

The Moongrove Garden

At the tide country where Man meets the Mangroves

PROGRAM

REGARDING PRE-DIPLOMA AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

The pre diploma research title was 'Man, Mangrove, Tiger and the Tiger shrimp' which started with an interest to look into how some of the practices of the coastal human forest interface of the Bengal delta created a complex web of interdependence and affect the landscape. The research explored the reasons behind the salt water shrimp farm expansions and the potentials of the mangrove based silvofishery which is being practiced in other parts of South East Asia.

Later on, during a site visit last winter and after talking to experts who have been actively involved in the polder management it came out that the people are slowly rejecting the salt water shrimp farming and becoming more adaptive to improvised techniques inspired by the traditional agriculture. It was also very much clear that the communities with strong bonding are doing better practices. Shrimp farming is more profitable but needs bigger investments and the profit goes to only individual company owners; and on the other hand, communities who have been able to stop the aggression of the shrimp industry were producing crops all year around and earning more than what they would earn as shrimp farmers. This became a pull factor to shift the focus of the further advancement of the research toward the community and local farming techniques.

THE PROJECT

The project is a garden for the community which is located in one of the lands outside of the polders. These lands are left outside of the polders because of their elbow type landform which behaves unpredictably. On the other hand, since there are no laws about the ownership, these lands are usually used by farmers who have lands nearby and eventually taken over by more powerful entities such as shrimp industries. If left alone, these lands could become pioneering mudflats of the migrating mangroves, but because of their close proximity to the embankments, people will always be there to use it. Hence, seen from a strategic point of view, the project in one hand will belong to the community, which means lesser chance of being occupied by the shrimp industries, and on the other hand it will use mangroves as garden patches which will mimic part of forest ecology. The design will create public spaces inspired by local beliefs and farming methods and it can be seen as a pilot project for lands of this typology along the coastal human forest interface.