their home in Jet Sip Rai, and have paid it back in full.

Khun P does not worry about her family’s health because are rarely ill. She believes that this is because she cooks the family’s food herself and does not usually buy cooked food from vendors. Also, she keeps her house very clean and only drinks water which is boiled. Her only serious health concern is that one of the children will get Dengue fever during the rainy season.

Khun P has several concerns regarding the safety of her family. She comments that “I often sees people I does not know walking by our house and I worries a little bit because there is no husband in the house, only children....so I always keeps the front gate closed.” She also worries that her oldest son who is 14 years-old may be influenced by his peers to try drugs. Finally, she worries about her children being in an accident while taking the bus to school.

The family’s biggest problem at the moment is financial. Khun P

tries not to worry about this too often, but sometimes it makes her feel depressed. She thinks about her financial problems more often than she did in her previous community because the economy was better at that time, she did not have to pay rent there, and her children were younger so they incurred less expenses. When she is feeling upset she goes to temple and talks to the monks about her problems or thinks about her children who make her feel *sabai jai*.

Khun P's family decided to move to Jet Sip Rai after they were evicted from their old community because the other possible alternatives were too far from the rest of their family some of whom lives in the Rong Moo Flats. Khun P is happy living in Jet Sip Rai because her neighbors are close by and she feels that she would have people to turn to if there was a problem. She prefers Jet Sip Rai to her old community because the road and pathways are much better. The worst aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai is that there is not yet a good cleaning system. The area is not as clean as it should be and too many people still litter. She sees the communities biggest social problems as glue sniffing and heroin.

### **Financial Situation**

Sixty percent of families interviewed reported feeling worried, anxious or depressed as a result of financial problems (see Chart 6.32). As noted previously, 93.3% of respondents from Jet Sip Rai were satisfied with the job opportunities available in and around their community and 100% were satisfied with the cost of transportation. Due to the assistance of a local NGO in providing wood at a highly subsidized rate, the majority of families did not need to take a loan in order to rebuild their homes in Jet Sip Rai. The Port Authority also assisted provided vehicles and many community members used some of the wood from the homes which they were being evicted from in order to build their new houses. Several families commented that over the last twelve years they had made improvements to their homes as their incomes allowed. Nearly all of the families interviewed paid between 120B and 170B per month for rent. Three families lived on a main road and pay up to 325B per month.

Similar to the other communities many people blamed their financial woes to the failing economy. One man who was a day laborer in the port complained about the new deep water port down the river in Rayong. Now many goods enter Thailand through this facility and he has noticed a decrease in the amount of labor needed in Klong Toey. Lately,

he was only hired two or three days per week. He was often worried and depressed because his job was neither full time nor predictable and he feared he will not be able to continue providing for his family. The family has to take a loan from a money lender nearly every month in order to meet their monthly expenses. They repay at 2% interest per day.

Although numerous families in Jet Sip Rai mentioned occasionally having to take loans to make ends meet, two families had become particularly unable to escape their indebtedness. One respondent took several loans twelve years ago in order to build her new home in Jet Sip Rai. The interest rates were between 20-30% per month and the family has not yet been able to pay off these loans. The house was exceptionally well built with tiled floors and nicely finished walls but this woman felt a great deal of anxiety because she must make loan payments every month and she fears she will not have enough money to pay for her grandchildren's schooling related expenses.

Another family did not even take a loan to rebuild their house, but had none-the-less become trapped in the cycle of indebtedness which was commonly seen in the slum communities of Klong Toey.

Only one of Khun DK's three adult sons are employed. Both her and her husband earn small and irregular. She complained that "my sons are too lazy. They go out all night long and then sleep all day refusing to do anything...they won't even go buy food." As she said this she glances over to one of her son's who is sleeping on a mattress in front of the television with his clothes on and pillows piled on top of his head. She also mentions that her husband's drinking problem is quite expensive. The family has no savings and they often have to take loans in order to meet their monthly expenses. They have become so embroiled in debt that they have mortgaged the rights to the plot on which their house is build and must make payments each month, as well as pay rent, or they will lose their home. Khun DK's biggest fear is that she may lose her house to the money lenders at any time.

(Case #15)

Khun O's family was also quite financially strained, but they had managed to avoid this cycle of indebtedness by living extremely frugally. Her family gets by "day to day" and she sometimes even worried if they would have enough food to eat, but she rarely, if ever takes a loan. Several of the more financially strained families worried that they may not be able to afford the expense of sending their children to school . One family interviewed had eleven family members who all were supported by two small incomes. As a result the two



youngest children in the household were not able to attend the nearby kindergarten because they could not afford the small fee and the uniforms.

It should be remembered that these cases are at one extreme and that 40% of respondents were not particularly worried about their finances. For example, one woman interviewed has two children who have recently graduated from university and are now working as an engineer and an accountant (Case #10).

### **Physical Health**

Respondents were asked if they felt that their family's were ill more, less or the same amount as people living elsewhere. Nine of the fifteen participants felt that their family was ill the same amount as others and five responded that their family was ill less often than others.

Health concerns mentioned were similar to those in the other communities. Parents were mostly concerned about colds and fevers in children and one woman mentioned that during the rainy season she worries about Dengue fever due to the increased number of mosquitoes. Several families were worried about diseases associated with excessive alcohol use in their male members. Khun O was worried about her brother's health because "he is very slim and I don't know what is happening to him." Another woman, who has already lost two sons to a similar disease, was very worried about her only living son who is in his early thirties. She became very depressed when she thinks about how thin he has become and how he cannot eat anything except ice cubes (Cases #8).

The majority of respondents felt that their physical health had either improved or stayed the same since moving to Jet Sip Rai. Most who felt that their health had improved attributed this to the better environment including no waste water under their houses and less densely spaced houses. The only people who felt that their health had gotten worse since moving to the Flats were older respondents who attributed this decline to their getting older.

Because Jet Sip Rai was located no more than a kilometer from most community members previous homes, everyone utilizes the same health service facilities which they used before the move. All respondents were satisfied with these services, but as in the

other communities most families self-medicated with drugs purchased from the chemist unless the problem was quite serious in order to save money. Several people mentioned that they preferred to go to the nearby health center run by the Human Development Center because it was cheaper and had friendlier service than the government health center, but that it was no longer open. Two out of fifteen families interviewed in Jet Sip Rai had social medical cards. Those who did not have one gave similar reasons to those given in WKTN.

Six of the families interviewed mentioned that they would like to have better health, but they did not know how to achieve this. Others thought that the community should be kept more clean and one man said with frustration that the only way to improve the health of his family would be to move away from this place because the air is so polluted. Another woman mentioned that it would be better if families do not self-medicate, but would go to see the doctor when they are ill. As in the other communities respondents tended to link mental health and physical health. One woman noted that her family would be more healthy if they had more money because then they would have fewer worried and as a result of better mental health, they would have better physical health as well.

### **Psychological Well-Being**

The major worries of those interviewed tended to focus on financial matters and family safety. In addition, several respondents noted that they were beginning to worry about being evicted since their twenty year contract with the Port Authority will now run out in only eight years. One man who is particularly worried about the possibility of eviction mentioned that there are rumors around the community that the Port Authority has already begun offering people money to move out.

Problems associated with financial matters were discussed above and tended to revolve around the declining economy and debt. Those under financial strain often mentioned that their biggest concern was that they may not be able to pay for the costs associated with their children's education. Several mentioned that they worried more about finances in Jet Sip Rai because now they have to make a rent payment which they did not have to pay as squatters in their previous communities. Besides worrying about the physical health of family members who consume too much alcohol, three women discussed

how they would have fewer financial worries if their husbands would drink less and work more.

By far the most commonly reported fear regarding family safety was that someone, especially a child, will be hit by a vehicle passing through the community. One woman stated that cars drive past her house much too fast, and she wished that they could be forced to go slower. The one negative aspect of having wider pathways is that those on motorcycles often behaved as if they were actual roads and passed up and down the narrow space between houses at dangerously high speeds. Several other families mentioned fire, eviction and fear that their children will be influenced to take drugs as their biggest concerns regarding the safety of their family. Khun K worried about all of the above problems and also mentioned fears associated with the local mafia. He had hoped that when he moved to Jet Sip Rai many of these problems would go away and was disappointed when his new community began to have many of the same problems as his old. He noted that “all of these things give me bad mental health.”

Respondents found it difficult to compare the worries they are currently experiencing to the worries they experienced in their previous community because they have been living in Jet Sip Rai for twelve years. In general, those interviewed tended to have fewer fears regarding their family’s safety and more financial concerns because the Thai economy was doing extremely well twelve years ago.

Nine of those interviewed found it easier to relax in Jet Sip Rai than in their previous community. This is attributed to factors such as sturdier houses, more privacy and better environment. All but one of the remaining respondents found it neither more or less easy to relax in their new community.

### **Overall Satisfaction with Community**

When asked if they were happy that they had moved to Jet Sip Rai, 80% of those interviewed responded positively. For example, even with all of Khun O’s worries, he still felt that his family was happier in Jet Sip Rai because they had a better quality house, there was less risk of fire, and he was able to make more profits from the new location of his shop. Khun N was happier in Jet Sip Rai because “when I walk on the pathways it is

easy...in my old community it was a wooden pathway and it was always wet and muddy and dangerous.” One man who was not very happy living in Jet Sip Rai stated that he had no other choice since he was evicted and the Flats would be too small for his family and Wat Charapon is too far from his work. A woman stated that she was not sure if she had made a good decision or not because she was never given an opportunity to see a place such as Wat Charapon. Similarly, another woman mentioned that she was happy here, but not 100% happy because she would have been a landowner if she had been given an opportunity to go to Wat Charapon. Another respondent was not happy because she felt she had no choice given that her husband’s parents insisted that they move here.

Most people stated that they came to Jet Sip Rai because they were evicted and had no where else to go, but it should be remembered that this community is a result of several years of negotiating between the community and Port Authority for a land-sharing arrangement. Several mentioned that they also came because they thought that Jet Sip Rai would be better than their previous community. One respondent said that at the time she was evicted she wanted to move into a Flat, but was not given this opportunity. Now she is happy she moved to Jet Sip Rai because it is conveniently located near the port and other business opportunities.

When respondents were asked what they felt to be the best aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai to be, the most common response was its convenient location. One woman expressed the views of many when she stated, “the houses are not so cramped together and this makes it easier for people to get out if there is a fire.” She was also pleased because the layout of Jet Sip Rai makes it possible for a fire hose to reach her house. Several participants mentioned their friendly neighbors as a positive aspect of the community, but this opinion varied greatly from *soi to soi* with others considering their “unfriendly” or “dirty” neighbors to be the worst aspect of the community. One man stated that he missed the way everyone would socialize and walk around his old community which was much smaller than Jet Sip Rai. Khun O also missed her old neighbors. One woman felt that the best aspect of Jet Sip Rai was that there is less glue sniffing, heroin use and violence than in her previous community, but she still considered drugs to be the communities biggest social problem.

Respondents tended to agree that drug use and dirtiness were the worst aspects of living in Jet Sip Rai. Again, the presence of both of these problems also varied from *soi* to *soi*. Several people complained of drug use by their neighbors and others stated that this is a major community problem, but was not common on their *soi*. Even so there was a general consensus that drug use and drug selling were the biggest social problem in the community. Considering observations made while conducting the interviews, there was as much visible drug use in Jet Sip Rai as in WKTN which is a community known for its drug problem. Those who complained of the dirty surroundings made reference to the ever-present rubbish on pathways and in many of the drains causing them to overflow, but this too seems to be dependent on how organized the particular *soi* is at clean-up. Although there were always school age children roaming around the community during the day, only one woman mentioned that, along with children using drugs, a major problem in the community is truancy. She worried that without an education these children will have no future.

Community members were asked to make suggestions about ways in which their community could be improved. Although two respondents felt that the community was already good enough, the remaining participants all felt that Jet Sip Rai needs to be kept cleaner. Several suggested a more formal system of cleaning and one woman suggested that the community should be broken down into smaller sections each with its own leadership. One of the more frustrated respondents commented that “there is no way to make it better because people are poor and they behave like slum people.” Another participant voiced a similar frustration about the drug problems in the community. “The community would be better if we got rid of the drugs, but these are still slum people and they don’t change and I can’t change them.”

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>WKTN</b>	<b>FLATS</b>	<b>WAT CHARA.</b>	<b>JSR</b>
AGE (YRS.)	45	40	46	43
YRS. in BANGKOK	37	32	36	29
YRS. in PAT	28	26	28	31*
NO. in HOUSEHOLD	4.8	4.6	3.8	7.4
AVE. INCOME	10,500B	11,500B	7,800B	7,500B
AVE. UTILITY COST	600B	560B	570B	815B

*\*12 of those 31 years were in JSR*

*Chart 6.29 OVERVIEW*

<b>OVERVIEW--% satisfied</b>	<b>WKTN</b>	<b>FLATS</b>	<b>WAT CHAR.</b>	<b>JSR</b>
QUALITY OF HOUSE	100	100	93.3	86.6
SIZE OF HOUSE	73.3	86.6	86.6	100
BATHING FACILITIES	73.3	100	100	86.6
TOILET FACILITIES	73.3	100	100	86.6
KITCHEN FACILITIES	60	80	100	86.6
WATER SUPPLY	60	100	66.6	80
DRAINAGE	53.3	100	93.3	53.3
PATHWAYS	100	100	86.6	66.6
FIRE PROTECTION	80	80	26.6	60
RUBBISH DISPOSAL	66.6	93.3	80	46.6
RUBBISH AROUND COMMUNITY	33.3	93.3	80	46.6
CONTROL OF RODENTS	20	100	73.3	13.3
CONTROL OF MOSQUITOS	13.3	93.3	6.6	20
AIR POLLUTION	66.6	86.6	100	66.6
DUST AROUND COMMUNITY	40	66.6	73.3	40
SMELL AROUND COMMUNITY	80	100	100	53.3
EDUCATION FACILITIES	100	76.9*	61.5*	80
JOB OPPORTUNITIES	100	53.3	53.3	93.3
TRANSPORTATION COSTS	100	33.3	40	100
MARKET/FOOD BUYING	100	46.6	86.6	93.3
NOISE LEVEL IN COMMUNITY	60	80	100	46.6
COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS	80	93.3	100	73.3

*Chart 6.30 OVERVIEW*

<b>OVERVIEW--% yes</b>	WKTN	FLATS	WAT CHAR.	JSR
Do you worry about violence in this community?	53.3	13.3	6.6	33.3
Do you fear walking around this community alone at night?	26.6	53.3	20	53.3
Do you worry that someone may break into your house?	60	40	20	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139.9</b>	<b>106.8</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>146.6</b>

*Chart 6.31 OVERVIEW*

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	WKTN	FLATS	WAT CHAR.	JSR
% Worried, anxious or depressed as a result of financial problems:	60	80	60	60
% Ill less than people living elsewhere	33.3	60	53.3	40
% Finding it easier or the same to relax in their new community	NA	93.3	93.3	93.3
% Happy with original community (WKTN) or their decision to move to their new community	86.6	86.6	93.3	80

*Chart 6.32 OVERVIEW*



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this section is to compare the effects of relocation on the communities studied and to discuss how the impact of relocation differed from the impact expected by the both the organizations working with these communities and the literature. A format similar to that used in presenting the individual communities will be followed.

#### *Results--Part I: Community Satisfaction*

The following section will provide a comparison of the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction felt by members of the four communities studied (see Chart 6.30, 6.31 and 6.32). How these comparisons differ from what was expected prior to conducting this study will also be addressed.

#### **Housing Structure**

As discussed in chapter two on relocation, all too often the housing structures provided to families who have been relocated do not meet their personal needs. Those living in the original community of WKTN are satisfied with their housing structures. This is the result of extensive upgrades over the last fifty years which have usually lead to sturdy, two-story homes. Less expected was the fact that the relocated families were also satisfied with the quality of their houses, the size of their house, and the bath, toilet and kitchen facilities. In fact, with respect to the latter three items, those in WKTN were the least satisfied.

One reason for this is that in all three relocated communities, the individuals who

were relocated had other options, so that they had some choice in whether or not to move into their present house. For example, those currently living in the Flats came from WKTN after the fire. Only about fifty percent of families chose to come to the Flats after the fire and the others, who for various reasons did not wish to live in a flat, continued negotiations with the Port Authority and were eventually given permission to rebuild on half of the original land. As a result, families were not forced into a flat, but instead after considering the positive and negative aspects of such a move, accepted the negative with the positive and decided to relocate. Another factor is that those who were not satisfied with the flat, may have decided to sell their right to the lease or sublet the apartment. Even so, all of the families in this study were given their lease directly from the Housing Authority.

Both Wat Charapon and Jet Sip Rai community members were given certain restrictions on house construction along with basic design plans from the Housing Authority, but changes within these restrictions were often made to accommodate a family's needs. For example, if a woman sold food for a living she was free to make her kitchen a larger portion of her house. Similarly, if someone wanted to make the lower level of the house a shop, this was also acceptable. This flexibility contributed to the high level of satisfaction with housing structure and avoided many of the problems which arise when families are forced to live in designs which were not created with them in mind.

A particularly unexpected result was the high degree of satisfaction with the size of the Flats. In fact, both the Flats and Wat Charapon had an 86.6% satisfaction rate with size of house even though houses in Wat Charapon were substantially larger than a flat and the average number of household members was actually slightly lower in Wat Charapon. This can be explained at least in part by whether or not respondents expectations were met. Those who chose to go to a Flat knew the size which their home would be and took this into consideration before deciding to move. Those in Wat Charapon often stated that while their house was larger than in their previous community, they would have liked it to be larger or that they expected to be able to build more with the loan money they had borrowed.

In general, dissatisfaction appears to be more dependent on whether or not one was given a choice and whether the choice meets with their expectations than simply the number

of household members per square foot. The number of household members of families interviewed in Jet Sip Rai was significantly higher than in the other communities and the houses were similar in size to both WKTN and Wat Charapon. Nonetheless, a higher proportion of respondents were satisfied with the size of their house in Jet Sip Rai indicating that the number of members in the household is only one of many factors which contribute to a family's satisfaction with the size of their housing.

A common impression of flats is that they are overcrowded and lack privacy. This was not found to be the case in the Rong Moo Flats. Of the fifteen families interviewed no one complained about the density of people living in the building and many mentioned increased privacy as a benefit of the Flats.

### **Community Infrastructure**

The majority of those interviewed in all four communities were satisfied with the basic infrastructure, such as water supply, drainage, pathways and fire protection. Relocation projects are often notorious for failing to provide such basic infrastructure even after families have moved to the new sites, but this was not the case in the three relocated communities studied. In fact, the land on which both Jet Sip Rai and Wat Charapon is built was filled as opposed to WKTN which is built on an unfilled swamp. Although the level of satisfaction with drainage appears to be low in Jet Sip Rai, it should be recalled that this was mostly a result of dissatisfaction with the rubbish which accumulates in them and blocks the flow of water. In addition, in these cases the Housing Authority provided a decent water supply, electricity and pathways at all relocation sites as well.

The only factor which was seriously lacking was fire protection in Wat Charapon. Although all community members interviewed in Wat Charapon expressed a greater sense of safety from the risk of fire as compared to their previous communities, the risk is still large and the impact of a fire would be devastating to the new community. It is essential that the Housing Authority include a means of functional fire protection as basic infrastructure in any relocation project.

## **Rubbish and Pests**

When families were relocated out of the slum communities (to the Flats or Wat Charapon) their levels of satisfaction with rubbish disposal and rodents were significantly increased. The rubbish problems in the slum communities, WKTN and Jet Sip Rai, appear to stem from several factors. Both the high density of housing and lack of any organized system of rubbish clean-up play significant roles in the problem. A low sense of unity with one's immediate neighbors also appears to contribute. The areas in Jet Sip Rai with the greatest amount of rubbish were the ones where neighbors had not organized a system of rubbish clean-up and where respondents tended to voice the greatest feelings of antagonism towards their neighbors. Common to all communities was the desire for defined rules around rubbish clean-up. People do not mind cleaning as long as others clean too.

There is also an inconsistency between individuals' desire for a clean community and their actions. Nobody wants rubbish to cover the pathways or fill the drains around their community, but littering itself does not appear to be seen as a 'bad' thing to do. Commonly during an interview a community member would not make a connection between their complaints about the rubbish around their house and the fact that their children were, at the same moment, dropping candy wrappers or plastic bags on the ground. People do not appear to connect their own littering with the larger problem of rubbish in the community. Although the government has recently begun a public service campaign to discourage littering throughout Bangkok, this effort does not appear to have yet reached the slum communities.

In all communities there were successful examples of organized clean-ups which tend to be on holidays. The majority of community members participate and those who are not cleaning often provide food or drinks to those cleaning. The desire for cleanliness in these communities was nearly ubiquitously expressed and many community members clearly stated a desire to be organized. The literature discusses numerous examples of communities coordinating to effectively achieve environmental clean-up and the communities in this study appear to already have many of the elements needed for success. They need only to organize (Anzorena p.102 / Ard-am 1991a, p.33).

The only community which seemed to be free of a mosquito problem was the Flats.

Wat Charapon is build near many rice patties which tend to attract mosquitoes and the two communities within Klong Toey have drainage problems which lead to excessive numbers of mosquitoes.

### **Pollution**

A similar pattern occurs with respect to air pollution, dust and smells around the community. Those families who were relocated outside of the slum communities, the Flats and Wat Charapon, were generally more satisfied with these factors than those who live in either WKTN or Jet Sip Rai. 100% satisfaction with the air quality in Wat Charapon is not surprising because the community is located away from the pollution of Bangkok, but the high level of satisfaction with both the level of air pollution and the general environment of the Flats was not expected. The Rong Moo Flats are certainly improvements over many of the flats constructed in the past. Not only does each flat have a private bath, toilet and kitchen, the Rong Moo Flats were designed with ventilation in mind and are much cooler and breezier than others flat designs.

### **Local Infrastructure**

The study found a high degree of satisfaction among interviewees regarding education facilities, job opportunities, transportation costs and food purchasing in both the original community of WKTN and the relocated community of Jet Sip Rai whose residents moved very near their old community through the process of land-sharing.

As was expected, those living in Wat Charapon expressed dissatisfaction with both the job opportunities available around their community and the cost of transport since they are located on a poorly maintained dirt road down with little public transport. What was not expected was that the level of dissatisfaction would be similar among residents of the Rong Moo Flats which are located on Port Authority land less than two kilometers from Jet Sip Rai.

Dissatisfaction with the availability of job opportunities in both communities was mostly expressed by women who were no longer able to earn as much money vending food. Most of the women in Wat Charapon attributed the problem to the fact that the

community was not yet full, and expected the situation to improve as more families continue to arrive. On the other hand, the problem in the Flats is in large part a result of a Housing Authority policy which restricts vending in the area around the buildings. It is unlikely that the situation here will improve unless the Housing Authority becomes more flexible in its policy. It should be noted that many families relocated to Jet Sip Rai feel that their selling power has increased as a result of their relocation, but they have been living in the community for twelve years and have had time to rebuild their clientele.

The dissatisfaction in the Flats can be explained in part by the fact that residents moved there from WKTN which is very conveniently located as demonstrated by the 100% satisfaction in all areas of local infrastructure. Expectations may also play a role in this case. Just as families were generally satisfied with the size of their flat because that was what they expected when they chose to move to Rong Moo, those who chose to move to Wat Charapon did so knowing that transport would be a problem. Those interviewed in Wat Charapon expressed a dislike for the commute, but were generally accepting of this sacrifice in order to gain the other perceived benefits of living in Wat Charapon. On the other hand, those interviewed in the Flats tended to complain more often about their transport situation. Perhaps this is because those moving to the Flats did not expect transportation to be as limited as it is. Additionally, because of the low cost of the morning and evening bus to Klong Toey from Wat Charapon (6B each way), many living in the Flats experienced a similar increase in cost due to an additional bus transfer to get to their destination.

The transport issue was a major contributing factor to lower (but still a substantial majority) level of satisfaction with education facilities in both the Flats and Wat Charapon and with the market for those living in the Flats. Surprisingly, there was a high level of satisfaction with the market and food buying in Wat Charapon. This is due to the ingenuity of the private sector which sees Wat Charapon as a paradise of consumers and have literally brought the market to the community.

### **Social Environment**

Included in the social environment is noise level in the community, feelings of

community togetherness and sense of safety in the community. As expected, families were highly satisfied with the level of noise in Wat Charapon since it is located away from the constant noise of the city. Unexpected was the high level of satisfaction felt by those living in the Flats which are generally thought to be not only overcrowded, but very noisy. On the contrary, 86.6% of those interviewed in the Flats felt that the noise was much less than they experienced in WKTN and much of this reduction was a result of less noise made by neighbors as opposed to 'city' noises.

In many cases presented in the literature, relocation of families has resulted in a situation where "well-established social networks and social support systems in the slum or other communities affected by the relocation scheme have been destroyed, and, on the other hand, new social networks and social supports have not yet been established" (Tai p.18). Fortunately, there was not such a deleterious result in the communities studied in Klong Toey. In the Flats and Wat Charapon 93.3% and 100% of respondents, respectively, were satisfied with the cohesiveness of their new community. Both those interviewed in the Flats and Wat Charapon had been living in their new community for approximately one year. Both communities had suffered an ideological split in their previous communities over the issue of whether or not to relocate and, as a result, neither community moved to the new site in its entirety. But families did move as sub-groups of their former communities. Many respondents mentioned having the same neighbors as previously and relying on these neighbors advice about problems or even small loans without interest. While there were several people in both communities who expressed missing old neighbors or having family members living closer, only one respondent noted a sense of deep loss as a result (Khun F from the Flats).

Many of those in Wat Charapon spoke of how easy it was to talk to their new neighbors and it appears that the process of building new houses together has helped in forging new bonds. In addition, those who chose to move to Wat Charapon clearly have certain inherent similarities such as a desire to be a landowner or to get their children away from drugs. Although those in the Flats had lived there the same length of time as those in Wat Charapon, there were more comments about not yet knowing their neighbors as well as they would like, but this was not to the point of dissatisfaction. This is most likely due

to the less open nature of flat living compared to a neighborhood like Wat Charapon.

In the original community of WKTN slightly over half of those interviewed worried about violence in the community, but only 26.6% worried about walking alone at night. Notably, the pattern was reversed in all three relocated communities. In these areas respondents generally worried more about walking alone at night, but less about violence in the community. This implies a sense of security which comes from living in a community for a long time and was expressed by many in WKTN who stated that they do not fear walking alone at night because they “are used to the place.” Even so, those in Wat Charapon felt the most safe all categories.

Previous studies in the slums of Klong Toey have reported that domestic violence does occur, but is not very common. Although this study did not specifically ask about domestic violence, the topic was commonly brought up by participants particularly in WKTN and Jet Sip Rai indicating a growing problem which must be further addressed.

## ***Results--Part II: Well-Being of Family***

### **Financial Situation**

Financial concerns were commonly cited as the greatest worry of the respondents in all four communities. There were numerous examples of families trapped in the viscous cycle of indebtedness in each community. This problem will be further discussed below under recommendations.

Interestingly, financial concerns were greatest in the Flats and not the in Wat Charapon as would be expected. In both the Flats and Wat Charapon families have similar concerns regarding decreased opportunities for income generation, but in Wat Charapon the majority of families have taken loans from the community cooperative and must pay back 1,600B per month whereas those in the Flats have rental payments of only 300B per month. In addition, those interviewed in the Flats had a slightly higher average monthly income at 11,500B per month for an average of 4.6 household members compared to Wat Charapon with an average monthly income of 7,800B with an average of 3.8 household



members. This also disproves a commonly held believe that “those who move to Wat Charapon are all rich.”

Many factors contribute to this anomaly. One explanation is that families are more willing to be frugal and bear the burden of financial insecurity if they feel that they are will gain equity for themselves and their children. As Khun J said “the best aspect of Wat Charapon is that I now own land which can be kept for my children and grandchildren.” What is ‘affordable’ given a guarantee of land tenure may be very different from what is ‘affordable’ when the risk of eviction is ever-present. Also, families are more willing to be frugal in order to meet a mortgage payment which results in ownership than to make a smaller rent payment that does not result in anything except more rent payments.

Also contributing to the fact that those in Wat Charapon do not feel substantially greater financial strain than those who were not relocated, is the fact that financial burdens specific to unrelocated communities are often not fully appreciated. Although families were not specifically asked if they had ever personally lost their home or belongings in a fire, this scenario was described by many of those interviewed in Wat Charapon. Some had experienced repeated fires. For a low-income family, a fire can be devastating. This may lead to the unavoidable borrowing of money from illegal money lenders who charge up to 20% interest per month. This is in contrast to the legal loans taken by those in Wat Charapon through the community cooperative which are at rate of 12% interest per *annum*. Besides loss of property through fire, many families lose all of the equity they have put into their houses when they are evicted.

An explanation for the high financial burden felt by those in the Flats despite their higher than average income is that many are still recovering from the loss of their possessions in the December 1995 fire in WKTN. It should also be noted that those interviewed in Jet Sip Rai had comparable incomes to those in Wat Charapon, but nearly twice the number of household members, it was expected that they would feel significantly greater financial strains. The fact that the community has been there for twelve years means that many have already completed payment on the loans which they took to assist with their house construction, but more significant is that the majority of community members were provided with highly subsidized wood for their homes from the Human Development

Center.

### **Physical Health**

Respondents perception of the physical health of their family members corresponds with their degree of satisfaction with the level of pollution around their community. The majority of those relocated in all three communities, especially the Flats and Wat Charapon, felt that their health had improved since moving to the new community as a result of more sanitary conditions. Many respondents attributed their better sense of physical health to the fact that their mental health had improved since relocating. Three health related issues were brought up by respondents during interviews which warrant further attention. These include access to social medical card, the ubiquity of cigarette smoking, and the family's perception of the risk of HIV/AIDS in their own family. These issues will be discussed below.

### **Psychological Concerns**

Much of the medical and development literature reports that relocation can be a very disturbing experience. "The relocation process usually results in the disruption of community ties, social networks and established life-styles, which in turn cause serious socio-psychological and financial problems to the relocated population and the community" (Tai p.14). Although certainly not discounting that such consequences of relocation may be the norm, such an impact was not seen in the three relocated communities presented in this paper.

Certainly there are individuals who suffered serious socio-psychological consequences as a result of the relocation process (see Khun F of the Flats, Khun O of Jet Sip Rai, Case #15 Wat Charapon), but such serious effects were not expressed by the vast majority of those interviewed. In all three relocated communities the majority were satisfied with their sense of community and 93.3% of respondents found it the same or easier to relax than in their previous community. It must also be noted that several respondents in the original community of WKTN voiced serious socio-psychological concerns with respect to circumstances within their own unrelocated community.

### **Overall Satisfaction with Community**

The majority (86.6%) of those living in WKTN were happy living in this community, but less expected was the finding that 53.3% of respondents stated that they considered the option of a piece of land in Wat Charapon to be an attractive option. In addition, the overwhelming majority of those interviewed in the relocated communities were happy with their decision to move to the new community. As discussed above under housing structure, one reason for this high degree of satisfaction is that no one was forced to move to either the Flats or Wat Charapon and those in Jet Sip Rai spent years negotiating with the Port Authority for an option satisfactory to both parties. But this does demonstrate that these particular relocation projects have managed to meet the needs of a significant number of families.

Participants were first asked to discuss the best aspects of their community, then the worst aspects. The question as to whether or not they were happy with their decision to move was asked after this discussion in an effort to help the respondents to consider both the positive and negative in formulating their answer. Responses generally indicated that the respondent finds the positive aspects of the community to outweigh the negative. For example, a respondent often stated that they do not like having to take a loan in order to rebuild their house, but they would much rather worry about a loan than the constant risk of fire which was part of their daily life in the previous community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated earlier the UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has labeled forced eviction is “a gross violation of human rights.” Eviction should always be a last resort. In Klong Toey, for every fifty homeowners who are relocated, some successfully and others unsuccessfully, there are approximately fifty renters who are evicted and left with little means and no support in finding alternative shelter in a city known for its scarcity of affordable housing. But the harsh reality is that there will continue to be situations where eviction is seen as unavoidable. The following are recommendations for making the relocation process more successful when there are no other options.

### *Don't Generalize*

All slum residents are not alike. This may seem obvious, but there is a tendency among both those working with slum communities and the community members themselves to make comments beginning with “slum people are....” Those interviewed for this study were an extremely heterogeneous group. Some were poor while others were economically secure. Some were willing to make economic sacrifices in the present in order to have a more secure future and others more highly valued security in the present. Some were extremely happy in their communities and others could not wait to leave. Some valued convenience over peace and quiet and others found that peace and quiet could make the inconvenient seem convenient. Some could not bear the thought of another fire and others could not bear the thought of being in debt. As a result it is unlikely that any one relocation project will meet the needs, both practical and psychological, of all the members of a community. The reason that the relocation projects in this study appear to have been so successful is because community members were given some choice in how and if they would relocate. Given the heterogeneity of families within each community one key to a successful relocation is to provide families with options. For example, community members could be given a choice between a piece of land in Wat Charapon or a flat instead of just providing a single option to the entire community. An argument against providing options for the community is that such a proposal would break up the community and

destroy individual support networks. But the reality is that the provision of only one option also divides communities into political factions of those who want to go and those who do not and, in the end, the needs of fewer families are met.

### ***Don't Just Listen to the Squeaky Wheels***

As discussed in chapter two, many successful relocation projects have resulted from collaboration between the community and an NGO. A common role played by the NGO is to serve as a mediator between the community and the landowner. For this reason it is extremely important that the NGO have a clear understanding of the views and desires of the majority of community members. In order to truly gain this understanding it is important that organization members go out into the community and speak with people in a systematic fashion. A very different picture of the community's views may emerge through this process as opposed to only speaking with those who approach the NGO, more often than not, with a complaint. For example, prior to conducting this study, a social worker who periodically goes to Wat Charapon to give technical assistance to those building their houses, told me that "everyone will complain about the water, they all dislike the taste and do not think that it is clean." Those interviewed often mentioned that the water was 'different' than Klong Toey and 66.6% felt that it was worse, but 66.6% also stated that they were satisfied with the water supply. The squeaky wheels are certainly the loudest and often have the most complaints, but care must be taken not to make decisions based, not on the facts, but on the opinions of the most vocal members of the community who may or may not represent the views of the majority.

### ***Don't Idealize the Original Communities***

When faced with the difficult decision of whether or not to accept a relocation proposal when under the pressure of eviction, families have to carefully weigh the positive and negative aspects of both the relocation site and their current community. There is a tendency for those working with communities facing relocation to idealize the slum community in a way that the community members themselves may not. By idealizing the original communities organizations may influence families to make decisions which are not

based on all of the realities of their life. This can result in decisions which may lead to dissatisfaction or regret.

Many who had chosen to relocate spoke of being relieved to have taken their families' away from certain negative aspects of their previous community such as high levels of drug use, noise and pollution, the risk of fire and the burden of the nagging possibility of eviction. These are not small burdens and clearly many of those interviewed felt the insecurities which come from relocating to be worth the relief from the worries of their previous community. The fear of fire should not be underestimated. Respondents commonly stated, "I would rather worry about a loan than about another fire."

Another concept which tends to idealize slum communities is to think of them as 'urban villages.' The correlate to this concept is that everyone lives together as a family and works together in mutual support. Those interviewed in this study often spoke of such a reality, but this was not at the level of the entire community. Most respondents spoke of having support from a subgroup of friends and relatives within that community. Several of those interviewed who had lived in WKTN for decades mentioned that these days they do not know everyone like they used to because the percentage of renters, who are more transient, is now so high (50% or more). The majority of those interviewed have weathered the relocation process with these smaller support networks relatively intact. This is another argument in favor of offering communities faced with relocation more than one option.

### ***Communities Must Be Free to Make Their Own, Well-Informed Decisions***

By remembering the heterogeneity of community members, by actively seeking the opinions of a random selection of community members, and by carefully weighing the positive and negative aspects of both the relocation site and the original community, organizations working with slum communities can avoid allowing their own biases to get in the way of individual community members making their own personal, well-informed choices. Only an individual family can know all of the peculiarities of their own situation which would make one option more feasible than another. For example, some families with eight household members were comfortable living in the Flats, whereas other families in WKTN with four family members stated that they could never live in a Flat because it

would be too small for them. Other families with very low-incomes were happily getting by in Wat Charapon and others with much higher incomes from WKTN stated that they would not like Wat Charapon because they could not afford a loan. Only the individual family can know the subtleties of their capacity for living closely together or for being frugal. When opinions are pushed on community members there is always a risk of resulting poor decisions based on false assumptions about an individual families' needs.

An example of this occurred in WKTN after the fire in December 1995. Early in the long negotiations with the Port Authority, it was decided by those at the negotiating table that the option of land such as in Wat Charapon would not be offered to the community. In a survey conducted with community members who chose not to move to the Flats, several families stated that they would have liked such an option as Wat Charapon but had not ever heard about it. The UNDP has stated that human development "is a process of enlarging people's choices" and inherent in this statement is that their choices will not be made for them (Aldrich p.31). It was extremely common for those who were not satisfied with their living situation to explain their dissatisfaction by stating that they did not feel they had a choice.

NGOs working with slum communities have a positive history of supporting the grassroots efforts of families fighting against eviction. If eviction becomes inevitable and families are faced with a proposal of relocation, NGOs must continue to be true to their stated goals and assist the community, not by making decisions for them, but by helping people to truly help themselves. This can be accomplished through the provision of bias-free information and assistance in understanding both the negative and positive aspects of each options. Such a service would be invaluable in many cases because of rumor-mongering which often surrounds tense and politically loaded situations like relocation. With respect to Wat Charapon rumors were rampant. "It's where the bandits are", "its not safe for families who only have women", "its not safe for a *farang*<sup>10</sup>" and "there are ghosts at Wat Charapon" were all comments heard prior to conducting this study. In reality those living in Wat Charapon reported the lowest levels of fear regarding violence, personal safety and burglary.

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<sup>10</sup> a westerner

### ***Expectations Affect Satisfaction***

If decisions are truly well-informed, the reality of a relocation site is much more likely to meet families expectations. This study demonstrated that a families' level of satisfaction with a particular aspect of their new community was dependent on whether or not this factor met with their expectations. Families interviewed were much more willing to accept a negative aspect of their community if they knew about it prior to making their decision to move. Nearly everyone interviewed in Wat Charapon stated that the community either met or exceeded their expectations. The major reason given for this is that most families had been given an opportunity to visit the site before making their decision. Clearly, all aspects of a community cannot be known beforehand, but efforts can be made to reduce the number of surprises and thus increase satisfaction.

### ***The Problem of Indebtedness Must Be Addressed***

An average of 65% of all respondents reported feeling worried, anxious or depressed as a result of financial problems. The major problem many of these families faced was the repayment of loans at 20% interest per month to illegal money lenders often associated with the local mafia. Numerous examples were given in chapter six of families who had become trapped in this viscous cycle of indebtedness where each month they only pay interest and never decrease the principal. Debt is an enormous problem in these communities and directly leads to numerous other problems such as children not attending school, gambling and the selling of drugs as one of the few means of making enough money to escape from such a trap.

The majority of these families who find themselves in debt have spent years working extraordinarily hard to pull their families out of poverty only to find their efforts crushed by the unexpected. One woman interviewed had worked her way up to supervisor at a sewing factory and enjoyed a comfortable salary. Several months prior to the interview, her nephew was in a motorcycle accident which resulted in a 40,000B hospital bill for the family. Now the woman is a victim of illegal money lenders. Although she is diligently paying back the loan, she expressed a high degree of anxiety about being so heavily in debt.



All of those interviewed were paying back their loans but several were just able to manage the 20% per month and without reducing the principal the interest soon exceeds the amount of the loan by many fold. Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank which specializes in loans to low-income families, has found that “nobody is better at managing money than poor people...they learn how to stretch every penny and make do.” His research has shown that wealthier people were more likely than the poor to default on loans (Ryan). If these families who were interviewed had access to personal loans, even at interest rates virtually guaranteed to make money for the lender (ie: 30% per annum), they would be out of debt in one tenth the amount of time and at one tenth the cost that it would take to pay back the illegal money lender.

The Urban Community Development Office was started under the National Housing Authority in the early 1990's. The purpose of the office is to “help bridge the income gap among various groups of people” and “to make the urban poor become a vital force in the national economic development in the future.” The office has made it possible for those rebuilding in Wat Charapon to receive loans as a group through a legal system at a reasonable interest rate of 12% per annum (9% actual interest and 3% for the cooperative's administrative costs). Although the groups early policy statements discuss the need for the urban poor to have access to personal loans from a legal system, none of those interviewed in Klong Toey knew of a way to access such loans.

Families in these communities do not need handouts, but access to loans at reasonable rates so that when a hardship does enter their lives, it does not destroy all of the progress they have made to help their families out of poverty. Only then will the bridge between rich and poor begin to be constructed.

### ***Encourage Development of the Private Sector Industry***

Wat Charapon is an excellent example of how the private sector can have a profound impact on the level of satisfaction community members feel toward their new community. Entrepreneurs have come to see Wat Charapon as a vendors paradise and have brought the market to the community thus making the lack of transportation less of an issue when it comes to going to the market. If this unexpected factor had not come into play in

Wat Charapon, it is unlikely that there would have been such a high level of satisfaction with the new community. Such private sector entrepreneurship should be promoted in relocation sites which are located outside of the city and do not have easy access to shopping facilities.

Another area where the private sector could play a powerful role in improving the lives of those living in Wat Charapon would be to provide an income-generating activity which could be done in the home. Wat Charapon is extremely rich in human resources and several women interviewed suggested that such an opportunity would be welcome by many living in the community. The community leader of Wat Charapon owns a lumber company in Klong Toey and hopes to begin a furniture making project in Wat Charapon in the space set aside for income-generating activities. Such private sector initiatives should be encouraged by the government. One possibility would be for the Urban Community Development Office to serve as a liaison between entrepreneurs and the potential work force in Wat Charapon since this falls within their objective of supporting small businesses.

### ***Encourage Incremental Improvements***

On numerous occasions respondents described their serious financial concerns while we sat in their beautiful and completely finished new homes. It was not clear why they had not taken out a smaller loan and then later made incremental improvements to their houses. Later, a woman who had chosen to move to the Flats instead of rebuilding her house after the WKTN fire explained her reasoning, "I would lose face if my new house was not as nice as my neighbors." In Suntaree Komin's comprehensive study of the psychology of Thai people she found the value of preserving ego or 'saving-face' was consistently ranked as a top priority (Komin p.161).

Efforts should be made in future self-help projects to encourage families to take affordable loans for a basic structure which can easily be improved with time. NGOs who provide technical assistance for such projects can demonstrate a model which creates a nicely finished product which can be constructed with a smaller loan package. Certainly everyone would not be interested in such a model, but by making it a standard option it would help to reduce the fear that their house will not be up to par with everybody else's.

Also, such an idea may not be immediately obvious to a family who has never before had the luxury of time to make improvements on their home since they may have never before had security of tenure.

### ***Address Problems Before They Begin***

Many of those interviewed spoke of the relocation experience as a means of escaping from the negative aspects of their previous communities such as drug abuse, litter, and fighting both among youth and within the home. Many expressed a new sense of hope and pride at having brought their families away from these problems. Others feared that as more people moved into the area, these problems would become increasingly common.

Community members and government interventions must not wait until these problems arise. They must organize against drug abuse, littering, and violence while people are motivated, hopeful and proud of their new communities. Once the problems begin to take hold it is often too late to stop their progression. Khun M from Jet Sip Rai spoke of his disappointment when problems similar to those in his previous community began to arise in his new community. These relocation sites provide an excellent opportunity for the government to save money by using preventive interventions now rather than waiting until drug treatment programs and care for AIDS victims are needed. Messages against domestic violence may be more effective at the new sites because numerous respondents mentioned one of the best things about their new communities is that there is less violence and motivation to keep this problem away may be high. The communities could organize neighborhood watches with community volunteers to keep an eye out for drugs, violence or littering and catch these problems as they arise.

### ***Public Health Concerns***

Many of the lower-income families interviewed were interested in purchasing social service medical cards which would entitle them to free medical services and medications. Unfortunately, many unnecessary barriers to acquiring such a card exist and are described in the results section on WKTN. Simple changes could be made to make this service available to more of those members of society who would benefit from such an option. For

example, increased awareness of the program's existence, a payment plan, more appropriate office hours for the working poor who cannot afford to miss work. Unexpected illness or injury is a major problem which leads these families into debt with exorbitant interest rates.

The second public health issue which needs greater attention is cigarette smoking. Nearly every man interviewed during this survey was a smoker and cigarettes were a virtually ubiquitous household item. The serious health (and financial) consequences of cigarette smoking are enormous and range from numerous types of cancer to increased incidence of both heart attacks and strokes to emphysema and other lung diseases. As effective public health messages continue to reduce the numbers of smokers in the United States, tobacco companies are increasing their promotion of cigarettes in countries such as Thailand (WHO, 1996). This advertising campaign must be countered with information on the health consequences of tobacco use. The enormous number of smokers in Klong Toey indicates that this message has not yet been taken up.

It is interesting to note that only one person specifically mentioned HIV or AIDS as a concern during the interviews. Khun O stated that she worries about her brother's health because "he is very slim and I do not know what is happening to him" and another woman interviewed was worried that her thirty year old son would soon die, as his two brothers had, of a 'wasting disease.' But neither of these women mentioned the possibility that the illness was AIDS. There are two possible reasons for this. Perhaps they did not feel comfortable discussing this due to the stigma which still surrounds the disease. Or perhaps even though they are aware that HIV is a problem, they do not yet fully realize its potential impact on their families. More education in this area may be needed.

As discussed above domestic violence was often mentioned as a serious problem in the communities studied. This is a serious public health concern which demands further investigation and intervention.

### ***Reduce the Influence of Organized Crime***

Certainly this is easier said than done. Gaining an understanding of the complexities of the mafia's control in slum communities and relocation projects is beyond the scope of

this study, but it should be recognized that the impact on the communities studied was substantial. Besides the negative effects of drug trafficking, intimidation and illegal money lending, the mafia is making money off of relocation projects as well. Whenever families are given the option to own a piece of land in a place like Wat Charapon or hold the rights to a flat, there are those who would prefer to sell that option and use the funds for relocating to a third site. Reasons are often financial, but also include dissatisfaction with the site and skepticism that the government will actually allow the families to remain on the new site for the long term. Often these rights are purchased by the mafia who then turn around and are able to make huge profits off of the government subsidized housing unit. For example, the Flats are rented at 300B per month, but the market rate is around 2,500B per month. Thus the mafia can make 2,200B per month off of a single unit, with the net effect being that they have stolen the government subsidy from the poor and further decreased the number of affordable housing units available. In Wat Charapon they have purchased land from those not choosing to move to that location at 60-80,000B and are now able to sell the plot for over 220,000B. Again, a subsidy meant to assist the poor has become a profit for the mafia. While not wanted to harshly restrict the rights of those low income families from selling that which is legally theirs, a means of reducing this backward flow of money from the poor to the rich needs to be considered.

### *Those Left Behind*

No matter how successful a relocation project may be, many people will still suffer enormous loss as a result of eviction. This includes homeowners who for many reasons do not choose to accept the relocation package. Often these families are brought to court by the landowners and after a protracted battle lose everything with no compensation at all. Possibly the biggest losers in the relocation projects discussed in this study are those who were renting in the evicted communities. There is rarely even dialogue about what to do about these low-income rental families and they are too often pushed off of their tightrope of survival by the eviction process. The following case is of a rental family who lives in the Lock 9 area of Klong Toey. The absentee landlord of the house they rent has been offered land in Wat Charapon, and they must leave so that he can collect on this offer.

When Aot was born he was strong and healthy, but then at age four he began to have some troubles standing up and was later diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. Up until now, when he is 19 and near the end of his life, one of his parents has always had to stay home with him and, therefore, the family has had to survive on one small income. They have never been able to fulfill their dream of actually owning a home because nearly all of their extra money has gone to medical bills for Aot. Although no one is pleased about being evicted, many of the home owners have been given a piece of land as compensation. They have lost their home but at least they have a place to go. This family has been paying 1,200B per month for a one room shack with electricity and water for the last two years and cannot afford one baht more. They have searched and searched in the area for a place within their budget, but with increasing numbers of evictions and less and less housing available it is unlikely they will find anything they can afford. So they stay in their tiny home as long as they can even though everything around them is being torn down as people take the wood to use on their new houses. Even the pathway over the marshy land below their house is beginning to disappear. Soon it will be too unsteady for Aot's father to balance as he carries his son to the main road.

Many families live in slum communities because, financially, they have no other options. World Bank guidelines state "...whenever feasible, involuntary resettlement must be avoided or minimized, and alternative development solutions must be explored." (World Bank). Only when these guidelines are taken seriously and eviction is avoided in the majority of cases will these families be able to enjoy their right to shelter. Unfortunately, even slum upgrading can adversely affect families who rent by increasing the cost of renting a house or rooms. The only way to truly assist families such as Aot's is for governments throughout the world to accept the idea of adequate shelter as a basic human right and make the provision of affordable housing to their citizens a priority.

### *The Thai Economy*

"In the best of circumstances nothing can be done if the economy is not working, or the nature of the tie to the global economy means that stability is impossible" (Aldrich p.22). It must be mentioned that this study was conducted when the decade long climb in the Thai economy was just beginning to slide backwards. In June the Thai baht was, as it had been for years, a stable 25 baht to 1US dollar. By the time this survey was conducted in late July and August, the baht had been devalued to 48 baht to 1US dollar. Although

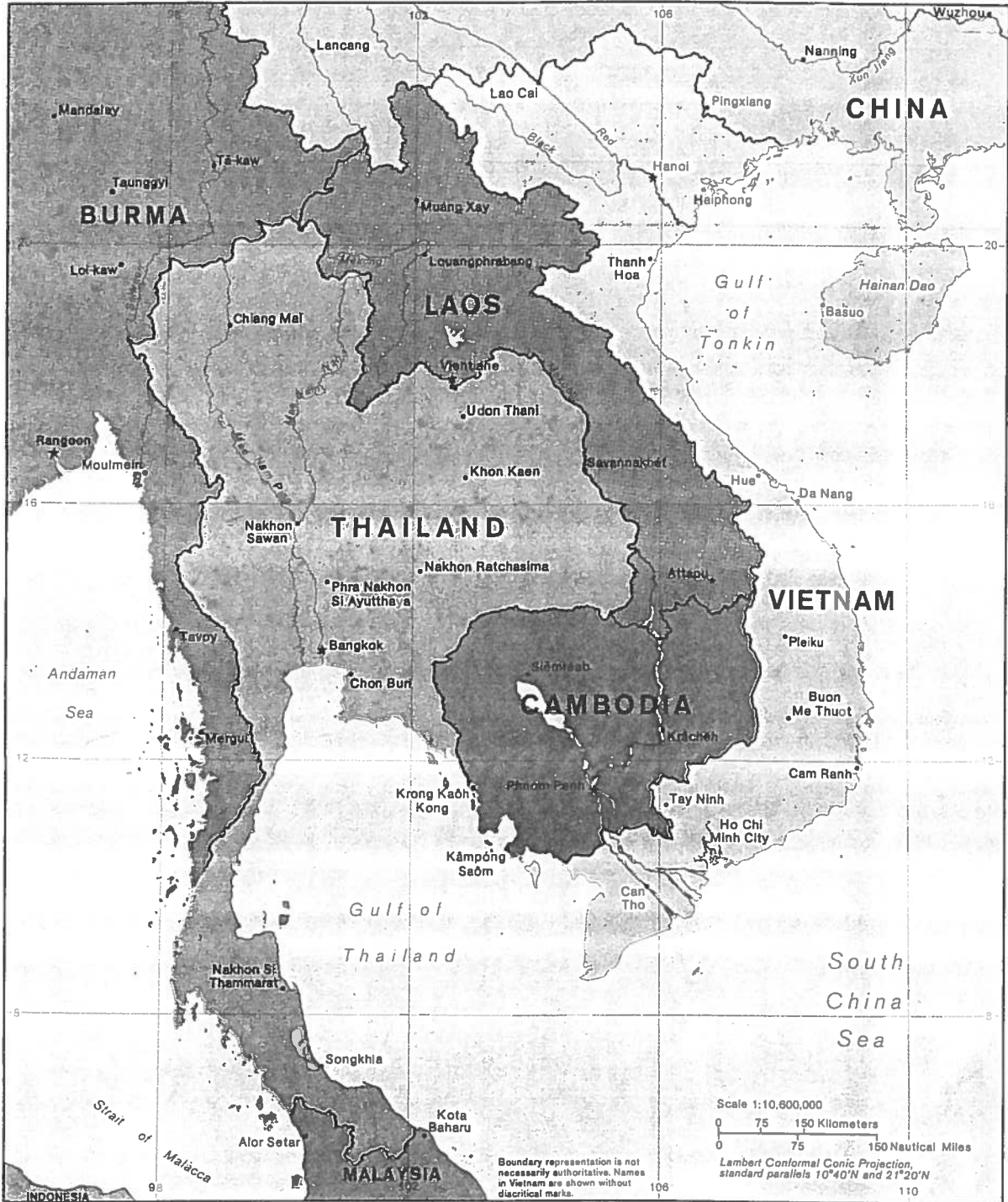
those interviewed had noticed that the economy had been slowing down over the last few years, these most recent problems had only just begun to affect their lives. It will be unfortunate if the successes of these relocation projects are overshadowed by financial problems which are not under the individual family's control. Hopefully, economic recovery will be quick to come to the region so that the dreams expressed by those interviewed will be realized.

**Appendix A**  
**Maps**

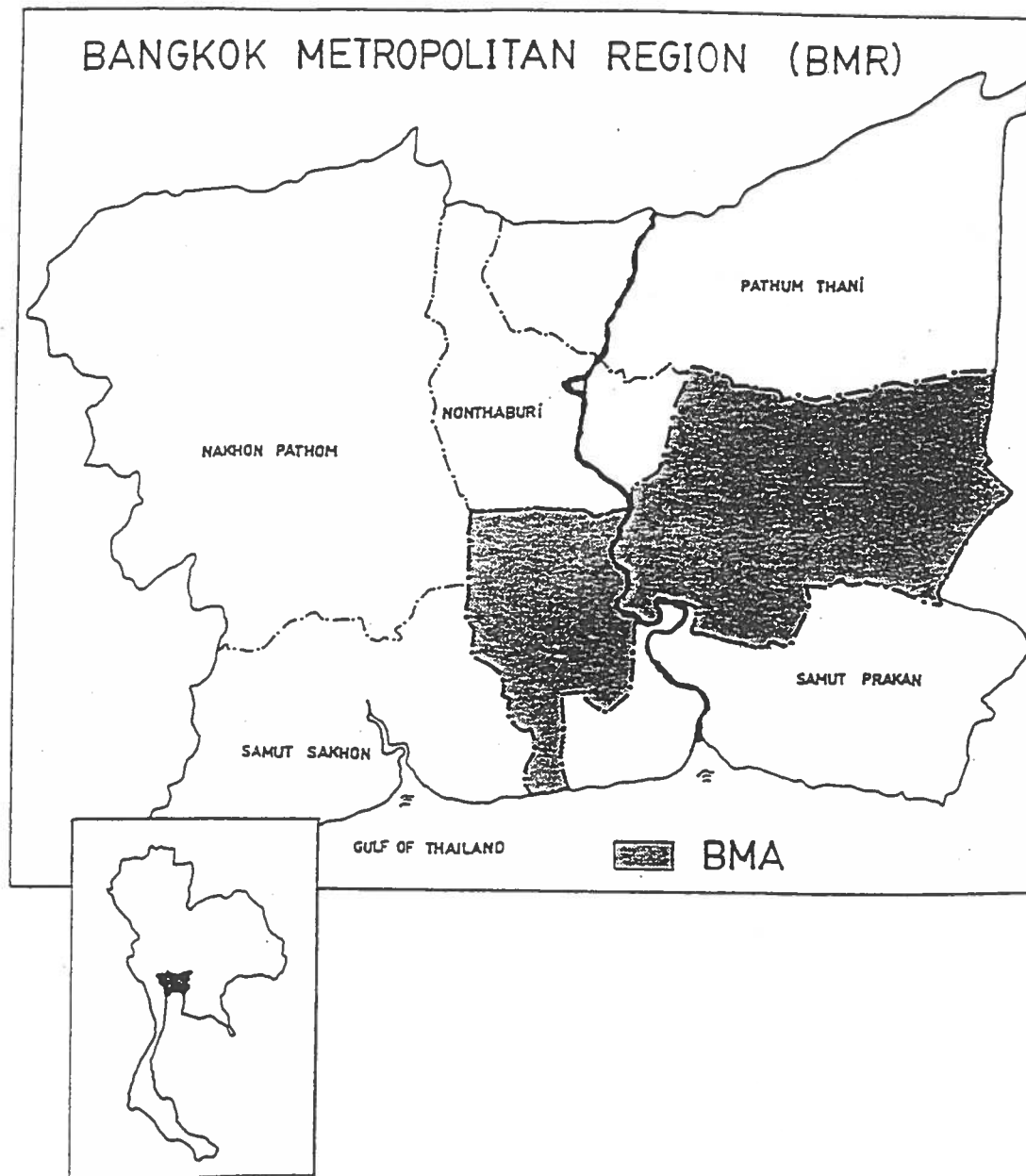


# Mainland Southeast Asia

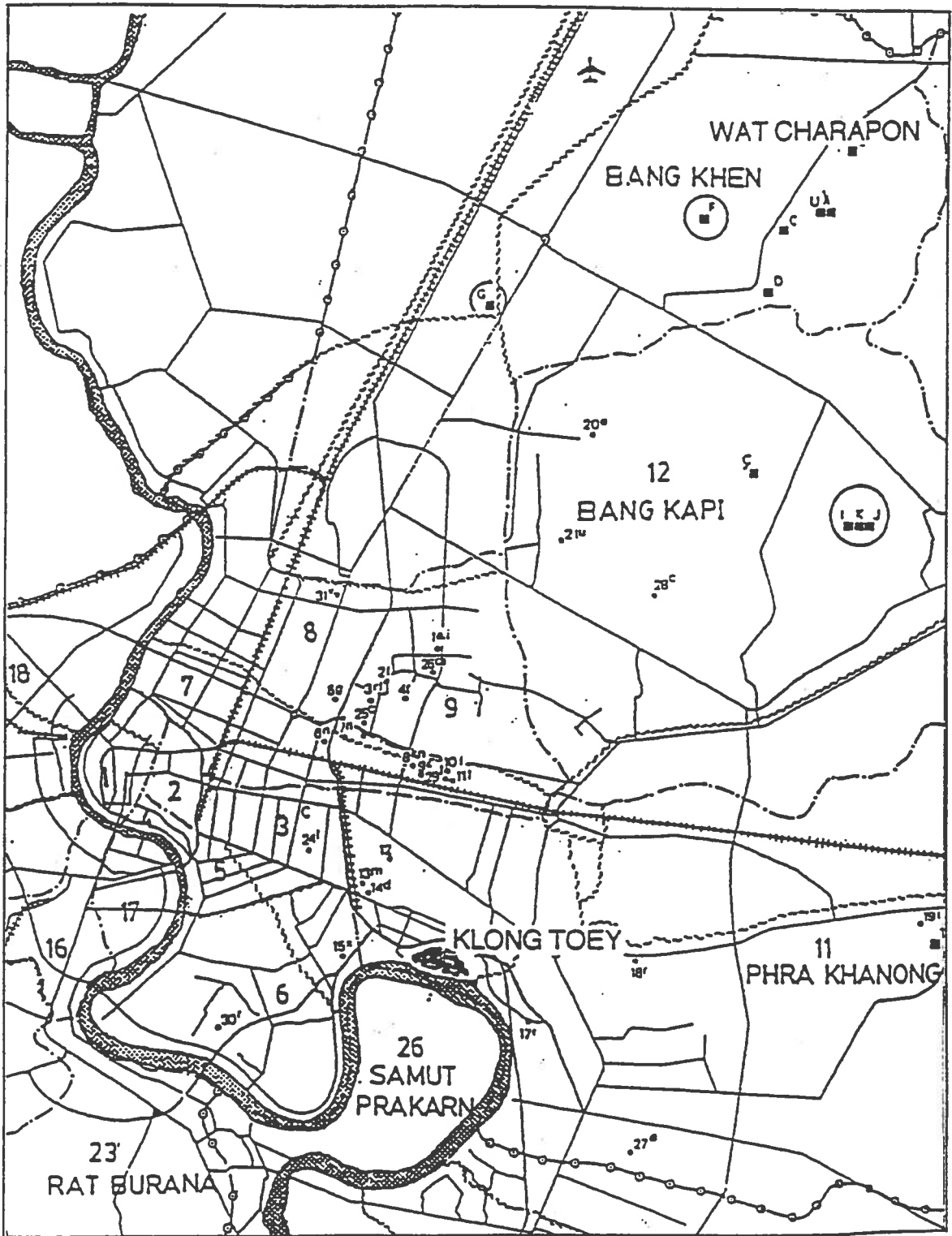
MAP ROOM



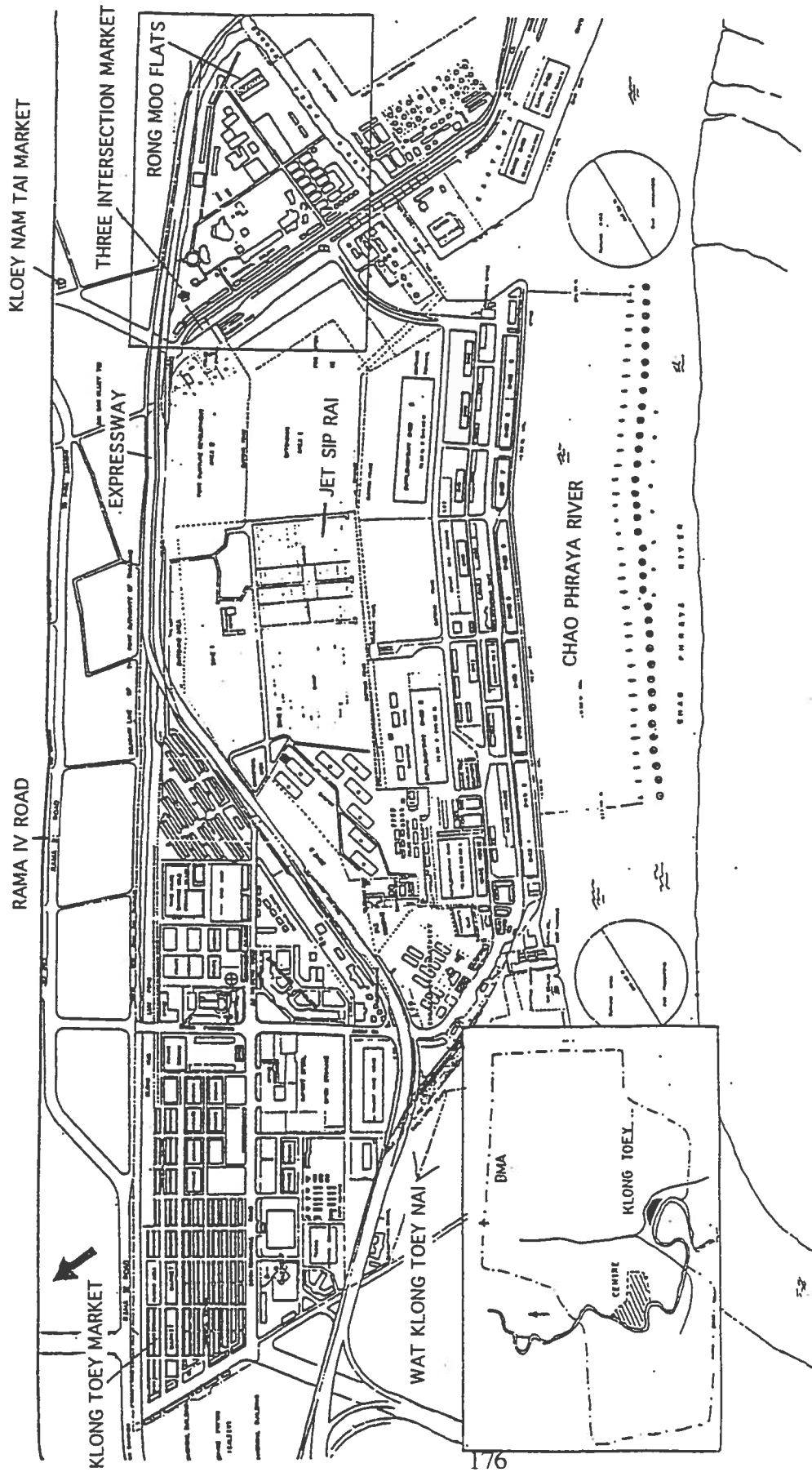
Map #1 Thailand



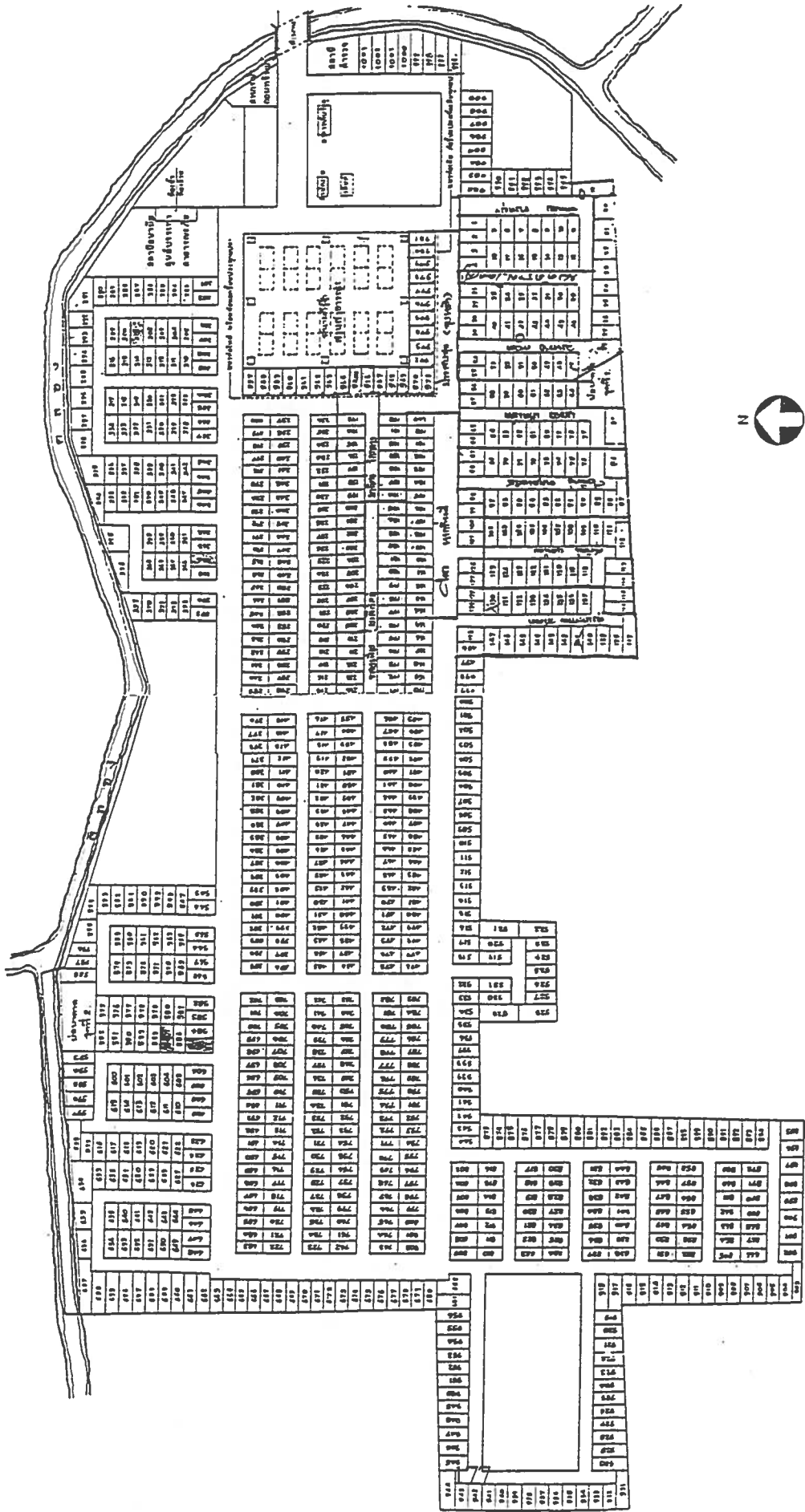
Map #2 Bangkok Metropolitan Region



**Map #3 Klong Toey and Wat Charapon**



Map #4 Port Authority of Thailand



Map #5 Wat Charapon



Map #6 Jet Sip Rai

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire Summary

**\*Note:** questionnaires varied slightly to accommodate community differences

#### **Biodata**

- Age of interviewee
- Sex of interviewee
- Place of family origin
- When family came to Bangkok
- Length of time living in last community
- Household members: age, occupation, cost of transport to occupation
- Average monthly income
- Average monthly savings
- Average monthly cost of water / electricity
- Need for loans

#### **Physical Health**

- Where do you go to receive health services? Are you satisfied with the quality of service? Are you satisfied with the cost of the service?
- Do you have a social medical card? If not, why not?
- What are you most afraid of regarding the health of your family? young children? older children? spouse? elderly? self?
- Are your health concerns greater or lesser since moving here?
- Are the people in your household ill more, less or the same amount as people living elsewhere?
- What can be done to make your family more healthy?
- Have you noticed any differences in the health of your family since moving here?
- What is your source of drinking water?
- What is your source of washing, bathing water?
- What do you think could be done to improve the health of this community?

#### **Personal Well-Being**

- Why did you choose to move to this community?
- Are you happy with your decision to move here?
- In what ways is this community different than what you expected before moving here?
- What are you most afraid of happening to your family? young children? older children? spouse? elderly? self?
- Are these fears greater or lesser since moving here?
- What do you see as your biggest problem at the moment?
- In general, do you feel anxious or worried? Do you sleep well? Are you easily irritated? Do you think too much? Do you feel depressed? If yes, why?
- Are these feelings more or less since moving here?
- What in your life makes you feel *sabaijai* (comfortable at heart)? Do you feel this way

more or less since moving here?

- What in your life makes you feel *mai sabai jai* (uncomfortable at heart)? Do you feel this way more or less since moving here?
- When you are feeling *mai sabai jai* what do you do to calm yourself or relax?
- Is it easier for you to relax here or was it easier to relax in your previous community? Why?

### Well-Being of the Community

- What is the best aspect about living in this community? What about this community makes you happy?
- What is the worst aspect about living in this community? What about this community makes you unhappy?
- What do you see as the biggest social problem in this community?
- Do you worry about violence in this community? If yes, what type of violence?
- Do you feel safe walking alone at night?
- Do you worry someone might break into your house?
- Is there more or less violence here than there was in your previous community? Please explain.
- In what ways do people in this community help each other?
- Has this community ever worked on a community project together? If yes, what was the project? Were you personally involved?
- Are you more or less happy here than you were in your last community?
- What about this community is better than your previous community?
- What about this community is worse than your previous community?
- If you were given the choice would you prefer to stay in this community or go back to your old community? Please explain.
- What do you miss about your old community?
- Please state whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following and whether you feel that each is better or worse than in your previous community.
  - quality of housing
  - size of house
  - education facilities
  - job opportunities
  - transportation costs
  - bathing facilities
  - toilet facilities
  - kitchen facilities
  - market / food buying
  - water supply
  - garbage disposal
  - control of rodents
  - control of mosquitoes
  - drainage
  - pathways
  - fire prevention
  - smells around community
  - rubbish around community
  - air pollution
  - dust around community
  - noise level of community
  - community togetherness
- Name something that would make this community better.



## **Appendix C**

### **Case Studies**

- Wat Klong Toey Nai
- Rong Moo Flats
- Wat Charapon
- Jet Sip Rai

(Note: cases #1-4 for each community are located in the body of the text)

## Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #5

### ***Observations***

Khun AA is 40 years old and has lived in WKTN her entire life. She lives with her teenaged son and twin toddlers in a standard, but older and somewhat roughly put together two-story house made of cement and plywood. They are on a corner lot have a small fenced in cement area in front of their house. Here the children play and Khun AA prepares meat on a small table which has underneath old bicycle tires, plastic bottles and trash and above are hundreds of flies. Khun AA said that she was willing to participate in the interview, but appeared to be very distracted with slicing the meat she sells by the railroad tracks and towards the end said that it was taking too much of her time.

### ***Financial Situation***

It is not surprising that Khun AA was distracted by her work since she is the sole wage earner in her household. She earns about 3-4000B selling grilled meats and other foods around the corner from her house from a small store by the railroad tracks. She has no savings and she often has to borrow money to make ends meet. She usually borrows between 50-500B per month at between 15-20% interest.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AA feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. Khun AA says that her only health concern is that her children are always getting coughs and colds. If someone has a serious problem she will go to a private clinic about 10 minutes away by motorcycle taxi. The service is satisfactory, but it usually costs between 200 and 300B and this is too expensive. Therefore, unless the problem is very serious she will just go to the chemist and buy some medicines.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AA could not think of anything in particular which she fears happening to her family. She considers their biggest problem to be financial insecurity. She often worries and thinks too much about not having enough money. She feels depressed when she thinks about the fact that her 14 year-old son "just sits around all day doing nothing." She does not know what makes her feel *sabaijai* and she has no time to relax. When she is upset she "just continues working."

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AA feels that the best aspect of living in WKTN is that it is "near everything." There is nothing about WKTN that makes her particularly unhappy. She finds the biggest social problems to be that "a lot of neighbors swear at each other and there are a lot of people around [her] area who are renters and are not very clean." Also, there are a lot of drugs in the area. If the people in her area were given an opportunity to move into a Flat, she would like to go if it were near the Port and she would have a place to sell her wares. She would not like to go to Wat Charapon because it is too far.

## Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #6

### ***Observations***

Khun AB has lived with her daughter, husband and son in WKTN for the last 12 years. Her son is currently not staying with them because he is attending a commercial college in another province. Their home is a relatively large one-story which appears quite sturdy. It is covered with wood siding and is painted with faded blue paint. There is a large elevated porch covered with many plants off of the front of the house on which Khun AB enjoys relaxing. Most of the houses in this area have visible waste water and floating trash underneath, but there is no odor.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AB is the supervisor for a group of construction workers. He has his own pick-up truck which he drives to work. Although it was not stated Khun AB implied that she made some extra money as a money lender. Khun AB seems proud that her daughter is attending an all English-speaking private university. The family is able to save about 2000B per month and never has to borrow money.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AB feels she is ill more often than most people, but the rest of her family is ill less often than most people. Most of her health concerns relate to her diabetes and thyroid problems and she must see the doctor every three months in order to get her medications. Her doctor is at Chulalongkorn Hospital and she is satisfied both with the service she receives and the cost.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AB worries about her daughter being in a traffic accident because she returns home late in the evenings. Khun AB's biggest problems at the moment are her diabetes and thyroid disorder. These illnesses sometimes make her feel dizzy and this irritates her and sometimes makes her sad. Overall, she does not worry much and nothing in her life makes her feel particularly stressed. When she does feel stressed she gets medicine from the pharmacist which calms her.

She feels very *sabaijai* when she thinks about the fact that her daughter will soon finish University, get a good job and be able to take good care of herself. In general, she feels relaxed because she "has a nice breezy front porch to sleep on."

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AB is happy living in WKTN because the community is "peaceful and quiet and usually people stay in their homes and do not trouble [her]." She appreciates the convenience of being near the market, the hospital and her daughter's university. The worst part of the community is that "there is too much amphetamine use, glue sniffing and heroin."

If the entire community were evicted Khun AB would not mind moving to a Flat, but she would not be willing to go alone. Similarly, if all of her relatives were able to move to Wat Charapon as well she thinks that it would be good to be a land owner. But she fears it may be too far for her daughter once she begins working.

## **Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #7**

### ***Observations***

Khun AC has been living in WKTN for the last 14 years. She lives with her husband and 2 year-old daughter in a very small and simple two-story home of slightly less than average quality. Although the house was clean inside, there was a lot of trash lying around the pathway and between houses. Because their house is at an odd angle there is an open space in front on which they have many plants and a small spirit house. The electrical wires passing in front of their house dangle rather lowly and precariously. Even though this house is quite far down the *soi* the traffic and horns of the interstate can still be heard.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AC does not work outside the home and Khun AC is a truck driver who is often away from home for weeks at a time. He recently purchased the truck and although the family has "enough money to spend" they are not able to save due to monthly installments on the truck. Khun AC has more than doubled his total income since purchasing the truck and they no longer have to borrow money.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AC feels that her family is ill about the same as people elsewhere and she does not worry that her family will become ill. Right after the fire in WKTN her daughter began to get more rashes and bug bites and she attributed this to some sort of allergy to the fire fumes and dust.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AC is relatively happy living in WKTN because she "is used to everything here." Her greatest fear regarding her family's safety is that her husband will be in an accident while driving his truck. She worries a great deal about this especially when he is gone for long periods. She wants him to look for a different job, but knows that with other jobs he cannot earn enough money to pay for their expenses.

Recently Khun AC has felt somewhat depressed. This is because her grandmother's house burnt down in the recent WKTN fire and Khun AC feels badly that she does not have enough money to help her grandmother rebuild her house. She grew up with this grandmother and feels that she should be able to do more.

Khun AC feels *sabai jai* when she thinks about the fact that since her husband started driving the truck they have enough money to spend and they do not have to take loans anymore. When she is feeling stressful, she goes out walking, cleans or watches TV and this helps her to relax. She generally finds it easy to relax in WKTN because it is quiet by her house.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AC could not think of anything about WKTN that makes her particularly happy, but she thinks that the worst aspect of this community is that there are a lot of drug addicts and alcohol users. Every night people drink too much and this annoys her.

If Khun AC was evicted she would go to a Flat as long as it was not the Rong Moo (Slaughterhouse) Flats because she did not like these when she visited due to the inconvenient access. She would prefer to go to Wat Charapon because she doesn't really like the Flats and would like to own her own land. "Wat Charapon is good because it is away from the slums and there are less people."

## Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #8

### ***Observations***

Khun AD is 40 years old and has lived in WKTN her entire life. She stays with her husband, four children and mother in a two story house of somewhat above standard quality and large enough to cover two plots. They are in the last row of houses before the railroad tracks and have a permanent covered stall from which Khun AD sells cooked foods. The trains come by twice in the morning, once in the afternoon and once in the evening.

### ***Financial Situation***

Between Khun AD's sales and her husband's job as a metered taxi driver for a private company, they earn around 11,000B per month. Khun AD's mother helps her to sell food and is a member of the community committee. Their older son is attending a private technical school, their older daughter has finished school, but is not working. Their two youngest children attend primary school and are able to walk to school. The family has no savings and occasionally Khun AD will borrow up to 3000B at 10% interest to buy food for selling.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AD feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. She does not worry about her family's health very often and says that "if they start to have an illness, it is best to buy the medicine early before things become serious."

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Regarding the safety of her family, Khun AD most fears that her husband will be in a traffic accident because he must spend all day every day driving in Bangkok traffic. Her biggest problem at the moment is that she has to take loans at the beginning of the month in order to buy the food which she prepares and sells. She sometimes cannot sleep well, but this is because the area around her house is quite noisy. She often thinks too much about her loan problems and then becomes a bit depressed.

Khun AD feels *sabaijai* when she is able "to make all of the bad things go out of her head." When she wants to relax she goes around chatting with her neighbors.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Overall, Khun AD is happy living in WKTN. She finds the location to be convenient since it is near the main road and all of the services she needs. The worst aspect of the community is "that the environment is not good--air pollution and people who are bad people." The major social problems are young people using amphetamines and fighting. Because her house is next to the railroad tracks there are more people hanging around and "people are fighting outside [her] house everyday."

Khun AD would not like to move to the Flats because she is already comfortable in WKTN. She is not sure if she would like to move to Wat Charapon or not and would have to discuss it with her family, but thinks that she would prefer just to stay here.

## **Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #9**

### ***Observations***

Khun AE has been living in WKTN for the last 25 years. She shares a standard two-story home with her two adult daughters and granddaughter. The front half of the lower floor of their house has been converted to a small shop. The front of the shop has an awning with a table and chairs for relaxing and a decorative mobile made from purple straws.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AE runs the shop with her older daughter and they earn about 6000B per month. Her younger daughter completed university and works as a researcher for a local bank. The granddaughter attends a private Catholic school near the Klong Toey market and she usually takes the local bus for 3.5B each way. If she is late she has to take a motorcycle for 50B. Khun AE is not able to save any money from her shop, but neither does she have to borrow money to make ends meet.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AE feels that her family is ill less often than people in other communities. She only worries about her younger daughter's health because she has to take the bus quite far everyday and, therefore, has to breathe a lot of polluted air. Other than that she does not worry because "everyone must look after themselves and keep themselves and the house clean." Khun AE has a medical card for the elderly which entitles her to free services, but she has not had it very long and has never tried to use it.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AE and her family are happy in WKTN because they are used to living here. She does not worry about anything happening to her family because "whatever will be, will be." She does not have any big problems at the moment and states that "everybody has to save their money and not spend it like water."

Khun AE often worries about "the future of young people in the community because everyday more people are using heroin and amphetamines." She has lived in this community a long time and she cares about many of the children in the community as if they were her nieces or nephews. Sometimes she thinks about these issues too much and becomes depressed because she knows that some of them will begin using in the future.

When these issues really begin to cause her stress, she tries not to think about them and just lets things happen. Sometimes she consults with her neighbors and she would find it easier to relax if the community were more quiet.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AE feels that the best aspect of living in WKTN is that it is located near the center of Bangkok and is quite convenient. From her perspective the biggest social problem is "the extreme amount of drug use." Khun AE feels that the government should "take stronger action against drugs; everybody says it is bad but nobody takes action!"

She would not like to live in a Flat or Wat Charapon because it is more convenient in WKTN. In Wat Charapon she has heard "that there is nothing...there is no doctor and [she] is old and has no car."

## **Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #10**

### ***Observations***

Khun AF and his wife have been living in WKTN for the last 25 years. Their home is a standard two-story which is painted a faded blue and has a blue striped awning over a large front porch with a nice railing and chairs in which Khun AF is relaxing. Similar to nearly all of the houses in WKTN the inside wooden planked floor is covered with a sheet of linoleum and there is waste water underneath. Their children are grown and also live in WKTN so Khun AF's grandchildren often come to visit.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AF retired from a job with the Port Authority several years ago and collects a monthly pension of 10,000B. He and his wife are able to save about 2000B per month and never have to borrow money.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AF feels that he and his wife are ill about the same amount as other people his age. They both suffer minor aches and pains and Khun AF used Thai traditional herbs for his leg pain. He and his wife receive free services from the Port Authority health center as a continuation of his employee health benefits. He feels that they could be more healthy if they got more exercise and the pathways were kept more clean because sometimes there is a bad smell near his house.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AF's often worries that either his wife or himself will become ill because they are now in their 70's. Khun AF sometimes feels depressed when he "thinks too much about things [he] shouldn't be thinking about like getting old and having been born a poor person so that [he] can't get the things [he] wants."

When Khun AF goes out walking around WKTN he feels *sabaijai*, but when he stays at home doing nothing he feels uncomfortable and useless. He would find it easier to relax if there was a nice place for the elderly and children to walk in near WKTN.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AF is happy in WKTN because "it is nice to have a place to call [his] own, a place to stay." The worst aspects of living here are the increasing cost of living and the chemicals used and delivered at the Port which often smell bad. He is also very concerned about the use of drugs and youth fighting which goes on in the neighborhood.

Khun AF would consider moving to a flat depending on its location, but he does not want to pay rent. He would like to go to Wat Charapon because he thinks that it is better to own his own land. But from his understanding "people who move to Wat Charapon are rich." Overall, if he is evicted he feels that he would have to leave and says that because he is old he does not care where he goes as long as it is in Thailand.

## Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #11

### ***Observations***

Khun AG and her husband and came to Bangkok from another province in the Central region about eight years ago and settled in WKTN. They live in a standard two story house with their two children, Khun AG's brother and sister and their spouses and one child. The house has a nice front porch area with a few decorative plants and nicely tiled steps leading to a solid wood front door. Khun AG are sitting on the front porch preparing Hmong bean snacks for selling. The pathway in front of their house is clean, but there is a large break in the cement and a board over the exposed waste water.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AG and her daughter sell food from a basket by the railroad tracks or do odd jobs around the neighborhood. Everyone else is formally employed as a driver, a cleaner for a private company, a security guard, a seamstress, and a messenger. Khun AG owns his own truck and the two brother-in-laws each have a motorcycle. The family makes about 29,000B and are able to save about 5000B per month.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AG feels that members of her family are ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. She believes that their health could be better but she does not know what to do to improve upon it.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AG's biggest concern regarding the safety of her family is that her 3 year old will be hit by a car while he is playing. The area near the railroad tracks is supposed to be an open space for playing or walking, but many cars use this area as a short cut to the back of the neighborhood.

Khun AG does not have any big problems at the moment. She does not worry, think too much or get depressed. She sometimes get irritated at her family, but this is only because she "is the type of person who always wants their own way." She says that she feels *sabaijai* most of the time "just naturally." When something does bother her she does anything she can to distract her mind and she has no problem relaxing in WKTN.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AG is happy living in WKTN. She feels that the biggest social problem is that there are a lot of heroin users and glue sniffers living here. Also, there tends to be a lot of people fighting--both youth doing Thai kick boxing and husbands and wives.

Khun AG would not like to live in the Flats because she thinks that it is better to have a house and she feels better in a house. If the family was evicted she would not mind going to Wat Charapon and feels that this option would be better than the Flats for her family.



## **Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #12**

### ***Observations***

Khun AH has lived with her husband for the last 28 years in WKTN. The couple share their two story house of standard quality with their three children ages 17 to 25. The front of the house is decorated with many plants and strings of beads and stars hang in the front door. The pathway by the house is very clean, but the house across from their's is elevated and the waste water underneath is filled with rubbish and burnt decaying boards that were build over after the fire in 1987.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AH works as a construction laborer, but is only able to find work about half of the time. Khun AH was hit by a car about two years ago and had to stop working because up until this time her leg is not back to normal.

Their oldest daughter attended university and works at an insurance company and their younger daughter is a secretary for a private company. They both take the bus to work for 7B each way. Their son is attending a government technical college and owns his own motorcycle. All together the family earns about 15,000B per month and do not have any savings at the end of the month. But they do not ever need to take loans because Khun AH "can get credit from the shops if [she] needs to...[she] has lived here a long time so people trust [her] and she does not have to pay interest."

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AH feels that everyone in her family is ill about he same as other people, except for her eldest daughter who goes to see the doctor for different problems nearly every month. Fortunately, this daughter has health insurance from work so these services are free. She sometimes worries because her spouse has pain in his legs and knees. Regarding herself she worries about consequences of her high blood pressure and knows that it is partly due to the fact that she is overweight.

She feels that her family would be more healthy if they did more exercises and did not just sit around all of the time. She would like there to be a place in the community for people to do exercises, like a small park.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AH's biggest worries focus around her teenaged son. She worries about him becoming involved in rivalries between boys attending different technical schools. These rivalries are very common and often the boys fight with each other. She says that "her son seems to care more about his friends than about his family and [she] fears that these friends might influence him to take drugs." She also worries that after he finishes technical school next year that he might be unemployed. In addition, she also worries about her husband because he gets drunk at home every night.

Khun AH also worries about the family not having enough money for their expenses as the economy becomes less stable. She says that nothing in particular makes her feel *sabaijai* because "whatever will be, will be...you can't change anything so you have to accept it and be happy anyway." If she is feeling unhappy she prays or leaves her house to go and chat with her neighbors.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AH likes living in WKTN because of its convenient location and because she believes that it is easier to get a job if you live here than anywhere else. The worst aspect

of living in this community is that there are many people using amphetamines and heroin.

She would not like to move to a Flat because her leg is not well and she is afraid that if she was given a room on an upper level that she would not be able to climb the stairs very easily. In addition, she thinks that a flat would be too small for her family. She would also not like to move to Wat Charapon because it would be too inconvenient for her children to get to work.

## Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #13

### *Observations*

Khun AI has been living in WKTN for the last 25 years since she was 17 years old. She shares her two-story home of standard quality which has an additional room added to the front with her husband and two adult children. Khun AI and several of her friends are relaxing on a shady well-constructed cement front porch. She says that they enjoy "sitting together, doing each other favors and eating together." Next to them is a large birdcage containing three pastel-colored parakeets. Many of the houses in this area are located at the end of narrow dead-end pathways including Khun AI's home. Although the pathway in front of her home is very clean, the area across from her is an open swampy area filled with fruit peels, rubbish, and old scraps of rotting wood.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun AI stays at home and watches neighborhood children not for money, but just to help out. Her husband used to work but now Khun AI says that they are both "too worn out to work anymore" and Khun AI is quite overweight. Their son does shipping inventory at the port and he also spends part of his time in Chonburi at the deep water port. He has his own motorcycle and often stays overnight in Chonburi. Their daughter works at a petrol station outside of Bangkok and spends two nights a week nearer to her job.

Khun AI and her husband are supported by their children who provide them with 2000-3000B per month. Khun AI says that they do not take loans and if they do not have enough money, they just don't eat.

### *Physical Health*

Although Khun AI stated that she is not healthy enough to work and that her and her husband are very worn out, she did not mention any specific physical problems. She feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere and she does not worry about their health. She is happy with the service she receives at Chulalongkorn Hospital and with the cost of the doctor's services, but the price of medications is too expensive.

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun AI often worries if her son is late returning home because she does not think that it is very safe to ride a motorcycle in Bangkok and she fears he has had a crash. She also so worries that someone in her family will become ill, about the economy becoming worse, and especially around holidays, she worries a lot about a fire occurring in the community. She says that "around New Years people celebrate by cooking more and drinking more so fire is more likely at this time."

Nothing in particular makes Khun AI feel *sabaijai* and when she is feeling particularly worried she sits and clears her mind. She finds this easy to do because she has her own house which she likes and it is quiet.

### *Well-Being of Community*

Khun AI finds the best aspect of living in WKTN to be that her house is located at the end of a dead-end pathway so there is very little noise. The worst aspect of the community is that there is a lot of heroin and amphetamine use. Khun AI feels that another major social problem within the community is violence within families.

She would not like to move to a Flat because they are too small for her family. She would like to move to Wat Charapon because she really would like to have her own land. She is interested in finding out how she can do this.

## **Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #14**

### ***Observations***

Khun AJ has lived in Klong Toey most of her life. She lives with her husband's mother, father and brother and her two young children. Her husband lives with his other wife in another house in WKTN. The house is a standard two story with a nicely finished balcony and a gate at the front. There is waste water visible underneath their house but there is very little rubbish floating in it. They have a big fish tank for decoration and a small sign on the front door says 'No Smoking.'

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AJ and her mother-in-law watch over her children, her father-in-law is a supervisor for a subdivision of the Port Authority, and her brother-in-law works as a messenger and owns his own motorcycle. Khun AJ does not have any savings and sometimes, but not very often, she has to take a loan from friends at 10% interest.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AJ feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. They are rarely sick so she does not worry about their health.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AJ's often worries that someone in her family will be in a traffic accident or that a fire will burn her house down. Her biggest problem at the moment is that she wants to get a job, but she implied that her husband would not let her. She is often worried and depressed and feels that she thinks about these problems too often. When she is feeling particularly stressed by not having a job, she does housework or tries to find something to keep her busy.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AJ cannot think of anything about this community that makes her particularly happy. The worst aspects of this community are the common use of drugs and fighting among youth.

Khun AJ lived in a flat many years ago and did not like it. She found it to be too small and not comfortable. She had to lock her door all of the time because she did not know the neighbors and could not ask them to watch over her house. Her parents are building a house in Wat Charapon and she would like to go and live there.

## **Wat Klong Toey Nai Case Study #15**

### ***Observations***

Khun AK has lived in WKTN for the last thirty years. He lives in a standard size house with good quality wood siding and a brick facade with his wife, two of his daughters, the daughter of his oldest son and his niece. Although the house was clean, the pathway in front of the house was scattered with rubbish. This seems to be the case for all of the houses located within 20 feet of the railroad tracks where many people are selling food and many others are loitering.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun AK worked as a taxi driver until he had a stroke which left him unable to work. He now helps his wife sell rice soup in the mornings and fried bananas in the afternoons. One daughter has just finished her schooling which was funded by the Christian Children's Fund. His youngest daughter and granddaughter attend the local government primary school. The family has no savings and often has to take as much as 2000-3000B from the money lenders at 20% interest. Even so Khun AK says that "it doesn't matter where he lives, if he wants to sell something he can...he just needs a trolley and he will never starve to death."

### ***Physical Health***

Khun AK feels that his family is ill more often than people elsewhere. His wife has high blood pressure and he is concerned because she often has episodes of blurry vision. He is also concerned that the blood vessels in his brain are blocked and that he may have another stroke. Khun AK wants to get a medical card for the poor, but they are only available every three months and the last time he went to get one, the office has already closed. He is hoping that his friend will be elected to local office and then he is sure he will be able to get one.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun AK often worries about his daughter and niece breathing polluted air as they go to school. His daughter spends a lot of time sitting on the bus in traffic and his niece has to walk by the Shell Oil facility where he fears she will breathe in toxic fumes.

His biggest problem at the moment is that as the economy becomes less stable, he and his wife are finding it more and more difficult to sell their wares. He often worries because he does not have enough money and is easily irritated because he and his wife have to work so hard and they are tired. He does not usually feel depressed because he tries not to think too much about his problems. Overall, he finds it "very difficult to relax in WKTN because [he] is constantly worrying that his children will become involved in drugs and [he] always fears fire."

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun AK can think of nothing about WKTN that makes him happy. He "wants to get out of this community and get [his] children away from all of the heroin." He says that "a lot of people have come to the community with posters...you will die or you will be arrested, but it doesn't work and people are using and selling every night...people are bad deep inside and many people get rich by selling drugs so nothing will change." Other social problems include a lot of youth fighting and gambling.

Without any prompting, Khun AK states that he really wishes he could get a piece of land in Wat Charapon. In Wat Charapon he would be able to sleep better because he

would not have to worry about fire and he would very much like to have his own land, but he would have to think carefully about whether or not he can afford to take a loan in order to build a house. Khun AK would also be willing to move to the flats because his family has two houses in WTKN so they would get two flats and that would be enough space. He says that he “just wants to get [his] children out of WKTN so that they don’t see drugs everyday.”

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #5

### *Observations*

Khun BA has been living in the Rong Moo Flats with her husband and 16 year-old son for the past year and a half. Their flat is sparsely furnished, but there are curtains on the windows and a loft area. A cool breeze was blowing through the room during the noontime interview. Khun BA was babysitting a child and chatting with a neighbor when we arrived.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BA's husband is an office worker for the Bangkok Expressway, but this is a somewhat new job and he is still in the probationary period. He has to take a motorcycle taxi to the main road and then a bus to reach his office. Their son works setting snooker balls on the open air tables in Klong Toey. He also takes a motorcycle taxi to his destination. Khun BA earns a little money babysitting the neighbor's children or washing clothes. Since moving to the Flats the family's transportation costs have increased and, due to the downswing in the economy, her husband is no longer able to work overtime for extra income. Oftentimes at the end of the month they have to borrow from a money lender at 20% in order to make do until payday.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BA feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. Even so she worries that her husband's diabetes may have bad consequences in the future. For herself, she said that she "knows that [she] smokes too much and [she] worries that she may get cancer."

Khun BA believes that this community would be more healthy if there were not so many trucks in the area making pollution and if the stink from the old slaughterhouse was eliminated. Since moving to the Flats she feels that her family's health has stayed the same, but she worries less about their health because even though the environment is not perfect, it is better than in WKTN and "here there are less people moving around and annoying [her]."

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun BA's family decided to move to the Flats because "after the fire [they] were too lazy to go back and build a new house." They are happy with their decision and Khun BA more often feels *sabaijai* because of the cleaner air and good breeze.

On the other hand there are certain problems which she feels worried about more often. She has always worried about her family being in car or motorcycle accidents, but since moving to the Flats she finds herself worrying more often because they must ride motorcycles to the main road more frequently. Khun BA feels that her biggest problem at the moment has to do with the family's financial problems. This problem has also increased since moving to the Flats because in WKTN they did not have to pay rent and their travel expenses were not as high. Sometimes she is not able to sleep because of these worries and she often feels depressed. When she is feeling this way she smokes a lot of cigarettes and sometimes she talks with her friends about her problems. It is easier for her to relax in the Flats because her "parents, grandparents and brothers all stay together now, in WKTN [their] houses were not together."

### *Well-Being of Community*

Khun BA feels the best aspect of living in this community is that the "wind blows

all of the time keeping the house cool and fresh.” She does miss the fact that in WKTN she had more convenient access to the main road and she sees the biggest social problem in the Flats as drugs, but “drugs are everywhere, it doesn’t matter where you go.” Overall, Khun BA is neither more or less happy living in her new community, but she would not like to return to WKTN because “it is more comfortable in the Flats.”



## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #6

### *Observations*

Khun BB has been living with her husband, three year-old son, brother, sister, mother and father in their one room Flat with a loft for the last year and a half. Because her husband was sleeping in the apartment, the interview took place in the stairwell so as not to disturb him. Khun BB says that the space is a bit crowded and she would like more privacy, but it is not that bad because the only time that everyone is home is at nighttime for sleeping.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BB's husband has recently started his own clothing company. This new occupation has lead to a tripling of the family's income which makes Khun BB feel much more comfortable. She works at home taking care of her son and doing household chores.

Khun BB's father is a small *songtaew* driver. He and his wife walk to the taxi company and then he drops his wife off at her job as a housecleaner. Khun BB's brother works as a motorcycle messenger and owns his own motorcycle as does her husband. Khun BB's sister is a secondary school student and she is also dropped off by her father at the bus stop on the main road.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BB feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. She does worry sometimes about her husband's health because he is "very fat and eats a lot...sometimes he can't breath and he feels tired very easily." Regarding herself, she has more clothes washing to do since moving to the Flats and this sometimes leads to back pain. When asked what could be done to improve the health of her family, she said that she "does not know because she does not see her family very much...they come home late and leave early." Overall, she believes that their health has improved since moving to the Flats because "there are no mosquitoes, no dirty water [under the houses] and her son does not play with dirty stuff anymore." But she does worry about her son falling into the klong behind the Flats because there is no fence.

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun BB's family decided to move to the Flats because they felt that it would cost too much to rebuild their house and were afraid that if they did rebuild that they could lose it all again in another fire. Her father came to see the place beforehand and thought that the environment was better than in WKTN. They still believe that it was a good decision.

Other than the health concerns mentioned above, Khun BB's only concerns for her family revolve around transportation issues. She worries that her brother may get randomly shot when he comes home late on his motorcycle. She also worries that her mother may fall when trying to get on or off the bus as she gets older. Overall, she has less fears since moving to the Flats because she does not have to be afraid of fire.

Currently, Khun BB has enough money to spend so she does not have any problems. For this reason she feels more *sabaijai* than when living in WKTN, but this is not related to the move. Sometimes Khun BB still does not have money for all of the things that she wants, and this makes her feel stressed. She finds it easier to relax at the Flats.

### *Well-Being of the Community*

Khun BB finds the best aspect of living in this community to be the better environment including fewer mosquitoes and cleaner air. She finds that she sleeps better here because she does not have to worry about fires. She finds that there are much fewer

social problems in the Flats than there were in WKTN. There are no drugs here and less fighting both between drunk people and within families. She says that "at least when families fight here, they have more privacy...they can do it behind closed doors."

Khun BB is happier living in the Flats and would not like to return to WKTN. The only thing that she misses about WKTN is that there were more places to hang her clothes out to dry.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #7

### *Observations*

For the last year and three months Khun BC has been living with her husband, daughter and son-in-law in a nicely decorated flat with a loft. The home is moderately, but carefully decorated with lacy curtains, garland for decoration, pictures of the King and a glass cabinet for knickknacks. The room is divided with wardrobe into two sections and a pleasant breeze passes through the room.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BC works as a taxi driver and owns his own *songtaew*. Khun BC owns a pedal operated sewing machine. When living in WKTN she would often earn money by sewing clothing for neighbors or selling some foods she had prepared. In the Flats she has not had many opportunities to do either of these income-generating activities.

Khun BC's daughter sells food outside the Flats near the canal, although technically this is not allowed by the Housing Authority. Her daughter's husband works for the government as a regulator of vendors and is able to walk to his office as it is near the Flats. Since moving to the Flats, the family's income has decreased and their expenditures have increased. Now not only do they have to pay rent, but their transport expenses have increased. Occasionally, Khun BC's daughter will take a loan from friends at little or no interest in order to buy the food she needs for selling.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BC feels that her family is ill less than people elsewhere and she believes this is because they look after themselves and eat good food. Even so she worries about her daughter who often has headaches and nausea from breathing in bus exhaust fumes.

Khun BC's husband drinks too much alcohol and does not eat regularly which she believes has led to his severe heartburn. She worries that when he is out driving all day that he does not eat and this exacerbates the problem. She also worries about his being involved in a traffic accident.

Regarding herself, Khun BC feels that she needs to get more exercise by either walking more or moving about as she did when she was working more often. Overall, she worries less about her family's health since moving to the Flats because "it is less densely populated and there is more space to breath."

### *Psychological Health*

Khun BC's family did not choose to move to the Flats, they just had no where to go after the fire and the Port Authority told them to come here so they did. They are happy that they are living here because they would be afraid that if they went back there would be another fire.

Other than the health issues discussed above, Khun BC does not worry about anything specific happening to her family, but with respect to general safety she does worry a bit more because "here there are a lot of new people [she] did not know before."

Khun BC, who is 51 years-old, sometimes worries that if she becomes ill in the future that her family will fall apart. She often worries because she has not been able to work since moving to the Flats. She finds it frustrating not to have enough money to spend and yet to not be working. On the other hand she feels *sabai jai* when she thinks about the fact that her daughter and son-in-law have jobs and they earn enough money for themselves.

### *Well-Being of Community*

Khun BC finds living in the Flats to be very stable, clean and comfortable for her. Here, she is not afraid of fire and the air flows nicely because they are located next to the canal. Also, she appreciates that there is less crowding than there was in WKTN, but finds the Flats to be more noisy because the rooms are close together. She sees the biggest social problem in the Flats to be the selling of amphetamines and that occasionally children sit in the stairwells and sniff glue.

Khun BC misses several aspects of WKTN. Besides the location being more convenient, her husband had a place near their house where he always parked his truck and everyone knew it was his space. Here he has to park in the lot, but there are no assigned places. Sometimes people are territorial and this leads to problems. In addition, the family "lived in WKTN a long time and [she] misses the relationships with [her] neighbors...now [her] neighbors are all separated."

Considering everything, Khun BC's family is more happy living in the Flats. The environment is better and "they are settled down here already." They would not like to return to WKTN because there they not only have to worry about their house burning down, but they could be evicted at anytime.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #8

### *Observations*

Khun BD has been living in this flat with a loft for the last year and a half. Also living there are her daughter-in-law and granddaughter (her son died last year), the 2 year-old granddaughter of her son who is in prison, her adult nephew and adult grandson with his 3 year-old child. Although this seemed like a lot of people they were not dissatisfied with the size of the home. The place was well-furnished with older but nice furniture. During the interview her two grandchildren and her nephew were napping.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BD's financial situation has suffered partly as a result of the move to the Flats and partly due to her life's circumstances. She sells less food outside the Flats than she did in WKTN, plus there is more bus fare and now she has rent payments. In addition, she now has more children to take care of than she did when living in WKTN. She says that she would not make it month to month if her niece did not give her some homey each month to help her with the care of the children. Even so Khun BD still borrows money nearly every month from money lenders at 20% interest. She was told when her house burned down that she would be given 25,000B to move to the Flats, but she has never received this compensation.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BD feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. Khun BD does worry about her own health because she is getting older (63 years) and if she becomes ill she will not be able to pay for her grandchildren's needs. Khun BD's health has become worse since moving to the Flats partly because she is growing older and partly because she has some difficulty walking up and down the stairs at the Flats (she is on the second floor) and becomes easily tired with shortness of breath. She also feels that "pollution is in the air everywhere you go and this contributes to [her] illness." Finally, she "thinks too much" about her problems and feels that her mental health problems contribute to her physical health concerns.

### *Psychological Well-Being*

After the fire Khun BD wanted to stay in WKTN, but she did not have any money to rebuild her house and she "would lose face if [her] new house was not as nice as her neighbors." She feels that she did not really have a choice about coming to the Flats and she is not very happy about being here.

Khun BD feels she worries about the safety of her grandchildren the same amount in the Flats as she did in WKTN but for different reasons. In WKTN she worried more about fire, and now she worries that they will be hit by cars in the parking lot or fall into the canal behind the Flats since there is no fence.

Khun BD is often depressed and worried about taking care of her grandchildren. This is not a result of the move, but due to her elder son's death and her younger son's being put in jail. She sees her biggest problem at the moment as vicious cycle of loans at 20% interest. She has to pay the interest on her old loans, but then does not have enough money to spend, so she has to take more loans. When Khun BD was asked what in her life makes her feel comfortable, she replied that she "thinks she should just die so that she no longer has to worry." She often thinks of Buddha and prays in order to relax.

### ***Well-Being of Community***

Khun BD finds the best aspects of living in the Flats to be that she no longer has to be afraid of fire and that there are less thieves around (except motorcycle thieves.) In WKTN “if you hang clothes out to dry or leave the wash bucket out, they disappear.” She is not happy because of her money problems, but if she had enough money she would prefer living in the Flats. But the reality is that she is now caring for her grandchildren and has many additional financial responsibilities. Therefore, the worst aspects of living in this community nearly all have to do with finances. Here she has to pay more for rent, water and electricity, she is far from the good places for selling her foods and it is less convenient and more expensive to go places from this community. Also, Khun BD “found it easier to make merit in WKTN because the monks walked by everyday, but there are very few here.”

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #9

### *Observations*

Khun BE has been living in the Flats with her husband, two young children and her brother-in-law for the last year and a half. Their flat has a loft and a comfortable, homey feel with many children's toys. The children were playing and laughing with their mother as she did her wash and during the interview they ran to get popsicles from the ice cream cart.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BE and her mother-in-law stay at home watching the children. Her husband works at the nearby Bangkok Post offices. Her brother-in-law is a shop keeper's assistant. Both of the men own their own motorcycles for commuting. Khun BE also drops their five year-old daughter off at a private pre-school. Occasionally, the family has to borrow money from friends or relatives, but generally they have enough to for their expenses.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BE feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. Her only health related worry is that her mother-in-law will suffer from complications of her diabetes. Her family's health has not changed since moving to the Flats.

### *Psychological Health*

Khun BE's family decided to move to the Flats because "it would have been too expensive to rebuild and we have our children to worry about." They are happy with their decision. Khun BE worries that someone in her family, especially her husband, will be in a motorcycle accident. She sometimes fears that the Flats will collapse and she wishes that there was a fence near the canal so that she would not have to worry about the children falling in. Overall, she worries less about her families safety in the Flats because she is no longer afraid of fire. Khun BE's biggest problem at the moment is that sometimes she does not have enough money to spend. She feels stressed when she thinks about her mother-in-law's stinginess, but when her husband and children make her feel *sabai jai*. Whenever she is stressed she talks to her own mother and finds it just as easy to relax in the Flats as it was in WKTN.

### *Well-Being of Community*

Khun BE does not miss anything about WKTN except its more convenient location and she would not like to return. She is more happy at the Flats because it allows more privacy and she likes the cool breeze which comes off of the canal. She is feels the biggest social problem in the Flats is motorcycle theft.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #10

### *Observations*

Khun BF has been living in the Flats with her brother, her elderly father and her two nephews for the last year and a half. The flat is nicely furnished and has a well-finished loft with a linoleum covering and a nice wooded banister. Khun BF's brother is serving their elderly father a meal in bed when we arrive. Because this family lives on the first floor which gets more traffic, there is more rubbish in the hallway outside of their flat. Khun BG wishes that there were more rules to prevent people from littering and throwing their cigarette butts on the floor.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BF is a supervisor at a sewing company and makes a comfortable salary. To get to work she has to take a motorcycle, then a bus, and then another motorcycle for a total of 43B one way. She receives a small additional income by selling clothing which she purchases inexpensively at work and repairs with her sewing machine at home.

Khun BF's brother works as a day laborer at the Port. Her 16 year-old nephew is a student and takes the bus to school and her 24 year-old nephew works as a motorcycle messenger for a private company and has his own motorcycle. The family never takes a loan unless there is an emergency. Such an emergency occurred two months ago when her nephew was in a motorcycle accident and the hospital bill came to 40,000B. At that time she took a loan from a friend with interest.

Since moving to the Flats the family's income has stayed the same, but their transportation costs have increased. Also, now that her teenage nephew is getting older, he is requiring more money for his everyday living.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BF feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. She worries about her nephew because he still has some of the pins left in his leg from the motorcycle accident. She fears her brother may be hurt on the job because he has to carry heavy loads and he is getting older (55 years.) Regarding herself, she worries that her bones are softening and she fears she does not eat enough calcium. She also is concerned about her slight weight gain and is concerned that she must keep her cholesterol low. She feels that her family's health is the same now as it was when they lived in WKTN, but she "worries about them less because here [she] has better mental health."

She wishes that her family would spend more time together because when her nephews stay out and play snooker she worries that they may become involved in drugs. She believes that "a small park where people could exercise or sit and eat outside would help to bring families together and thus reduce drugs."

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun BF's family chose to move to the Flats because they took everything into consideration and decided that the Flats would be more convenient overall and safer from fire. They are happy with their decision.

Overall, Khun BF worries less about her family's safety because there is less youth violence and fighting within family's than there was in WKTN. Her biggest problem at the moment is repaying the loan which she had to borrow after her nephews accident. She worries about all of her expenses, especially the ones that have increased since moving, and tries to save every penny. Sometimes all of these financial concerns makes her feel depressed.

Khun BF feels *sabaijai* when her family is understanding and accept her even if she



does not have much money to give them. She feels *mai sabai jai* (uncomfortable at heart) more often in the Flats because now she is also responsible for her two nephews and she was not before. This added responsibility makes her life more stressful. Even so she finds that the environment of the Flats makes it easier for her to relax.

***Well-Being of Community***

Khun BF feels the best aspect of living in this community to be that she did not have to rebuild her house after the fire and therefore, she does not have to live with the burden of loan debt. In addition, her flat is “easier to clean because it is smaller and neater and it provides more privacy...[she] likes having her own space.” She states that “not much is worse about the Flats...but the people living here are still slum people and they still throw rubbish and have no manners.”

Khun BF is happy because she does not know of any amphetamine or heroin use occurring in the Flats, but there are some children who sniff glue. Her other main concern is that there are parking problems because there are more motorcycles and cars than there are spaces. Khun BF's family would not like to return to WKTN because there is too much pollution and people are not considerate of others, but worst of all then they would have to worry about fire again.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #11

### **Observations**

For the last year and a half Khun BG has lived with her husband and daughter in a very sparsely furnished flat with a loft area. There are no couches or chairs and we sit on mats on the floor. A blanket covers the windows to the hallway and the only "extras" are a few plants near the window. This flat is on the first floor on the parking lot side and noises of cars and motorcycles pulling in and out were common. A neighbor was playing the radio loudly and the sound emanated into Khun BG's flat. Their daughter, who is eight years-old, was very interested in the interview and Khun BG was careful in allowing her daughter to share her opinions as well.

### **Financial Situation**

Khun BG works as a cleaner for a private company. Khun BG works for a delivery service as a driver for a private company near the Port. Both get to work by bus and pay 6.5B and 3B each way respectively. Their daughter attends a local primary school, but it is too far for her to walk alone. Khun BG and her husband cannot escort her or they will be late for work, so they pay 1,200B twice yearly for her transport to school.

The fire in WKTN was particularly devastating for the BG family. Just before the fire the family had decided to improve their home. They were able to get a loan at a good interest rate from the company where Khun BG is employed and they purchased the lumber that they would need. When the fire destroyed their community, it not only burned their old house and most of their belongings, but it burned the newly purchased lumber as well. Khun BG points out matter of factly that "now the loan payments are deducted from [Khun BG's] salary each month, but they have nothing." Even with this burden the family is able to save several thousand baht each month because they live very frugally. They worry that the economy will continue to decline leading to less hours available for them to work. In addition, the family was told that they would receive 25,000B in assistance from the government because they lost their home in the fire and three years later they have not received any.

### **Physical Health**

Khun BG feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere. The only health issue she worries about is that her daughter has toothaches rather frequently and is quite slim so her mother buys her vitamins. She feels that her family's health is the same as it was in Klong Toey. She attributes their good health to the fact that they only came to Bangkok six years ago and, therefore, were able to grow up in the fresh air of the provinces.

### **Psychological Well-Being**

Khun BG's family moved to the Flats because they were too afraid of another fire to stay in WKTN. They are happy with this decision. Khun BG sometimes worries more about her family being in traffic accidents more often since moving to the Flats because her daughter did not have to take a bus before. Her biggest problem at the moment is that the family is not earning as much money as before the economy began to have problems. This problem is exacerbated by their loan payments. Khun BG worries a lot and is not able to sleep well because she thinks too much about these issues.

Khun BG feels *sabaijai* when her family is healthy and happy. She feels this way more often since moving to the Flats, because they are not always worried about fire. When she is feeling particularly stressed, Khun BG goes to the temple to pray. Even

thought Wat Saphaen is a bit harder to get to than her old temple, she still finds it overall easier to relax in the Flats.

***Well-Being of Community***

Khun BG feels that the worst aspect of living in this community is that “only the 72 bus comes near the area and if you miss it you have to wait a long time for another.” The biggest social problem in the area is glue sniffing, but Khun BG thinks that the glue sniffers are people who live behind the Flats in the Rong Moo slum and not people living in the Flats themselves. The one thing that she misses about WKTN is that it was nearer the temple and it was easier to see the monks.

The best aspects of living in this community are that the air is good, there is a nice breeze, and when families are fighting or arguing [physical or verbal] in their rooms it is not as loud as it was in WKTN. Overall, Khun BG’s family does not want to go back to WKTN because they are happier in the Flats.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #12

### *Observations*

Khun BH has lived in the Flats with her two daughters and son-in-law for the last seven months. They have no loft or burglar bars on their windows or door. They have little furniture and a wardrobe divides the room into two halves. On each side a mattress lies on the floor and a television. Both televisions are on with different programs. This family seemed to enjoy the interview and were very comfortable joking around with each other.

### *Financial Situation*

When living in WKTN, Khun BH used to sell food from a stall outside their house in WKTN. Now she washes clothes and irons for people living in the Flats. Her two daughters sometimes help her with this work. Her older daughter's husband works for the Expressway towing broken down cars. During the interview he finished a fifth bottle of whisky, made some friendly jokes, shot his pellet gun at some plastic bottles, grabbed his motorcycle keys and helmet and said goodbye. Since moving Khun BH's younger daughter has a new *fan* who spends about half his time living with them at the Flats. He is a health care worker at a clinic outside of Bangkok and his salary greatly assists the family. Occasionally, Khun BH will require some extra money but she does not like to take loans and will pawn some of her belongings instead.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BH feels that her family's health is about the same as people elsewhere. She feels that it is more difficult to get to the doctors than it was in WKTN because they have less relatives around to help in the Flats. This worries her because her older daughter has serious asthma, but she thinks that the asthma has become less severe since moving to the Flats because the environment is less polluted.

### *Psychological Health*

Khun BH and her family decided to move to the Flats because they felt it was a more convenient option than to have to wait to rebuild a house. Khun BH recalls that she paid someone at the district office 1500B in order to be put on the list. They are pleased with this decision. Khun BH sometimes worries about money problems and she has been known to get irritated and throw a plate or two. She only feels sad if she hears a sad song and she feels *sabaijai* when someone says something nice about someone in her family. She feels stress when she thinks about her older daughter's asthma. If she finds herself worrying too much she either sits at home and relaxes or goes window shopping at the department stores. Overall, she finds it easier to relax in the Flats because although it is hotter here, she finds it more quiet.

### *Well-Being of the Community*

Khun BH feels the best aspects of living in the Flats are that it is quiet and more peaceful and she enjoys the greater privacy she feels from having their own room. She is annoyed by one neighbor who is often shouting and she worries that a child will be hit by a car in the parking lot. She sees the need for a playground so that the children will not have to play in the parking lot. The biggest social problem in the Flats are the drugs and amphetamines, but this is mostly localized to the first floor.

Khun BH's family feels that it was more fun in WKTN because they had more friends there, but the Flats are better because it is more peaceful. When asked if they would like to return to their old community, the whole family said "NO" in unison and agreed that the Flats will be more fun when more people move in.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #13

### *Observations*

Khun BI has lived in the Flats with his wife, and teenaged daughter and son for the last seven months. Their flat is simply furnished with no loft or bars, but very nicely decorated. They have homemade art made from colorful construction paper hanging on the walls and a shelf filled with small knickknacks. Numerous family pictures and an artificial tree also make the flat feel very homey.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BI works as the fix-it man for the Flats. He is paid by the Housing Authority and this salary is less than he earned before retiring. His wife sells food from a cart in the parking lot of the Flats and Khun BI helps her when he is free. She also earns a little extra washing clothes for neighbors. She did the same in WKTN where she was able to earn more money selling. His daughter goes to a community college and his son attends a government secondary school. Their transportation costs are also more expensive than when living in WKTN because they only had to take one bus before and now they have to take two. If they walk to the main road about 1km, the price is cut in half. Khun BI says that he occasionally, but not usually, borrows from a money lender at 20%.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BI feels that his family is ill less often than people living elsewhere. He points out that the Flats "are a nice place with good air and no waste water, no bad smells, no mosquitoes and no pollution....here [his] family's health is 100% better and no one has been sick since moving here." Khun BI does not worry about his family's health because he believes that you "cannot worry about what will happen because it is destiny and you shouldn't worry about what hasn't happened yet."

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun BI wanted to move to the Flats because the land he was living on in WKTN was not his and if he rebuilt he would have to borrow a lot of money and he might get evicted in the future anyway. At first his wife did not want to come and they argued a lot. As a result they did not come to the Flats in May with the first group of people, but waited until January when his wife had agreed to move. They are happy with their decision, but Khun BI was a little disappointed when he arrived because he realized that the paint was no good and he had to spend his own money to improve the place.

Overall, Khun BI does not worry about his family because his "children are old enough to take care of themselves and they have been well brought up." He also says that he worries less since moving to the Flats because "there are better people here and fewer bad people doing bad things [drugs]." In WKTN he was afraid his children would be influenced by these bad elements. He also sometimes feels stressed if his children are late returning home because the traffic accidents are common in Bangkok.

His biggest problems are financial. The declining economy is leading to increasing expenses, lower pay and higher taxes. Sometimes he worries because he has not able to save any money for his children, but he has been careful to provide them with a good education. Khun BI never feels depressed and he attributes this to the fact that he "does not have too high of expectations for life and he does not look too far into the future." He feels *sabaijai* when he thinks of his children finishing school and bringing home their certificates and he finds it easier to relax in the Flats than in WKTN because he has more privacy here.

### *Well-Being of Community*

Khun BI feels that the best aspects of living in the Flats are that they are peaceful and quiet and everybody helps each other by getting together to discuss community problems. He also appreciates that if someone wants to get drunk they can do so in their own room and shut the door so it is less disruptive than in WKTN. He is also happier in the Flats because the environment is better and there are less amphetamines and traffic so he sleeps better. The worst aspect of living in the Flats is that the quality of the paint and flooring material are not very good. He says many of his neighbors have used their own money to put in better tiles and he would like to do the same, but is not happy to be spending his own money.

Overall, Khun BI would not like to return to his old community. He feels that there were a lot of down sides to owning his own house. In WKTN his house was "dirty and crappy and [he] was always having to pay for repairs." Also, all of the houses were made of wood and once he lost his house to fire. In WKTN he did not feel safe because "there were no police, no good fire extinguishers and no protection." The only aspect of the old community that Khun BI misses is that his wife had more freedom to sell and he wants the Housing Authority to allow stalls.

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #14

### ***Observations***

Khun BJ and his wife have lived in the Flats for the last seven months with their two young sons. Their Flat has bars but no loft and is kept very neat and clean, but has minimal furnishings. They said that much of their furnishings were lost in the WKTN fire, but they were able to save their television. The two children sat watching television and playing with a toy dump truck and a plastic gun.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun BJ works as a cleaner for a downtown hotel. He pays 17B for the bus or he can walk to the main road and pay 7B. Khun BJ does not work. Their older son attends a government primary school and usually walks to the main road to catch the bus for 3.5B. Their younger son attends the nearby kindergarten run by the Human Development Center. This costs 10B per day or whatever the family is able to afford. Khun BJ says that they are very careful with the cost of the utilities. Although the family is not able to save any money, they also never have to take a loan.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun BJ feels that his family is ill less often than people elsewhere. Although Khun BJ says that she worries that someone in her family may become ill, she does not worry about any particular illness. She feels that the Flats are a more healthy place to live for her family, but she has not noticed an actual change in their health. The family goes to the same health center they went to before moving and find it less convenient to get to because transport is more expensive from the Flats.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun BJ and his wife decided to move to the Flats because they thought that it would be more comfortable and convenient than in WKTN. They found this to be true and are happy with their decision.

Khun BJ's only worry regarding her family's safety is that they will be in a traffic accident or hit by a car. This fear has increased since moving to the Flats because her children now have to walk a greater distance to the main road in order to catch the bus to school. At first the couple replied that they did not have any big problems, but then said that sometimes they worry they will not have enough money to pay for their children's education. In general, they are happy when they have enough money for their expenses and they find that they feel *sabaijai* more often since moving to the Flats. When the couple feels stressed, they talk to each other or their neighbors. They find it easier to relax in the Flats "because it is more peaceful and they have better neighbors."

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

The family is more happy living in the Flats than they were in WKTN. This is due to the better and cleaner environment, the greater privacy, and fewer drugs. Khun BJ's wife says that her children also have a better space to play in the front of the Flats. Sometimes, though, she finds the Flats to be more noisy. The family could not think of anything they particularly missed about WKTN and would not like to return because they "are more *sabaijai* here."

## Rong Moo Flats Case Study #15

### *Observations*

Khun BK is a single man who has been living in the Flats for the past year and a half. His flat has burglar bars, but no loft. The room is sparsely furnished, but the furniture he has is of high quality. When we arrived Khun BK and his friend were drinking whisky, eating, and smoking while watching television which had a cable hook-up. He was very willing to participate in the interview, but it seems the drinking made him a bit playful with his answers.

### *Financial Situation*

Khun BK works as a messenger for a cable company and has his own motorcycle. He has recently received a promotion and now earns 7000B per month. He says he never has any savings because he drinks every night, but he never has to borrow money. After the fire in WKTN, but before Khun BK knew if he was going to receive the rights to a Flat or not, he purchased a small house in Klong Toey. He has not been able to sell it and he is still renting it out for less than his monthly payments. This is his only source of financial stress.

### *Physical Health*

Khun BK feels that he is ill less than most people. His only health concern is that he will become sick as a result of drinking too much. He says that about three years ago he did not drink so much and he was active in sports. Before moving to the Flats, he exercised more because he had more friends to exercise with in WKTN. He said jokingly, "In the Flats the only exercise I get is running up and down the stairs."

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun BK decided to move to the Flats for several reasons. First, he is alone so he does not need a big place. Also, he felt that the land at WKTN was not his and he did not have money to rebuild. He is happy with his decision.

Khun BK does not worry much or feel irritated. His only problem is the house he bought in Klong Toey and sometimes he feels sad when he thinks of the installments he has to pay each month for a house he does not even want. Even so, he feels that overall he was depressed in WKTN more often than he is in the Flats. Khun BK feels the most *sabai jai* when he is out chatting and drinking with his friends. He finds it easier to relax in the Flats because "the environment is a lot better."

### *Well-Being of Community*

Khun BK finds the best part of living in the Flats to be the greater convenience. He does not have to clean as often and he feels much safer from fire. There is nothing he misses about WKTN and he "would not like to go back because [he] feels that this place is more his own than WKTN was."

Although Khun BK could not think of any social problems in the Flats, he did mention that he wishes the Flats has a big fence around them because he believes that motorcycle thieves come from the Rong Moo slum community located behind the Flats.



## Wat Charapon Case Study #5

### ***Observations***

Khun CA is an elderly woman who has been living alone in Wat Charapon for one year. Her house is a two-story of standard size and quality. She has three large banana trees in front of her house and a number of other plants and flowers around her front porch. Prior to moving, Khun CA lived in Lock 8 with her five children who are in their twenty's and thirty's. They often visit her but she is the only family member who lives here full time. Her children now rent accommodations in other Klong Toey communities.

### ***Financial Situation***

Before moving to Wat Charapon Khun CA was part of the Women's Group started by a local NGO. She was able to earn a little money through a sewing cooperative associated with this group. Now that she has moved she is not able to work there, but her children each give her a little money which ends up being more than she was earning when she worked. She has enough money to live here and to buy food for the monks. She did not have to take a loan because her sons helped her to build her house.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CA has "a horrible thyroid" for which she has to get medication every two and a half months. She also has a lot of atherosclerosis and "problems with the vessels in her brain." She feels that she is healthier in Wat Charapon than she was in Klong Toey because the air is not polluted. In addition, she worries less about her physical health here because she "has good mental health here and feels stronger than before." Prior to moving here she did exercises at a center for the elderly set up by a local NGO and participated in an elderly person's social group. At Wat Charapon she continues to do the exercises she learned in this group at home and also is able to walk around the neighborhood much more than she did in Klong Toey.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CA chose to move to Wat Charapon after she came to see the community. It "made her feel happy because it did not feel like Bangkok and sometimes it reminds her of her hometown" (She moved to Bangkok from the Northeast province in 1952.) She has found living in Wat Charapon to be the same as she expected it to be.

Khun CA does not have any particular fears about anything happening to her. She says that "you are going to die no matter where you are," but also feels that in general she has less fears since moving to Wat Charapon. Her biggest worry at the moment is that she may become sick and there is not a health center in the community. She also worries about one of her sons because he drinks a lot and sometimes when she thinks about this too much she cannot sleep well and becomes sick. Overall, she feels she worries less here because before "all [her] children lived together and would always fight and argue."

When Khun CA needs to relax she just thinks about Lord Buddha and prays and then she feels *sabai jai*. She finds this easier to do at Wat Charapon because it is peaceful and the air is good.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun CA feels that the best aspects of living in this community are the good environment and the fact that she got free land. The worst aspects are that there is no doctor nearby, there is less transport, and they are further from the main road than Klong Toey. But overall, she is happier in Wat Charapon and she would not like to go back to Klong Toey "because it is a lot better here."

## **Wat Charapon Case Study #6**

### ***Observations***

Khun CB, his wife and three grandchildren have been living in Wat Charapon for about three months. Their two daughters, the mothers of the children, have both remarried and live elsewhere. Their house is a standard two-story and although it is solidly put together most of the wood and bricks are second-hand. All of the essentials on the top level are completed, but the bottom level has only been enclosed and is still unfinished and mostly filled with construction materials. The grandchildren are quite thin, but look healthy and are both playful and well-behaved.

### ***Financial Situation***

One year before the move Khun CB was let go from his job because his position had become redundant. In addition, he suffers from a "blood disease" so he stays home to take care of the grandchildren and his wife works. She is employed as a cleaner for a private company near Klong Toey. This is the same job she had before the move and now she has to pay slightly more in transport costs. Their 12 year-old granddaughter has continued at the primary school she was attending in Klong Toey and takes the bus daily. Their 9 year-old grandson attends a local government primary school for which they pay 200B per month for his transport. Their 4 year-old granddaughter was attending a subsidized kindergarten set up by an NGO in Klong Toey but now she just stays at home since there is no such school near Wat Charapon. Their income has stayed the same with the move, but transport costs have increased and they have a loan to repay. They borrowed 50,000B from the community cooperative.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CB feels that his family is ill about the same as people elsewhere. His wife often has headaches and he sometimes faints as a result of his "blood disease." He believes that living in Wat Charapon leads to less illness in his family because the air is better here. While living in Klong Toey he would have to go to the hospital quite often because of dizziness and fainting. He has not had to see the doctor since he moved to Wat Charapon. He thinks that one way to keep his family healthy is to get exercise and it is easier to walk and bike in Wat Charapon than it was in Klong Toey.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CB chose to move to Wat Charapon because his wife told him to sign the paper and he saw it as a way to "get out of the eviction problems [he] has faced [his] whole life." He is happy with this decision and there is nothing that is different from his expectations about Wat Charapon.

Khun CB does not worry about anything happening to his family and this has not changed since moving here. His biggest worry at the moment is that he will not have enough money to meet the loan payments. He has never in his life owed money and he is not happy about this. Overall, he feels more happy in Wat Charapon, but he does worry about his expenses more here. When he is feeling stressed he does not try to do anything in particular because "if there is no money to buy food, then you just don't eat." He mentions that his two daughters cannot be relied upon for help.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

In Khun CB's view the best aspect of living in Wat Charapon is that the air is good and he does not have to worry about fire all of the time. While living in Klong Toey he had to remove all of his belongings from his house three times because there were fires moving

toward the area. One time the fire stopped burning three houses from his.

The worst part of living in Wat Charapon is that the family's expenses each day are greater. In addition, he wishes that there was a health center nearby. He cannot think of any social problems in this community and he feels this is because the community leader is often reminding people over the community loudspeaker that drugs and glue sniffing will not be tolerated in the neighborhood. Overall, Khun CB is more happy in his new community and he would not like to go back to Klong Toey. He is settled here and likes it better.

## **Wat Charapon Case Study #7**

### ***Observations***

Khun CC and her husband have lived in their two-story home of exceptional quality for one and a half years. Although the house is of standard size, it has been built on a double lot which also contains a shed and a green garden or yard space. The entire lot is fenced in with a tall cement and metal fence. The outside of the house has nice wood paneling and awnings over the windows and the inside is nicely tiled and completely finished. Although nearly every household interviewed had televisions, fans and small refrigerators, Khun CC also has a mobile phone, an air conditioner and a wash machine.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun CC's husband owns a lumber company which is located in Lock 8 of the Klong Toey slum. His income is quite a bit larger than the average Wat Charapon resident. Khun CC does not work nor did she work before moving. Her husband owns his own pick-up truck which he uses to commute to his business in Klong Toey. Although they are one of the only families interviewed who is able to save money on a monthly basis, the amount saved has decreased since moving to Wat Charapon because they have had to decorate the house and repay the loan. They received the standard, full loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CC feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. She worries about her husband's health because he has had some heart problems in the past. She feels that due to the better environment their overall health is better in Wat Charapon than it was in Klong Toey and, therefore, she worries less about her husband's heart. She believes that the best way to stay healthy is to see a doctor "even if you are just a little sick, so that the illness does not get out of control."

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CC and her husband chose to move to Wat Charapon because when they came to see the land they liked it. They also wanted to leave Klong Toey. She is happy with their decision and everything about Wat Charapon is as she expected it to be.

Khun CC currently does not have any big problems. In general, she feels she has less worries here than she had in Klong Toey. She has a very close relationship with her parents which makes her feel very *sabai jai* (comfortable at heart), and she is able to keep in touch with them by calling them everyday since she has a mobile phone.

Although currently there is nothing in her life which makes her feel particularly stressed or worried, she generally finds it easier to relax in Wat Charapon. The community is peaceful and quiet and she finds walking, bicycling and visiting neighbors to be relaxing.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun CC's favorite aspect of this community is the fresh air and the fact that it is quiet and peaceful. In addition to having "less noise of people arguing and swearing," she particularly like the fact that she can "sometimes hear the frogs in the mornings and the evenings." She has everything she needs here and does not have to worry about fire.

Nothing about this community makes Khun CC unhappy, but she does miss the convenience of Klong Toey where there were more buses and she could go "anywhere anytime." She sees the biggest social problem to be glue sniffing and amphetamines, but also says that there is much less of this here than there was in Klong Toey. Overall, she is more happy living in Wat Charapon and would not go back to Klong Toey.

## Wat Charapon Case Study #8

### **Observations**

Khun CD and her husband have been living in their one story house of excellent quality for about three months. They have added many finishing touches to the outside of the house such as good quality windows and gutters. Their front porch is fully covered and large enough for a sitting area and many potted plants. The back of their house abuts the *klong* (canal) so they have a little extra green space and they have planted papaya trees and a small garden.

### **Financial Situation**

Khun CD's husband has always been the sole financial provider for the family. He is employed as a truck driver for a private company in Bangkok and makes a steady, comfortable salary. He owns his own motorcycle which takes him to and from work. Since moving to Wat Charapon they have not been saving any money because anything extra they have at the end of the month goes into improving their new house. They took the standard full loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative to fund the majority of their house construction.

### **Physical Health**

Khun CD feels that her family is ill less often than people elsewhere and attributes this to the fact that her family is very strong. She has no concerns about the health of her family and although she says that they have always been healthy, that their health is even better here because the environment is better.

### **Psychological Well-Being**

Khun CD and her husband originally decided to come to Wat Charapon only because they were evicted and did not know what else to do. She says that they "would not have come if they had not been evicted because [they] did not want to take a loan, but now [she] is glad that they did." Living in Wat Charapon is just as she expected it to be.

Khun CD sometimes worries that someone in her family will be in a motor vehicle accident, and she also worries when she is away from her house that it might burn down. Once in Klong Toey her house did burn down, and since moving to Wat Charapon her fear of fire has lessened. She also appreciates that this area is very quiet and that there are less noises here to annoy her. In Klong Toey "people were always yelling and talking loudly."

At the moment there are no major problems in her life and nothing about Wat Charapon makes her feel particularly uncomfortable or sad. One thing which makes her feel particularly *sabaijai* (comfortable at heart) is when her daughter and relatives visit. Unfortunately, since her daughter still lives in Jet Sip Rai and works as a paralegal in Bangkok, they are not able to visit as often. Whenever Khun CD feels worried she just goes out and looks at the trees around Wat Charapon and she feels better. She finds it easier to relax here because the "environment is better and more breezy."

### **Well-Being of Community**

Khun CD feels that the best aspects of living in this community are the better air and environment. She enjoys having a place to walk around and likes living on a *klong* which is not polluted. She worries less about fire in this community and is very happy that the house and land belong to her family. Khun CD enjoys her neighbors very much. They are the same neighbors that she had in Klong Toey and together they talk about everything.

Khun CD sees glue sniffing as the biggest social problem in the community and says that it was "brought from Klong Toey." Although nothing about this community

makes her unhappy, she does wish that there were schools, a health center and a market in the community. She is able to buy what she needs at reasonable prices from trucks which pass through the community, but she misses “going to the market to walk around...people like to shop for new things, to socialize and to gossip at the market.” Khun CD is just as happy here as she was in her old community and would not like to go back because she believes that overall things are better in Wat Charapon.

## Wat Charapon Case Study #9

### *Observations*

Khun CE and her husband have been living in Wat Charapon for one year with their daughter, son and daughter-in-law. Their house is a standard sized and quality two story, but the first floor is not yet finished. Attached to the second floor balcony is a large awning which covers a cement front porch with a table and chairs for customers who visit their small store front shop to enjoy their snacks. Their house is on a corner lot and they have planted a row of trees along the roadway. There is also a patch of sugar cane and a fruit-bearing banana tree at the front of the house.

### *Financial Situation*

Since moving to Wat Charapon Khun CE's husband has continued working as a driver for a private company in Bangkok. He owns a motorcycle which he and his daughter, who is in her final year at a community college in Bangkok, use to commute into the city. When living in Klong Toey Khun CE and her daughter-in-law worked at a nearby sewing factory. Currently they are involved in making silk flowers at home for an artificial flower company. Their son was a motorcycle messenger, but has been laid off because of the recent downturn in the economy. He also helps to make the flowers. In addition, the family as just opened a store front shop four days prior to the interview. So far they have been making between 150 and 400B each day. The family has taken the full loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative in order to build their home.

### *Physical Health*

Khun CH feels that her family is ill less often than people living elsewhere. Her major health concerns regarding her family are about her daughter and her daughter-in-law. Her daughter has recently been involved in a motorcycle accident which resulted in a subdural hematoma and surgery. Her daughter-in-law is due to give birth very soon. Khun CH believes that in general her family is healthier since moving to Wat Charapon as a result of the good air here.

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Khun CE's family came to Wat Charapon because they were evicted by the Port Authority and they were given a piece of free land. They are not yet sure if they are happy with their decision. It is a bit better than Klong Toey because the houses are not so cramped together and thus the fire risk is reduced, but the loan they had to take is a lot of money. Before he came to Wat Charapon they thought that there would be a lot of people moving there and not as many as they expected have come.

Khun CE has two main worries regarding her family. She often worries about motor vehicle accidents and since they now have to travel further to work she tends to worry about this more than when they lived in Klong Toey. Khun CE's greatest fear is that he will be laid off work because of the troubled economy and then he will not have enough money to pay back the loan.

Khun CE considers his biggest problem at the moment to be the fact that he does not yet have a permanent house registration paper. He only has a temporary paper saying that he has been given this piece of land and he fears that either the Port Authority or the Housing Authority may take it back. Although this problem is currently a major source of anxiety for Khun CE, the thought of his new house and the possibility that he may actually be given the land permanently is the thought that makes him most *sabaijai*. When Khun CE needs to relax he goes out walking and chatting with neighbors, something he finds easier to do in his new more quiet neighborhood.

***Well-Being of Community***

Khun CE sees the best aspect of this community is the fresh air and the free land which he received. The aspect of his old community which he misses most is the convenience of its location. Even though he thinks that drug use is much less common in Wat Charapon than it was in Klong Toey, he considers it to be the biggest social problem in the new community. Khun CE does not want to return to Klong Toey. He says that “even if [he] has to leave this place he would go somewhere else besides Klong Toey.”



## Wat Charapon Case Study #10

### ***Observations***

Khun CF lives with her husband, three teenage children and toddler niece in a two story house of standard quality which is not yet finished. They have been living here for the last three months. Although the house is fully enclosed and livable, no finishing work has been done. The lower level windows are not yet installed and the openings are covered with plywood. Instead of a front patio they have a planter with flowers and a banana tree to one side, and a small brick and cement 'pond' for washing clothes or cooling off as their 13 year old daughter was demonstrating.

### ***Financial Situation***

While living in Klong Toey, Khun CF's husband drove a *songtaew*. He would rent the small Suburu truck from a company, but since moving to Wat Charapon he has used part of the loan money to buy a Suburu of his own. He now drives people to and from Wat Charapon in the morning and evening for 15B. During the day he continues to provide taxi services in Bangkok.

Khun CF works as a cleaner for a private company in the Port as she did before the move. She is paid daily and fears that she could be laid off without warning. She commutes with her husband and pointed out that if she had to rely on the public bus she would not be able to get to her job on time.

Their daughter has continued her job as a bus fare collector and their son, who previously carried cargo for a private company near Klong Toey, has gotten a new job as a bus fare collector and is able ride to work with his sister on their motorcycle. Their 13 year-old daughter has never gone to school and she looks after their niece. Since moving the family's income has increased because the children's salaries have increased slightly. The family took the full loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative in order to build their home.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CF feels that her family is ill less often than people living elsewhere. She does not have any concerns about her family's health because "people in [her] family do not die of sickness or in crashes." She considers them to be *tai yak* (difficult to die). In general, she feels that her family is even healthier in Wat Charapon than they were in Klong Toey.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CF's family decided to move to Wat Charapon "because [they] were evicted and were given free land...[they] thought it would be a good idea not to be a squatter anymore." They are happy with their decision and find Wat Charapon to be just as they expected it to be.

Khun CF does not worry about anything happening to her family since "everything depends on destiny so why fear." Although she considers her biggest problem to be related to money matters, she does not worry about this because "no matter how much you think about money you still don't have it, so why waste your time thinking about it." Khun CF feels *sabai jai* when she has time to go out strolling around the neighborhood. She has this feeling more often in her new community because the environment here is better and it is more peaceful and quiet. She rarely feels worried or stressed unless her family does something to upset her.

***Well-Being of Community***

When asked what is better about Wat Charapon than her old community, Khun CF replied “everything.” She specifically referred to the cleaner air and the fact that her house and the area in general are much nicer than Klong Toey. In any case, she was still able to think of a few things that were worse about Wat Charapon. It is far from Klong Toey and her job and is, therefore, less convenient. She now has to get up at 4:30 in the morning to get to her job on time. Overall, she says that she is happier in the new community and would not go back to Klong Toey because “it is much better here even if less convenient.”

## Wat Charapon Case Study #11

### ***Observations***

Khun CG has been living with her husband and daughter in a two-story house of average size but high quality for the past one and a half years. The front has a brick facade, a door of wood and glass and a proper roof over a front porch large enough for a table and chairs. Extra time and care has been put into decorating the home with a nice tile floor, lacy curtains and numerous potted plants in the corners of the front porch. The house is virtually complete except that the inside walls have only a primer coat of paint.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun CG sells small cosmetic items from a basket over her shoulder or clothing on the sidewalk in downtown Bangkok. She takes the bus in the morning for 6B and returns in the evening. She has to travel further to sell her goods than when she lived in Klong Toey, but this does not bother her. She says that "if you want to work it doesn't matter where you are." Unfortunately, her husband has recently become unemployed because the shipping company he worked for in the port folded. Prior to this he was receiving an income of 10,000B per month which she misses very much, but she blames the loss of his job on the downswing in the economy and not on their move to Wat Charapon. In order to build their new house they took the full loan available from the community cooperative (150,000B), plus they borrowed additional funds from relatives at 10% interest. Their daughter attends a local government primary school and her father brings her to and from on the family's motorcycle.

### ***Physical Health.***

Khun CG feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. Her major health concerns regarding her family revolve mostly around herself. Her job leads to leg pain from walking too much to sell her wares and headaches which she attributes to the smoke and pollution from the traffic in Bangkok. She believes that, in general, the health of her family has improved since moving to Wat Charapon. For herself, she feels physically better because here she is more *sabai jai*, but she is still stressed about having enough money to pay back her loans.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CG chose to move to Wat Charapon because she was "sick of drunk people and heroin users all over the place and especially on the path in front of my house." She is happy with the decision to come here. It is even better here than she expected and she is happy to own a house and land. She is also pleased that there is less glue sniffing, heroin use and less motorcycles making noise.

Khun CG does not worry about anything happening to her family because "whatever must happen, must happen." Her biggest worry at the moment is that she will not have enough money to pay for her expenses, but so far she usually does not have to borrow to meet monthly payments. In Klong Toey she could not sleep well because she was afraid of fire, and here she does not sleep well because of her money worries. But overall, she feels better here because "at Klong Toey everything bothered me...everything smelled like rat shit, cat shit, dog shit and it got on my nerves a lot." She finds it easier to relax now because, considering everything, she is more comfortable at heart in Wat Charapon.

***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun CG feels the best aspect of living in this community is the fresh air. She could think of nothing about Wat Charapon that makes her unhappy. Although she has occasionally seen people selling amphetamines in the field across from her house, she feels that there is much less heroin, glue sniffing and amphetamines than in Klong Toey.

She can think of nothing worse about Wat Charapon “because there is nothing good about Klong Toey” and she “only stayed there because she had nowhere else to go.” She could think of nothing which she misses about her old community and would not go back because she feels it is much better here.

## **Wat Charapon Case Study #12**

### ***Observations***

Khun CH has been living in Wat Charapon with her husband and son for the last five months. Their house is an average sized two-story made of standard materials, but the workmanship is exceptional. The wood on the stairs is carefully sanded and stained to bring out the beauty of the grain. The entrance is an arched doorway with in-laid glass "bricks" in a neat geometric pattern over the door. The wooden railing on the second story balcony also demonstrates particular care taken in the carpentry. Although the house looks quite complete and is impeccably clean, it does lack many of the finishing touches such as coverings on the cement floor and walls.

### ***Financial Situation***

Since moving to Wat Charapon Khun CH has continued to work as a day laborer unloading cargo in the Port Authority. Their 12 year-old son plans to finish the school year at the government primary school in Klong Toey. Next year, for grade seven, he will begin at the government secondary school near Wat Charapon. Both father and son travel to Klong Toey by bus daily. In addition to an increase in transportation cost (from 3.5B to 9.5B) for their son, he also needs money for breakfast because he leaves the house so early.

While living in Klong Toey, Khun CH was working as a seamstress in a nearby private shop. Just prior to moving she broke her arm in a motorcycle accident and is not able to sew, but she has been able to use her time to help with the construction of their new home. When her arm is out of the cast, she plans to return to her sewing job in order to get more money for finishing the house. The family borrowed the full amount of 150,000B from the community cooperative for the construction of their home.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CH feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. Her concerns regarding the health of her family revolve around traffic. She fears that because her son has to travel far to go to school everyday that he is breathing in a lot of traffic pollution. She also worries about traffic accidents. She feels that overall these concerns are about the same as they were in Klong Toey because although the travel time is increased, the air and environment in Wat Charapon is better.

She believes her family would be more healthy if they did more exercises, but she does not know how and they do not have time. She would also like there to be a health center in the community "so that [they] would have a place to go if someone gets sick at night...now only people with cars do not have to worry."

### ***Psychological Health***

Khun CH's family moved to Wat Charapon because they were being evicted and felt that if they did not move they would be kicked out anyway. Wat Charapon appealed to them because of the free land and the reduced risk of fire. In addition, they wanted to leave Klong Toey because they were "afraid that [their] son might get involved with bad people [drug users] as he gets older." They are happy with their decision and "everything about Wat Charapon is even better than [they] expected...except the loan money ran out before the house was finished."

Khun CH's greatest worry about her family is that her son will begin using drugs, but since moving to Wat Charapon this fear has been reduced. Her biggest problem at the moment is that they do not have enough money to finish their house. She "just wants the house to be finished so that she just has to worry about the loan payments and no additional

building costs...that will be better.” Although Khun CH sleeps better in Wat Charapon she finds that she is easily irritated when she is thinking about these problems because they make her *mai sabai jai*. She finds it easier to relax here because the environment is better and “every morning [she] chats with her neighbors and feels more relaxed.”

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun CH feels that the best aspect of living in Wat Charapon is that they do not have to worry about fire because the houses are not so close together. She has a lot more friends here and felt that her neighbors in Klong Toey were very selfish. “Here people with cars will ask if you want to go out with them or to the market...when [she] goes out walking people are more friendly ...if [her] son is home alone people will keep an eye on him, that would never happen in Klong Toey...in Klong Toey people would not even let you know if there was a fire!”

Although she is happier in Wat Charapon and would not like to return to Klong Toey, she misses being closer to a doctor and wishes there was more transport in and out of Wat Charapon. If she goes out with the bus in the morning, she has to wait until the evening bus to return because taxi’s are too expensive.

## **Wat Charapon Case Study #13**

### ***Observations***

Khun CI has been living with her husband and nephew in a two-story house of average size and good quality for the past two years. The floor is nicely tiled and the walls are fully painted. The house is decorated with many artificial flowers and there are a number of toys for her nephew scattered around the very clean living room. The front porch has many potted plants and banana trees around the edges.

### ***Financial Situation***

Both Khun CI and her husband have continued with the jobs that they had in Bangkok before moving to Wat Charapon. Khun CM is a cleaner for a private company in the city and her husband works in a factory near the Port Authority. They either go by public bus, or if they need to go earlier they take a Suburu *songtaew* which are more expensive, but go by the expressway. Her nephew is three years old and she has to pay someone to take care of him during the day. She really wants a kindergarten in the community for him to attend. The family borrowed the standard loan of 150,000B from the community cooperative to build their home.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CI feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. Her only concern regarding the health of her family are the bug bites her nephew gets from playing in the sand. These worry her because they always seem to get infected. In general, she thinks that her family is healthier since moving to Wat Charapon due to the better air. She wishes that there was a doctor in the community because at the present time it is difficult to go to the health center since it is too far and inconvenient.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CI and her husband decided to come to Wat Charapon because they were evicted. Khun CI is happy with their decision. Even though the community is how she expected it to be, she still wishes there was a kindergarten, better transport and less of a loan to repay.

Khun CI is sometimes afraid when she travels by bus because the drivers can be reckless and she feels that they may crash. She is also afraid of coming back to Wat Charapon alone by motorcycle taxi not only due to the possibility of an accident, but because the driver may hurt or rape her. This fear is greater since moving to Wat Charapon because it is located in a relatively isolated area several kilometers from the main road.

Khun CI's biggest problems are that she has to commute to Bangkok for work and there is not a kindergarten for her nephew. She sometimes gets irritated with her nephew especially when she is tired or stressed from traveling to work and he cries or disobeys. She says that these feelings have increased since moving to Wat Charapon. She also feels uncomfortable when she thinks of their loan, but it makes her very *sabaijai* to own a house and land. When she is feeling stressed she finds it easier to relax in Wat Charapon because of the better environment.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun CI feels that the worst aspect of living in Wat Charapon is the fact that transportation is less convenient here. She misses living near everything and being able to return home at any time. At night she cannot return to Wat Charapon by taxi because "after 7:00 pm the taxis will not come here because there is too much crime against the taxi drivers if they go off the main, busy roads." If her family needs a doctor at night there are

no buses and the road away from Wat Charapon is not yet very good. Khun CI believes the biggest social problems here to be glue sniffing and heroin selling. She does not think that the community leader and members do enough to prevent these problems.

Even given the above problems, Khun CI is more happy living in Wat Charapon. She is more comfortable here because the environment is better and the houses are not cramped together so her family has more privacy. She would not like to return to Klong Toey because “the air here is better and [she] was fed up with the slum.”



## **Wat Charapon Case Study #14**

### ***Observations***

Khun CJ, her husband, two sons, daughter, daughter-in-law and granddaughter have been living in their two-story unfinished house for the last two years. The upper level is mostly completed, except for the balcony, and is of standard size and quality. The lower level is being used as living space, but it is enclosed with a combination of second hand boards, cement blocks and tarps.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun CJ was not employed in Klong Toey and currently spends her time looking after her one and a half year-old granddaughter. Her husband has continued to work as a day laborer in the Port Authority. The leader of his group, that is the man who has the card that allows them access to the Port, drives him to and from Klong Toey everyday for free. Unfortunately, about 5 months ago, while working on the house, Khun CJ fell off a truck and could not go to work for 4 months. He has just recently returned to work.

As in Klong Toey, their two sons, ages 23 and 18, do not work. Khun CJ's daughter-in-law was also not working while living in Klong Toey, but she is currently employed at a sewing factory which is located about 4-5 kilometers from Wat Charapon. The family was given a 100,000B loan from Khun CJ's husband's boss. They are not being charged any interest, but Khun CJ feels that they ought to be paying at least a little. Since they came here from Rom Glau after the chemical explosion fire, they were told that they would be able to get a special loan from the Building Society (a government bank) at 11% interest, but up until now (2 years later) no one that she knows of as received any money and she wonders why they still have to wait.

The family appears to be particularly frugal. For example, they are not currently paying for electricity because they have jerry-rigged a hook-up to the main pole. For purifying their water they have made their own filter using an upside-down two liter plastic bottle filled with sand and charcoal.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CJ feels that her family's health is about the same as people elsewhere. Since her family is healthy she only worries about her own mild asthma and the bug bites that her granddaughter gets on her legs which always seem to get infected. Khun CJ feels that her family's health is the same as it was when they lived in Klong Toey.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CJ's family chose to move to Wat Charapon because they "wanted the land...[they] had never owned land before." They are happy with their decision because Wat Charapon is just as they expected. They "thought that life would be better here and it is."

Khun CJ considers their biggest problem to be the loan, but she feels a little better now that her husband has returned to work. Although she does not really worry about this problem, she says that she is sometimes irritable when she thinks about it. The aspect of her life that makes her feel uncomfortable at heart is that another son, who remained in Klong Toey, uses drugs. She tries not to think about this very often. Overall, she finds herself to be less irritable in Wat Charapon because the air and environment are better so she finds it easier to relax.

***Well-Being of Community***

Khun CJ finds the best aspect of living in Wat Charapon is the fresh air and pleasant breeze. She could not think of anything worse about this community, but wishes that the phone line would be installed so that she can keep in touch with her relatives. Although she is not currently aware of any social problems in this community, she fears “that drugs will come as more people move in.” Khun CJ feels more happy in Wat Charapon and would not go back to Klong Toey because “here is better.”

## **Wat Charapon Case Study #15**

### ***Observations***

Khun CK has been living with her adult daughter and nephew in Wat Charapon for the last two years. Their house is an unsteady looking structure made of secondhand scrap wood and the window spaces are covered with boards. They have elevated their house on stilts like a traditional Thai home and “when it is windy no one stays upstairs because [they] fear it will fall.” Underneath the house they have an area with a dirt floor where they keep piles of extra wood, kitchen wares, and a table for eating and chatting. The people sitting at the table are enjoying their food and laughing. Over the table hangs a brightly colored mobile which spins in the breeze. To one side Khun CK has also built a counter space where she prepares *somtorn* (papaya salad) for selling in the community. This area is lined with a plastic cloth and kept spotlessly clean.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun CK’s financial situation has been affected by numerous extremely unfortunate circumstances over the last two years. After their home was burned down during the chemical explosion fire in Rom Glau, the family was given 60,000B as compensation and an opportunity to own a piece of land in Wat Charapon. Just after moving to Wat Charapon Khun CK’s husband became very ill. They used nearly all of this money on his hospital bills, but unfortunately he still died as a result of his illness. Soon after losing her husband, Khun CK’s daughter was struck by a 10 wheel truck while crossing the street in Bangkok. She sustained severe internal injuries and lost part of her intestine. The truck company compensated the family with 100,000B, but the hospital bills have exceeded this amount.

Khun CK sells *somtorn* from the front of her house and occasionally from a cart which she pushes around the neighborhood. She also was a food vender in Klong Toey, but there she made more money. She earns between 100 and 200B per day but hopes that as more people move into Wat Charapon her business will improve. Khun CK knows that if she went around with her cart more often she would make more money, but she does not do this because she is old [50 years] and her back hurts if she walks too much. Although her daughter helps her some with the business, she will not go out with the cart even though Khun CK often asks her to do so. Her nephew was unemployed in Klong Toey as he is now.

The family did not take a loan when they first moved to Wat Charapon because they did not want to be in debt, but now Khun CK fears that they will lose their land because the house does not meet the Housing Authority requirements.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun CK feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people elsewhere. Her major concerns regarding the health of her family revolve around her daughter’s accident. She worries that her daughter will not be able to have children due to injuries she sustained in the accident. Khun CK also worries that if someone were to become ill at night she would not know how to get to the doctor. Overall, she feels her family is slightly healthier in Wat Charapon because the air is better.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun CK’s family decided to move to Wat Charapon because they lost their house in the fire and because they knew that they would eventually be evicted. They are happy with their decision, but prior to moving here she expected that the market would be more convenient and she did not realize that it would cost 40B to get to the main road by

motorcycle.

Khun CK is very worried that her house is not up to standard. She fears that she will not be able to get a registration number and her family may lose the land. Khun CK has asked for a loan from the Building Society, but has not yet had a response and she is also trying to borrow from the community cooperative, but they only distribute money in blocks at certain times of year. In addition to not being able to get a loan, Khun CK has had to cope with the loss of her husband's income and her own decrease in profits. She is afraid that even if she gets the loan that she will not be able to pay it back and will lose the land anyway. She finds that she is often worried, anxious and depressed and she "thinks too much" about these problems. Sometimes she cannot sleep because when she wakes up early she just starts worrying and "becomes angry at herself because of her bad destiny...first [her] house burned and then [her] husband died."

Khun CK has felt *sabai jai* less often since moving to Wat Charapon, but does find it easier to relax here because of the better environment. She likes this community because she enjoys going out walking and chatting with her friendly neighbors, and "just wants to have a nice house like other people."

### *Well-Being of the Community*

Khun CK feels that the best aspects of living in Wat Charapon have to do with the general environment. She appreciates the good air and "in the morning [she] can hear the birds singing." She finds it "more convenient to buy food because the trucks drive right by [her] house and sometimes [she] picks greens from the field."

On the other hand Khun CK dislikes it when she has to buy something special at the main market because it is too far. The worst part of living in this community is that there are not enough people living here to buy her *somtorn*. She sees the largest social problem in Wat Charapon to be the use of amphetamines.

Overall, Khun CK says that she prefers Wat Charapon to Klong Toey because here she does not have to worry about eviction and she likes this place better. She would not like to return to Klong Toey, but recently her life has been very difficult and she has a lot of worries.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #5**

### ***Observations***

Khun DA lives with her four adult children in a slightly larger than standard two-story house which is very clean but looks slightly weathered. In the front corner of their lot she has built a small wooden covered stand from where she sells both cooked and packaged snacks. There are a lot of flies in the area around her house possibly because she is preparing food. The drains were mostly free from rubbish along with the pathway except for some candy wrappers and dog excrement.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DA runs her small shop, her oldest son works at a cigarette factory, her oldest daughter is a cashier at a departments store, her younger son checks inventory for a private company, and her youngest daughter stays at home. The family has no savings, but they did not have to take a loan to rebuild their house nor do they generally need to borrow money to make ends meet.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DA feels that her family is ill less often than people living elsewhere. She does not worry about the health of her children, but she does worry about complications of her diabetes. Khun DA feels that her family's health is better in Jet Sip Rai than before they moved here because this community is more clean. Before they had a lot of waste water underneath their houses.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DA and her family moved to Jet Sip Rai because they were told to leave their old community. They did not have enough money for the wood they needed to rebuild, but they were given wood from HDC and never had to pay for it. They are happy with their decision to come to this community.

Khun DA's biggest fear regarding her family's safety is that someone will be hit by a car or in a car accident. She worries about this less since moving to Jet Sip Rai because they previously lived closer to the main road. At the moment Khun DA has no major problems because she has enough money and she is happy. She worried much more before moving to Jet Sip Rai because her children were younger and often needed money and she knew that she could be evicted at anytime. She is now *sabaijai* because her children are independent and they are able to help her with the expenses. Now she always feels relaxed.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DA finds the best aspect of Jet Sip Rai to be that there is less glue sniffing and heroin use here than in her old community which she attributes to the fact that the community leader and the police walk around every evening. But she knows that there is still some heroin use and sees this as the biggest social problem in the community. In her old community she recalls that there were often shootings and knifings."

Overall, Khun DA is happier in Jet Sip Rai. She misses nothing about her old community and would not like to return.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #6**

### ***Observations***

Khun DB and his wife live with their three children ages two to nine in a house which belongs to Khun DB's father. They occupy half of the house and the other half is rented out to another family. The house is somewhat in disrepair with a shack-like expansion off of the front. Because their house is adjacent to the parking lot, there is a lot of rubbish piled along the cement fence which runs along the front of their property. In the parking lot they have constructed a small bamboo and plywood permanent covered stall with picnic table underneath which they use for eating and socializing.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DB works as a day laborer in the port and although he is able to earn 200-500B per day, he is only given work about 2 or 3 days per week. His wife stays home to take care of the young children. The youngest child stays at home and the older two attend the local government primary school. Khun DB complains that he is not able to work as often as he was before the deep port in Rayong was opened. Now a lot of goods enter Thailand through this new port and decrease the amount of labor needed in Klong Toey. His wife notes that she has to take a loan nearly every month in order to pay the family's expenses. She repays 2% interest each day.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DB feels that his family is ill less often than people living elsewhere. Although the family does not suffer from any serious illnesses, Khun DB often worries about the effects of pollution from the boats in the Port and the cars and dust in the parking lot. He feels that his family is healthier since moving to Jet Sip Rai, but he believes that they would be even more healthy if the environment was better. He would prefer that the parking lot was used only for recreation or a market and that no cars were allowed. He would like to move his children out of the area all together, but he does not have enough money to do so.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DB came to Jet Sip Rai because he was evicted. He was able to choose the general section in which he wanted to live along with 5-7 other families. The specific lot was chosen by lottery. He says that his decision was 'okay', but he would prefer not to be near the parking lot. He would not prefer the Flats because they are too small, and Wat Charapon is too far from his work.

Khun DB fears eviction, electrical fires, and worries that his family may be involved in a traffic accident. His biggest problem at the moment is financial. He often worries he will not be able to pay for his families needs and is sometimes depressed when he thinks too much about the fact that his job is neither full time or permanent. He feels *sabaijai* when his family is happy and he feels this way less often since coming to Jet Sip Rai in part because he now has children and greater financial responsibility and partly because he is not getting as much work as he used to get. When he is feeling stressed he drinks.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DB feels that the best aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai is that his immediate neighbors are nice people and he is near the port area so it is easy for him to get to work. The worst aspect is the pollution from the parking lot and he wishes that there were more trees. He believes that the communities biggest problem is the possibility of eviction in 8

years when the contract runs out and he heard that the Port Authority has already begun offering people money to move out.

Khun DB states that his “old community was a slum, everything was dirty and the walkways were unstable, so the housing is better here, but people are still the same and do the same stuff...they are still slum people.” Khun DB misses the fact that people did more socializing and walking around in his old community. He feels that the location was even more convenient and he did not live near a parking lot so there were not so many people and cars moving in front of his house. Although he says it is difficult to compare because the economy was so much better 12 years ago, he thinks that taking everything into consideration, he would prefer to go back to his old community.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #7**

### ***Observations***

Khun DC lives with her brother-in-law in a standard two-story house. Her husband has another wife and he lives elsewhere with her. They have constructed a small fence from scrap corrugated metal at the front of the house to create a small courtyard in which there are several banana trees and hanging laundry.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DC has a stroke two years and eleven days ago which left her left side partially paralyzed and with no sensation. Her brother-in-law has a three wheeled bicycle cart which he uses to collect rubbish such as old wood, paper, bottles, plastic bags. He is able to sell or recycle these scraps for 100-200B per day. Khun DC used to do the same before her stroke, but now she is unable to work. After her stroke Khun DC was hospitalized for two weeks and although she received a slight reduction in the cost from social services, she has to take a loan to make the payments. She has no savings and is supported by her brother-in-law and husband.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DC worries that she will have another stroke or some other heart problem. Her health was better before moving to Jet Sip Rai, but only because that was prior to her stroke and she did not have the stress of her husband having a second wife at that time. Her only daughter died several years ago in her sleep, so she does not have anybody else's health to worry about.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DC came to Jet Sip Rai because she was told that she had to leave her old community and was only given this option. She is not sure she is happy with this option because she was not given an opportunity to go and see places like Wat Charapon. She now thinks that maybe another option may have been better.

In Khun DC's old community there was much traffic near her house and she often worried that someone would be hit by a passing car. Since moving to Jet Sip Rai, Khun DC no longer worries about this. In general, Khun DC tries not to worry because the doctor told her that anxiety was bad for her heart. When she first learned that her husband has taken a second wife she was very angry and depressed, but now she has learned how to let go of bad emotions and she does not think so much about her problems. When her husband comes by the house to yell at her, she no longer yells back and she believes this helps her to remain calm.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DC feels that the best aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai is that the air is fresher than her old community. The worst aspects are that there is too much rubbish and too many people are always smoking, sniffing glue and using amphetamines.

Overall, Khun DC is happier living in Jet Sip Rai. In her old community she had a lot of problems with her neighbors and they were always arguing with each other. She can think of nothing which she misses about the old community and she would not like to return.



## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #8**

### ***Observations***

Khun DD lives with her husband, son, daughter, son-in-law and three grandchildren in a two-story shack which is patched together with pieces of plywood and is minimally finished. The drains in front of her house are blocked and overflowing which has created a particularly distasteful odor in the area and caused the bottom quarter of Khun DD's front door to have rotted out. At one point the water created a deep puddle of dirty water on the pathway in which several children were playing.

Khun DD's older son and daughter (parents of the grandchildren) have both died in the last few years, and this is a difficult topic for Khun DD to discuss. Her one living son is also very ill.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DD stays at home to watch the grandchildren. Her husband used to work, but cannot find a job anymore. Her daughter does not work either, but her son-in-law works at a lumber yard nearby. Her son is "very sick...he is upstairs dying." The children attend the local primary school irregularly because Khun DD often does not enough money for supplies or uniforms at the beginning of the term. Sometimes they receive a scholarship from a local NGO. Khun DD, her husband and the grandchildren are supported by whatever her daughter can give them.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DD feels that her family's health is about the same as people living elsewhere. She is very concerned about her son who she believes is going to die very soon and her husband who is suffering from alcoholic cirrhosis. But her grandchildren, her daughter and herself are all healthy. She does not know what could be done to make her family more healthy.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DD's family came to Jet Sip Rai because they had been evicted and were told that they had to come, but she is happy with the move. Besides her great concern for her son, she also worries that her youngest grandchild will fall into the blocked cement drain and be hurt. Her biggest problem at the moment is that she does not have enough money to send her grandchildren to school. She is not able to sleep well between her worries about her grandchildren and her son. Sometimes she uses sleeping pills which she buys from the pharmacy. She becomes very depressed when she thinks about how thin her son is and how he cannot eat anything except ice cubes. As she gets older she often worries about who will take care of her grandchildren when she is gone. She knows that nothing short of her son getting better would make her feel *sabaijai*, but she has learned not to calm her self a little and not to dwell on her problems all of the time. She finds it no more or less easy to relax in Jet Sip Rai than it was in her old community.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DD finds the best aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai to be that "the houses are not cramped together and this makes it easier for people to get out if there is a fire." She is pleased because she knows that the fire hose could reach her house. The worst aspect of this community is that there is a lot of drug use and she does not like many of the people around her. Even so she must compromise since they all must live together. Khun DD misses some of her neighbors from her old community, but overall she is no more or less happy living in Jet Sip Rai than she was living in her previous community.

## Jet Sip Rai Case Study #9

### ***Observations***

Khun DE lives with her husband and adult step-son in a two story house of standard quality. The floor was covered with several large pieces of linoleum and the walls were decorated with three calenders--one of the King, a Disney calender and a Playboy bunny calender. A scrap wood and corrugated metal fence enclosed a small cement are at the front of the house. Khun DE was sleepy, but willing to participate in the interview.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DE drives a tuk-tuk from 10pm to 6am usually around the main Klong Toey market. She previously rented the tuk-tuk, but recently purchased her own and now pays monthly installments. Her husband does construction and repair work around the community whenever people ask him for help, but this is not a very regular income. Her step-son works as a day laborer in the Port. The family does not have any savings because in addition to the installment payments for the tuk-tuk, they also have to pay rent. When the family moved to Jet Sip Rai they did not take a loan in order to build their house, but just added on slowly as they could.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DE feels that the rest of her family is ill about the same amount as people living elsewhere, but she is ill more often. She often worries about complications from her diabetes which she treats with Thai traditional medicines. Lately, her concerns have been growing because she is often tired and believes that she works too much for someone her age (54). In addition, she feels that her family would be healthier if they lived outside of Bangkok because there would be less pollution.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DE came to Jet Sip Rai because she was evicted and she thought that it would be a good place to open a shop at the front of her house. After moving here she began to fear that might not make as much money with a shop as she does driving the tuk-tuk and she decided against making the investment. At that point she feared that the move was not a good decision, but now she is happy that her family came to Jet Sip Rai.

Khun DE does not fear anything happening to either herself or her family. She "is old and brave...you have to be to drive a tuk-tuk at night by yourself." Her biggest problem at the moment is not having enough money for all of her family's expenses. Sometimes when she is worried about money or her health she is not able to sleep well. Then she becomes overtired and she is "not able to forget about these problems." At this point she will take some sleeping pills which she gets from the pharmacy and when she wakes up she feels refreshed and her problems seem much smaller. At the moment she can think of nothing that makes her feel *sabaijai* because her family is always ignoring her requests. She says that she "can always go out and earn more money, but if [her] family will not spend wisely, there is nothing [she] can do about it."

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DE can think of nothing which she particularly likes about living in Jet Sip Rai, but there is nothing she misses about her old community either. She "works at night and sleeps during the day and doesn't really associate with others so it does not matter where she lives. Overall, she just does not like Klong Toey because it is too dirty. She "just lives day by day...if [she] had enough money she would go back to her hometown because [she] still has relatives there, but [she] does not yet have enough money to live the rest of her life." Khun DE came to Bangkok 24 years ago from the Northeast.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #10**

### ***Observations***

Khun DF lives with her adult daughter and son in a standard two-story house which is decorated with exceptional care. A carefully constructed cement wall covered in bougainvillea enclosed a front courtyard and was nicely painted. The family appeared to take pride in careful maintenance of their home.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DF worked in a factory until about 2 months ago when she began having severe headaches which forced her to stop working. Now she works at home helping her niece do the finish work on cloth napkins. Both of Khun DF's children attended university. Her daughter now works as an accountant and her son is an engineer. At the moment the family has no savings because they are paying for a new television and stereo system on a monthly installment plan.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DF feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people living elsewhere. She is afraid of all illnesses, but is particularly concerned about her severe headaches. She does not feel that her family's move to Jet Sip Rai has affected their health either positively or negatively. She believes that they could be healthier if the community was cleaner and there was a park where people could exercise.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DF and her family left their previous community because they were forcibly evicted, but they are happy with their decision to come to Jet Sip Rai. When her children were younger Khun DF's biggest fear was that her children would begin using drugs because she often had no choice but to leave them alone when she was working. The fact that they have graduated from university and have good jobs makes her very *sabai jai*. Nothing in her life makes her unhappy, but she often worries about her headaches. Overall, Khun DF feels more content living in Jet Sip Rai. In her old community she "could not leave for very long without worrying about her house either being robbed or falling down because it was not very stable."

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DF feels the best aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai is the fact that they are near the market and the business district. She also appreciates that the houses and infrastructure are of better quality and that the houses are not too close together. In addition, she feels the committee members and community leaders do good work and are well-organized. She believes that the community's biggest social problems are drug use among children and the fact that so many children do not go to school. Khun DF worries that they will have no future without education.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #11**

### ***Observations***

Khun DG lives with her husband and their two toddlers, several of her husband's brothers and sisters, and four of their children for a total of 11 household members. Their house is a two-story of standard size, but below average quality. The walls were patched in many places with scraps of plywood and the entire structure appeared somewhat unstable. The drains in this area were completely clear and it was noted that this area only very rarely floods because whenever they see trash in the drains they all get together and clean it out. This *soi* is decorated with many plants and has very little rubbish.

### ***Financial Situation***

Both Khun DG and her husband both work for the Port Authority as cleaners. They provide the only reliable incomes for the entire household and as a result two of the youngest children in the household do not attend the local kindergartens because they cannot afford the small fees and uniforms. The family has no savings.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DG feels that her family is ill about the same as people elsewhere. She worries about her children getting respiratory illnesses because "the area is too dirty and there are too many people." Overall, she worries less about their health than in their previous community because she feels that people are ill less in Jet Sip Rai than before. She tries to keep her family healthy by not feeding them food which has gone off and by teaching her children not to sit in dirty places.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DG's family moved to Jet Sip Rai because they were evicted from their previous community. They are happy about the move, but wish that they did not have to pay rent. Khun DG's biggest fear regarding the safety of her family is that someone will be involved in a car accident, but she feels safer living in Jet Sip Rai than she did in her previous community. The family's biggest problem at the moment is financial and Khun DG is very worried about continued devaluation of the Thai baht. But overall Khun DG does not think about this problem too much or feel depressed. She finds it easier to relax in Jet Sip Rai than in her previous community because she has more privacy here.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DG finds the best aspect of living in this community to be that they have a common area at the center of the community where they have a market and occasional 'fun fairs' with Thai traditional dancers, cinema screens, and traditional plays. The worst part is always having to clean rubbish out of the drains. She finds the biggest social problem to be people getting drunk all of the time, but she has adjusted herself to these problems and they don't bother her anymore.

Overall, Khun DG is more happy living in Jet Sip Rai than she was in her previous community. She finds that this community is more conveniently located with respect to the market and her job and the community infrastructure is better. There is nothing she misses about her old community.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #12**

### ***Observations***

Khun DH lived in a sturdy two-story house of exceptional quality with a nicely finished balcony and front door. The household includes most of Khun DH's immediate family including her parents and siblings along with their spouses and children for a total of 15 people. The house is located on the main road and serves as an excellent location for the food stall which the family runs in front of their house. The problem with the location is that motorcycles are continuously passing and are so loud that they drown out the conversation.

### ***Financial Situation***

All of the adult family members except Khun DH's mother and her husband have steady work. Khun DH and two of her siblings run the food stand from the front of the house where they sell sausages and rice soup. Due to its location the business has been quite successful, but unfortunately with the recent downswing in the economy their profits have recently declined. The family does not have any monthly savings, but does not usually have to borrow any money to meet their expenses. They did borrow from a money lender at 20% interest in order to build their house when they moved to Jet Sip Rai, but have paid back that loan in full. All four of the children in the family attend kindergarten or primary school regularly.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DH feels that everyone except for herself is ill about the same amount as people living elsewhere. Regarding herself, she has had a heart problem since she was a child and most of her physical health concerns revolved around this. She wishes her family had more money because this "would make their mental health better so then they would be more healthy physically as well."

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DH's family moved to Jet Sip Rai because after they were evicted from their old community her mother really wanted to move here. The family is happy with this decision because the community's location provides them many business opportunities. Khun DH's biggest fear regarding the safety of her family is that one of the children will be hit by a passing car. This fear is greater in Jet Sip Rai than in their previous community because now they live right on the main road. The family's biggest problem at the moment is financial. Although Khun DH does not often feel depressed, she does feel she worries too much about how her family will meet all of their expenses. She would feel *sabaijai* more often if her husband did not drink so much alcohol and would go to work more often.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DH feels that the best aspect of living in this community is the business opportunities it provides her family. When Khun DH and her family first moved to the area, it was not yet fully developed, but now the roads are good and the family is able to sell much more food than before. The family also finds Jet Sip Rai to be better than their previous community because it is cleaner and has better pathways which do not pass over waste water. The biggest social problem in Jet Sip Rai is the use and selling of drugs.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #13**

### ***Observations***

Khun DI lived with her husband, siblings and elderly father and young step-mother for a total of nine household members. Their house is of standard size and is quite sturdy, but appears to be made of second hand wood. Khun DI, her husband and brother were watching television and playing with their pet squirrel. Two of Khun DI's younger brothers are in prison for drug related crimes.

### ***Financial Situation***

All of the women in the family have jobs with a local NGO. Khun DI is a kindergarten teacher and her husband is a taxi driver. Khun DI did not know the actual income of the entire household, but her and her husband along earn about 10,000B per month. They currently do not have any monthly savings. They did not need any assistance to rebuild their home in Jet Sip Rai because at that time her parents had enough saving to pay for it themselves.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DI feels that her family is ill less often than people living elsewhere. She believes this is because everyone takes care of themselves by eating properly and drinking water that has been filtered. She believes that they are more healthy in Jet Sip Rai than they were in their previous community because the houses are less densely spaced.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DI and her family chose to move to Jet Sip Rai after they were evicted because it is located near most of her family members' places of work. She is satisfied somewhat but sometimes she wishes they had gone to Wat Charapon because then they would own their own land. On the other hand she thinks that this might not be good because they would have to commute quite far everyday and this would be bad for their mental health.

Khun DI's biggest concern regarding her family's safety is that someone will be hit by a car in front of their house because they live on a main road and the cars go much too fast. She wishes that they could be forced to go slower. The family's biggest problem at the moment is financial, but Khun DI does not worry about this very often. She feels *sabai jai* when her family is happy and they have enough money to buy what they want. Nothing makes her unhappy in her life at the moment and this has not changed since moving to Jet Sip Rai because "happiness depends on the person not the place."

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DI feels the best aspect of living in this community is its location near her family's work places. She is also more happy living here than in her previous community because it is cleaner, has less waste water and her house is more stable. There is nothing she misses about her old community. She believes the biggest social problem in Jet Sip Rai is the use of drugs.

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #14**

### ***Observations***

Khun DJ lives with her adult children, their spouses and five children for a total of 13 household members. Their house is of standard size but exceptional quality with tile floors and finished walls. They have a large fish tank in their living area with a green light and large goldfish. Four of her grandchildren were playing on the floor with Barbi dolls. Their *soi* is very clean with many plants and good drainage.

### ***Financial Situation***

Khun DJ takes care of her grandchildren and takes care of their home. All of her children work either as day laborers in the port or at a nearby sewing factory. The family has no savings and is still repaying several loans which they took out at 20-30% interest in order to build their new home in Jet Sip Rai.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DJ feels that her family is ill about the same amount as people living elsewhere. She feels that her family's health has improved since moving to Jet Sip Rai because their new house is more sturdy and cleaner. She believes that the community would be more healthy overall if community members kept the pathways more clean.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DJ's family came to Jet Sip Rai after they were evicted because they had nowhere else to go, but they are now pleased with the move. Khun DJ's greatest fear regarding her family's safety is that one of her children will be in a car accident or be mugged when they return home late at night. Her biggest problem at the moment is that they are still paying off the loans for their house. At times Khun DJ feels a great deal of anxiety because she fears she will not have enough money to pay for her grandchildren's schooling. She also worries about her oldest daughter because her husband has another wife and this makes her daughter very upset. Khun DJ's financial worries are much greater since moving to Jet Sip Rai because she did have so many loans before. Khun DJ could think of nothing which makes her feel *sabaijai*, but this was also true before the move.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DJ feels that the best aspect of living in Jet Sip Rai is its convenient location with respect to her children's jobs. She is very happy with her house which is spacious, well-ventilated and well-lit. She does not miss anything about her old community. She feels that the worst aspect of Jet Sip Rai is the drug problem, but did not worry about this because "it's their [drug users] problem and it has nothing to do with [her]."

## **Jet Sip Rai Case Study #15**

### ***Observations***

Khun DK lives with her husband, four sons and one grandson in a very poorly put together shack-like house. The house is elevated and the area underneath is enclosed on one side with pieces of scrap wood. Instead of stairs up to their house they have only a rickety ladder. At the front of the house are two banana trees and a three foot metal and wood fence. During the interview their grandson was very excited and was dancing and running around until he became engrossed in a Power Ranger commercial on their small television.

### ***Financial Situation***

Of the six adults living in the house, only three of them work. Khun DK works as a day laborer in the port and one of their sons is a bus driver. Khun DK has an irregular income from odd jobs around the neighborhood and doing Thai massage. Khun DK complained that her "sons are too lazy. They go out all night long and then sleep all day refusing to do anything...they won't even go to buy food." As she said glanced over to one of her sons who was sleeping on a mattress in front of the television with his clothes on and pillows piled on top of his head. The family has no savings, received no free assistance in building their home, and has taken numerous loans at 20% interest per month in order to make ends meet.

### ***Physical Health***

Khun DK feels that everyone in her family except her husband is ill about the same amount as people living elsewhere. Her husband drinks too much and is often sick as a result. She does not feel that her family's health has changed since moving to Jet Sip Rai.

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

Khun DK's family moved to Jet Sip Rai under the influence of her husband's parents. She is not happy with this decision because she feels as if she had no choice. In addition, the family has mortgaged the rights to the plot on which their house is built and they have to make their payments every month or they will lose their home. In addition, Khun DK preferred their previous home which was of a higher quality. The family's biggest problems at the moment are the poor quality of their home and the fact that they may lose their house to the money lenders. Khun DK feels that their life was better before moving to Jet Sip Rai. Nothing in her life makes her feel *sabaijai*. The above problems together with the fact that she owes money to other people as well and her children refuse to work make her feel *mai sabaijai*.

Throughout the interview Khun DK's 7 year-old grandson voiced several of his own opinions. When his grandmother did not mention his mother as a member of the household, he announced that his mother had left his father and moved to another house. While we were discussing violence in the community the child volunteered that "grandpa beats up grandma everyday, but she does not fight back" before he could be silenced. As we were leaving the child stated that he wants to go to school and his mother wanted him to go as well, but his father will not let him.

### ***Well-Being of the Community***

Khun DK could think of nothing either better or worse about living in Jet Sip Rai compared to her previous community. She said that she "does not like anywhere [she] has lived." Khun DK is less happy in Jet Sip Rai and would like to leave, but she does not wish to return to her old community either. What she really wants is to have her own piece of land.



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