

Bridging The Gap

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Abstract

The aim of my graduation thesis was to research how the city of Bangkok can deal with flooding and preserve the socio-economic context of informal settlements along the city's canals by using spatial and non-spatial measures. Integrated planning in Thailand is lacking, resulting in underperformance of critical flood-defense infrastructure. This research tries to find ways how and if small-scale interventions are capable of contributing to the system of flood-defense on the city scale. In order to cope with monsoon run-off from the north, the government has drawn a plan to clear the city's canals of obstructions in order to increase discharge capacity. Inhabitants of informal communities along these canals therefore face eviction. In Thailand there is an existing program for informal settlement upgrading by community participation, Baan Mankong. This program allows communities to draw their own upgrading plans and receive loans/subsidies to carry them out. This research takes an existing upgrading plan as a starting point, but an improvement is needed on the water management aspect. For the vision of this project we imagine that in the year 2040 the urban poor are no longer suffering from the negative impacts of climate change and the consequences of the lack of action in order to provide them with sufficient protection, but that they have adapted to the changing circumstances and that they are an example of the transformation towards a water adaptive Bangkok, like it once was. The main objective of the research is to achieve large scale contributions to the city's flood-defense by implementing small-scale interventions. In order to do so, there is a need for a city-wide framework which guides the small-scale interventions and makes sure they complement each other and can function as a system.

Keywords: Bangkok; climate change adaptation; community upgrading; flood defense; urban informality; watersensitive urban design; participatory upgrading; Baan Mankong

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