

SPARC



The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers



annual review 2009

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a message from the director

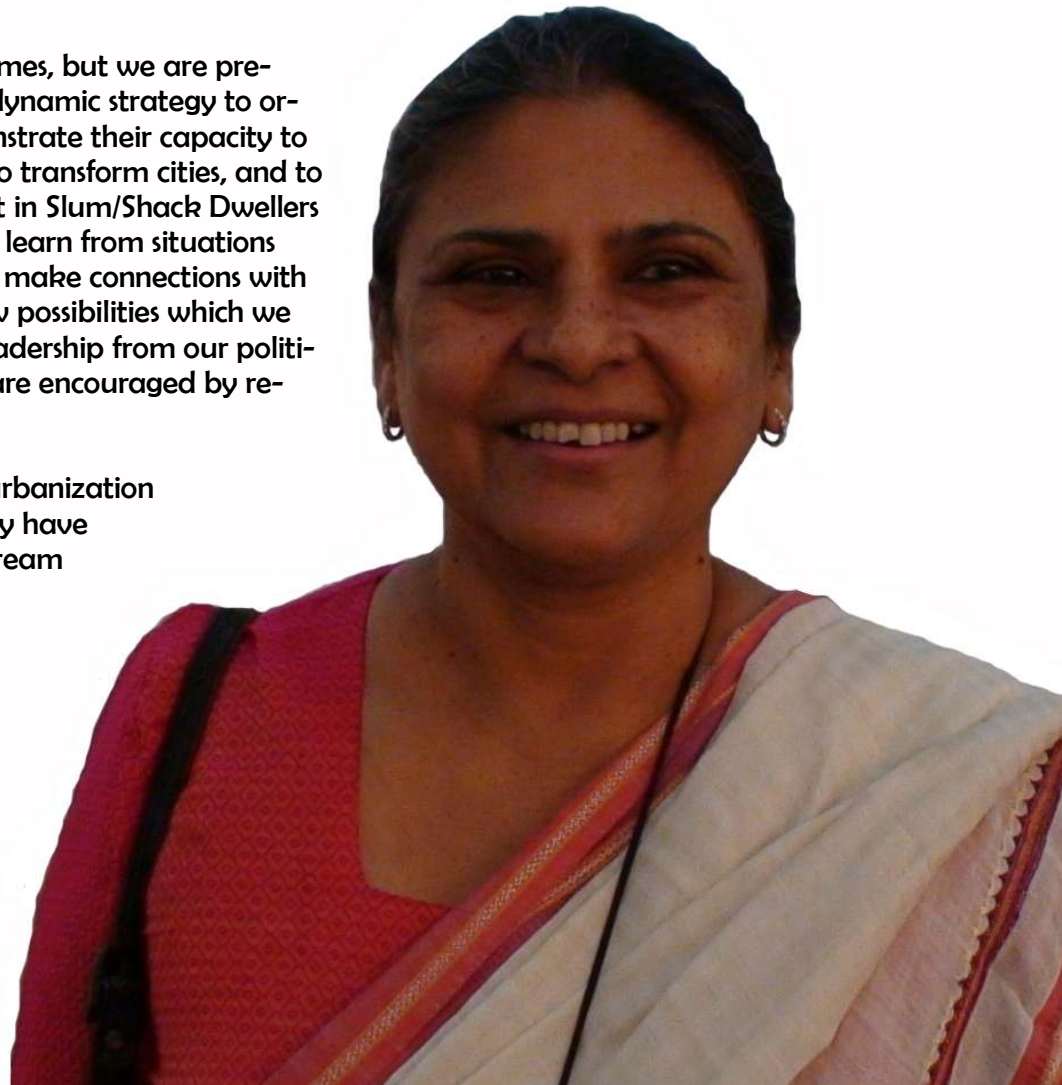
SPARC is 25 years old this year. It was an eventful year: national elections were held, and there was a general agreement that the vote for the United Progressive Alliance, led by the Congress Party, was a mandate to pursue the development agenda. This year, for the first time in the history of Indian presidential speeches, issues of slums were seriously addressed. And the government announced a new scheme, Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY), which seeks to make India slum-free in five years by providing basic amenities, offering subsidized credit, and granting property rights to slum dwellers throughout the country.

We have championed the need for greater attention to issues of urban poverty for a very long time, and have consistently urged the Indian government, grantmakers and foundations, and bilateral and multilateral agencies to invest in development strategies to address urban poverty. For some time, this effort seemed to be in vain, but more recently it has begun to pay off as governments and other organizations begin to explore urban issues, albeit cautiously. Most are uneasy about where to start, fearful of the long gestations and investments required before seeing results—something that the new culture of output-based aid requires within short investment spans, and where attention spans in development make long term investments more and more difficult. We believe that whatever the latest focus, be it HIV/AIDS or climate change, the poor and vulnerable, those who have no voice, deserve attention. Governments must take stock of those who are vulnerable and demonstrate that their governance mechanisms address their needs.

We also believe that in this millennium, which is clearly the urban millennium, factors we did not anticipate will dramatically impact our day-to-day lives. Cities and towns will have to change the way they are managed or become dysfunctional. Rules and regulations that sought to contain urbanization within outdated frameworks will be washed away by waves of migration and the internal growth of cities seeking new ways to accommodate all who seek to live there. Water and electricity shortages will demand new individual and collective behavior from urban residents, and tough choices that seek dramatic transformation rather than gradual change will arise.

We find ourselves in challenging times, but we are prepared to meet them. We have a dynamic strategy to organize the urban poor and demonstrate their capacity to participate in dialogue, to learn, to transform cities, and to explore solutions. Our involvement in Slum/Shack Dwellers International helps us explore and learn from situations beyond our national frontiers and make connections with global stakeholders to explore new possibilities which we can adapt locally. We still need leadership from our politicians and administration, yet we are encouraged by recent signs of progress.

We find that in India the issue of urbanization and the concerns of urban poverty have finally begun to appear in mainstream development discourse policy and practice, and we look forward to engaging in these processes in years to come.



urban poverty in context

To the international community, the narrative of the past decade in India is one of phenomenal economic growth and a vast increase in opportunity. Less frequently noted is a correspondingly massive growth in India's urban population and the vast increase in the numbers of urban poor, visible in the slums that characterize most Indian cities. The economic strides India has made in the past few years are real and significant, yet if India does not rise to the challenges presented by rapid urban growth, it will struggle to translate economic gain into improved quality of life for years to come.

Many of India's large cities, including Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, have grown especially quickly, and have been unable to provide infrastructure, housing, and services to accommodate their growing populations. Mumbai's population, for example, has grown from 8 million in 1981 to approximately 21 million in 2010. Despite Mumbai's enormous economic success, around half its population live in slums. How can India continue to grow its economy while ensuring that its cities can accommodate the 250 million new urban dwellers expected over the next twenty years? With between 30 and 60 percent of the population in many cities in India living in slums, and the urban population expected to nearly double to 575 million by 2030, finding a sustainable and functional solution to the growing pressure on Indian cities is imperative.

Yet urban issues do not receive adequate attention from policymakers, politicians, or the public, many of whom cling to the idea of India as a land of millions of villages. But economic success will bring more urbanization, so urbanization will not stop, and it certainly will not reverse. People will not leave the economic opportunities and social freedoms offered by cities for a life of stagnant, wrenching poverty in rural villages. Nor should they: India's economic growth is largely dependent on the migration of labor to jobs in cities. Urbanization is an inevitable part of development, and one that has the potential to change millions of people's lives for the better. Yet for this positive change to occur, the people whose lives are being affected must be a part of the process. SPARC is committed to supporting the urban poor as they seek to assert their needs, their rights, and their essential place in India's vibrant urban future. SPARC and its Alliance with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*, a federation of women's savings groups, are also strongly committed to supporting the national federations of slum and shack dwellers that have developed in over 20 other nations—and to supporting Slu./Shack Dwellers International (SDI), the small umbrella group to which all the federations belong.



sparc at a glance

achievements

2009 was a busy year for the Alliance. Federation groups enumerated **3077 settlements**. Mahila Milan and Federation groups participated in **25 exchanges** between cities, states, and countries. Mahila Milan groups collectively **saved 2,49,79,724 rupees** and **gave 2,14,67,400 rupees** in loans. SPARC/Nirman began **2 major construction programs**, in Pune and Bhubaneswar. **12 new Mahila Milan and Federation groups** were formed. We strengthened relationships with academic partners and undertook **4 new research projects**, looking at urban communities' vulnerability to disaster, the importance of open space in settlements, and the ways the Alliance's work has contributed to the realization of human rights. Alliance leaders continue to advise the government on slum policy, serving on the **Millennium Project Taskforce on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers** and task forces on the **Dharavi Redevelopment Plan** and the new **Rajiv Awas Yojana housing scheme** for the urban poor. Finally, we worked to spread awareness about urbanization around the world, hosting the **Informal Cities** art exhibition in Mumbai in November.

awards and accolades

Sheela Patel received the **David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award**, honoring leaders who exemplify the principle of working together for the common good, from the Synergos Institute in New York City on September 21, 2009.

Jockin received an **honorary PhD** from the Kalinga Institute of Technology in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, on Sunday, December 6, 2009.

Jockin was honored as the **Reader's Digest Asian of the Year** in a ceremony in Mumbai on 10 Feb 2010.



about the alliance

Since 1984, **SPARC** has been working on issues of urban housing and infrastructure in partnership with two community-based organisations, **the National Slum Dwellers Federation** and **Mahila Milan**. Together, they are known as **the Alliance**. Today, the Alliance works to produce collective solutions for affordable housing and sanitation in over 70 cities in India. The Indian Alliance is also a founding member of **Slum/Shack Dwellers International**, a transnational network of the urban poor in over 30 countries.



The National Slum Dwellers Federation organizes communities living in informal urban settlements and mobilizes them to articulate demands, explore development strategies and negotiate with city authorities. Originally formed to fight evictions, NSDF has moved from a protest model to one that encourages poor people to see themselves as active partners in development.



Mahila Milan—"Women Together" in Hindi—is a decentralized, settlement-level network of poor women's collectives that manage savings and credit activities, slum surveys and mapping, and housing and infrastructure projects. MM empowers women to become active leaders in community and urban development.



The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) is one of the largest Indian NGOs working on housing and infrastructure issues for the urban poor. SPARC provides professional support to its grassroots partners in order to build their capacity to play a proactive role in developing solutions to urban poverty and creates links between the CBOs and formal institutions.



R. M. K. SUMMARY

R.M.K. SC	TOTAL	WITH	M. M. LOAN GIVEN	R.M.K. LOAN GIVEN	TOTAL	SR. NO.	AREA	SAVING	M. M. LOAN REPAY.
						1.	138-B	49104	3920
410	163893	13537		3000	138376	2.	CHILDREN	1880	
3786	153700	10658		15000	121587	3.	M.P. NAGAR	2426	
356	141461	11054				4.	SANJAY NAGAR	587	
129	156737	96575							

the federation model

Over the past 25 years, the Alliance has developed a set of **core activities** that build the organizational base, capacities and confidence of communities to develop and negotiate for development solutions. We call this set of core activities the '**federation model**.'

core activities

- Setting up **Area Resource Centres** that serve as a meeting space and base for activities
- Encouraging households to join a community-level **Savings and Credit** program that builds financial assets and local capacity
- Completing community-led **Slum Surveys and Maps** to create a powerful informational base for strategizing and negotiations
- Facilitating **Peer Exchanges** among groups on local, regional and national levels so that communities can learn from each other
- Organizing **Housing Exhibitions** that showcase affordable solutions and act as a tool for mobilization and dialogue with officials
- Undertaking **Precedent-Setting** housing and infrastructure projects that provide needed improvements while demonstrating solutions that can be scaled up and the capacity of the poor
- Supporting **Dialogue and Negotiation** on win-win solutions with relevant authorities
- Advocating for pro-poor **Policy Changes** on the basis of grassroots experience and demonstration of good governance practices

guiding principles

- **Start with the poorest of the poor.** Unless solutions work for the bottom 30%, they will be left out.
- **Participation of women is central.** Development initiatives cannot succeed without those who hold together their homes & communities.
- **The poor must be partners, not beneficiaries.** The poor know best which strategies will work, and change only occurs when they are organized to make demands and sustain them over time.
- **Real change is a long-term process.** We support communities for lifetimes, not project timelines.
- **Negotiation is necessary.** Protests alone don't lead to answers: dialogue with authorities is essential for accessing land and amenities and scaling up.
- **Solutions are political, not technical.** Access to land and shelter is a systemic and political problem, so solutions cannot be primarily technical or managerial.
- **Good governance is inclusive.** It honors the participation of poor people and women in development decisions and practices.



housing and infrastructure

Rapid urbanisation draws millions to India's urban areas every year. But the inadequate supply of affordable housing forces the most migrants and many poor city dwellers to create homes wherever they can find land. Though successful city economies are fuelled by cheap labour, few authorities include the poor in development plans. It is therefore critical for organisations of the poor, city authorities and financial institutions to work in partnership to create sustainable and affordable solutions to this housing crisis.

At the local level, leaders from federations of slum dwellers train communities to build their own capacity well before negotiating with authorities. Federation activities aimed at securing housing include starting housing savings, managing credit within the community, identifying land on which they could build, looking at existing subsidies and policies for the poor, and holding housing exhibitions. SPARC has also established a nonprofit construction company, SPARC Samudaya Nirman Sahayak (known as SSNS or Nirman), that supports SPARC's alliance with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan* in undertaking housing and infrastructure construction projects.

Wherever feasible, the Alliance promotes low-rise, high density structures, yet this is not always possible under municipal constraints pressure on land use and locations which are suitable the communities related to their livelihoods. We seek the best option in the context of stark choices, while continuing to explore better alternatives and working with regulatory bodies to advocate for better housing policies at the city, state and national level.

When land is available, communities explore options for securing land tenure and constructing one storey houses. Costs are kept low by contributing local labour, looking at low-cost construction technologies and blending government subsidies with housing loans. All construction is designed, supervised and implemented by local groups. When land is scarce, communities consider at multi-storey housing options. Since this type of construction is more expensive, securing subsidies is essential.

Wherever feasible, the Alliance promotes low-rise, high density structures, yet this is not always possible under municipal constraints. We seek the best option in the context of limited choices, while continuing to explore better alternatives and working with regulatory bodies to advocate for better housing policies at the city, state and national level.

Another important component of our strategy is building relationships with financial institutions so that they begin to work with the poor and seriously explore how to develop the low-income housing loan market.





Name of Project/City	No. of Settlements	Total Households	Total Structures	Total PAPs (Individuals)	Total no. of existing Seats	Required no. of Seats
Baseline Socio-economic Survey of MUTP	26	918	-	2,991	-	-
BSES Survey for R & R for TATA Power House-'08 (Phase-I)	4	33	-	143	-	-
Nashik Jopadpatti Redevelopment Survey	2	238	-	1,303	-	-
Kolhapur Jopadpatti Redevelopment Survey	2	164	-	695	-	-
R&R Survey for STUP Consultants Pvt. Ltd.(BKC-CEEH)	2	420	-	1,552	-	-
Households Survey at Pune	2	79	-	342	-	-
Socio-economic HHs Survey at Ahmednagar	1	104	-	521	-	-
Kolhapur Socio-economic Survey -10	1	539	-	2123	-	-
National Jopadpatti Redevelopment at Pune	1	175	-	389	-	-
BSES Survey for R & R for TATA Power House-'09 (Phase-II)	7	152	-	665	-	-
Biometric Household Survey for Pune-'09	6	529	-	2,275	-	-
BSES Survey for R & R for Bombay Dyeing Mill-'09	1	388	-	1,509	-	-
BSES Survey for R & R for TATA Power House-'10 (Phase-III)	3	35	-	151	-	-
NSDF Settlement Profile for Other Cities	2692	1,062,235	893,235	4,459,665	10,076	79,117
TOTAL	2751	1,065,043	893,235	4,474,456	10,076	79,117

incremental housing

When the poor move to the city, their housing options are extremely limited. Many start out by putting up plastic sheets on poles, sleeping under these makeshift structures at night and packing them up during the day. Over time, corrugated metal sheets replace the plastic, which are in turn replaced by bricks and mortar.

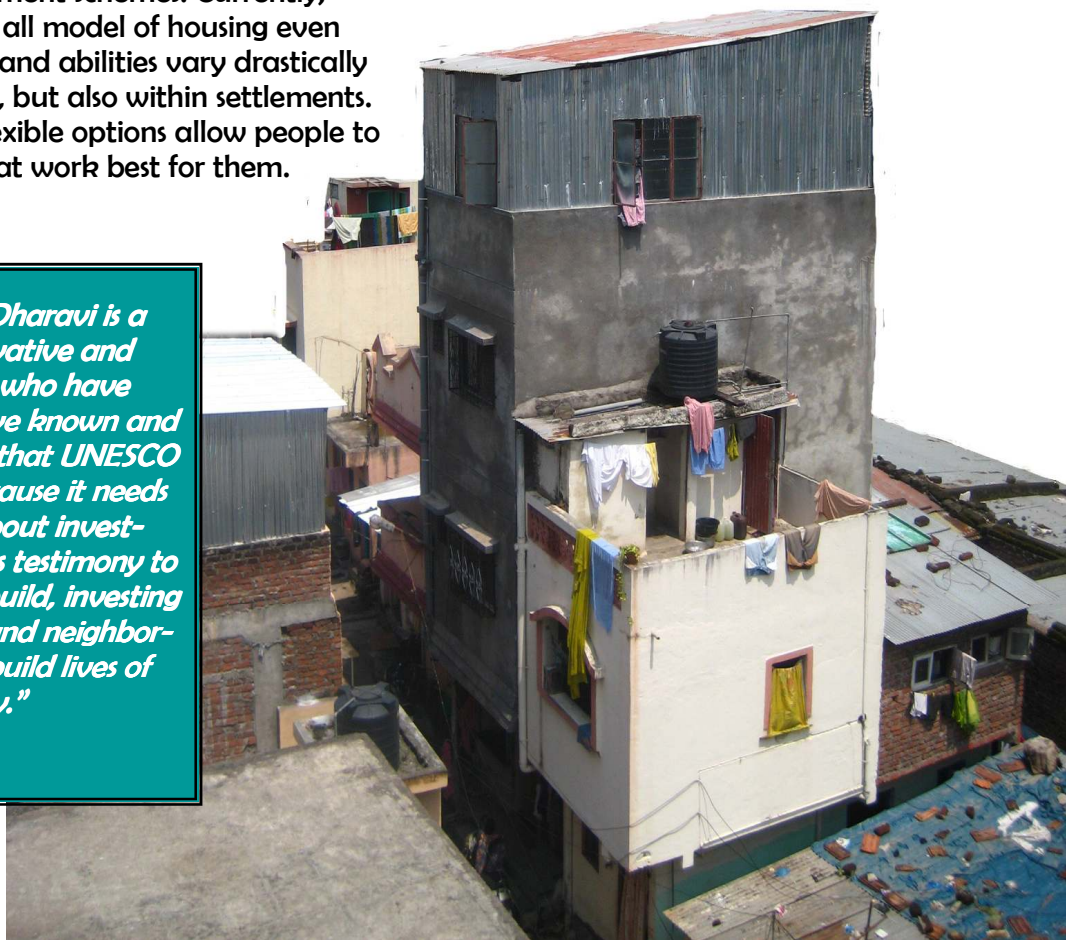
Gradually, the roof becomes the first floor, with ladders or narrow staircases leading up from the outside. Further investments are made to obtain amenities like water, electricity and drainage—with slum dwellers often paying more than the market rate to people who steal utilities. Additional floors may be rented out to other migrants, increasing the income of the original family. Depending on the need, congestion, and rate of growth of the slum and the families, slum dwellers continue building their houses piece by piece. A great deal of investment goes into building these houses and upgrading them, but it is spread out over time in small amounts that slum dwellers can afford.

Yet this system of building is not well understood by planners and policymakers. Rather than looking at slums and seeing years of patient investment and improvement, planners and architects see cheap, ramshackle structures that might as well be torn down. But incremental building strategies must be the way forward for affordable housing in the urban centres of the global South. Though government subsidies are helpful and necessary in slum upgrading projects, the government simply does not have enough money to rebuild or replace the self-built houses of the slums from scratch.

Clearly, alternative financing strategies are needed, yet thus far, little research has been done to determine which financial models best support incremental housing and small-scale building. SPARC hopes to fill this gap by undertaking an extensive research project examining the financial needs of the urban poor with regards to housing and asking which types of finance models can meet those needs. We plan to look at a range of factors, from types of materials used to the market value of upgraded housing to security of land tenure, and bring the results to municipalities and private financial institutions to develop new financial strategies that will meet the needs of India's urban poor.

We also hope that research on incremental housing options will encourage the government to move towards offering more housing options in urban development schemes. Currently, most schemes offer a one-size-fits all model of housing even though people's resources, needs, and abilities vary drastically not only from one city to the next, but also within settlements. Incremental housing and other flexible options allow people to select the upgrading strategies that work best for them.

"To those with a discerning eye, Dharavi is a historical monument to the innovative and survival imagination of the poor who have carved this town. Some who have known and studied Dharavi even suggested that UNESCO should give it heritage status because it needs to be a reminder to the world about investment and design from below. It is testimony to how in most cities, the poor self build, investing bit by bit, carving communities and neighborhoods and finally towns as they build lives of their families inter-generationally."
Sheela Patel, SPARC Director



making settlements child friendly

Common space is extremely important in the daily life of slum dwellers: since the private space inside homes is often limited, common areas provide a space to carry out tasks like washing and bathing as well as to socialize and interact. This space is especially important for children, who often have no other place to play or explore. Common space is rarely given much attention by planners and researchers, who devote their attention to issues like infrastructure and housing design. Yet the availability and quality of common space is critical to the well-being of children in the slums: unsanitary conditions and threats like motor vehicles pose a danger to children's health and safety, while inadequate space to play, socialize, and meet other children threatens to stunt children's mental, social, and physical development. A better understanding of common spaces could therefore improve the quality of life in informal settlements for children and parents alike.

Anupama Nallari, a PhD student from the City University of New York with support from Sheridan Bartlett, is currently working with the Alliance to learn more about public and common spaces in slums and how they can better meet the needs of children and families. Anupama is speaking with mothers and children living in slums and/or resettlement sites in Bangalore and Mumbai about the common spaces they use, when they use them, who manages the spaces, and what would make them better and safer.

Drawing upon the information gathered in these interviews, we hope to develop a model for public and common space in informal settlements that can be used in urban renewal schemes across India and South Asia. With better information about these vital spaces, we can make settlements more livable, vibrant, and safer places for people of all ages.



health and habitat

Before founding SPARC in 1984, many of our original staff members worked in the area of health, focusing especially on women and children. Yet in the twenty-five years since then, we have at times forgotten that the initial impetus for exploring the issues of housing, infrastructure, and land securities was their direct impact on health.

Until communities and households have access to safe water, sanitation, and basic amenities, the impact of poor people's environment overwhelms any effects of habits and practices, medicines, or nutrition. From overly crowded living spaces to lack of access to clean water, life in the slums presents a number of threats to residents' health. But it is not only diarrhea and other diseases associated with inadequate water that are the problem. For instance, malaria and tuberculosis are particularly troublesome diseases on the rise in urban India.

Though malaria is usually associated with poor rural areas, it is a growing problem in India's cities. Malaria is an especial risk in poor areas of cities, where pools of water at construction sites, in trash heaps, and in cisterns, where it is stored due to inadequate piped water supply, create breeding grounds for the mosquitoes that spread the disease. Urban incidences of malaria have gone from being a negligible problem in the 1950s to accounting for approximately 15% of malaria cases in India today. Improved water provision, drainage, and trash collection would reduce the number of breeding sites for malarial mosquitoes and help eradicate the disease in urban areas.

Tuberculosis, on the other hand, has long been common in urban areas where large numbers of people live in close quarters. Unsurprisingly, then, as India urbanizes, tuberculosis cases are on the rise. Poor nutrition and sanitation make people more susceptible to the disease, and cramped living conditions contribute to its spread. India currently accounts for one-fifth of all tuberculosis cases globally, with approximately 330,000 Indians dying of tuberculosis each year; improvements in urban sanitation and living conditions would help reduce these numbers as more people flock to cities and end up in slums.

Our work focuses on the importance of a safe habitat and access to amenities, an ongoing process that clearly has a huge impact on the health of communities. We have begun to explore ways to undertake research and disseminate information that will help communities understand the challenges they face and how they can mitigate the threat of disease. Discussions with various organizations working in public health and participation in events and workshops addressing issues related to the social determinants of health have helped us strengthen our commitment to improved habitat as a critical foundation for overall better health.

We are also looking at ways to increase community groups' capacities to understand and manage issues of emerging chronic diseases like diabetes and blood pressure that are quickly reaching epidemic proportions. Such diseases are anticipated to affect the urban poor more than the elite, as healthy diet and exercise are rapidly becoming part of elite lifestyles while they diminish among the poor.

Women in the slums, especially those from Mahila Milan, are very keen to have conversations about health, and we are beginning to learn how we can support them in articulating their health problems and where they can go to find the solutions. The challenge is in creating the inquiry, assessing the need, and locating institutions, including other NGOs and government agencies, that can help develop solutions.



disasters, climate, and housing

The eastern state of Orissa is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters: while coastal areas are at risk for flooding and cyclones off the Bay of Bengal, the state's interior is prone to droughts, heat waves, forest fires, earthquakes, and mudslides. These disasters are particularly harmful to Orissa's urban poor, who live in substandard housing in informal settlements in vulnerable parts of urban areas—for example, on riverbanks in Cuttack and on hillsides in Rourkela. SPARC is currently working with David Satterthwaite of the International Institute for Environment and Development on a research project to learn more about how people in informal settlements respond to and are affected by natural disasters. This is also contributing to a better understanding of vulnerability among the urban poor to climate change for the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

In preliminary interviews, we have learned that quality of housing is a major factor in how severely people are affected by floods, storms, and other disasters. Though most houses in informal settlements sustain some damage when disasters strike, pucca houses weather storms better than those that are kutcha. People's main strategy to prepare for disasters is therefore to make their houses as pucca as possible: many families use Federation loans to rebuild after disasters, using pucca materials whenever they can. Location, and consequently, land rights, are also extremely important: people who do not have land patta are often forced to live in vulnerable areas like riverbanks or hillsides. Due to their limited resources, most people do not see disasters as something that can be protected against in any significant way. They are simply a part of life. People try to prepare, but recognize that their ability to protect themselves and their families is limited.

As the effects of climate change continue to intensify, the resources and strategies people use to deal with natural disasters and extreme weather events will be more important than ever. Housing quality and location are clearly critical, and SPARC will continue to work with IIED to map vulnerability and identify factors contributing to disaster impact in Orissa. Furthermore, the broader project seeks not only to focus on natural disasters, but to map all aspects of vulnerability the poor face, and then examine how climate variations exacerbate this vulnerability. Ultimately, we hope to develop recommendations for future building and upgrading projects in vulnerable areas and highlight the dangers posed to poor urban communities by climate change.



relocation and urban development

Land tenure is one of the most important factors in the issue of housing for the urban poor. Slum dwellers are perpetually in danger of having their homes demolished unless they are granted secure land tenure. In most cities, however, about a third of slum dwellers cannot be granted land tenure on the site where they live due to conflicts with provision of public utilities and infrastructure, as is the case with people living on pavements and along the railway tracks. For the first ten years of the Alliance's existence, negotiations to stop demolition of these structures, until the proliferation of urban infrastructure projects brought to the fore the issue of resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R). Municipalities engaging in urban infrastructure projects are now required to resettle displaced households. The Alliance has been engaged in many efforts to smoothen and enable the participation of affected families in the R&R process.

Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP)

When it began the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) to upgrade the railway tracks in 2000, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) appointed SPARC as the key interlocutor of R&R for about 16,000 families living along railway tracks and roads. The families were resettled without force in the largest urban resettlement project in the world outside of China.

Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project (MUIP)

In view of the success of MUTP, the MMRDA appointed SPARC as the nodal agency in for R&R under the Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project (MUIP), under which about 9,000 structures along roads have been relocated. In these instances, staying where they were and upgrading incrementally was not an option for slum dwellers. The authorities were going to move them one way or another. What the Alliance sought, therefore, was a resettlement program that involved those being resettled in the choice of relocation sites and in the management of the relocation process.

Pavement dwellers

When SPARC was established in 1984 to address the plight of pavement dwellers, they were invisible in the eyes of the city and faced routine demolitions. Owing to persistent advocacy and mobilization, the Government of Maharashtra has not only placed pavement dwellers on par with slum dwellers in policy, but has also announced a special project to resettle them. MMRDA will offer 10,000 tenements specifically for pavement dwellers. The Maharashtra Government and the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai have appointed SPARC in 2008 as the agency to resettle all pavement families in Mumbai.



The following table shows the relocation done under Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project (MUIP) in 2009-2010. No pavement dwellers have been shifted in the last year.

#	Name of the Project	2009-2010	
		Residential	Commercial
1	Western Express Highway	34	11
2	Eastern Express Highway	85	5
3	Andheri Ghatkopar Link Road I	107	32
4	Andheri Ghatkopar Link Road II	23	9
5	Goregaon Mulund Link Road	7	9
6	Andheri Kurla Link Road	0	1
7	Sahar Cargo Link Road	3	0
8	Main Link Road	38	20
9	Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg	0	1
10	Saki Vihar Road	3	0
11	N.S.Fadke Marg	1	9
12	Mahakali Caves Road	1	0
13	Jai Prakash Road	1	0
14	Veera Desai Road	7	2
15	B.K.C.Road to C.S.T.Road	1	0
16	Sion Dharavi Link Road	16	0
17	Anik Pajankar Link Road	104	21
18	JVLR Extension	4	0
19	Sion Koliwada to Kokri Agar Link Road	36	0
20	Metro Rail	2	1
21	B.K.C. Road to C.S.T. to LBS Junction	0	8
	TOTAL	473	129



Shifting of pavement dwellers from 2001-2008

S.No.	Area Shifted From	Area Shifted To	Number of Families	Year of Shifting
1	G South (from Kamgar Stadium to Mahalakshmi - Senapati Bapat Marg)	Lallubhai Compound	344	2007
2	G North (from Mahim to Kamgar Stadium)	Vashinaka	576	2007
3	P D'Mello Map No. 1 (Manamma Hotel to Karnak Bunder)	Lallubhai Compound	209	2007
4	Cross Maidan, MG Road	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	32	2003
5	Marine Lines	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	30	2002-03
6	Gamdevi-Kurla	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	27	2003
7	Ganesh Nagar, Parel	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	51	2001
8	Murtikar Nagar, Khar	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	10	2006
9	Naik Nagar, Sion	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	16	2007
10	Nagpada	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	22	2006
11	Tank Pakadi, Byculla	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	13	2006
12	Dimtimkar, Byculla	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	28	2006
13	Sophia Zuber, Byculla	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	12	2006
14	Jhula Maidan	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	10	2006
15	Dimtimkar, Byculla	Milan Nagar, Mankhurd		2006
16	Sophia Zuber, Byculla	Milan Nagar, Mankhurd		2006
17	Jhula Maidan	Milan Nagar, Mankhurd		2006
15	Shanti Nagar, Kamathipura	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	27	2001
16	Dongri Market, Elphinstone Bridge	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	21	2006
17	Azad Maidan	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	63	2001
18	Ballard Pier, Fort	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	49	2006
19	P D'Mello Road	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	27	2006
20	Parsi Bawdi and Cross Maidan	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	23	2007
21	Rahul Nagr, Chembur	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	25	2005
22	Panchsheel, Chembur	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	5	2005
23	Sable Nagar, Chembur	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	4	2005
24	Others (shifted by Jockin)	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138B	10	2005
25	Byculla	Mankhurd Transit Camp 138A	21	2006
26	P.D'mello Road	Lallubhai Compound	250	2007
27	Reay road - wadala	Natwar Parekh Govandi	924	2008

policy impact and replication

On the basis of our experience in R&R, policy-making bodies, including Ministries in the Government of India and of Maharashtra and the MMRDA, have frequently invited SPARC leaders to make presentations and participate on task forces. Representatives of the national government and of railway authorities in Kenya and the Philippines, where we have SDI partners, visited Mumbai and are drawing on principles established in the MUTP process in their cities.

Closer to home, other government and private sector agencies who also seek to either relocate or rehabilitate slums dwellers now want to work with the Alliance. The Alliance only moves forward with this process after the communities agree that they too seek relocation. For instance, those living under the high tension electricity towers in Mumbai want to move as much as the Tata Power seeks to move them, as all understand the hazards of their current location.

R&R can be a win-win situation for all stakeholders. City infrastructure undergoes much-needed improvement, enhancing the efficiency, productivity and quality of life for all, while the poor achieve safe and secure shelter. Yet R&R projects have also raised many issues that require consideration. Some of the main problems that arise at relocation sites relate to high maintenance costs, adverse impacts on livelihoods, and difficulties with building and site design, social infrastructure, and connectivity. It is clear that we must plan holistically and not focus on housing alone. Although these are contentious issues with no easy resolution, they must be examined in an open and participatory fashion with the people that the government wants to relocate as we refine R&R practices.

However, there are a range of complex issues that also have to be addressed while undertaking relocation—a strategy the Alliance only undertakes after all other possibilities have been exhausted. In the case of railway slums and pavement slums in Mumbai, our efforts to seek relocation emerged from the impossibility of seeking in situ redevelopment. Similarly, we have been open to a wider spectrum of relocation sites due to the knowledge that the longer the negotiations take, the further the sites will be from the central city. Such decisions have also taken into consideration the transformation in Mumbai's transportation system—in five years, the central city will be connected by rail transport to the entire metropolitan region, and areas that are now on the fringes of the city will be the centrally located belt of the larger metropolitan area.

Clearly, the more organized and stronger the neighborhood groups, the better they are able to address the adverse aspects of relocation. Likewise, the greater the cooperation between the authorities and the Alliance or other organizations facilitating the process, the better the relocation is managed. This and other insights derived from our experience with relocation projects are now being organized in an internal study. The Alliance is supporting two groups of slum dwellers that have been relocated to different areas in examining their experience and producing an analysis of the Alliance's relocation strategy and techniques.



sanitation and the poor: evolution of practices

Over 50% of slum dwellers in urban India have no toilet facilities in their home. The public facilities that do exist are insufficient and frequently become unusable due to lack of maintenance. This leaves slum residents with no choice but to defecate in the open, threatening health, safety and dignity, especially for women and children. Unsurprisingly, the lack of sanitation facilities is one of the top concerns communities want to address.

The Alliance began working in a significant way on community sanitation in slums with the Pune Municipal Corporation in 1999. Within a year, we constructed more than 10,000 seats in community toilet blocks benefiting at least 500,000 slum dwellers. This was the first time an Indian city achieved such scale in slum sanitation. Equally important was the mode of implementation: a precedent-setting partnership between the municipality, NGOs and community-based organizations. The Corporation provided land, capital costs, water and electricity, while NGOs and CBOs designed, constructed and maintained the community toilets. Traditionally, the government builds toilets without community participation, resulting in poor quality construction, lack of water and electricity supply, and absence of proper maintenance and setting off a wasteful cycle of demolition and reconstruction. We have seen substantial improvements in community-based sanitation and related policies and programmes.

The community-led model of slum sanitation has been successful for many reasons. Firstly, these toilets are more affordable. While private providers charge 1-2 rupees per person per use, in the Pune and Mumbai models, a monthly pass of Rs.25-30 covers unlimited use for an entire family. A Rs.1 fee for passers-by helps augment a community-toilet's revenues, which pay for maintenance. Secondly, communities developed innovative design features in toilet blocks, including a caretaker's room and children's toilets. The former provides accommodation and an employment opportunity, while ensuring good cleaning and maintenance; the latter helps prevent children from squatting outside because of their inability to compete with adults in queues.



Project Update

SPARC is currently engaged in several toilet construction projects in the Mumbai Metropolitan region. In 10 separate locations, SPARC is involved with construction of 357 toilets providing 6228 toilet seats to an estimated 55719 beneficiaries. In some locations, SPARC is in the midst of transferring project responsibility to a community partner or other developer, while in other cases SPARC remains a leading partner in the process.

Federation and Mahila Milan groups are also beginning toilet construction projects across the country with support from SPARC. In Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, for example, 66 Federation members have each received a loan to construct individual household toilets, while in Puri, Orissa, the Orissan Slum Dwellers' Federation has succeeded in building a much-needed community toilet in the settlement of Pentaghoda, with the support of the Puri municipality.

The Pune project helped put slum sanitation on the radar of politicians, bureaucrats and NGOs. One result was a collaboration between SPARC, the Administrative Staff College of India, Yashada (the Government of Maharashtra's training institute for government officials), and the Water and Sanitation Program (a multi-donor partnership administered by the World Bank) to focus attention on urban sanitation. A wide range of stakeholders, including municipal officials, NGOs and community groups, participated in seminars, workshops and field trips on the subject. Hundreds of visitors came to see toilet sites in Pune, including representatives from 32 towns in Karnataka.

Our work in Pune directly leveraged new funds for slum sanitation. Impressed by the Pune experiment, the Government of India declared a new scheme that granted a 50 percent subsidy to States or municipalities that took up toilet block construction in slums. The Pune demonstration also helped the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) get sanction for its slum sanitation programme under the World Bank-assisted Mumbai Sewage Disposal Project I (MSDP I). The Alliance won tenders for constructing 200 toilet blocks with 4000 toilet seats, benefiting at least 200,000 people, under this project. In the on-going MSDP II, the Alliance is constructing 150 toilet blocks benefiting over 150,000 people.

We have expanded our work on community sanitation to other cities across India. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) launched a programme of unprecedented scale to construct 30,000 toilet seats at 14 locations; it allocated the bulk of the work to the Alliance. We have also worked on sanitation projects in Vizag and Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, Tirupur in Tamil Nadu, among other locations in the last few years. The governments of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have declared their resolve to be "Open-Defecation Free."

At the policy level, Sheela Patel and Sundar Burra were members of a National Task Force on Urban Sanitation, whose report is pending final approval of the central government. Sheela has also been on the Governing Council of the Water and Sanitation Program.



A belief in the power of partnership is at the heart of the Alliance's work. From the Alliance's core partnership of the Federation, Mahila Milan, and SPARC to the partnerships forged between communities and officials at the neighborhood level, we seek to find partners who can support our work, complement our strengths, and challenge us to find better, more sustainable solutions for communities and cities alike.

the urban agenda: when will grantmakers blink?

The urban millenium is here, and it is in our faces. The impact and implications of urbanisation for development investments are beginning to hit many countries and development actors. Gradually, these countries and agencies are coming to understand that urban issues are real, important, and here to stay. Yet the real challenge is what they will do with this knowledge. Unlike the reaction to climate change or the HIV pandemic, there has been no attempt to understand the impact and implications of urbanization, or to estimate the costs of a failure to deal with urbanization. Clearly, there is deep angst surrounding urbanisation, especially the reality that a majority of urban growth will result from poor people moving into cities for jobs and chance at a better life. Cities are at the center of redefining the roles and obligations of nation states—a task that requires a huge shift in paradigm that is not being made. Governments are not alone in this struggle, however—grantmakers, foundations, and international development agencies are all searching for ways to realign their work to fit the new urban reality.

However, grantmakers, especially small foundations, have been early explorers of changing trends, developing new possibilities and making modest but robust headway which can eventually be scaled up with larger investments. Over the course of this year, we have met with representatives of several large and small foundations who have come to India to discuss these issues with us, examining the work of the Alliance and exploring possibilities for involvement. But we have yet to see an upsurge in larger commitments to urban work.

We feel that there is a huge deficit of organisations that will work on urban issues. Addressing inequity in cities is and will remain a deeply political issue which requires both exploration of new ways to address immediate needs and transformation of the ways in which cities, states, and nations deal with urban poverty. A project approach will not help: this work is too large, and must be undertaken in a comprehensive, long-term fashion. Finally, we believe that NGOs by themselves cannot adequately address urban issues. Rather, large numbers of the poor themselves must participate in social movements to seek change and change themselves in the process.

In the context of India there is a huge opportunity for this work to take place. The government's new Rajeew Awas Yojana (RAY) program reflects a commitment to exploring community participation as part of an ambitious attempt to provide security of tenure to households of the poor in Indian cities. RAY represents an attempt to get civil society involved in change processes and to work with a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the city. This program provides a huge opportunity to build capacities of both the poor and of non-state actors to contribute to this process.

So our challenge to philanthropies, foundations, and grant makers is: as the urban future rushes closer and closer, when will you blink and develop a strategy to participate in the process of solving the challenges of India's urban poverty?

the alliance and the media

As every NGO knows, the media is a powerful tool for social change, and mainstream media coverage can be a major boon to an organization's goals. Yet it is often tricky to communicate key concepts and processes within the constraints of mainstream media formats and tropes. There is a tendency among mainstream media outlets to depict urbanization as a bad thing, a fearsome phenomenon that prophecies doom and gloom for humanity. The media is programmed to focus on scandals and dysfunctions rather than stories of hope and transformation. Furthermore, few journalists have specialized knowledge of urban issues, and many are ill prepared to produce interesting and insightful stories about urban areas.

Even when media stories do focus on positive stories, the public's reaction can be difficult to predict. The *Times of India* recently published an article on the many types of foods, from idli to chikki, produced in Dharavi and sold across Mumbai and India. Yet instead of celebrating the industriousness of Dharavi residents, many people started asking restaurants and shops whether the food they were ordering had been produced in Dharavi—wanting to make sure they didn't consume something that came from what was perceived as a slum. We still have a long way to go in transforming perceptions of slums and slum dwellers, and the mainstream media is a vital partner in that task. Yet media producers must also listen and learn if they hope to truly understand and accurately portray urban lives and issues.

SPARC has worked closely with several journalists and media organizations in the past. We will continue to support thorough and nuanced reporting on urban issues, and hope to provide young journalists with the opportunity to spend time with urban organizations, learning about the cities and people they are covering.

We have also begun to expand our own media offerings, making use of Web tools like YouTube to disseminate self-produced videos on projects from slum upgrading in Pune to the Dharavi redevelopment scheme. SPARC's videos are available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/sparcmmnsdf>



the growing role of police panchayats

Securing citizens' safety and providing the rule of law are among the basic duties of any state. Yet many countries have struggled to provide police services for rapidly growing cities. Police violence is on the rise, and distrust between police and poor communities is high. In Mumbai, slums are notoriously under-manned in terms of police personnel. Despite the fact that more than half of the population lives in slums, the proportion of the police allotted to these areas would probably be less than a third of the total strength of the force. In an attempt to address these issues, SPARC and *Mahila Milan* have taken a community-based approach towards security that makes police and slum dwellers partners rather than antagonists.

The idea of community policing began in Byculla, Mumbai, as women began to work with local police to bring peace to their neighborhood. The relationship between community and police was first formalized in the city of Pune, and quickly spread to sixty-five settlements in Mumbai.

Settlements participating in the community policing programme begin by creating slum police panchayats. The panchayats are committees consisting of a mix of men and women from the slums who work closely with designated police officers to resolve disputes.

The idea behind panchayats is that community disputes should be resolved at the community level whenever possible. The panchayats deal with issues like quarrels and domestic violence, hoping to prevent small incidents from being blown out of proportion. They also greatly reduce the case load for the police.

Police panchayats have helped slumdwellers and police see each other in a different light. Instead of thinking of slums as dens of vice and crime, police learn about the factors contributing to crime and get to know the people working to improve their communities. And on the other side, slum dwellers gradually overcome their fear of the police as they build trusting relationships. Women in particular have grown more confident in bringing community and domestic safety issues to the attention of the police.

Improved relationships at a local level have translated into larger scale changes. Mumbai's Police Commissioner himself has promoted the panchayats as an effective and humane way of preventing crime in slums.

The reputation of the panchayats is spreading, and many cities are beginning to adopt community policing initiatives. By bringing the ethos of community participation to security, urban centres around the world can become safer places to live.

expanding our peer network: working with waste pickers' alliances

The Alliance has long worked with an eclectic mix of partners and allies from a wide range of fields and backgrounds. This year at the XX meeting in Cairo, we began to expand our peer network still further. We met with global networks of waste pickers, home based workers, and street vendors, and discussed what we could share with and learn from each other. Later, the SDI delegation was invited to attend a meeting of the waste pickers' network at a facilitated by the Gates Foundation in Durban.

Over the course of these meetings, we explored the possibilities for exchange between groups undertaking waste management in Africa and Asia. Part of what we are exploring in India is how we can collaborate to facilitate a role for waste recyclers in cities amidst the emerging relationship between the city and the private enterprises being contracted to undertake trash collection. It is still just the beginning of a potential partnership, but the connections between these livelihood issues and those related to habitat are deeply interlinked.

co-production and working with the state

Any organization that seeks to work at scale must engage the state in a variety of ways. The Alliance's engagement with the state has resulted in support for collaboration between communities and state institutions to identify issues, policy and practice that help communities undertake activities that best fulfill their needs and aspirations. This engagement has led to changing roles and functions through which communities undertake the tasks that they can do best and which are legitimated through policy and practice.

However, it is rare that this engagement reaches a level that we describe as co-creation or co-production, where communities, NGOs, and state institutions work together as true equals. More often, the poor are seen primarily as consumers and beneficiaries, while state and international institutions are viewed as the true partners and drivers of development. Both in India and internationally, there are many instances where co-creation has produced amazing breakthroughs—the Right to Information laws and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act being two recent instances of such success. But by and large, most engagements are a tug of war between communities and NGOs, which are seeking opportunities for co-creation of new strategies, and the state, which is seeking sub-contractors for projects that it selects and designs.

The Alliance has often taken risks to explore these engagements. We have participated in projects as sub-contractors, especially projects which deliver critical services to the poor, with a view towards changing the manner in which delivery is done, the manner in which communities can participate, and the intrinsic process of service delivery. Apart from allowing us to leverage valuable resources into much-needed outcomes of land tenure, basic amenities and services, this engagement helps the Alliance to understand in depth the manner in which present allocations remain unutilized or misdirected. More importantly, participating in these processes helps build the foundation for a more vital dialogue that has the potential to produce reforms in policy or to redirect attention to more participatory mechanisms to engage the urban poor. Our participation is also a response to the challenge of state institutions that accuse NGOs of only criticizing without producing solutions and alternatives.

Within the NGO sector, debates on the issue of engagement with the state raise serious concerns about NGOs being co-opted by becoming subcontractors who simply carry out government plans. These are legitimate concerns: the evidence on the ground suggests that in most instances government institutions view NGOs as organizations that will work cheaply, get communities to accept what the state wants to get done, and in some instances, by undertaking sensitive tasks, divert negative criticism away from the state. In other cases, many private sector institutions have set up trusts and foundations to undertake tasks allocated for NGOs in order to make a profit, adding to suspicion of NGOs.

The Alliance recognizes the validity of these concerns. Yet we believe that continuing to engage with the state despite the imperfection of current relationship structures is critical for those who are interested in reaching the eventual goal of true co-production. Declining to participate in these processes will simply allow organizations with no true community connections or interest in participatory action to fill the void. We will therefore persist in working and negotiating with state institutions, all the while advocating for processes that include communities and recognize non-state leaders as valuable and legitimate partners.

engaging the academy

The Alliance's many slum enumerations, surveys, and slum mapping programs all constitute important forms of research. The data collected in these activities often does not exist anywhere else. As a result, there is a great deal of interest from academic institutions and researchers in the Alliance's research and how it links to action and negotiated solutions. Many schools of architecture and urban planning are interested in drawing upon the Alliance's many years of experience in working on urban issues to help inform their own work.

Yet researchers' attitudes and strategies differ according to their past exposure to grassroots movements and knowledge of the complex issues facing urban communities. When communities and NGOs are involved in research as partners, it often produces great results. It is vitally important that poor communities are not treated simply as data collection sites into which researchers parachute on short field visits before going back to their universities to produce research that the people themselves will never see or benefit from.

It is often a challenge to balance the goals and structures of academic researchers with the needs and processes of the Alliance's work, but this has potential for fruitful results. We believe that it is important that academic researchers have contact with and support from on-the-ground organizations in order to better understand the challenges facing communities of the urban poor.

Since 2007-2008, we have developed close relations with CEPT University in Ahmedabad and KRVA, an architecture college in Mumbai. Students and faculty from each worked with us to study the Dharavi Redevelopment Project that was threatening to redevelop Dharavi with no consultation with its inhabitants - and come up with alternative scenarios. We have also sought to bring academic/professional institutions, NGOs, and other stakeholders together to work on slum issues in Pune and, potentially, in other cities.

SPARC also has relationships with a number of international institutions. We frequently host groups of planning and architectural students from a range of institutions, including the Development Planning Unit (DPU) of University College London, Columbia University and Harvard University's Kennedy School. Representatives of the Alliance have often spoken at DPU, the London School of Economics, Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and other universities. Due in part to these connections, case study material concerning the Alliance and SDI is now standard reading at many academic centres, and an increasing number of researchers contact us to learn more about India's slum situation. SPARC staff and Jockin Arputham (the President of the National Federation of Slum Dwellers) have also published many articles in the leading international journals on urban development about the Alliance's different work programmes and these help get the Alliance's concerns onto the reading lists and into the post-graduate courses on development. Ultimately, we hope to partner with Indian and overseas universities to develop comprehensive urban studies programs that combine academic inquiry and research with "on-the-ground" learning and case studies.



practice

Because the work of the Alliance is strongly rooted in process, exploration, and experimentation, we believe sharing our thoughts on practice and our experiences with new ideas and strategies is just as important as providing updates on projects. We hope the discussions begun in these pages will help renew and reenergize a conversation about what we do and how we do it.

We know that many of our experiments will be controversial, and that some will ultimately be unsuccessful. Yet we also believe that failure is an essential part of the learning process, and that the poor have the right to make mistakes and learn from them. Many of the activities that are now core features of the Alliance's work were originally seen as radical, if not crazy, experiments in social work, yet with time they became accepted as fundamental processes. To keep moving forward, we have to keep exploring new ways of thinking about and acting on our essential principles.

We also believe it is important to continue to reflect on the impact of our work on the individuals and communities we work with, and to continue to reevaluate the effectiveness of our strategies. As situations and circumstances change, we seek to update our time-tested activities to meet the challenges of the present while retaining the essential features that make them work.



the value of exchanges

The Alliance has been supporting community-organizations formed by the urban poor to visit each-other and learn from each other for over 25 years. Community exchange programmes rest on a very simple concept: the poor learn best from the poor. Community exchanges, in contrast to development processes that rely on experts as “agents of change,” actively involve slum residents and these help them in transforming their own lives.

In exchanges, federation members and leaders visit each other's settlements to learn about each other's conditions, problems and shared experiences. Exchanges take place between poor communities in the same city, across cities and even across countries.

Exchanges are an important first step in breaking the isolation and helplessness that poverty brings to urban poor communities. Once communities see themselves as part of a larger collective and interdependent process, they can explore together solutions to problems they face. They can also learn from each other's successes.

Community exchanges are exciting experiences for everyone involved. They are opportunities for new members to become acquainted with the strategies of the slum/shack dweller federations and be inspired by veteran leaders. For older federation members, exchanges energise and revitalise the federation process through the influx of fresh ideas and perspectives. In 2009, SPARC facilitated over 53 exchanges at the local, national, and international level.

From	To	Purpose of Exchange	Type
Pondicherry	Karaikal	Savings	Intercity
Villupuram district		Savings and loans	
Pondicherry	Cuddalore	Savings and loans	Intercity
Districts of Cuddalore	Cuddalore	District meeting	Intercity
Tiruchy districts		District meeting	Intercity
Gujarat	Pune	JNNURM Housing projects	Inter-state
DPU, London	Mumbai	MUIP, MUTP	International
Districts of Kanchipuram		District committee meeting	Intercity
Cuddalore, Vizhipuram	Pondicherry	Monthly regional meeting	Intercity
Mysore	Kolar Gold Fields	Savings and credit	Intercity
Chikmangalur	Kolar Gold Fields	Savings and credit	Intercity
Bhuj	Mumbai	Housing and sanitation	Interstate
Maharashtra	Kolhapur		Intercity
Mumbai, Kanchipuram	Pondicherry	Regional conference	Regional
Nasik, Malegaon, Kolhapur, Pimpri Chinchwad, Ahmadnagar	Mumbai	Maharashtra regional meeting	Intercity
Lucknow	Mumbai		Interstate level
WSP, Delhi	Pune	Toilets and sanitation	Intercity
Maddur	Kolar Gold Fields	Savings and credit	Intercity
South Africa	Mumbai	Housing, sanitation	International
Tanzania	Mumbai	Housing and police	International
Mumbai, Orissa, Ahmadabad, Bangalore	Kathmandu		International
Orissa	Pune		Interstate
ICMA- Orissa	Pune	Slum upgrading	Interstate
Zimbabwe	Mumbai, Pune	Housing, infrastructure	International

negotiated compromise as best practice

The poor cannot fulfill their basic needs through the market, and charity makes hardly a dent in the scale of poverty. Dialogue and negotiation with the state at various levels is necessary for producing real solutions at scale. The activities of the Federation model described above (including the savings, the enumerations and the community-exchanges) build the collective strength, credibility, skills and confidence of communities to enter into negotiations over housing, land and basic amenities, and to sustain them over time.

The Alliance has a policy of negotiating with government and financial institutions, regardless of the party in power. When facing evictions or being denied entitlements, poor communities and those who support them have to build the courage to negotiate with those that have denied them their rights—they don't have the choice not to. They must live with their tormenters – be they the police, government, or other classes.

Slowly, dialogue helps transform relationships between the poor and city authorities from one of distrust and hostility to one of productive dialogue. As authorities begin to see that the poor can be partners in helping them execute their goals, the complex negotiation process can lead to win-win solutions, joint ventures and even scaled up initiatives and policy change. Unlike reforms initiated from above, these improvements are likely to be sustainable because they arise organically.

compromising on high-rise housing

Wherever feasible, the Alliance promotes incremental upgrading (as described earlier) or where new construction is needed, low-rise, high-density structures. These are cheaper to maintain and better-suited to the profiles of the urban poor. Many have criticized us for participating in the construction of high-rise buildings. The facts speak otherwise: Out of some 10,000 houses/small apartments constructed or under construction, 50% are ground structures, and 10% are structures no higher than Ground+4. However, due to the constraints we face, 40% of tenements that the Alliance constructs are Ground+7 structures. These are all in Mumbai, as the present policy framework for slum redevelopment does not allow fewer floors. The Alliance therefore must choose whether to withdraw from such schemes because they are imperfect or continue to be involved, while simultaneously advocating for change. We choose the latter method of critical engagement because we believe it is more effective than boycotting. Slum dwellers cannot live on lofty principles: they must choose between moving into a G+7 building or continuing to live without security or adequate shelter and services, or in the case of resettlement, rebuilding from scratch in a new slum. We seek the best option that is available in the context of stark choices—which do not confront the armchair critic—while exploring better alternatives.



informal cities: art and advocacy

For nine days during the autumn of 2009, people from across Mumbai, India, and the world came to the Informal Cities exhibit at Mumbai's Coomaraswamy Hall to look, listen, watch, discuss, and question perspectives on urban growth as set forth by an international group of contemporary artists. *Informal Cities* investigated how art and architecture can contribute to social and political discussions, sought to increase awareness about informal living in cities, and offered an inclusive space for communication.

Informal Cities: Mumbai was conceived as an exhibition that would allow Indians and Mumbaikars to interact with the subject of informal cities and informal settlements. The exhibition featured artwork ranging from photography to drawing to video installations, depicting informal cities around the world. It also included the launch of the Indian edition of the book Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, and two seminars in which international artists and academics and Indian experts connected the Indian urban situation to global trends and issues. The book and the exhibition sought to demonstrate that Dharavi is not just about poor-quality living conditions, but also about peoples' livelihoods, from the Johnson & Johnson sterile surgical threads produced in Dharavi and exported as far as Sweden and Italy, and the idli and chikki that are consumed within a few steps from where they are made.

Yet the exhibit went beyond Dharavi. Because the exhibits showcased settlements from different parts of the world and their residents' creative solutions to their poverty, it was an artistic response to the global issues of urbanization and poverty. The exhibition was focused on the shared creativity and self-sufficiency (solutions) of settlement-dwellers worldwide. *Informal Cities* did not seek to simply draw attention to the existence of poverty amidst plenty or to point at the living conditions of the urban poor. Rather, it attempted to inspire discussion and thought on the dynamics and dichotomies of informal settlements and the powerful trends of urbanisation, globalization, and industrialization.

The exhibition was a great success. Attendants represented countries from Bolivia to the Czech Republic—and of course, Indians interested in learning more about the plight of urban slum dwellers in their own country and the similar situations faced by people around the globe.



the alliance's approach to microfinance

When people hear “microfinance,” they tend to think of microcredit—the small loans provided by organizations like the Grameen Bank and Kiva. Microsavings are much less widely known. Yet they are actually more important to the poorest of the poor. The best studies of microfinance done to date show stronger effects for microsavings programs than for the more prevalent microcredit. Research also suggests that although microfinance has an impact on people’s lives, for most, it does not seem to provide a pathway out of poverty. The true value in microfinance may lie in what SPARC and *Mahila Milan* have been doing for years: helping the poor get through periods of financial instability and manage cash flow problems.

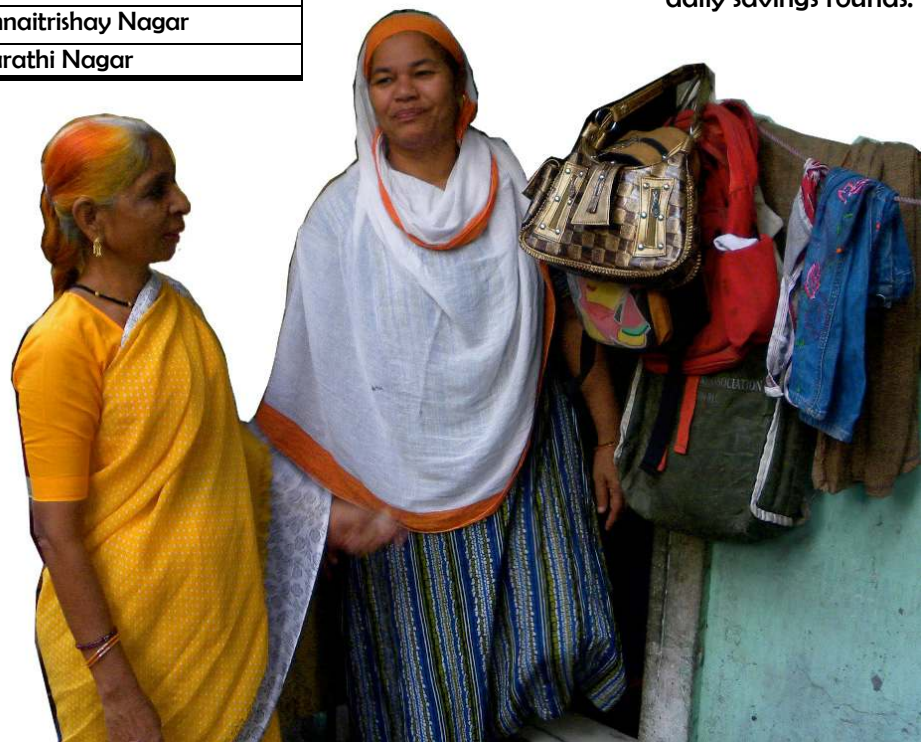
Mahila Milan’s savings and credit programs build trust within a community. They allow people control over their financial situations and the security of knowing that emergencies will not result in economic devastation. *Mahila Milan* members, who know best the situations facing the members of their community, have complete authority to issue loans and work out repayment plans, ensuring only necessary and responsible loans are made. In this way, the microfinance model practiced by SPARC and *Mahila Milan* builds community and self-sufficiency while looking towards the future.

As more and more companies and institutions look with interest at the possibilities offered by microfinance, the strengths of the SPARC model become clearer. *SPARC/Mahila Milan’s* community-based approach to savings and credit, which focuses on building and retaining trust within a community rather than linking trust to external companies and products, and on supporting people through periods of financial instability rather than encouraging nonproductive consumption, is structured to meet both the immediate and long-term needs of the urban poor.

New Savings Groups 2009–2010

State	City	Area
Tamil Nadu	Kanchipuram	Chengalpattu
Karnataka	Kolar	3 slums
Karnataka	Bangalore	Pogenahalli
Tamil Nadu	Theni	Gandhi Nagar
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Surya Nagar
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Kalwa
Maharashtra	Badgaon (Jalgaon)	
Tamil Nadu	Theni	Tangamanayakanpatti
Tamil Nadu	Kanchipuram	Kaktur
Tamil Nadu	Kanchipuram	Katakulatur
Tamil Nadu	Erode / Dindukul	Annaitrishay Nagar
Tamil Nadu	Kanchipuram	Barathi Nagar

Banoo, a Mahila Milan leader in Byculla, chats with a neighbor while making her daily savings rounds.



The Alliance Savings and Credit Chart

Year	Mahila Milan					
	Savings	Withdrawn	No. of Loans	Loan Amount	Principal Paid	S. C.
1987-1988	-	-	41	11,025.00	5,938.00	52.00
1988-1989	245.00	-	54	12,450.00	9,935.00	209.00
1989-1990	-	-	93	24,300.00	16,465.00	277.50
1990-1991	1,296.00	-	38	12,210.00	9,366.00	120.50
1991-1992	130.00	-	89	31,190.00	23,990.00	329.00
1992-1993	525.00	-	112	75,900.00	29,854.00	412.50
1993-1994	481,294.45	133,609.00	288	249,650.00	125,797.00	2,206.00
1994-1995	1,080,991.80	733,371.50	226	225,750.00	203,876.00	6,182.30
1995-1996	1,207,955.50	879,120.50	119	84,800.00	80,210.00	2,780.00
1996-1997	1,770,935.35	1,026,277.00	131	91,980.00	73,122.00	3,143.20
1997-1998	2,791,988.00	1,736,176.00	233	206,800.00	155,596.00	10,534.00
1998-1999	3,188,561.00	2,858,988.00	271	252,700.00	223,929.00	13,839.00
1999-2000	3,468,627.00	2,865,878.00	240	246,500.00	204,705.00	15,838.00
2000-2001	3,114,053.00	2,990,438.00	140	154,400.00	140,094.00	10,414.00
2001-2002	3,148,727.00	2,530,146.00	123	139,800.00	114,892.00	9,373.00
2002-2003	4,576,169.00	3,812,976.00	125	178,600.00	124,047.00	9,380.00
2003-2004	5,295,867.00	4,405,910.00	193	307,800.00	237,321.00	12,835.00
2004-2005	5,291,322.00	5,139,432.00	158	273,950.00	234,267.00	13,881.00
2005-2006	5,584,916.00	5,224,909.00	108	199,000.00	200,537.00	22,280.00
2006-2007	5,114,825.00	5,647,459.00	73	133,900.00	114,819.00	9,831.00
2007-2008	4,449,929.00	4,719,032.00	46.00	87,000.00	92,670.00	11,151.00
2008-2009	5,044,128.00	5,422,312.00	50.00	103,500.00	97,257.00	10,488.00
2009-2010	5,021,909.00	5,209,504.00	35.00	74,500.00	66,705.00	8,605.00
Total	60,634,394.10	55,335,538.00	2,986.00	3,177,705.00	2,585,392.00	174,161.00

mapping informal settlements

Residents of India's slums have long faced the threat of eviction from or destruction of their homes, many of which are built on government land. So when India's housing minister, Kumari Selja, recently announced a plan to use satellite technology to map slums across the country, she stirred anxiety among slum residents who worry that the maps will be used to target slums for demolition.

These worries are valid: maps could certainly provide the government with a tool to use in removing residents from desirable land. Yet SPARC believes this announcement reiterates how important it is that communities produce and map settlement information on their own so that they are able to contest or clarify the maps produced by the government and prevent unilateral evictions or demolitions.

Mobilizing communities to get involved in the mapping process helps ensure that governments don't simply use maps for their own purposes. In the same way that community-based enumerations act as a check on government-produced surveys, community-based mapping provides an alternative visualization of community space. Furthermore, the process of creating maps helps people develop a familiarity with maps and area-based representations of their communities, allowing them to evaluate externally produced maps more confidently and negotiate more knowledgeably. In recognition of these benefits, and of the challenges posed by the government's growing interest in mapping informal settlements, the Alliance is exploring a process for GIS mapping led by communities. Experimental mapping projects are currently ongoing in Bhubaneswar, Pune, and Bangalore.

In Bhubaneswar, SPARC is beginning a project to train communities to map 337 settlements using Google Maps. The city is in the early stages of implementing a major JNNURM housing scheme, and the municipality is undertaking its own mapping and survey processes in the course of the planning process. The community mapping exercises conducted by the Alliance will be integrated with the government's plane table surveys to create a deeper, more complex portrait of the city and its settlements. Once this process has been completed in Bhubaneswar, community members will participate in exchanges with people from other cities in Orissa to introduce the concept and process of community mapping.



Similar mapping projects are also taking place in Bangalore, where biometric survey data collected by communities is being linked to Google maps produced by communities, and Pune, where Mahila Milan groups are creating maps of every settlement in the city. Eventually, groups from Bangalore, Pune, and Bhubaneswar will meet to compare processes and determine which strategies work best for creating participatory, information-rich maps. In time, SPARC hopes to expand the community mapping project to other non-metropolitan cities that can use the data produced to help prioritize urban development projects and better understand the development needs of slum communities.

realizing rights

Poor people are often unable to access their rights and entitlements individually. Rather, the bigger the group, the more strength they have. The community's ability to respond to evictions and prevent them from happening is therefore best achieved via a large, locally-driven constituency-based approach rather than through intervention from outside.

Poor communities have their own understandings of their rights based on their experience of poverty in their cities. As they organize, they move from defining themselves as encroachers to asserting their rights as citizens who contribute to the city's economy and who therefore also have right to land and shelter in the city.

Community-produced surveys and enumerations are a key part of this process: in collecting information about their settlements, communities are able to see their collective incomes and economic strength as a community as well as at the city level. By surveying vacant land in the city, they assert their right to be included in the planning process. In designing their house and settlement, they demonstrate their needs to planners and architects who build houses that do not work for the poor. This includes the need to construct housing that they can afford. They begin to save, building a track record that makes them credit worthy in the eyes of financial institutions. At every stage they are able to realize their rights by working hard to understand their position in the city and becoming a part of the planning process.

Change occurs when large numbers of communities do their homework and take responsibility for the change they seek. This is what makes the learning transformational. New communities learn from communities who have already walked the path. They learn—how to get water, how to get land, how to collect information—from the past negotiations of other communities and cities. This process is empowering and is able to create the critical mass required to move to the next level of change.

Our experience has clearly shown that merely talking about rights and changing policy does not bring the change required, especially for the most vulnerable. It is only by actively participating in the change process themselves that communities of the poor have been able to realize their rights.

The external development community therefore must learn to support organized groups of the poor in realizing their rights, not only by filing cases and shouting about rights violations, but by having the patience to walk the path set by these communities, along with these communities.

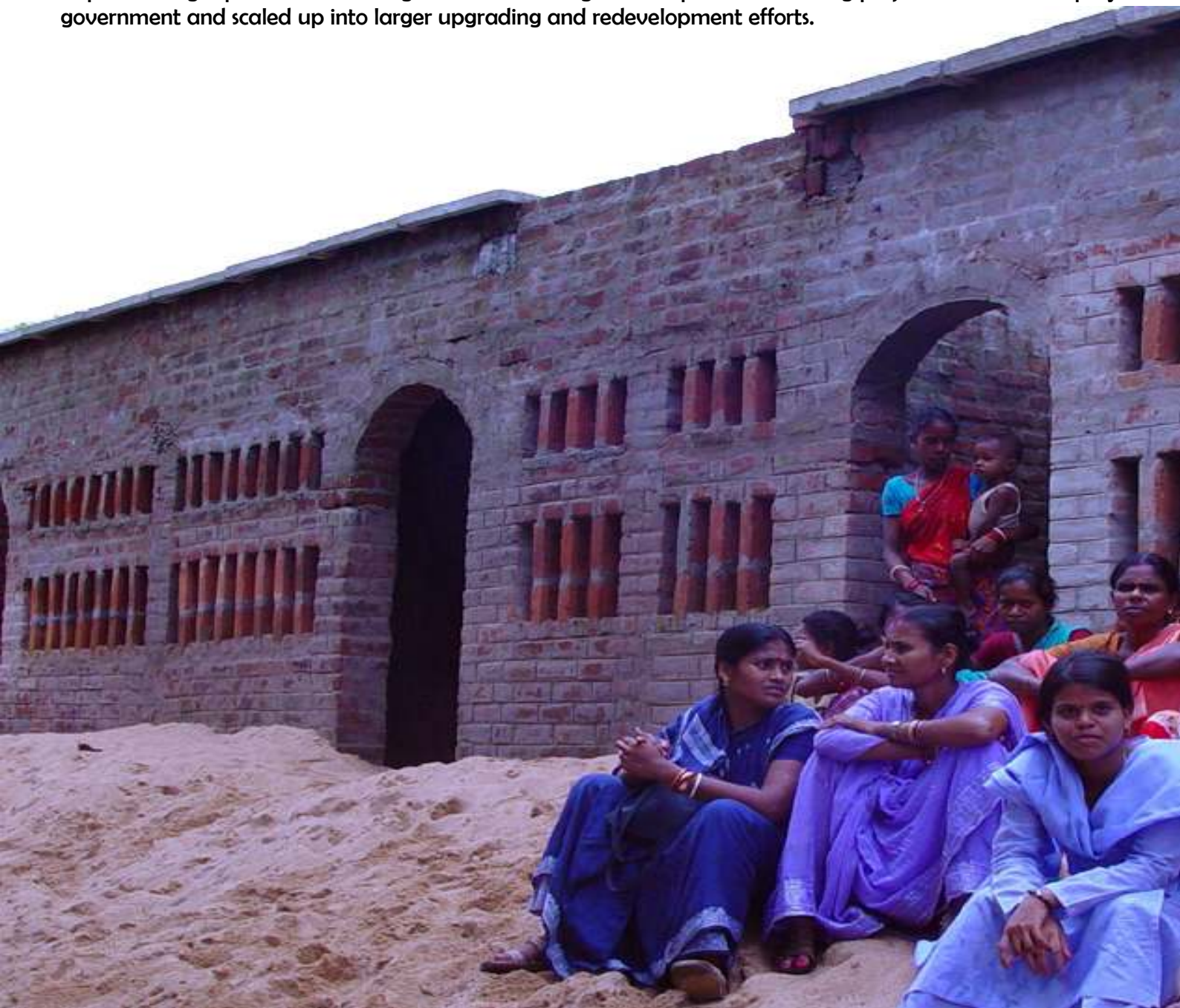


precedent-setting

The ideas and solutions that communities of the urban poor devise in the course of discussions and negotiations are exciting, creative, and very different from previous attempts to solve urban problems. Yet municipalities are often reluctant to invest in these untested ideas. So the Alliance undertakes precedent-setting projects—model or pilot projects that demonstrate the utility and sustainability of slum dwellers' solutions. These projects vary in size and scale—from the model homes constructed out of saris and cardboard by the women of Byculla to brick-and-mortar housing models in Munda Sahi, Cuttack.

Yet all accomplish a number of goals. In addition to providing much-needed facilities for slum dwellers themselves and offering alternative models for housing and toilet layout and design, these projects show the government and the public that slum dwellers are capable of designing, building, and managing projects that meet their needs efficiently and effectively. Models and exhibitions also help slum dwellers themselves understand building plans and translate concepts into real, tangible models.

But building a workable model is just the first step. It is critical to pair precedent-setting with advocacy—to document the outcomes of the project and take them to government officials to push for a new way of tackling old problems like housing and sanitation. When governments and the general public see that the ideas or designs they thought impossible are actually effective, they are more open to adopting those ideas as part of larger policies and strategies. The ultimate goal is for precedent-setting projects to be taken up by government and scaled up into larger upgrading and redevelopment efforts.



gender and the alliance

The NSDF was created in 1975 by male community leaders whose leadership emerged from their role in confronting evictions in their neighborhoods. These leaders were very strategic in using the anger and passion of women in protest marches and confrontations with the police. In fact, most of these men's strategies were to evade the police by putting the women in front of protests— it was difficult for the policemen to deal with hordes of women without charges of inappropriate behavior.

Where the ability to protest against evictions and defend neighborhoods was concerned, these men's organizations did pretty well. However when it came to actually working on solutions, the organizations tended to collapse. Jockin felt that men wanted to do things immediately and had little patience for solutions that required long-term work. Reflecting on their past experiences, NSDF's leaders realized that they had failed to include women in their strategies rather than use them.

NSDF saw in SPARC and Mahila Milan a group of women who were willing to explore solutions together, and who cared passionately about their work. Recognizing that Mahila Milan offered a way to truly include women in the work of organizing, Jockin offered to form a partnership. Still, it was almost ten years before the first group of women reached the national leadership of NSDF. Now, approximately 60% of the Alliance's national leadership consists of women.

Working with the Alliance has helped countless women grow in confidence and expand their horizons. Mahila Milan's exchanges with other settlements, cities and even countries, were important learning experiences for poor women and their families. Learning from each other was a critical component of women's gradual growth in confidence. Time and time again, Mahila Milan women said that they joined the group or started contracting toilets or collected savings because they saw that other women had done it, and thought, *why can't I?*

Shelter and habitat are without a doubt critical women's issues. Though women are increasingly finding outside work, most women still spend great deal of time working in their homes. Evictions, demolitions, and substandard housing therefore have a major impact on women's day-to-day lives. And women's empowerment is key to the success of the Alliance: women are overwhelmingly the catalysts for action in their communities, urging their neighbors to start saving and become involved in the struggle for better living conditions.

Of course, women cannot change their society alone: poor men and women must reconsider their relationships with each other to address issues of poverty and marginality. It's important to acknowledge that for women in most southern societies families and communities remains the only safety net for women and aggressive patriarchal analysis and confrontational behavior to address inequities in family situations does not work for poor women. Instead, SPARC's experience has shown that empowering women in one area can help them find the strength to challenge inequities and injustices in other aspects of their lives. Though Mahila Milan is not explicitly a women's rights organization, by giving women a forum to discuss their problems and work together to achieve mutual goals, it helps them recognize their power and abilities.

Indeed, we believe that SPARC has been more effective as an organization focusing on savings and housing than it would have been as an organization focusing specifically on women's rights: it was because the original Mahila Milan women were working for the good of the entire community, for goals that everyone wanted to achieve, that their families permitted them to engage in activities that ordinarily would have been out of the question. Once the women's families saw how their work had tangible benefits for the entire community, they grew to be supportive of their activities, in a way that is difficult to imagine had the women been out organizing specifically for women's rights.





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