TOWARDS EQUILIBRIUM
A VISION FOR KORAIL AS AN URBAN GATEWAY

One of the best places to witness the interaction between the formal and informal is Korail, located along Gulshan Lake and home to approximately 34,000 people. Korail is one of Dhaka's largest slums. The inhabitants work in garment factories, as rickshaw pullers and housemaids in the surrounding upper-class neighborhood. Many of the families have been living in the area for more than 20 years and made Korail a vibrant urban neighborhood, being ravaged by fire almost every year. Korail still stands amidst the heart of the city, almost mirroring a jellyfish that can regenerate its own body parts. Sudden eviction drives and lack of land tenure security are amongst the major problems that dominate the area. Despite proposals of the government, resettlement in an outside location will ultimately not benefit Korail inhabitants, because their households are based in the area and its surroundings. Also, the sharing of the land with private or public developers cannot be considered a solution. Therefore it has become essential for the government to reconsider its land distribution activities and include the option to lease out land to the urban poor.

LAND ENCROACHMENT IS SO DAMAGING THAT WATER IS ALMOST INVISIBLE NOW, CAUSING ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION.

A NUMBER OF NGOs ARE WORKING TO DEVELOP THE LIVING CONDITIONS IN KORAIL. THESE INITIATIVES ARE MOSTLY IN SERVICE BASED WHERE THEY ARE GIVEN DIRECT ACCESS TO HEALTH, SANITATION, EDUCATION AND MICRO-CREDIT PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, THEIR NGO INITIATIVES ARE NOT PARTICIPATORY IN TERMS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THIS DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO CAPACITY BUILDING. AS A RESULT, THE COMMUNITIES ARE DEPENDENT ON THEM.

WHY NOT CATALYZING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY POWER TO FACE THE CRISIS THEMSELVES?

An activity that has sustained and transformed into a community led initiative was the formation of a community-based organization (CBO). This CBO formed in 2003 monitoring a local NGO, DKV, collected feedback from the dwellers and passed the government in return of water supply; this initiative was fully run by the dwellers and was highly accepted by the dwellers. Over the years they succeeded to function independently and eventually transformed into their own entity now known as Central Community Based Organization (CCBO).
CREATING THE EQUILIBRIUM BY RESTRUCTURING THE COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATION

With the expansion of CCBO, a lot more members are needed. Currently, the CCBO has a lack of participation from women members; therefore, the newly proposed organization seeks to encourage female participation. In order to make women the leaders of the CCBOs, women empowerment is highly needed. Therefore, this project proposes to use the UPPR (Urban Poverty Reduction Programme) Social model to enhance their participation. This model works with women and girls to overcome their disadvantaged social position by encouraging them to take on leadership roles within their communities. The core philosophy of this program is making a banking system by giving a small amount of money from every family in every week to resolve their economic crisis and using this common fund for community development.

The CCBO structure strategy to mobilize and empower the community of the slum dwellers by providing them a media for “communication and development”.

The proposal is to help the community by empowering them through “enhancing the capacity of CCBO”. This organization will accommodate the growing multidirectional problems of Koral slum, based on their growing needs.

As per the current structure, with limited staff members, each member overlooks 200-300 households (considered as single community cluster).

Based on the 2017 survey of CCBO, there are 2,039 households living in Koral.

Baitraining in a refined “social model” inspired by UPPR, the number of households could be 300-350 households (community clusters), represented by single General Member resulting in 60-75 General Members in total.

Categorising the current aspects of the crisis, it can be six CCBO departments under CCBO with 90 main members and 100-105 Committee members.

The policy involves a set of criteria that need to be met in order to achieve tenure in the area. This policy will consider the income generation of a household based on two aspects, time bound and asset bound. The expected scenario of the policy is as follows:

The existing inhabitants of Koral will undergo an initial asset calculation that will be conducted by the CCBO. Households that are found to have an accumulative asset that goes beyond the ultra-poor or poor income level will be entitled to pay community water funds on a monthly basis in order to achieve and maintain the tenure or will be offered a space in the government resettlement community. The households that are at the poor and ultra-poor level will be given a tenure for a period of time as an opportunity seen a living by staying in this area. At a regular interval, this process will be repeated. In the next round of asset monitoring, the households will be expected to generate a certain amount of income. If a household fails to generate the expected amount of income over the given time, they will be entitled to shift the government proposed resettlement communities. On the contrary, if a household reaches the low-income level they will be entitled to pay the community development fund in order to continue their tenure.

The core idea is to convert Koral into an incubator. A space where urban poor will be given an opportunity to flourish in the urban area. During the tenure, the families will have an opportunity to gain hands on training in various skills. Vocational training organized by the CCBO in collaboration with NGOs offered will enable them to get jobs in the formal sector. The poverty reduction initiative and community empowerment objective can also be achieved to an extent through this proposal.
DESIGN VISION: INTRODUCING SPACES AS SOCIAL CATALYST

Spatial development is essential to allow these activities to take place. Capacity building activities will require space, which at this moment is almost non-existent in the area. Some roads need to be reconstructed; this can be conducted by the CCBO through the fund that will be generated by the community welfare fund collected from the dwellers themselves. Interactive activity spaces will be located on important interactions of road networks, this will allow the activities to be more visible and increase social acceptance and also attract more people to be a part of it. In addition to this, some platforms for community recreation as well as multipurpose activities are being proposed on the water edge, thus allowing the water edge to be preserved.

Koraal is an excellent place to create a developmental model that exhibits sensitivity to residents and allows their participation in an equitable redevelopment of their neighbourhood. Reaching an equilibrium is essential, through this proposed model, an equilibrium can be reached in term social acceptance of informal settlements and allow economic balance within the community as well as the formal environment. It will allow the people of informal settlements gain equal opportunity to be a part of the urban society rather than a burden on it.

The current scenario, dynamic relationship between the service provider & the service receiver, it is both buffered and connected by this water body. This lake is being encroached everyday a little in some major points.