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## **URBAN ACUPUNCTURE: AN ALTERNATIVE**

Purposive intervention to urban development to generate sustainable positive ripples for an 'Aided Self-Help' Kampung Improvement

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### **ABSTRACT**

Urban kampung has been a latent problem that in itself is an urban reality. Both central and local governments have attempted various policies as well as schemes to solve urban kampung problems; however, they have not been successful in terms of the sustainability of the kampung lives. Kampung settlements are continuously suffered from self-destruction that endangers people as well as their natural living environment. The famous project of Kampung Improvement Program (KIP) has its own success story in terms of approaches towards urban development. However, it has a serious flaw that it simply focused on 'public work approach' that has nothing to do with human life and its space, the life-cycle space within urban kampung. Urban acupuncture will be put forward as an alternative solution of urban problems that are based on Lerner's approach - the very principles of acupuncture that the lines of action must be simple, produce an immediate effect, at reasonable cost and applicable to any situation to facilitate the daily life of citizens as well as to cope with urgent needs, be it in the heart of cities or in peripheral areas. This paper will discuss urban acupuncture as an alternative approach to urban strategy especially in dealing with the acute development of urban kampung. It will critically analyze the existing strategies to overcome continuous densification of kampung, especially KIP, high-rise housing as recently announced by the central government. It will focus on life-cycle of the kampung people that demands careful understanding, *sui generis*.

**Keywords:** urban kampung, kampung improvement, urban acupuncture, aided self-help, participatory development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

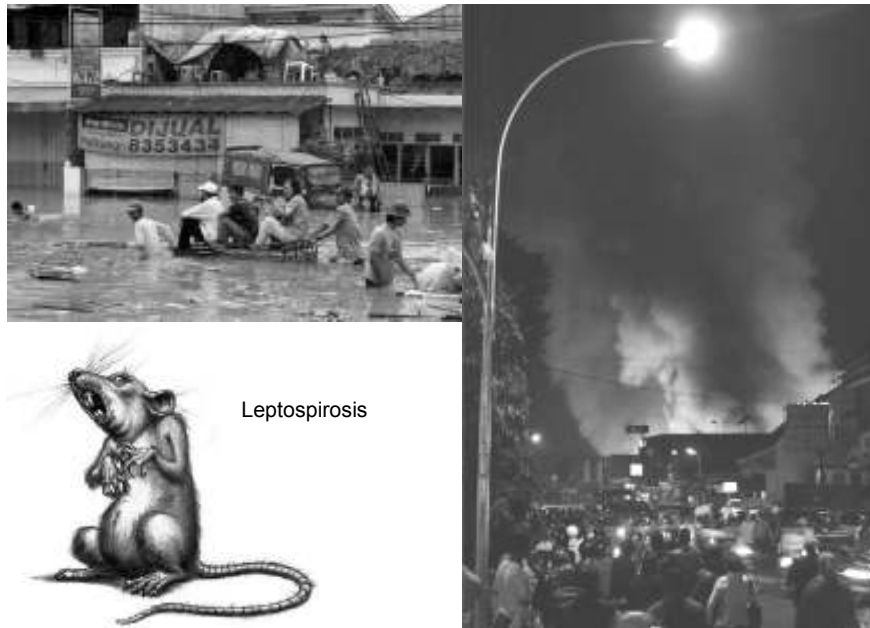
### 1.1 Background: Upgrading

While at the same time many of the government of the developing countries had very limited resources available, they fallaciously conceived housing problem of the poor as material issues ('what is') and tried to place them as a provider to solve it. Later it was realized that capitalistic, industrial approach was inaccurate if not erroneous. As pointed out by Skinner *et.al.* (1987) "by the mid-1970s many government of developing countries had accepted that they would be unable to meet the housing needs of their low-income populations through the provision of contractor-built units, which had hitherto been the policy norm. This policy had simply led to a widening of housing deficits as decaying housing stock and population growth outstripped construction at an ever-increasing rate." This situation has urged the developing – upgrading. The government acts as enabler.

Shelter upgrading in Indonesia known as *perbaikan kampung*, or kampung improvement. Historically, this approach had already initiated in the Dutch colonial period called *kampung verbitering*. Kampung traditionally is a communal or common property – under the *adat* laws. In the urban land issue, this type of tenure has been much more problematic than

### 1.2 Kampung Improvement Program (KIP)

Since its initiation in the late 1960's by the then Governor of Jakarta Ali Sadikin, Kampung Improvement Project (KIP) has not yet given any significant change to the life as well as living condition especially those of the poor. John L. Taylor (1987), in his research during the years 1979-82, on this Evaluation of the Jakarta Kampung Improvement Program indicates main features of the KIP (Taylor, J.L., 1987:40): i) the program's inputs consist entirely of physical facilities without any direct social or economical components; ii) roads and walkways account for at least two-thirds of total expenditures in most kampungs; in contrast, water supply is generally less than 20% and sanitary facilities below 5%; iii) inputs are provided on relatively homogeneous basis; that is, there is little room for much variation in type and standard of facilities in this massive 'public works' approach; iv) the program has made no attempt to deal with the issue of land registration nor to grant legal title to land for kampung residents; v) the program has also made no attempt at direct cost recovery; any increase in local revenues takes place indirectly through an expanded property tax base with housing improvements.



**Figure 1**  
Persistent "Urban Tragedy" over Kampung Settlement

Increasing population growth especially those of the poor that are mostly rural migrants with no appropriate skills needed simply rely on kampung as their affordable destination for living in the city. They are urbanized in their own terms based on their traditional norm and values. Indigenous people of urban kampung responded this demand for affordable housing for these migrants especially those of industrial and construction workers as well as the following individual 'investors' in the bazaar economy.

Until recently, kampung and its KIP were conceived as an isolated 'urban project' or improvement that has no direct integration to the functioning of the city as a whole. In fact, kampung settlement, firstly, provides affordable housing for those of poor unskilled of whom the city needs them. Secondly, actually, kampung has developed as a 'city within city'; it has its own social and economic entity that has never been incorporated to city system.

Unchecked densification process and uncontrolled development make matters worst and lead the kampung to tragedy – recurrent fire disaster, floods that cause a loss of life and property; outbreak of various diseases result from crowding, poor sanitation and clean water supply.

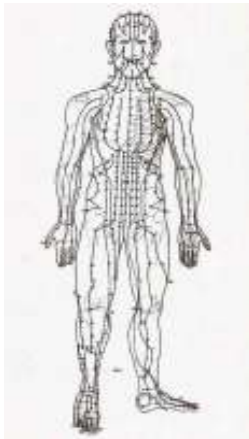
## 2. URBAN ACUPUNCTURE: LESSON LEARNED FROM CUTIBA, BRAZIL

The term is coined by the then Curitiba mayor, Brazil, Jaime Lerner. As the name suggests, it involves pinpointed interventions that can be accomplished quickly to release energy and create a positive ripple effect. There are four urban functions targeted as acupuncture points: transport, recycling, affordable housing and urban parks. These are associated with the crucial idea of Eco-city or sustainable urban development. His film – *Convenient Truth* – seems to give an opposing image or idea over the Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*.

*Urban transport* could be conceived as blood, in the human body, that transports foods and oxygen needed for metabolism process. It maintain all body organs to function properly. In the anatomy of a city, transport maintains the life of the city – especially the economy.

*Recycling* is an acupuncture point that primarily saves the city from waste hazard and in return it also generates economic opportunity for the poor. It stimulates remarkably participation of the poor to work together with local government and the private sector to change waste into 'nutrients' that are consumed by the industry. The city grows healthy.

*Affordable housing* is not confined to the provision of simply housing units in relatively remote areas. It includes provision of the urban economic activities and public facilities that bring the housing area simply beyond a dormitory place but into a sub-urban life and environment.



**Figure 2**  
Acupuncture  
Meridians

*Urban parks* are designed, firstly to solve flood problems by resettling the people into a safer place; secondly, it helps the city to increase green ratio. Before the scheme introduced, Curitiba had a very little green space ratio of about 0.5 m<sup>2</sup> per person. After the development of urban parks, Curitiba manages to increase this ratio to 60 m<sup>2</sup> per person (compare to standard provided by the WHO of 16 m<sup>2</sup> per person).

### 3. URBAN ACCUPUNCTURE IN INDONESIAN CONTEXT AND KAMPUNG

Acupuncture points in the human body are related to human internal organs such as lung, pericardium, heart organs, large and small intestine, liver and kidney. We apply this method to a city – similar to human body – that has ‘internal organs’ such as social structure and system, economic related organs (industry, services, information etc.), residential (maintain quality offspring etc.). Therefore, urban acupuncture points could be identified as transport system, greeneries, waste, and housing.

I will discuss kampung here of that which is inhabited by a majority of poor people. This people constitute a unique urban community developed of various traditional traditions, such as *adat* or customary laws of different ethnicities from all over the archipelago. They restructure into a type of ‘neo-tribal society’, since they are not similar to their origins but in many ways maintain their traditional norms and values to survive in the city. They are in process of becoming toward a civil-society of which urban society should be constituted by means of ‘social-contracts’ (established formal acts and laws). This implies that understanding this type of society is to understand their cultures, hence, their everyday practices.

In this regard, kampung should be conceived as a ‘city’ of its own that exemplifies its social and economic structure as well as practices. They are not parasites instead give significant roles to the city, for example, construction workers, budget food vendors and stalls (*warteg*). Kampung should be treated as part of the conurbation development. Consequently, accessibility of kampung should be integrated into the whole city system.

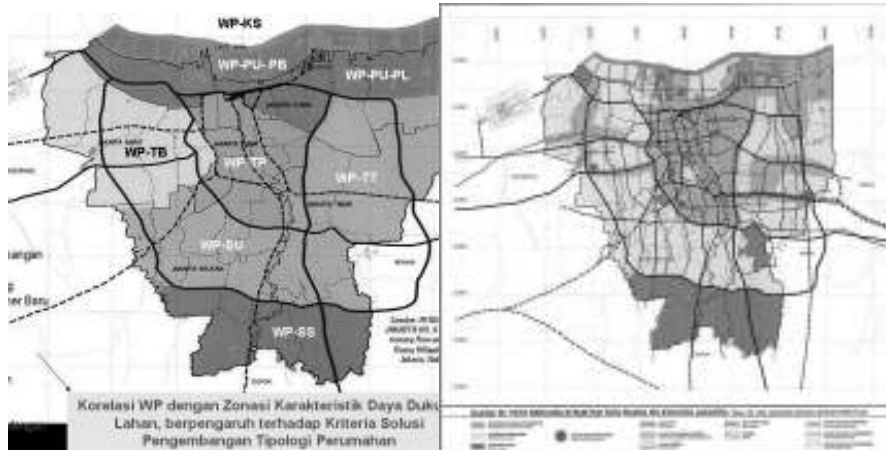
Within such a framework kampung settlement will have a role as a part of such a city function of which planning practice denies this reality. Urban planning practice until recently has viewed kampung as a simply ‘dormitory’ – a collection of houses. The following is crucial acupuncture points for kampung improvement:

- *Accessibility*. It should be developed within the larger urban context of which it should provide framework toward a ‘conurbation’. In the scheme, the transport system – a TOD system (Transit Oriented Development) – should be integrated with the kampung center development as a suitable local market, or otherwise the poor will find their own everywhere across the city.
- *Greenery*. It will subsume under the eco-urbanism that support *bio-nutrients* process of the urban environment as a whole. Ideal WHO standard of 16 square meters per person.
- *Aided-Self-Help Eco Housing for the Poor*. This scheme is especially crucial and addressed to ability of the poor to provide housing by themselves with the aid of the government and private

sector (CSR). The approach should be based on informal community structure (that may involve their patron such as land lord as well as the existence of the kampung 'mafia').

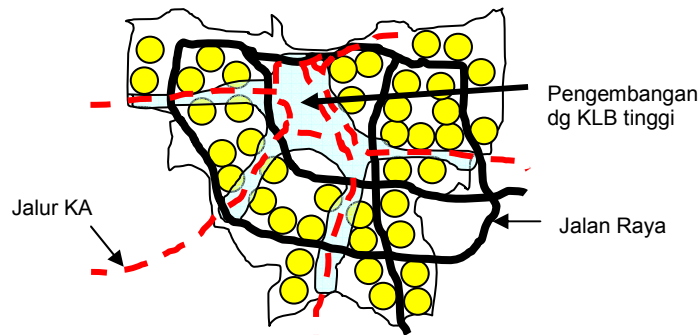
- *Eco-waste management.* The scheme should involve every individuals in the kampung to join the campaign of *trash is not a trash* – how to recycle waste into food or nutrients and, hence, incorporate private sector within the process and the poor have the benefit out of it – source of income as the Curitiba scheme has developed.

**4. ACCESSIBILITY**



**Figure 3**

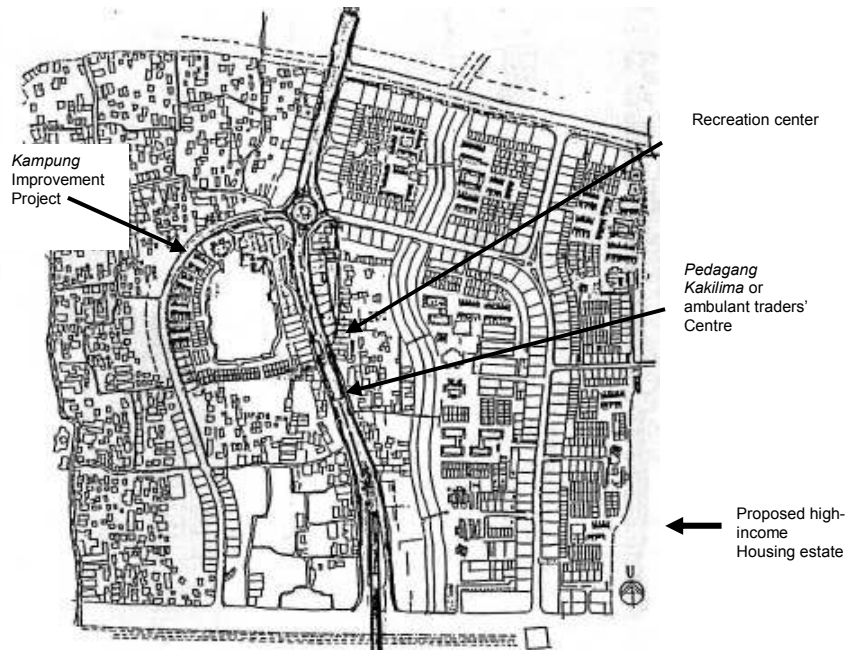
Structure of Jakarta & Its Settlement Patterns:  
 Over emphasis on road & unrelated settlement patterns over the transportation system  
 Dinas Perumahan DKI Jakarta, *Penataan/Perbaikan Kampung Terpadu*. Forum  
 Permukiman, Januari 2009



**Figure 4**

Ideal Urban Structure based on TOD  
 Settlement patterns including kampung and commercial high  
 density development are integrated into transport system

Figure 3 and 4 indicate the actual and its 'ideal' urban structure of Jakarta respectively. Kampung as a unique structure of urban settlement should have been integrated into the whole system of Jakarta, not otherwise. In such a system or settlement pattern, hence, any sub-urban may have its own (unique) center of which it will function as a generator of the local economy appropriate particularly to its local people.



**Figure 5**

A Proposal of Guided Land Development in Klender, Jakarta : A Development Consultant's unrealised project.

This is a good example of the guided land development in Klender, next to the Pengilingan area, which incorporates *kampung* and new housing estate. Unfortunately, this scheme is left on the shelves. The housing estate as now present is a 'segregate community' for high-income settlements.

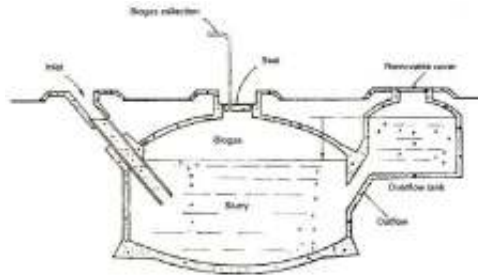
Source: Ismael, A., ' Guided Land Development: Klender, Jakarta', *Integrated Urban Development through 'Co-Development'*, Triarco Development Consultants, Jakarta, Paper presented for International Workshop on Housing ' Urban Coherence and Housing Strategies', Bandung, 1990, Case 3

## 5. ECO-HOUSING:AIDED SELF-HELP HOUSING IMPROVEMENT, GREENERIES AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Kampung settlement has its local knowledge and technology. Alien intervention – especially, capitalist or industrial production – toward its development may simply lead to petty capitalist commodity that excludes the poor migrants for affordable housing. Production process that involves labor and technology cause valorization, that is, increase value of commodity (especially house) – higher rents or price of houses. Aided self-help housing aims at suitable local resources, including labor, to assist the poor to improve their house.

*Eco-social.* The acupuncture point will be social ties. Kampung has its unique social structure of community that may not be the same from one to other. Housing improvement requires agreement among the kampung dwellers to change that may be regarded as social capital of the community. Participation should be considered in this sense. The role of NGOs, such as UPC, is paramount important. Local people have their own local knowledge and technology. Aid or intervention should act as empowerment and crucial resources for change. Reconstruction in Aceh has a lot of lesson to learn. Eco-awareness becomes crucial part of the improvement.

*Eco-centric.* This applies to those that relates to atmospheric and lithosperic intrusion or pollution – reducing carbon dioxide and chemical pollutants to the soils. Green needs carbon dioxide for photosynthesis process, while soil needs bio-nutrients to stabilize microorganisms within it. In this regard, both gas, organic as well as inorganic waste should be taken into account.



**Figure 6**

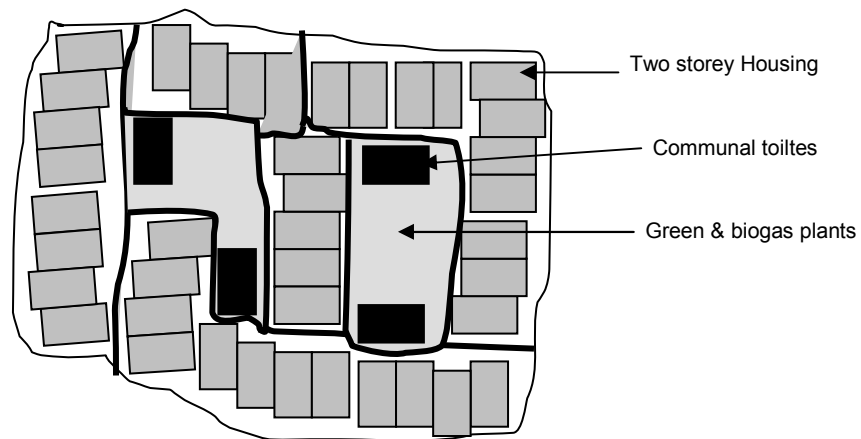
General Biogas Plant

Mahajan, n., *Move over Wind and Solar Energy, Cow dung is here to stay!* Ecofriend,  
[http://www.instablogsimages.com/images/2007/09/21/rural-biogas-plant\\_179.jpg](http://www.instablogsimages.com/images/2007/09/21/rural-biogas-plant_179.jpg),

21.03.08

Organic waste could process into methane gas (biogas) that can be mixed with the green waste. Additional outputs of this process are compost suitable for farming (in England this is called allotments that individuals can rent on lot for their green house and small farming in the city). Therefore, kampung improvement could be geared toward a mini-urban agriculture within its housing development. A scheme similar to that which is developed by Antonio Ismael could be introduced.

*Eco-housing.* Highly dense kampung should be redesigned to provide a better life-cycle space. The scheme incorporates all eco-logics toward sustainable housing design – *eco-block*.



**Figure 7**  
ECO-BLOCK of housing reconstruction within the upgrading program.



**Figure 8**  
Qingdao EcoBlock  
The Berkeley Institute of the Environment, *Sustainable Neighborhood "Eco\_Block" in China*, <http://bie.berkeley.edu/ecoblocks>, 8.03.09

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Urban acupuncture addresses the urban activities or sectors that make the city functioning properly in terms of much broader sense. It should address both ecology of the city – its natural as well as human aspects. The acupuncture points will engender urban activities of the public, private and popular sectors.

Careful and wise intervention towards the poor, that is, of local knowledge, norms and technology, should be taken into account in order that the scheme will not cause adverse effects. Aided-self-help will then encourage and empower the poor to help themselves. Social ties and network of the community will help to disseminate the change and improvement

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