



# SPARC

**Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers**

# Annual Report

# 2013-14



# Contents



**SPARC**  
Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers. SPARC is a registered NGO as of 13 December 1984 and has 25 years of experience till date in mobilizing the urban poor to gain access to basic facilities.



**NSDF & MM**  
SPARC began its work with Mumbai's pavement dwellers and in 1986 tied up with the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), a broad-based organization of the urban poor founded in the mid-1970s.



In partnership, SPARC and NSDF formed another community-based organization, the Mahila Milan (MM) (a decentralized network of poor women's collectives).



**SSNS**  
Set up in 1998, SPARC Samudaya Nirman Sahayak undertakes/manages construction projects with the partnership of organized informal dwellers to access affordable housing and sanitation.

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**In 2014, SPARC celebrates 30 years of commitment towards building an institution produces genuine partnership with community based organizations of the urban poor.**

**In addition to annual reporting, the report reflects on the past three decades; examining what has remained the same, what is different from what we envisaged then, what we have now and what that implies for the future.**

**The report aims to reflect the organic and ongoing nature of SPARC's processes and projects. Its focus is on the Alliance's expanding participation of federated slum communities in driving projects and deepening the engagement with the city and/or state for strategies to secure habitat for the urban poor. In doing so, the Annual Report explores innovations and precedents and our aspiration to facilitate access for the urban poor at scale.**

## **About this report**

Annual reports are written to fulfill fiduciary requirements to indicate the activities undertaken based on plans, and in the case of NGOs, to inform grant makers, governments, cities and peers how commitments made for receiving grants were fulfilled. This annual report will provide those details. They will appear with tables, and provide specific reports about activities that were undertaken.

However, for the Alliance, this yearly exercise is a means to maintain an annual diary that plots our processes and reflections and is a refinement of how we present what we do. SPARC's main mission is to deepen, strengthen and widen the capacity of the NSDF and Mahila Milan to create a social movement of the urban poor in India and to link it to similar processes across countries through SDI and its emerging global networking with other organizations working on the challenges of informality.



**2013-14** represents the culmination of three decades since the formation of SPARC, which was founded on the 13th December 1994. SPARC was founded by a group of peers who sought to explore an institutional form that would develop its identity, its priorities and its activities based on the relationships it sought to form with communities of the urban poor starting with the most vulnerable.

The most critical areas of tracking the journey undertaken by SPARC are its nurturance of the learning culture within NSDF and Mahila Milan, their unflagging exploration and pursuit of processes to build, strengthen and expand their outreach, and their ability to facilitate their members to prioritize their issues to explore and develop solutions. As a result of these priorities, precedents are identified that then seek to explore ways by which NSDF and Mahila Milan can create solutions for these challenges. All development interventions need resources in cash and kind. Federations have sought to build their own capacities to make contributions in cash and kind and whatever they cannot contribute they then seek from other sources. This demands a capacity to negotiate for acceptance of the strategies the poor suggest, convincing others to see examples of what they can do, and finally agree to explore some joint project delivery. The negotiations with the city and the government are overtly about the showcasing of these strategies that hopefully will produce projects but at another level they seek to change the roles and contributions of their city and of the poor towards changing their own lives.

Championing the solutions and creating legitimacy for the organizations of the poor to design and execute projects to survive beyond being pilots is a long journey. In most instances, exploring partnerships and seeking alliances with organizations and individuals in state and civil society sectors has made the scaling up possible; in other instances the uniqueness of what communities could do ensured the survival of the process.

In all instances, the learning curve has been steep and as roles and functions change, has made huge demands of our internal alliances. Increasingly in the last decade, projects and activities initiated by all of us are now almost entirely managed by the federations and SPARC has had to reinvent itself to explore more areas to develop possibilities of intervention, and focus on its ability to gather evidence and create frameworks that showcase how the organizations of the poor view some critical issues vital for development investments differently from the mainstream. In short, our learning cycle leading to strategies and actions continues.

**The Alliance of SPARC, NSDF, and Mahila Milan has sought to create a platform from which the urban poor can voice their needs; empowering them to seek solutions, explore new possibilities, and negotiate with the government.**

**Through examining community organization processes which did not produce solutions when each slum was a small and individual entity seeking change, NSDF began a trend to create a critical mass, linking slums across cities and states to produce an identity that the poor could aggregate at local, city, state and national levels to negotiate with a range of institutions whose rules and regulations have excluded them.**

**Through the formation of Slum Dwellers International in 1996, the same process seeks to build networks across continents and to bring the voice of the poor to the global development space.**

## **Reflections from the Director**

Each year we have to deepen and sharpen our belief systems, our expectations of ourselves and communities of the poor living in cities. We have to reflect on the challenges that emerge through seeking space and legitimacy for the rights of the poor to design develop and manage city development processes that work for the city and are critical for their own well-being. These reflections are as much to remind ourselves as to share with the readers of this report some of the issues that are at the forefront this year.

Clearly, knowledge creation and its ownership and the right to research remain foremost. In a changing world and urban environment where uncertainty is perceived at individual, collective neighborhoods, city and national level... as well as at the planetary level, the right to research, to explore, to classify, to analyze, to verify and to extract learning and knowledge from that process remains a critical survival challenge. Many definitions regarding what is poverty, what is chronic deprivation, and many seminal definitions that drive development investments get formulated on the basis of global discourses that leave the poor, the very subjects of this discussion, outside the process.

At present many of our attempts to undertake these reflections are reactions to unacceptable definitions. Informing the poor that a research is being “conducted” for “their good” by others is often called ‘participatory’ research. We clearly have to move towards being proactive and leading



the process based on defining our own needs. We continue to have to constantly defend the rights of the poor to “the right to research for change”, for assessment of what is being done and for these rights to not being treated as objects of research by others.

The term participatory research is now seen as covering all types of developmental research on issues that affect the poor. We challenge this all the time. The interpretation of participatory research for us accompanies the right to research where the poor define, own and execute the research, test its findings and create knowledge that gets embedded in their development processes.

Community federations not only demand change from state institutions to develop more resources and capacities to address the needs of the bottom 30 % of their citizens, they also seek to develop skills and capacities within themselves to take on more responsibilities to design and execute those programs.

An ongoing challenge for the urban poor who seek roles and participation in development is the constant reminder that the poor are not allowed to fail. The tentative initial explorations into new roles, into project design and execution and into knowledge creation are at best imperfect in their outcomes. Imperfections, mistakes and lack of foresight all accompany learning, and yet organizations of the poor and the NGOs who accompany them are somehow expected to produce perfection at the very first instance. Continuing to learn, refine and build on learning from mistakes through making improvements, definitely produces scale, but perfection is still a long way off.

Without being defensive and negative ourselves, we know that institutions of the state and market with whom we work while scaling up have similar fragilities and inadequacies yet coping with the challenges of delay and failures due to these inadequacies get assigned only to the urban poor communities. Our reflections and monitoring of what has gone wrong, what has not worked and why delays and back tracking occur, brings out the need for institutional strengthening not only of ourselves but of all institutional arrangements of the state and non-state agencies whose focus earlier were never the poor but who now need to work on these issues, and so those arrangements remained underdeveloped.

Challenges of embedding knowledge created by the poor into mainstream systems remain urgent and critical yet unfulfilled. It is difficult to produce this knowledge, because it's never a complete or a perfect strategy, idea or concept but an evolving one. It is difficult to accept that the poor produce knowledge and insight. that might be more impactful than that by the state institutions. If it does get accepted conceptually, it morphs into something quite different when executed by state institutions. Despite all these hurdles, given the growth of urbanization and poverty

## Reflections from the Director... contd

in cities, now is the time to create and legitimize what knowledge the poor bring to urban policy and practice.

As a strategy to mainstream the insights the poor have and to work in partnership with other stakeholders, the Alliance has often sought to develop long term ongoing relationships with academics, government institutions, other CSO institutions and social movements and with some market based institutions albeit cautiously. There are many challenges of co-production: of knowledge creation, of projects and activities, of Advocacy. Creating terms of engagement of explorations, or joint ownership of outcomes work if and when there is acceptance and agreement that the co-production is critically essential for whatever is the focus of the exploration and is not undertaken for purposes of expediency, pressure from donors or other external actors. The Alliance has always explored such relationships and while some have failed and others have dissolved, they teach us important lessons. The relationships that survive the initial challenges and remain robust are those that have passed the three crucial stages of development and evolved into long term ongoing explorations that celebrate their different strengths and support each other's vulnerabilities and weaknesses. These partnerships need individuals within organizations to navigate these explorations before they get institutionalized between organizations.

The three stages are simple and clear cut. First, there is the exploratory stage where anchor individuals explore each other's organizations while working on a joint process. At this stage each group explores each other's roles, each other's belief systems and how well co-production occurs. They assess the degree of equality each accords to the other, how to use their organizational strengths to deepen partnerships, and support each other will provide in managing weaknesses rather than exploiting them. Organizations of the urban poor remain extremely sensitive if they "feel used" or if they feel their presence is only being accepted to be politically correct.

Second, when and if the initial exploration or project works well, a deeper and more complex possibility is explored, joint reflections, which may be formal or informal, look at what did not work and why before planning more joint activities together.

At the third stage which at present is only rarely reached, each partner gives the other the right to explore new possibilities because there is both trust and confidence.

At each stage, especially at the first and second stage, how the joint activities get developed, how financing and ownership gets produced and how evenly the outcomes are strategized are critical to sustaining the joint venture. The Alliance has explored such relationship with government institutions, with peer organizations, academics and development agencies. The ability of the anchor individuals to facilitate the involvement of people from their own organizations and to explore how to embed this activity into their own agency becomes important for sustainability.



With Government agencies, co-production is explored to create inroads into accessing state resources, changing terms for access and seeking the right of the urban poor to execute the projects which they co-design or redesign with the state agencies. In almost all instances the engagement begins very unequally because the organizations of the poor feel the need for it, or they agree to get drawn in because they see an opening up of a new opportunity. Inevitably the leadership of that organization is required/involved as all acts of partnership however unequal, need senior leadership “buy in”. If and when that happens, and if that person is there long enough to co-produce some program, amazing possibilities emerge. Most senior administrators who explore this aspect positively have told us that they develop new insights about the urban poor, they begin to see flaws in their delivery systems that can be corrected and they see the poor as actors who can produce huge impact and outcomes that were earlier very insignificant and peripheral. In most instances NGOs and community networks cannot move to the second stage as administrators are transferred regularly. But in instances where the program really works for the state institutions, others are willing to explore this and consolidate the possibilities. Where the new leadership undertakes this process proactively for producing outcomes that work for both, the process thrives, otherwise it fails. Yet in many instances community organizations continue to pursue those institutions as much to seek accountability towards the poor as to leverage what they can and build their capacity to improve these relationships. Gradually, over time, those federations that can sustain these relationships despite the obvious lack of interest, find that their persistence produces institutionalization of that engagement but often not at optimal terms.

With academics and research agencies the main purpose to explore co-production is to embed knowledge that works for the poor into mainstream education processes. It sometimes, but much later, leads to a reflection of practical and theoretical processes that do not work when operationalized at city level for the poor. Academics want to explore these possibilities conceptually, but most often their university institutional process does not allow this and often the “red tape” forms the first disruption for explorations. In almost all instances, unless the community networks are mature enough to view the first stage as explorations, these relationships do not move forward. They have to view these explorations to learn about the other organizations, and facilitate their appreciation of the federations they associate with and the potential of what learning is possible. Unless the value of interacting and people’s organization is not appreciated this relationship gets aborted often by the communities who become impatient. Yet when this relationship reaches stage three it is a powerful and valuable process because it really brings two very different yet extremely innovative sets of ideas to produce crucial knowledge and advocacy.

With peer institutions at local and global level demarcating constituencies, agreeing not to compete and creating advocacy goals that work for both are crucial. Short term quick fixes often become disastrous as they serve no one’s needs and produce frustration and anger which disastrously impact their advocacy focus as well as adding to the general observation of mainstream institutions that grassroots organizations and NGOs are petty and always disagree with each other.

# Reflections from the Director

## Measurements and Urbanization

### **Better measures for urban quality of life: From whose point of view? Measuring what?**

In the post MDG period, development investments for a better world, seeking global consensus for eradicating poverty and producing measurements to demonstrate the impact of investments has become a vital central discussion. This is because global debates and measurements are critical in a world where transnational agreements based on measuring poverty and creating benchmarks essential to making investment flows for development investments requires such uniformity. Unfortunately, this uniformity then gets enforced onto local realities and the great ranges of locally produced realities don't influence the measurements. In effect, they don't matter.

Social movements of the urban poor and those like me working with such movement leaders find ourselves caught in the cross fires of such debates. People and their lives become a statistical number and aggregated figures mask local variations. Many countries in the global south facing rapid urban growth and stress in cities, have national leaders elected from rural areas and political parties. Their leadership has a deep seated 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century perspective that "sorting out rural development will produce a reduction in urbanization." Can we have some measurements to assess the knowledge and values of politicians and administrators on whether development policies are pro-poor in urban areas?

This is mirrored in the international development paradigm where development investments are also focused on rural development, with theories and practice developed by academics whose development education also remains on rural experiences. When cities are considered in development thinking, they are seen as locations that concentrate on economic growth. They are not seen as locations for equity and inclusion of all those who are poor, most of whom live in informal settlements and without the incomes and assets to allow them to survive with dignity, aspirations and opportunities. A focus on measuring this would help.

This reflection is not to do away with global data linked measurements but to reflect, especially in the urban context, the challenges linked to measuring poverty and exploring mechanisms to better measure the urban quality of life. Understanding and studying informality of people's habitats and livelihoods remains misunderstood and is poorly reflected in global and national debates. Yet these remain most crucial for developing benchmarks and policy initiatives to make cities work for all. Access to cash using the 1.25 US\$ or 2 US\$ a day international poverty line, for instance, does not capture most deprivations and in many cities is too low to reflect the costs of food, shelter and other non-food needs. Cities and urban survival measurements have to be coupled with global financial rates and inflation. Food price inflation (for instance, in India, the sudden quadrupling of potato and onion prices and the increase of fuel prices) has a huge impact on diet, nutrition, and increasing numbers of malnourished children in urban areas are evidence of this.

An inability to calculate ongoing minimum habitat needs and coping with the impact of surviving without them is also never factored into this measurement. Around a billion people live in informal settlements in urban areas. Most of them live in habitats that are at risk of being demolished. They end up using soft recycled material as these are often taken away by the city authorities. So many homes have to be refurbished after every monsoon period and/or in winter or summer depending on the local climate. In estimations done by Slum/Shack Dwellers International, the human labor and material costs of constantly rebuilding informal shacks over 25 years could build a good quality



home. It is necessary to measure the impact of evictions and destruction of habitat and livelihoods by city norms and regulations that deplete assets and erode incrementally developed survival strategies.

A key issue is how to deal with a global economic standard procedure and the norms it produces, based on upfront capital investments that cannot take account of the incrementally evolving survival to a stable but frugal quality of life of the urban poor. Those who have de facto secure tenure (where the evictions have not occurred thus making the households feel secure) incrementally consolidate their homes and upgrade them. In the absence of state support and assistance, this remains the manner in which almost all informal households have consolidated their homes. And yet all government norms and standards for habitat, all capital investment strategies for accessing subsidies and finance required by households needs all the capital to be “collected” upfront and repaid in ten to twenty years. And this is only available if the banks feel “comfortable” with the applicant’s financial situation. But they are never satisfied if the applicant is employed in informal livelihoods.

The lack of provision of the most basic amenities such as piped water, electricity, sewerage and sanitation remains a major crisis for most urban households. As long as informality cloaks this increasing majority of urban populations into invisibility, data collection to benchmark this is skewed and investment is delayed. It was only when state and private sector companies began to understand that the poor “purchased” water and electricity from informal cartels who stole from the company and sold to them at higher rates, that water and electricity began to be provided to the poor in some cities, and DFID and the World Bank have begun to incentivize electricity providers to reach out to the poorer consumers. The same possibilities don’t emerge for sanitation. I guess we will have to wait for technology to make fecal matter become energy producing cheaply before people get paid for defecating!

More and more urban workers are employed in the informal sector. Where are the measurements of their contribution to the GDP? Where are the measurements to demonstrate that in the absence of any welfare measures most poor end up working from homes, vending and hawking where they are vulnerable to the city’s punitive anti-hawking measures and often lose their capital investments when their goods are confiscated? Where are the measurements to demonstrate the value of their contribution to the cities’ middle class who now have both malls and street markets to choose from? Accountability of governance to the poorest is completely lacking as they get disenfranchised by the system and this is not easily accepted or measured. Corruption in high places is measured and quantified, but its aggregation when the poor pay for this in order to survive is rarely calculated and even less discussed with regard to the impact of governance measures.

The urban poor survive through collective processes, while governments and external investments in development are focused on delivery and transactions with individuals. How can these issues be explored, understood and measured? Social Movements of the urban poor are emerging mainly because both politically and in administrative terms urban realities are not impacting urban governance planning and policy making. All over Asia, Latin America and Africa those fed up with official systems are exploring different means to seek changes. Many have been patient for too long, waiting for their nation states and/or governments to wake up. Others, especially young people, are getting impatient and will increasingly choose violent means to get attention. Can we create ways to track these processes and proactively interact with them to develop new paradigms of development that work for the poor and for the city?

This was a blog by Sheela Patel published by ODI in 2014

# Reflections from the Director

## The governance challenge of shrinking space for civil society & social movements

### **Old problems, invisible problems, new actors: conceiving and mis-conceiving our urban century:**

This 21<sup>st</sup> century is clearly an urban century. Local, national, and global governance systems have to incorporate this reality into all aspects of life and development of society. Based on our collective experiences, the global development apparatus, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations and philanthropies, academics and NGOs have yet to accommodate this reality. The legal frameworks that guide our courts, and our general justice system have not yet woken up to the challenges that urbanization poses in terms of rights to property, voice and dignity. This reflection emerges from the past two decades. During this period various national urban poor federations in 33 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, have come together to form the network of Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI). Similar social movements of Habitat and Livelihoods have sprung up in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The formation of such networks is at least in part due to the inability of development agencies to incorporate their needs and aspirations into the development agenda. Urbanization is in the process of transforming basic aspects of social organization such as shelter and work. The question is whether these changes will produce peaceful and dignified co-existence, or a chronic war of attrition between formal and informal parts of the city. While once co-existing, these parts are increasingly in conflict as inequalities increase.

### **Governance for whom? Global investment trends and cities in the global South:**

Global capital and local investment flows that finance construction have changed the nature of this industry in the Southern cities. Capital transfers occur more easily within a market-friendly state and the pace and scale of residential construction has escalated in many of the larger urban centers. The profitability of larger houses increases with every 100 sq. feet of construction. As a result, the construction industry builds bigger and bigger houses despite the need for smaller units. This pattern exacerbates the housing crisis and growing numbers of households are stuck in denser slums with neither security nor services.

These developments in the residential sector are accompanied with an increasing emphasis on cities as financial centers. Public and private infrastructure priorities such as roads, bridges, and flyovers are visible attempts to ease motorized traffic, although in most cases they are associated with more traffic congestion and increased air pollution. Non-motorized transport or public transport policies are always an after thought even though they remain the mode of transport for 60 to 80 % of the population. Traditional livelihoods from cycle rickshaws, paths for walking, multipurpose habitats and livelihood options within historic city neighborhoods, are now only understood as problems of the crowded inner cities. The dominant policy response is to “empty” and “clean” cities to facilitate investment favoring the corporate sector while displacing low-income urban populations and existing enterprises.

As cities grow, the need for water increases. Additional water supplies are drawn from rural areas, which may suffer from shortages. Within cities, inequalities in access to basic services increase. While the formal sector may enjoy access to subsidized water, the poor pay several times more per liter for water. Sanitation remains a major crisis. Almost all cities in the global South have no formal system to process fecal matter which continues to pollute habitat and water bodies. All formal sanitation is water based but only in the formal areas (at best) is there sewerage. Lack of access to toilets means that most of the urban poor defecate in the open, this affects ground water while



untreated sewerage pollutes water bodies and seas. Sanitation in both urban and rural settings remains a major crisis – and the problems are particularly acute in areas of high population density.

The nature of health challenges in the global south have begun to shift. While the impact of poor hygiene and infectious disease is well-known and some global strategies are developed for HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and diarrhea, we now face the significant onset of chronic and lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, heart attacks, hypertension, and stroke. These continue to be perceived as diseases of older age and elite lifestyles, when in fact, they are affecting younger populations given the changing food habits. The divides of formal and informal access to food diversity and security are a primary driver of this phenomenon. Yet specialized hospitals for these diseases remain the major preferred response. Preventive and public health approaches do not emerge as dominant responses, nor are they linked to the related issues of access to land, shelter, and food security.

Infrastructure investments create more evictions today than ever before and most governments have no development framework to address the displacement process. While there have been many debates and global frameworks for rural displacements due to dams and other projects, the scale and impact of displacement in cities remains opaque in most countries. While the World Bank has safe-guard regulations for projects that it funds, these tend to be diluted by nation states who see them as impediments to the swift roll out of infrastructure. It is clearly not enough to have rules in place without associated institutional mechanisms that hold governments accountable to these rules.

Some human rights activists are often caught fighting cases in courts where laws all too often support policies that continue to drive inequality and elitist formal visions of city development. Others, like grassroots federations in the SDI network, collect data and produce documentation to explore dialogue with city, state, and national governments to change legal frameworks and explore policy dialogues on the one hand and continue to help social movements to challenge evictions on the other. While both are critical and essential, there is often a conflict between these two sets of civil society organizations with little understanding of their complementarities. Much of this is exacerbated by an external environment of donor agencies and foundations and associated value frameworks of both such agencies and local movements which deny the need and importance of the other.

Demographic projections have never formed the basis of city development plans. Even when there are published projections on increasing populations in cities (as a result of both internal growth and migration), development planning processes of most cities never incorporate these data sets into creating land and services for all. These development plans form the basis on which the legal frameworks and courts make their judgments to enforce these plans. The poor who are living informally rarely get any justice in the legal justice system.

In the global South and definitely within cities and urban areas, the demographic representation of youth is huge and completely disproportionate to the attention this has received in public policy debates. While consumer goods and marketers have caught on to this and are producing a globally homogeneous consumer demand for music, clothing and a material vision of “the good life,” local realities of poverty, and lack of educational and occupational mobility

# Reflections from the Director

## The governance challenge of shrinking space for civil society & social movements... contd

for these very same young people is producing disastrous outcomes. Governments have a very small space of time in which to create education, livelihoods and value systems that can enable a productive youth force. Cities of violence and crime become possible with disgruntled and disillusioned youth who cannot see a future for themselves.

The inter linkages between climate change and urbanization as the twin macro-forces of change demanded of development define our time, but they are equally misunderstood. Instead of linking climate change to an agenda that will make cities work for all and ensure social justice, climate change often become a discourse that enables more evictions in the name of safety. Rather than seeing opportunities to develop new technology that can provide more jobs and more security for all, these possibilities are ignored. Solar and alternative energies remain out of the reach of the poor, access to them is blocked by conventional energy providers, and research and development investments do not focus on what works for all.

Cities frequently appear to be designed without considering women's needs. One paradigm for thinking about this is quite simple: the main streets are for men and the side streets for women. For women, urbanization is a double edged sword with some positive and continuing negativity. More and more cities agencies report incidents of sexual violence in both formal and informal neighborhoods. There is now a need to reflect on whether these incidents are increasing as well as exploring whether media focus and young women's courage to report these heinous crimes has registered more cases. Women's representation in political and administrative posts remains meager and is often decreasing. Similarly, women continue to be disadvantaged in respect to livelihood opportunities and continue to play the major role of home and household support whose non-monetized values are not appreciated. Cities do not seem to develop any support for child care to facilitate more women working. In turn, women's health and educational status also do not improve and when women work, their employment tends to be in informal low paying jobs and social mobility is less than males even in informal livelihoods.

Clearly the most important challenge is to face the realization that not only is urbanization here to stay; it is growing and will continue to do so for several decades before it stabilizes. In Latin America, which is now almost 80% urban, we have insights regarding interventions in urban governance. These provide the basis for making more nuanced investments in Africa and Asia, which are still undergoing rapid urbanization processes. Yet not all aspects of urbanization will be the same. The world is a different place now, especially in terms of the political and financial flows that are determining urbanization processes today. Development agencies (international and national) have investment choices that will decide the costs to be incurred by future generations in their struggle to climb out of poverty and secure greater social mobility and equity in cities.

Our present governance choices clearly show that we are on the wrong path. Inequality within cities, within nations, and between nations, are increasing in most countries. The only consistent exception is Latin America where urban inequalities are reducing in some countries. The world today and the extractive nature of capitalism has created wealth but not produced equitable distribution.



Informality is the invisible elephant in the city. How can the world rid itself of poverty, if it does not acknowledge challenges presented by informality? When will we accept the need to address increasing informality and accept that simply trying to formalize the informal will just not work? The market, presently the default instrument to solve all problems, has actually exacerbated informality. More and more production of goods and services in the global South now occur in informal settlements where work and homes operate in the same spaces.

Formalization of rules and regulatory frameworks that produce legal norms and standards have never been inclusive. Over time, especially in cities the exclusionary nature of formal institutions has begun to encompass more of the population that those it includes. Development interventions are often unable to address the challenges faced by those in poverty whose vulnerability cannot be addressed by existing regulatory structures. Exclusion does not only mean excluding the “informal” in issues of basic amenities, services and security systems. The responses to such informality both deny the urban poor a safety net and often destroying the meager dwellings and work spaces that they have developed in spite of their exclusion.

### **New actors and roles to build cities for all**

#### Social movements

In the absence of inclusive regulatory frameworks that work for the informal sections of cities and towns, urban social movements are a rare and significant type of actor that can create a critical mass of people seeking change. Some of these movements are gradually getting recognized and more are surfacing because the rule of law does not recognize the needs of their constituencies. Peaceful resolution is possible, when the demands of social movement are validated and channeled into meaningful institutional mechanisms for deliberation. Sometimes this means that government officials have to accept a level of institutional uncertainty with which they may be unfamiliar. Alternatively, recent struggles in the Middle East and many cities in Asia and Africa indicate that peaceful demonstration of discontent too often leads to violent reprisals that actually prolong conflict.

These movements are still not well understood. Very few formal institutions actually have instruments, strategies or mechanisms to explore their presence, engage them in dialogue and attempt to facilitate channeling their energy ideas and resources into solutions that ensure sustainable inclusion into city mainstream processes. This is particularly true for movements of the most disadvantaged citizens.

#### Local and National Civil Society

Formal civil society groups are often based in cities although most of them work in rural areas. Those who work in cities often “select” slums to undertake a specific project which may be in public services such as health or education, but almost never about basic issues of land, security, access to water, sanitation, and amenities. Conversely, discussions within civil society indicate that addressing these issues requires long time frames beyond any existing funding cycle amongst major funding agencies. In fact, funding rarely accommodates such long term explorations where there is no definite success assured. Such uncertainty is due to the structural factors that governance structures in cities and state government operate within and produce exclusionary frameworks. Professionals work hard

# Reflections from the Director

## National Governments

Governments need to participate in addressing the challenges that the urban poor face because secure habitat, basic amenities, and livelihood access are essentially the foundational elements of surviving in a city and are not available to the urban poor. Almost all national government leaders in Asia and Africa get elected from rural constituencies and national and provincial administrations are attuned to facilitating rural development. Impact on making cities work for all has to be initiated when the informal population is 10-15%. Yet it's only when the tipping point comes and the numbers of informal habitat are overwhelming that the institutions wake up. By then, the space for interventions tends towards too little, too late.

## Foundations and Philanthropists

Grant-making institutions walk a fine line between being activists and supporting activists. The social and economic processes of urbanization have underlined the extent to which local actors need to be enabled to take the lead in pushing forward processes that lead to meaningful institutional change. Grant-making institutions have a tendency to exacerbate the so-called "projectification" of development, and are less likely to support the long term processes through which local actors, especially in poor communities, themselves can determine their own agendas for change. A second outcome of the project focus of donor aid is that it exacerbates the tendency to "select" countries, communities, and cities, based on unaccountable criteria. The criteria for funding has to become much more linked to core principles of organizational processes, and much less oriented to pure hard outcomes. This is not to say that an outcome driven approach to funding is irrelevant but traditional paradigms of NGO based service delivery will be unable to deliver systemic change without support for organizations that actually build towards systemic transformations.

## Global and Multi-national governance

Global governance institutions increasingly give lip service to the voice of civil society and broad-based participation. Yet real decision-making continues to be taken in the exclusive hands of national governments and international bureaucrats. The very architecture through which strategies are developed are so vertically framed, that the local and CSO processes enter the discussions and debates after all the critical decisions are made. The challenge now is not just about alternative spaces for the voice of the urban poor, but to channel those spaces into becoming meaningful influences in changing the international institutions that have stood astride development agendas for the past 60 years.



Sheela Patel  
Director SPARC



# Section I: Process

## Building Knowledge and Federating Communities

### Sharing & Capitalizing on Collective Learning

**All organizations must have a learning and knowledge creation culture:**

**Communities learn best when they -**

- Learn from evidence that is visible.
- Watch their peers benefit from change in practices.
- Gain confidence of “ I can do it too” when they see others exploring solutions or dialogue with city.
- Improve self image when they can help others to do what they have learnt to do themselves.
- Become managers of events and public functions when they host peers, or visiting groups (exchange groups) or government officials in their neighborhood.

**A committed group of leaders who design and manage institutional identity and processes can lead a social movement of the urban poor.**

**The institutional architecture of organizations must have some critical characteristics -**

- Symbols of how activities get designed and managed and “owned” by the poor.
- Partnerships with different sets of technical and professional organizations which partner and assist but do not control the process.
- Leadership which facilitates exposure, mentoring and creating scalable leadership that will engage inside and outside.
- A culture of exploration and risk taking for change without fear.

**In the past thirty years since its inception, the association with Mahila Milan and National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) has helped showcase such a partnership for SPARC.**

The Federation Process enables the community to tackle bigger issues such as sanitation and health. The objective of the process is to empower the community, that includes both men and women. The realization by the community that their voice can be heard and that their ideas can be implemented, enables the community to negotiate for their rights. For example, once a community learns to save, then, for the first time, they are financially stronger. This enables them to improve their conditions either by upgrading their households, or by being able to negotiate with the government for proper housing. Once a community is able to successfully navigate through one issue, they feel stronger to tackle other larger issues. The Alliance believes that the only way to have sustainable improvements in slum communities is by making the members themselves responsible for the change.



## Types of Peer Exchanges and their Evolution

### How the process began and has evolved within the Indian Alliance

- Initially, getting pavement women to sit in groups and share their stories was an act of creating familiarity. It quickly morphed into creation of networks, knowledge exchange and collective exploration of shared priorities.
- Doing things together, exploring the unknown; be it speaking to officials or going to check out the offices of various institutions all became so much easier when done together.
- When National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) joined this process, this learning and sharing extended beyond pavements and cities and groups travelled within cities, between cities and between countries. Teaching and learning became a community process completely owned and managed by the communities.
- New ideas and knowledge whether brought in by SPARC or by others were listened to, experiences or lack of them on that subject were discussed and a collective exploration was developed. It meant that there was less fear or uncertainty about exploring what they did not know.
- Knowing and sharing what one knew was also seen as a means of consolidating learning.

*As the Indian Alliance linked first to Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) and later to Slum Dwellers International (SDI) these systems were explored by the communities from other countries and integrated into their own practices.*

### Progression of exchanges -

- *Initially a group of 5-8 slum dwellers, that had more women than men, were accompanied by an NGO affiliate when they visited other settlements.*
- *Gradually, the technical professionals who were working with slum dwellers also joined the group.*
- *Gradually, government officials and political leaders from the area accompanied the groups.*

**THE STRATEGY WAS TO HELP A MIX OF VARIOUS GROUPINGS OF PEOPLE FROM A LOCATION TO MEET OTHERS WHO HAD WORKED TOGETHER AND SOLVED PROBLEMS.**

### The value of this horizontal or peer exchange process

- Robust knowledge is that which gets used, explored, tested and produces outcomes that work for the groups which in turn further propagate it.
- The more the process is shared, the sharing refines it, tests new possibilities and creates endless permutations and combinations with new elements that different locations bring into the picture.
- Creating a knowledge base that could be globally utilized by the poor is a new and exciting possibility that the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has put at the center of its processes.

Over the last thirty years, of the many things explored, the main aspects of the processes that are always ensured in the content of horizontal learning are now called the tool kit of the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) process. They have all begun in India and even today they form the nucleus of the sustained mobilization of the federations wherever they are.

- ***The federation model of institution building.***
- ***Enumerations.***
- ***Women centered savings and credit.***
- ***Precedent setting.***
- ***Public negotiations.***



## Creating an Institutional Identity

### The Federation Model

**The federation process has one single meta focus - to build an institutional architecture for communities of the poor to build networks of knowledge, experiences and political skills so as to change the way cities deal with the poor.**

**Social movements and organizations of the poor create the knowledge that people need for facilitating change. Initially the process to build knowledge is for SURVIVAL in a hostile and unknown situation while seeking work and home informally and illegally. Only when vast numbers face the same crisis comes the insight that something is wrong with the system and not with them.**

**The urban poor make a quantum leap when they understand that they have to both fight the exclusionary frameworks of cities as well as build bridges with the city and that their lives and their childrens' future is intertwined.**

**By applying the federating processes, the urban poor can anticipate the following results -**

- **Building a movement**
- **Building capacities**
- **Confidence to engage other stakeholders**
- **Managing & designing projects that work for them and for the city**

**In the 30 years since the inception of SPARC, the Alliance with Mahila Milan and NSDF first demonstrates that a group of dedicated community leaders and professionals can and have produced an institutional process that facilitates a larger social movement of the urban poor. Together we have developed tools to build capacity, provide identity and voice that make the poor believe that they can contribute towards changing their city and themselves.**

**The challenges of managing social movements that have different systems of accountability alongside accountability to external relationships with the state and grant making agencies remain a balancing act for the Alliance. Yet paradoxically this balance facilitates engagement, demonstrates the power of what people know and can do, and builds confidence of the community leadership.**

**Inside the Alliance our roles in managing the federation process have changed. Now NSDF and MM manage the community process in expanding the use of the federation model to induct more communities and build their capacities while SPARC deals with the external legal, financial and technical aspects of our work.**

## The Federation Process

The urban poor have come to realize the value of developing their capacities. For too long, others have been assuming that they can facilitate the empowerment of the poor. Yet, in reality, the existing frameworks that are based on rules and laws work against the urban poor. Change needs vision; the federation process is a demonstration of a possibility of change and some immediate steps that get taken for large numbers of the poor to become change makers themselves.

NSDF and Mahila Milan are themselves institutional explorations that look into how the poor produce leaders who explore the potential to organize large numbers and identify the critical priorities that existing development has not addressed. They can never encompass each household and individual living in informal settlements but they act as crucial role models by demonstrating how communities themselves can produce vital solutions to the city's problems. They have a membership, yet their solutions have to pass the test of being workable for all living in similar conditions. In short they are the crucible for change.

SPARC was founded as an exploration of how professionals can demonstrate real capacity to partner

organizations of the poor. Initially it was a crucial and vital ally to the community based organizations, providing professional support and providing the link between the CBOs and formal institutional arrangements until they began to get recognized for their own strengths and contributions. Gradually SPARC's role changed to institutionalizing the precedents that the federations produce and to challenge existing norms and standards that restrict the poor from participating in development.

The federating process provides the community with the means to approach the government with their requirements to make change for the poor, and to negotiate their terms with the added benefit of reliable data. It provides financial knowledge and mechanisms to communities that struggle with making ends meet or that explore new possibilities. In addition, the federating process allows the community to explore and experiment with new ideas and to create a platform to share their ideas and experiences with other urban poor communities.



## Creating Data about the Poor through Enumerations

**All organizations need to have a learning and knowledge creation culture of their own.**

**Cities exclude the urban poor in many ways -**

- **The poor, especially slum dwellers are never accurately and completely enumerated and the communities never check the data base for accuracy.**
- **Their needs are never recognized and they are all assumed to have the same challenges uniformly.**
- **The assessments tool to measure their level of vulnerability is always flawed.**
- **Resources to address these problems of the poor (when and if allocated) never reach the poor OR solutions are never based on strategies that the poor approve of.**
- **The poor never have space and resources to design and demonstrate what works for them.**

**Accurate disaggregated data about slum dwellers serves several purposes -**

- **It produces a collective identity and knowledge about themselves and their settlement.**
- **It produces a new identity for communities and networks.**
- **Planning and outcome and impact of investments can be assessed.**

**Seeking collective priorities based on data is essential to the federations as well as for advocacy on issues when in dialogue with the city.**

**Surveys between 1996 to 2014 in Mumbai and other cities**

		Settlements	Households
Household Surveys		2104	194289
Settlement Profiles		7263	2421341
Sanitation Surveys*		1942	

\* Surveys conducted pre and post construction of Toilet blocks to determine toilet requirement in a settlement and to assess the functioning of the same.

### THE ACT OF COUNTING

The enumeration process, by which NSDF and Mahila Milan design information gathering and collect data and analyze it, operates at three basic levels.

- Individual and household data
- Settlement data
- Issue based data

Initially the act of collecting information was mainly to bring together and organize communities and networks and help slum dwellers develop a sense of identity, and to explore how to develop collective priorities.

Gradually this data began to be presented to the government and initiated a contestation with data collected by the state. Over time, the data gathered by the people was considered accurate and representative and government and other agencies began to commission the Alliance to collect data for various projects (this is further elaborated in the project section).

Today federations are using GPS and digital mapping techniques and championing the right of slum dwellers to collect data about themselves and ensure that it is recognized while planning new city activities.

### THE KNOW YOUR CITY CAMPIAGN OF SDI AND UNHABITAT EMERGES FROM THIS PROCESS

## Data Collection by Communities

### THE PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

The process of data collection has to emerge from some reason that communities know and understand. It helps formulate and develop a foundation for “thinking through” on issues that impact them. In 1985 the first attempt to collect data emerged from the threat of evictions for pavement dwellers. Discussion with the city officials made the Alliance realize that the city of Mumbai had no real data about pavement dwellers. So “lets count ourselves” was how it began. It quickly led to many other communities that faced similar and other challenges to undertake similar explorations. In some instances it was undertaken to challenge the state about their data and in other instances it was because of acceptance by the state that the poor gathered data about themselves; more accurately than the state did. In 1986-7, resident communities in Dharavi counted families and structures and listed Nagars (or resident groups with identity they had created to counter the state survey which was only counting “recognized structures”. This was to counter the government plan of redeveloping Dharavi to house 35,000 households and evict 15,000. the community survey had 80,000 structures and over a 100,000 households, and a separate listing of shops and manufacturing units. The slums along the railway lines in Mumbai were to be counted by the Government of Maharashtra for the Indian Railways to address the challenges of encroachments. SPARC sought to do the survey and NSDF conducted the survey on the ground.

These three surveys formed a very strong foundation for the manner in which the Alliance executed the census type enumeration of slums by the communities to produce a data base of the poor on the basis of which they created a federation process and produced a advocacy strategy for themselves.

**Community led enumeration and mapping adds to the value and power of the community of the urban poor. Each individual and household participating in the survey is a person or a household or part of a neighborhood. The questions compiled for everyone to answer deal with quantification of who they are, what they do and how they live in the city. Communities measure and map their structures and number their homes, producing addresses and externally identifiable mechanisms, and gradually these are turned into plain table maps that can be and are presented to the city.**

**Communities prepare themselves for participating in the process and leaders make sure everyone is available for answering. The enumeration process captures vital and detailed information about the number of households, the type of structure and building in which the household resides, and the availability of basic services within the settlements. This information is formally documented and comprehensive settlement profiles are created for each settlement; its history and the resources available within the settlement. This forms the basis for establishing collective priorities and creating a basis for negotiations with the government with regards to land, tenure and infrastructure provisions. This data is digitally stored and registers of household and individual data are then checked by each community for accuracy and tables are generated that form the basis for priority setting.**



### What remains same and what has changed:

Initially SPARC was equally involved in the design, execution and reporting writing, now NSDF and Mahila Milan manage the initial process of data collection, and build local capacity to undertake the surveys themselves at city and community level. SPARC digitally enters data and produces registers and reports that NSDF and MM then get confirmed with communities and then presents to the city.

Community residents continue to make their locality maps, but now they get located on GPS and trained professionals within communities digitalize the maps.

### The various types of enumerations are:

Slum profiles:

These are data bases of settlements and their characteristics in relation to the city town.

Household census:

This type of survey is Household data Issue focused data collection, eg sanitation, energy, water and on issues that communities have to explore or develop an understanding about.

Today, these processes and strategies have been adopted by SDI and by other organizations and have become tools for advocacy and campaigns as well as for benchmarking and monitoring.

## The Indian Alliance and SDI's Data Management Strategy

**By 1988, the Indian Alliance had begun sharing this strategy with other Asian groups through ACHR. In 1991 the Indian Alliance began to work with South Africa and by 1996, SDI was set up. Residents from informal settlements in Asian and African countries began to learn about surveys through exchanges with India and began their own enumerations. While the data was always digitalized in India, in SDI each affiliate reformulated the questions and most did not digitalize their data.**

- **2010 onwards, SDI began to develop a minimum standardization of questions that all its affiliates would undertake; SDI also created space for specific additional questions that each community/affiliate could add on.**
- **Initially surveys were undertaken only in member communities of the federations, now federation leadership are encouraged to cover all slums in the city regardless of membership.**
- **All affiliates were encouraged to start digitalizing data, and SDI and the Indian and South African affiliates are seeking to develop anchor net based data base for all its affiliates.**

This progression indicates an evolution of processes in many ways and reflects how in real time, the urban poor learn, take control of processes and develop their strategy. It does not happen overnight, the standardization takes time and many negotiations, and most importantly it retains its implicit commitment to serve their needs and interests.

In more than overt ways it challenges the global and academic institutions and research claims for appropriating the participatory research process.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH is not

- JUST informing the poor about the survey.
- Telling people outcomes of the research.
- Or undertaking it because its “good for them”.

Participatory research concepts, instruments and outcomes have to be owned, managed and negotiated by the poor or those whose interest it must serve. This takes time, patience and capacity building, much of which development interventions don't have an inclination to invest in!



## Local, National and Global Advocacy for Community Created Data

As the communities undertaking surveys began to understand the impact and value of data in their pursuit of seeking rights to the city, the need to engage those who either discredited their data, ignored what they were saying or did not know about this became urgent.

Getting municipalities, national and provincial governments to see this value has been most urgent and a priority for each organized community and federated informal settlements. The Indian Alliance itself began this process of seeking to undertake citywide slum profiles almost ten years ago, based on which resident city leadership could take the data about the status of slums to the city. Some cities listened and some federations have worked with their city to produce city wide data of slums, but a major opportunity was lost.



For both the Indian Alliance and SDI this is a major step forward. Building a foundation from below needs a connection with trends coming from top down to be sustainable. Creating linkages, building legitimacy and invading spaces hitherto not accessible to slum dwellers is crucial in this era of urbanization.

**SDI NOW HAS MOUS WITH MANY OTHER GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS TO CREATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH SLUM DWELLERS AFFILIATED WITH SDI TO WORK ON DATA COLLECTION JOINTLY. THESE ARE:**

- **UCLG ( MAYORS NETWORK) WHICH JOINTLY ENGAGED CITY AND SLUM DWELLERS TO COLLECT DATA.**
- **AAPS WHERE AFRICAN PLANNERS LEARN THROUGH THEIR COURSES IN UNIVERCITY TO COLLECT DATA WITH SLUM DWELLERS.**
- **GLTN WHICH NOW HAS SLUM PROFILING AS A TOOL FOR LAND SURVEYS IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS.**
- **UNHABITAT HAS LAUNCHED A KNOW YOUR CITY CAMPAIGN WITH SDI THAT WILL SEEK TO ENCOURAGE ALL CITIES TO KNOW THEIR SLUMS IN ORDER TO GET TO KNOW THEIR CITY.**



## Developing Capacity to Manage Finance

### Mahila Milan and Women's Savings Groups

**Women face the most serious implications of living in slums yet they are the least connected to possibilities of exploring change.**

**NSDF and Mahila Milan believe that -**

- **Women have the patience to endure for the time it takes to address land and infrastructure issues and to get sustainable involvement of informal settlements.**
- **Women have to be central in developing solutions since they manage and maintain the assets that are created better than men.**
- **In poor neighborhoods men and women have to work together and replace competition for leadership with supporting each other.**

**Mainstream access to banks and credit**

- **Public announcements aside, a poor person feels persecuted when seeking to open a bank account or get loans.**
- **The very same system which penalizes the poor person and denies access to formal financial systems makes these announcements.**

Many bankers have visited to observe Mahila Milan and their functioning. More often they believe that more regulation is good, yet in all instances it has trapped the poor into increased disappointments rather than improvements in access to credit.

In almost all instances an intervention by SPARC or a legally recognized NGO that can provide collateral is needed to access credit for the poor. How can that scale up this process?

- **In many instances, loans given to communities of the poor or to individuals become categorized as NAP (Non Performing Assets) because they have no collaterals.**
- **Very senior bank officials have to get involved in negotiating any loans to the poor.**
- **Sometimes, city officials almost threaten banks with their own accounts to get them to give loans to the poor. Often the documentation needed is impossible for the poor to attain on their own.**

#### **MAKING WOMEN THE CENTER OF LEARNING PROCESSES**

Exchanges facilitate communities to share their experiences as well as to learn from each other.

- Through Mahila Milan all exchanges ensure that women also get the opportunities to meet other men and women and learn and grow to explore their leadership potential.
- Women who begin to explore leadership roles have become role models for other women. In addition, women have laid out the guidelines based on which men and women work together towards addressing issues of informal settlements.

#### **COLLATING KNOWLEDGE THAT EXISTS THROUGH PEER EXCHANGES**

Isolation and feeling disempowered is the most difficult barrier to believing that a person can be an agent for change. This is very true for poor women, many of whom are first generation migrants.

Exchanges are held between Mahila Milan and NSDF leaders to replicate, refine and adapt what has proved successful and beneficial to a particular city or town. The Alliance creates a process of exchanges between slum dwellers in a city, between cities and, now through SDI, between slum dwellers from various countries.

#### **SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO TRANSFORM NEIGHBOURHOODS IS A MARATHON, AND WOMEN HAVE THE ENDURANCE, PATIENCE, AND COMMITMENT NEEDED TO STAY ON COURSE THROUGH THE JOURNEY.**

The Alliance recognizes that and facilitates traditional leadership of older men to work in partnership with women, giving them space and support to develop new knowledge and skills.

## Savings and Credit

### Linking women to finances -

- Starting with daily savings women learn financial transactions accounting and collective money management.
- They develop capacities to give loans and get repayments initially for loans from savings, but later for loans from external sources. The Alliance delivers housing, sanitation, economic and educational loans through Mahila Milan.
- The recognition they get from communities helps change their status in homes and neighborhoods and they become part of NSDF leadership at local, national and SDI level.
- Mahila Milan ensures that women are not included simply because they are dependable in the eyes of outside actors, but because they play critical leadership roles.
- Interestingly when external lenders wanted to lend only to women, Mahila Milan leadership insisted on giving loans to both men and women.

Total Savings Groups		
States	2012-13	2013-14
Maharashtra	131	138
Tamil Nadu	319	319
Andhra Pradesh	83	84
Pondicherry	99	99
Gujarat	19	19
Orissa	157	174
Uttar Pradesh	38	38
Karnataka	120	120
Delhi	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>992</b>

#### SAVINGS & CREDIT AND WOMEN LEADERS

Savings and credit was initiated by SPARC to organize women. Along with collecting the daily savings, the rituals connect women and motivate them to talk about their issues in general.

This activity was started by the women living on the pavements in Byculla, Mumbai and gradually spread to other streets, slums, and cities. It helps households in the poor communities to keep aside some money from their earnings and expenses that can be used in times of crisis and/or emergency. It also serves in building a financial niche. Today, this practice of beginning with women managing savings and credit and developing leadership to become city and national leaders has made SDI a unique organization with more women leaders at all levels than men.

Women and now young girls in informal settlements are made into saviors by expectations placed on them by various campaigns. While its good to draw attention to their vulnerabilities and their plight, seeking to push them to become change agents without changing the very environment that victimizes them adds a burden to their already vulnerable status. Changing the perception of women and girls about themselves has to be done within families, neighborhoods and cities to be sustainable.



## Creating Solutions that Work for the Poor

### Precedent Setting Practices

#### **Change that works for the poor needs their participation:**

**For too long the poor have waited for others to find a solution to their problems. By exploring possibilities, the NSDF and Mahila Milan leadership have become stakeholders and have led urban communities from being “beneficiaries” waiting for others to do something to become “participants” by organizing themselves.**

#### **Why precedents?**

- **Often what the poor do in their survival strategy can be transformed into a scalable solutions with a few tweaks and changes and find acceptance by the state.**
- **Unlike others, advocacy by the poor needs evidence that the solution will work before they explore it. So both their membership and the city need this evidence.**
- **No solution becomes perfect all of a sudden, it needs many attempts to review and modify and change. By undertaking these actions, NSDF and Mahila Milan own that insight and can make changes when needed.**
- **Ultimately, for scale, processes have to be negotiated and solutions come from co-creation. Other constituencies, state and non state, only respect organizations of the poor if there is evidence that they have made a central contribution.**

#### **How do they work?**

- **Slum networks are facilitated to compare what works for them and why the legal framework does not allow it, accepting some aspects that they need to retain and others that they remove and replace with other possibilities.**
- **By demonstrating the logic of why they defy the law because that solution works for them; often senior officials accept he logic and give permission for the changes requested.**
- **Unlike other change agents in development who work at changing the wordings of the law or its abolition, the federation process seeks to propose what works for them and use it as a precedent to scale up many more using it.**
- **The Alliance seeks to produce solutions that are explored and experimented upon by its members but ultimately have to be useful to all those who are in the same context regardless of whether they are members of the Alliance or not.**

#### **PRECEDENT SETTING**

Experience has shown that the poor communities learn best by doing and their advocacy works best when they themselves demonstrate in practical terms what they seek to secure in terms of policy change.

Often, setting a precedent is a modest and tentative process. At each level, precedents have to be set up in the management delivery, systems development and finances.

Undertaking new concepts often results in additional risks. By risks we mean that when the solutions do not fit the norms the city may confiscate or demolish the asset. For instance, in Mumbai for many years the roof of a slum dwelling that was more than 9 feet in height could be demolished. Over time and many negotiations the height of 14 feet was permitted that allowed a mezzanine to deal with expansion that was vertical when horizontal was not possible.

The Alliance shares the risk with individuals and the communities. By demonstrating a strategy that works for the poor and exploring the possibility of having that solution permitted as a precedent, the law then allows others to undertake it as well. Working ongoing on solutions is essential as there continue to be flaws that are observed that need to be corrected.

The poor demand the same right to fail or to make mistakes and seek correction as all other elements of society also expect and take for granted. Somehow when the poor produce imperfect solutions these are heavily criticized and there are demands that they should be penalized.

## Precedent Setting to Explore New Possibilities



**1986:** Pavement dwellers in Mumbai undertake a census; then women in Mahila Milan design houses and share these with the pavement dwellers; design their own building. The entire process leads to a policy by the Government of Maharashtra that is now rehabilitating all slum dwellers.

**1987-90:** Mahila Milan begins to travel all over India building savings groups and helping women manage money. Today all affiliates of Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and many others undertake this kind of process to empower women and expand their leadership .



**1987:** While designing their homes, Mahila Milan decides to go for community toilets. This becomes so logical to slum dwellers living in dense slums that their demonstration leads to city wide sanitation projects in India and in other countries working with Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

**1990:** House Model Exhibitions held to show case design, lead to women learning hands on construction and to manage construction. Over the next twenty years more and more women are encouraged to undertake construction contracts.



**1996:** Mahila Milan learns to make Laddis or funicular shells for the roofing of their future homes. This costs one fourth of RCC roofing and its manufacturing gives employment to slum dwellers. Each group from various cities and from other countries now use the same technology.

**1995-2000:** Show Railway and Airport authorities that slums on their lands are willing to move if they get a fair deal. This is demonstrated in Mumbai and 900 households move away from a railway track and 1,500 households move from an airport runaway. Mega infrastructure projects now invite the Alliance to set up negotiations for relocation and finance the relocation as part of the project.



**2008:** In cities like Pune where the Mahila Milan is strong, projects under JNNURM abandoned by commercial contractors are taken up by Mahila Milan leading to dramatic changes in the procurement, which are then adopted by other cities in order to get the construction completed.

**In each instance the solution emerged from reflections, experimentations and demonstration of what was possible. Communities made mistakes, then corrected them, they helped cities learn to deal with contracts managed by slum dwellers and helped many others see the possibilities they could take back and try and use in their own settings. It has now produced a national Alliance that has members who believe they can all innovate and bring new ideas to their networks.**

## Why the process? Learning to Leverage and Scale up

### Membership in social movements demands solutions that work at scale

**Change is political and its test is that solutions for change have to work on the ground -**

- **Empowerment requires the belief that participation will bring change.**
- **All solutions need resources and contributions from the city/state as well as those issues affected by the challenge for change.**
- **No strategy comes picture perfect in the beginning; it gets crafted over time, with mistakes and messes mixed with what works.**
- **For every robust solution many precedents are necessary at various levels and scale. It is a ladder for learning with constant modification and self correction.**
- **The poor and their associations seek the right to explore this process, make mistakes, learn and evolve.**

**The test of solutions being robust are -**

- **Most importantly, the identification of the priority has to come from communities or has to be validated by them.**
- **City wide solutions need state intervention yet they also require central participation of the community.**
- **There will always be unintended consequences. These cannot stop explorations, but they must produce learning for refinement, changes and improvements.**
- **Scale develops exponentially and incrementally dumping large moneys and setting up huge targets is the best way to kill a process.**



**Transformation from being beneficiary and consumer to drivers of change**

It is a validation of the processes of the federations that the PROCESSES and RITUALS of federation building and the creation of new identities produces drivers for change in the leadership of the federations.

These leaders have to balance knowledge creation with demonstrated evidence of creating solutions and negotiating for them while retaining the capacity to sustain mobilization with those who have been fed on feudal fodder that someone else will produce solutions.

The leadership has also learnt that strategies that they advocate have to fit into the larger aspirations of the city. It is an unpalatable reality that the claim they have on nation states to address their needs as a priority is never stand alone.

However convolutedly or over time, many of the strategies developed by the Alliance have become embedded in the city development and once they demonstrate their impact and affectivity, increasingly, they get yearly routine budget allocations.

**THIS TAKES TIME, COSTS, RISK TAKING, INNOVATIVE AND RESILIENT BEHAVIOR WHICH THE FEDERATION LEADERSHIP HAS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED.**

## Dealing with Unintended Consequences

### Learning without evidence that it works is a non starter for the urban poor -

- **Moving from survival strategies to a slightly more improved condition is what every household and neighborhoods aspires to, but change does not happen without testing and evidence.**
- **By and large small precedents produce evidence and agreements but the need to reach scale is essential if that practice has to survive,**
- **When communities seek roles, they tread on opportunities of others whose anger and resistance against this move has also to be managed. It comes in the form of threats, allegations and accusations against the federations.**
- **Making mistakes is par for the course, and federations and their leadership cannot produce scale and perfection at the first shot. Learning and refining solutions and correcting mistakes are ways to ensure that learning occurs and at the same time those who use the asset don't pay the costs.**

**Create champions within communities, state administrations and academia. The long term relationships facilitate reflections and explorations of new possibilities and a defense of strategies and championing of opportunities for the poor to drive change.**



### Challenges while making transitions

However well designed precedents are, they remain the first step in the change process, and unless there is practical evidence that it can lead to changed practices amongst communities using this strategy, that precedent may just die as many pilot projects do. Our experience shows that championing the precedent changes strategy and making sure it does not die from lack of repeated explorations is the investment that the federations make.

In India, urban development is a state subject and urban innovations addressing the challenges of informal housing and their need for land and housing remain unaddressed. It requires repeated demonstrations of altered practices to demonstrate the value of community participation and clears the path for their requirements to be included in state managed project norms and standards. This places a huge burden on communities to repeatedly demonstrate projects while seeking scalability.

Most city procurements for construction exclude NGOs and CBOs from participation, and badly designed and executed projects or failures by the market agencies are often the main reason. NGOs are invited to take up projects rather than be encouraged to explore innovative strategies and build on scalable ones.

Taking risks of reputation, financial and technical elements that accompany the project have led to most urban NGOs or CBOs to avoid exploring this possibility. Mainstream Financing also does not support the borrowings necessary to take on projects and organizations have to go to extraordinary lengths to access finances.

**THIS IS OFTEN A MULTI DECADEAL PROCESS, ESPECIALLY, WHEN STATE INSTITUTIONS WHILE AGREEING TO THE POSIBILITIES DO NOT ADOPT IT HOLISTICALLY.**

**WE ALSO FIND THAT WHEN THE STATE ADOPTS THESE PRACTICES THE DISTORTIONS (RATHER THAN REFINEMENTS AND IMPORVEMENTS) THAT OCCUR IN THE PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS LEAD TO FURTHER CHALLENGES.**

## Exploring Partnerships with the State

### Creating Voice and Capacity

**Social movements and organizations of the poor must make demands on the state**

**Good governance means ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the poor are met.**

- **Democracy can be interpreted as the right of constituencies who feel neglected to state demands and make claims on the state.**
- **The precedent setting and dialogue with the state has several milestones -**
  - **Identifying what does not work and what needs to be changed and how.**
  - **Presenting data and information along with a physical alternative that both the larger constituency and administrators can view and debate.**
  - **Developing financial, organizational and managerial capacity within communities to undertake a modest project with permission from the city to make modifications.**
  - **Helping change procurement norms to allow communities to compete for tenders.**
  - **Using peer exchanges and pursuit of networking to get more cities, states and the national government to accept the changes.**
- **The confidence of each negotiation milestone, leads to more explorations and negotiations with more cities and states.**

**Seeking change by breaking existing rules and creating new ones**

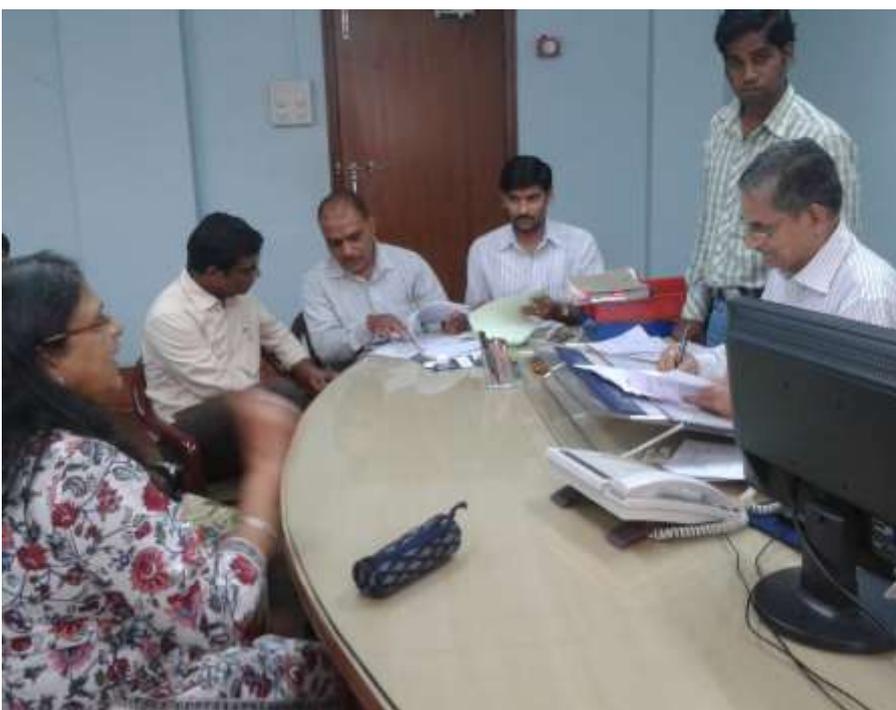
For a very long time :

- The legal framework has to include practices that work for the poor rather than obstruct them.
- The poor being forced by their survival needs have done what works for them.
- Yet there have not been changes in the legal framework that can accommodate what works for the poor.

The NSDF and Mahila Milan's organizational identity and knowledge creation equips them to prioritize what they need, what they can do themselves and what they require the state to do for them.

Secure tenure, basic amenities and the right to participate in their own solution building and execution are their focus areas and over the last three decades they have developed a strategy for advocacy and negotiations that they call precedent setting.

The areas in which they have set precedents are many. Not all scale up or become the hallmarks for the federation process, but the project section will show those that have used the entire tool kit of the Alliance to undertake major projects.



## Levels of Dialogue and Negotiations



The majority of slum dwellers in most situations consider the act of seeking dialogue with government or technical professionals or even NGOs with trepidation. The imagery of making demands but not getting a response is what they often assume is the routine.

The transformation to believing that they themselves can go with some strategy where they demonstrate what they can do and seek a possible response with some corresponding resource or policy change is not common.

However, many federated communities have explored this process and now engage others - state, city, academics, technical professionals and others on a wide range of activities. In our internal assessments they operate at five levels:

1. Non acknowledgement: In all cases and in most instances, initially, in the event there is a meeting there is no acknowledgement.
2. "You have told me, let me see what I can do." A more polite and kind answer that assumes that they have been asked a favor and they commit to keeping it in mind. **In almost all groups this is the initial outcome when seeking engagement. When the individual or group is small and unconnected it disheartens them and produces disengagement.**
3. "Interesting ! Show me what you can do." This is often the first reaction after the persistence that the federations encourage its members to have. Other groups that have achieved something are presented to these officials, and stories of what they do in other cities with their officials is shared.
4. "Very effective. Help me in what I am doing." Often an interested response is 'help me', and federation members being strategic give whatever help is needed, and bring the officers to explore the possibilities.
5. "Amazing, lets try and do something together." Once in a blue moon the response is exciting, the possibility of designing a solution together comes about and produces real engagement, partnership and co-production of solutions. This group and their city gets many visitors, all seeking to inspire their partners.

# Section II: Projects

## Leaping from Precedent to Projects at Scale

### Housing

#### The paradox about land security and the urban poor

**In an ideal world, there would be space and legitimacy for the poor to come to cities to work, earn a living and experience increasing fulfillment of their aspirations as do all others who live in cities.**

- Instead they are trapped in informality, the only way they acquire a space to stay is through informal and illegal channels, trapped to pay informally for protection through informal means and over a period of three to four decades obtain some security that is often de facto rather than de jure.**
- Governments all over the world have been unable to provide financing to the poor to upgrade their homes. They also focus on markets and government subsidies to demonstrate their commitment to the poor, when in fact they serve only a very small number through that investment.**
- In actuality real scale will be achieved when the state focuses on land security and access and provision of bulk services to all, allowing planned but incremental upgrading driven by households. Thereby strengthening what households can do with support to aspects they cannot undertake.**
- The Alliance explores all three options. For purposes of becoming a demonstrated player in what communities can do, we began with constructing market based subsidy housing in Mumbai. Then demonstrated what communities can do in subsidy housing, and now are expanding scope for incremental housing. Pursuing what is possible, what can demonstrate what the people can do and developing a support architecture around that forms the basis of the projects the Alliance undertakes.**

**Most of the negotiations and precedents are set by the Alliance of NSDF, Mahila Milan and SPARC, and SSNS the construction company jointly set up by SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan. (Projects are discussed in greater detail in the SSNS Annual Report.)**

It is always the case that policies meant to be pro-poor never get executed to their fullest. The poor are never involved and can't understand why the schemes don't work. The Alliance believes that you learn by doing, and while you can also make mistakes while doing, that knowledge can be used to improve or change policy.

From its inception and focus on habitat, National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan have explored the possibility to design housing and explore construction in a wide range of projects. In this report we discuss the projects based on land negotiations, design choices, where the finance comes from, how the policies are framed and what working for these various projects has taught us.

While providing the much needed financing and secure tenure, these projects have become precedents which the federation champions to show what new possibilities can be produced.

#### Housing undertaken by the Alliance

	Housing Units	Constructed
Market Based (TDR) A+B	3388	3024
Subsidized	3142	2304
Assisted Incremental Housing		1810
Relocation	58361 HH	28070



## Mumbai Based Market Subsidized Projects

### Backdrop:

In 1995 the Slum Redevelopment Act emerged from the recommendation of the Afzalpurkar Committee. The report acknowledged the inability of past strategies of the government to provide housing for slum dwellers, and suggested a market subsidy whereby the provision of additional density ratios to land presently occupied by informal structures would not only provide housing for the residents of slums, but also provide additional housing stock for the city. While the act also recognized all those with election cards up to 1.1.95 (which was the year the government that set up this program got elected), it conceptually gave tenure security to almost all the households (although many did not have documentation). It also made provisions for communities to take up projects. However there was never any serious attempt to develop financial architecture to ensure that slum dwellers could take up this scheme.

A possible solution to the city's challenges is mired in slum dwellers being cheated, in scams and projects that have never taken off. Poor governance has led over time to over 200 cases with complaints in the high court. Since then the cutoff date has been extended to 2000, but with each year the numbers who are not eligible increase, making it impossible for the scheme to work. and with cut off dates at the most changing to 2000 in 2014, many more households are out of the program. These and many other deficiencies have led what could have been a possible strategy into what many consider scams where construction companies build terrible tenements to get the land benefits of the scheme.

### Institutional architecture of the program:

MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area development Authority) under the housing department has a SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Authority) section independently scrutinizing projects and awarding additional FSI / FAR or Transferred development rights which the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai provides as certificates that get traded in the TDR market. MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority) is also a competent authority to commission these projects.

The Alliance undertook the projects stated in the table to demonstrate the process of how communities can take up these projects, what process should be explored and how designs should be developed with the communities. Through undertaking such projects it has also made several recommendations to the housing department to improve the governance of the scheme by dividing the project frame into two parts. Part one being the development of documentation and design with communities which NGOs can take up with residents association, and part two, where the state institutions tender out construction based on plans that communities make. There is no response from the state to date.

Completed TDR Projects	Units
Rajiv Indira-Suryodaya (In-situ)	263
Bharat Janata (In-situ) Phase 1	147
Milan Nagar (R&R-MUTP) Phase 1	88
Oshiwara I (In-situ and R&R – MUTP)	836
Kanjurmarg II- Jollyboard (R&R, MUIP)	106
<b>TOTAL (A)</b>	<b>1440</b>

Ongoing TDR Projects	Total House Units	Completed/ Finishing Stage
Oshiwara 2 Phase 1	1036	997
Kanjurmarg 3	912	587
<b>Total (B)</b>	<b>1948</b>	<b>1584</b>

Each Project has been taken up to demonstrate some unique feature of community driven projects:

1. Rajeev Indira, Suroyodaya
2. Milan Nagar
3. Bharat Janata
4. Oshiwara 1
5. Oshiwara 2
6. Jolly Board
7. Kanjurmarg

In each instance the strategy for community participation, developing designs, undertaking financing and working out procurement was based on making the projects sustainable demonstrations that others could follow.

SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) is a not for profit company that SPARC Mahila Milan and National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) have set up to assist communities undertake construction of housing and infrastructure.

Details regarding all these housing projects are available on the Nirman website ([www.sparcnirman.org](http://www.sparcnirman.org)) and the annual report.

## JNNURM - BSUP Subsidized Housing

### Housing subsidies and the urban poor

#### Its there and yet its not there.

- The Indian state always has many schemes to provide subsidies for the poor, yet most of the poor we work with don't seem to get access.
- In the case of housing subsidies, a blend of center, state and city resources are meant to provide housing and amenities to the poor.
- A substantial amount of this resource is unutilized, some is misdirected to those who should not be getting it, and some used to build houses such that people don't want to live in them.

#### Why explore the subsidy option when its clearly not a scalable solution?

- Public money has to be accountable. How can the urban poor understand why they have no access. Only seeking to access it will open up the process.
- Demanding access will also help highlight all barriers that presently restrict how beneficiary selection is done, who designs and constructs the outputs and rules that are to guide them.

#### What have we found?

- If data on delivery is an indication, there is not much interest in delivering subsidies to the poor at city, state or national level.
- Many regulations and procedures both restrain innovation as well as delay any action, yet rarely do administrators and politicians seek to change these.
- Names of subsidy schemes change but the content remains the same; inaccessible to the poor.

#### What happens next?

- There is a new government at the center and in many states. Will they find use in what we have learnt?
- Names of schemes change, will the capacity building mechanism and systems of delivery change?
- How long will the enthusiasm for working on urban poverty survive after schemes are launched?
- Will the voices of the poor be heard, recognized and invited to join the process?

#### Backdrop:

The Indian Alliance did not bother much with housing subsidies, while it focused on seeking land security for the poor. In the 1990s after exchanges with South Africa and discussions with their minister the Late Joe Slovo on future housing subsidy for the poor in South Africa, federation leaders and SPARC began to reflect on these discussions that allocations or funding is not enough, communities of the poor have also to be involved in the design and delivery.

Back in India, VAMBAY (Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana) was the scheme through which households received money to improve their homes. Through MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority), the Alliance sought to demonstrate that the present strategy, where a committee of parliamentarians selected the individual beneficiaries, was not strategic. Instead selecting a cluster or neighborhood was better as a starting point and facilitating communities to participate was the way forward.

This journey began when in 2000, Mahila Milan Pune built 5 houses with community involvement in a part of Pune called Yerawada.

In this section we focus on the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) 2005-2014 and the subsidies that households were to get under the scheme for Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP).

Completed Subsidy Projects before JNNURM	Total House Units	Constructed
Hadapsar	713	713
Solapur Bidi	501	501
Sunudugudu	75	75
Solapur Mathadi	34	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1323</b>	<b>1323</b>

## JNNURM - BSUP Subsidized Housing

### JNNURM and its BSUP program

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal (JNNURM) started with enthusiasm, commitment and energy to engage everyone. Politicians and administrators worked hard to create systems and procedures to ensure that the program created crucial investments. Many different stakeholders from the Prime Ministers' Office to the city were involved in the initial period.

Yet many things did not work out as planned. Although SPARC and its partners were deeply committed to explore possibilities for participation of the poor, there were no institutional arrangements to make that happen even though the rhetoric of inclusion and participation were strongly evident in the discourse. As a member of the National Technical Advisory Group, SPARC was unable to push changes needed to ensure utilization, and details of studies undertaken are available on the SPARC website.

However, within almost three-fourth of the time given to the projects, the projects had failed in many cities; the federations were ready to take up such projects where the opportunity arose to redesign and take these forward. In each instance, communities used their survey strategy to ensure detailed documentation of households, mapped structures, and redesigned houses the way the residents wanted them.

At each stage there were challenges, of procurement norms, of designs not fitting in norms, of the inability of officials to work with communities, delays in giving money for work done and many other impediments which poor people face when they take up projects. Politicians feel insecure, local contractors did not want to do projects but now feared work by others and so on.

There were internal challenges as well, contractors from the communities were sometimes unable to deal with the specifications, others sought to overreach, beyond what they could do, and still others demanded more money that what they had worked for. Despite that and delays, both the Alliance and local leaders learnt a great deal about this subsidy delivery system.

### The challenges of the program for cities and its urban poor

- Almost all cities had never done this type of housing but were in a hurry to get fund allocations. So Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) were written to gain funds much of which remained unused.
- There was no self correcting or learning mechanism in place when things did not work.
- There was no linkages in projects that delivered city wide infrastructure and housing for the poor.

Ongoing Subsidy Projects under (JNNURM)	Total House Units	On going	Completed/ Finishing Stage
Phase 1, Yerwada, Pune, Maharashtra	572	105	441
Phase 2, Yerwada, Pune, Maharashtra	553	251	131
Bhubaneswar, Odisha	253	99	154
Puri, Odisha	164	43	7
Nanded, Maharashtra	213	-	213
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1755</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>946</b>



**Step 1:** Discuss the scheme with residents, have them select women from every 15 houses to form a committee, and undertake a survey and map the locality.



**Step 2:** Work with architects and engineers and create communication between communities and the design team about their needs. Start savings for community contributions on the side, open bank accounts.



**Step 3:** Get plans approved, challenge norms that don't work. Select contractors, encourage people with no jobs to work with contractors and learn skills, and start taking down existing houses and re-building houses.



**Step 4:** Ensure timely inspections, billing of money owned to construction, documentation of construction and community contributions, assist households in their various difficulties.



**Step 5:** Inaugurate completed houses with fanfare, invite visitors and guest through the entire project to learn with others and share experiences with communities instead of just the leaders.

## The People's Way: Incremental Housing

**Why is what the poor are not the center of the states vision on housing? How is it that what a majority do by building their own houses with their own money is never discussed in state policy other than to demolish it?**

**For too long**

- **Cities have let remain invisible what people do for themselves just because it does not fit into their norms.**
- **Cities and policy makers prefer to demolish these informal dwelling saying they are inhabitable rather than accepting it is what people do when the state plays no role in supporting solutions that work for them.**
- **Professionals study informal dwellings, document them endlessly, but have done little to suggest strategies, solutions or alternatives that people can take up themselves.**

**It is said that the country will need 5% GDP to provide minimum housing to all.**

- **The policy makers make these calculations but to date there are no financial instruments, even experimental ones, that explore creating modest financial services that the poor in slums can access.**
- **The National Housing Policy has never looked at this majority segment of householders and produced a financial or normative upgrading strategy for them.**
- **The present subsidy regime gives hardly 1% of the households a subsidy while ignoring all others.**



Housing designed and financed by the poor, now labeled slums, forms the bulk of housing stock in all of our cities. This is happening on an ongoing basis yet it remains unstudied and is generally ignored. Fortunately, it presents opportunities to be at the foundation for driving housing improvements and can be scaled up dramatically. Despite this, there is little knowledge or recognition about incremental upgrading practices; the factors affecting the materials and understanding what defines the choices poor people make. As a result, there is no engagement with self built housing regarding design, finance or policy to produce a large scale impact.

In 2011, the Alliance decided to study self-built housing in informal settlements of Mumbai and Pune and to begin to document and analyze the potential of informal practices of construction. The incremental process was first to be understood, by documenting the stages of development and growth in an individual house and across the settlements.

The focus was on understanding the specific choices made by the households in terms of materials, internal layout changes and extensions to the house.

Secondly, the inquiry sought to understand the changes and choices available and observed and noted the actions required to secure these choices - access to finance, materials and construction.

The third part of our study reflects documentation of the incremental process of design and construction and the factors that facilitate change by outlining how varying levels of perceived security, not just the granting of tenure, can affect household improvement. It also observed the impact of access to subsidy or government interventions.

## Initiating Study and Reflections



The existing theory that the long wait endured by families to obtain a house (and their access to finance and settlement level amenities that are acquired over a period of time) impacts incremental up-gradation was found to be consistent with our findings as well.

However, the study also located several other factors (environmental, social, and financial) that have an impact on specific choices made by individuals in upgrading their homes. On the whole, we seek to understand the resident's perspective and that of the federation members to further our awareness. In doing so, we seek to evaluate the following points:

- The connection between housing improvements and tenure, the granting of land rights and perceived security, in order to show how policy can have an impact on self-built housing.
- To understand the impacts of changes at house level in the larger settlements, in order to engage with practitioners or universities who can help plan growth for informal settlements.
- To build a body of knowledge about materials, construction and methods that could be refined and shared amongst communities for safer, well informed choices at the house level.

The goal is to engage practitioners, government and financial institutions to support self-build solutions at various stages in order to produce a formalized structure to gain legitimacy for communities to drive construction themselves.

In the spirit of our Alliance commitments, National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan have begun to give loan amounts to communities that are upgrading their homes that help complete some elements but that also ensure that the households can accommodate the repayment within their income streams.

The present loans do not prescribe any conditions, and developing a documentation seeks to build towards both knowledge creation as well as an ease of filling the application forms. The only requirement is that the loans are taken by groups or collectives who also take responsibility for repayments, and their construction is reviewed by their peers for ensuring that the money is used for this purpose.

# Section II: Projects

## Relocation

### Why Consider Relocation?

**The choice of relocation of households and neighborhoods is often the last option that the Alliance considers.**

- **It is often chosen only after seeking out every other option and after discussions within neighborhood communities of that particular federation.**
- **The choice of exploring the relocation option emerges when evictions have not only depleted the communities in the past, but when possible security of tenure in that locality is not seen as possible.**
- **Relocation, when it is seen as an opportunity for improvement by the households who face this choice.**
- **An agreement with the state and/or the land owner that the whole process is to be designed and managed by the federation whose members are assisted by the Alliance.**



#### Creating Win-Win Partnerships between the Poor and the City for Large Scale Relocation and Rehabilitation in Mumbai, India

**“We don’t want to live on the pavements or along the railway tracks or in a slum. But when we can’t afford housing, we have to live on these lands because they are close to where we work, even if it is dangerous for our children.”**

The city has always resorted to evictions whenever land was needed for urban infrastructure development in similar cases. Even in the few cases where the municipality did provide alternate land, the poor were just dumped in places far from the city with hardly any provisions for water, infrastructure or jobs. Invariably, these poor communities were forced to come back to the city and build a shack in a new slum or pavement. It was a history of complete failure. But a peaceful and sustainable solution does exist. And the experience of the Alliance of SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan demonstrates how to create win-win partnerships between the poor and the city.

#### Designing and Executing Large Scale Relocation and Rehabilitation

Initially the idea of exploring relocation was discussed in 1987 when women pavement dwellers began to reflect on their habitat situation. NGOs were fighting for their right to stay where they were and women asked themselves **“DO WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO LIVE ON PAVEMENTS?”**

“Why not?” they were asked by their peers who supported them to stop evictions in the areas. “Because we can’t see any real improvement in our lives just staying here. We don’t want to be evicted, we want to plan our relocation if such a thing is possible.”

It was with this demand that the Alliance began to explore how communities could design their own relocation and housing options. They gained knowledge through the House Model Exhibition process and the rituals and practices of good comprehensive documentation.

As it happened, the other federations that were fighting evictions were the households on the railway tracks. These households impacting city wide infrastructure had explored this concept with the pavement federation and seized the opportunity long before the pavement dwellers.

The exploration and development of relocation protocols began in 1990.

## Why Consider Relocation?

Celine d’Cruz and Gunashekar Mulayan of the Alliance presented a paper at the 2014 WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY titled, “Integrated Land Governance into the Post 2015 Agenda – Harnessing Synergies for Implementation and Monitoring Impact”, citing examples from the Mumbai Urban Transport Project 2 (MUTP 2). The paper describes how community-managed data collection can produce secure tenure for slum dwellers while ensuring the effective resettlement of thousands of households to make way for implementation of large-scale redevelopment programs. In the example cited here, involving a large-scale, World Bank-funded transport infrastructure project in Mumbai, federations of the urban poor collected large amounts of data, and subsequently used this information for their collective negotiations with land authorities, producing solutions that work for both the city and the affected communities. Data collection began in the year 2000, and by 2008, about 18,000 families were relocated voluntarily, ensuring that the World Bank supported infrastructure project could begin as planned. The paper concludes by describing key lessons for relocations related to major urban infrastructure development. In particular, it highlights how large relocations in development projects can be made more effective and efficient if they are managed through grassroots organizations formed through community-based data collection. This suggests a much greater need for investment in building capacity in the affected community through such organizations and processes well before implementation of a project.

Projects	HH To be Relocated	Relocated
MUIP (Mumbai)	30441	9436
MUTP (Mumbai)	23734	17936
Tata Power Phase I (Mumbai)	238	241
Tata Power Phase II (Mumbai)	275	173
Tata Power Phase III (Mumbai)	393	64
Tata Power Phase IV (Mumbai)	240	104
MbPT (Mumbai)	1700	280
Warje Relocation (Pune)	1340	116
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58361</b>	<b>28350</b>

### Insights in managing relocations

Notwithstanding that relocation is never the first choice, many challenges emerge while exploring this option -

- Strongly organized poor communities that can effectively plan and execute all activities in collaboration with the state and local governments. But that assumes that organizational processes predate the strategy for relocation and the willingness of state institutions to co-design the process.
- Demonstrated economic value of a good relocation as actually a cost and reputation saving mechanism is never understood until the end.
- Joint handling of crises, challenges and unanticipated events.
- Clear policy on Relocation and Rehabilitation.
- Concerted advocacy, social mobilization and technical support provided by the mediating civil society organizations like the Alliance members, SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan.

No project at scale is without imperfections. Yet tough choices and strategic plans and collective exploration mitigates risks and supports households through difficult initial periods.

The Alliance never undertakes relocation as a contractual arrangement unless there is an agreement from the community networks on whose behalf it undertakes negotiations.

The relocation process foundation is prepared with -

- Negotiations that demonstrate all other options are reviewed before accepting relocation.
- A detailed survey of settlements and households and data about households is available with communities and official institutions.
- Collective of 25-50 households undertaking savings and women collectors who get trained to be Mahila Milan leaders.
- Designing all elements of relocation with these cluster leaders and communities
- Support to households post relocation to the extent feasible.

## The Time Line of Relocations to Date



**1986:** Pavement dwellers from 15 locations were moved to Dindoshi, Goregaon without any preparation. They were dumped on land without amenities, BUT they had marked streets and plots. Over the last 2 decades these houses have built incrementally. Adarsh Nagar Society, a group of pavement dwellers designed and built their own homes, and the entire settlement has been a laboratory of good and bad aspects of relocation from which we learnt a great deal. Despite all negative aspects, we saw, how, after the initial set backs of coping with the trauma, these households have built their homes incrementally, and now have basic amenities.



**1989:** In the 1970s New Bombay or Navi Mumbai was planned and developed to act as a spill over for Mumbai. However in the absence of local train services this did not work. It was in the late 1980s that the plan for building a railway station in Mankurd was taken up. But there was a large slum called Bharat Nagar with over 900 structures that would have to be relocated. National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan facilitated this relocation as much to address the crisis of the households as the city, and the formally documented households with a capacity to pay the nominal contribution for housing moved to the tenements, and 116 households with no demonstrated capacity to make payments were given a plot of land and National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan helped them build their own houses called Jan Kalyan Society.



**1998:** Between 1995 and 1998 the Indian Railways and the Government of Maharashtra's negotiation with the World Bank failed, but the discussions between the urban development department of Government of Maharashtra and Indian Railways with the federation led to a project to shift 900 households around the Kanjurmarg station to a plot owned by the Government of Maharashtra adjoining the station. The Indian Railways would pay for infrastructure, the state would give land, and communities would build transit housing with a loan from HUDCO. Later, through SRA, when housing was built with market subsidy the costs would be reimbursed to the households. This produced the MUTP project in 2000.



**2000:** The World Bank loan for public transport was finalized in 2000 and the Alliance's strategy for community driven relocation was adopted in the rehabilitation policy and SPARC and two other organizations were contracted to undertake the rehabilitation. SPARC undertook the rehabilitation of 35000 households through the RSDF. Finally 18000 households were relocated and as the project gets extended more railway slums will be relocated. This remains the most powerful example of community intervention and the work of pavement dwellers towards designing relocation by the poor themselves. Much of the infrastructure linked relocation being done today in Mumbai is based on this strategy.



**2005:** Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project (MUIP) was a further investment made by Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA) where pavement slums, slums where road expansion was sought, or additional infrastructure projects were developed. A similar relocation was undertaken by the Authority.

## The Time Line of Relocations to Date



**Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT):** National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) has a federation of slums on Bombay Port Trust land which is the largest land owner in the city. The Alliance has been exploring a range of possible ways to create a precedent by which in-situ development or relocation form possible options to address the security of tenure for slum dwellers residing on MbPT Land. The plans of MbPT and Indian Railways for developing a container yard required slum dwellers to relocate. The Alliance was contracted to undertake the relocation of the households and the shops were relocated on the plot itself. An updated survey was conducted in September 2012. Total affected structures now are 1,679 of which 66 families have moved in.



**Tata Power:** Tata Power is a private company that produces and supplies electricity to Mumbai and other cities and is in the process of expanding its production and distribution networks by upgrading its distribution towers. In 2009 Tata Power approached SPARC to explore the possibility of working together to plan relocation for households living under the transmission towers that they wanted to make higher and expand the base. The Alliance contributed to undertaking of the baseline socio-economic survey, work with communities to locate alternative housing, work with Tata Power to obtain tenements from MMRDA and to facilitate the relocation itself. As of today, 582 families have been shifted to the relocation sites at Bhakti Park, Wadala, Govandi and Nahur.



**Slums along the water pipeline for Mumbai:** There have been many occasions when the main pipe line bringing water from the lakes to the city of Mumbai have burst and killed people squatting around the pipes. Like pavement dwellers there are completely invisible settlements in the city, and 15,000 households need to be shifted. The Alliance began to work on this after discussions with the households that they would explore this process with National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan.



**Pune Warje:** Under JNNURM, many cities built houses on land they had from a subsidy with a plan to relocate households. The households they planned to relocate did not want to move. Pune Mahila Milan suggested that the tenements could be allocated to households who were living along the canal and rivers which flooded each year and affected these households. The contract to relocate 1,340 households was given to SPARC and Pune Mahila Milan have designed and managed this project. The project has been a huge capacity building for residents association, the city officials and Mahila Milan Pune who have had to undertake documentation to help households get loans and make the move to the new houses.

### Projects that have yet to take off despite long detailed negotiations

#### Mumbai Airport

98000 structures around the Mumbai International airport have to be relocated to facilitate expansion of infrastructure for the airport. The residents association want the alliance to negotiate land for airport infrastructure to be vacated and their houses to be built on the rest instead of hotels.

#### Cuttack Ring Road

2000 households who face flooding each year from the rivers need to be relocated both for this yearly crisis as well as the construction of the ring road. Despite at least a decade of dialogue with the city and state, neither the investment allocation is used, or the relocation finalized.

#### Navi Mumbai Airport

Residents of several clusters of the peri urban area in navi Mumbai are facing constantly changing guidelines for relocation and the socio economic survey contracted to SPARC for the last four years keeps starting and stopping. The national and state government cannot finalize the compensation strategy.

## Unintended Consequences of Relocations

**No relocation, with or without resources, is without unintended consequences.**

### Negative -

- **Moving from the center of the city changes access to many social and cultural activities that are familiar.**
- **Almost all poor households lose one job, and costs of retaining the jobs means more travel expenses.**
- **Even when the whole community moves, larger social networks and access to amenities is depleted.**
- **Establishing credibility and connections takes time.**
- **Vulnerable households get hounded to sell their houses or tenements.**
- **Formal bills, documentation, managing society cooperatives demand collective behavior different from informal settlements.**
- **Most new relocation sites don't have adequate schools, health services and other amenities like downtown areas from where people move.**

**Even households constantly demanding that federations relocate them have to deal with these aspects.**

### Positive

- **Modern cities may initially seem to move people to the edge of the city, but in this present period, all cities grow beyond the "edge" and people have locations that work well for them after three years or so,**
- **Families claim their children get better marriage proposals, aspire to study, have better self esteem and more relatives from villages come to stay with them.**
- **Over time, expenditures on health, on house repairs goes down.**

- By and large relocations without planning or involvement of communities and no commitments to stay with the community after relocation can not work well.
- In all our experiences with relocation, neither the state nor the officials have systems in place to work on this issue; so developing rituals and building on what works has had to be the "modus operandi" for relocation work.
- Peer exchanges, getting support from those who have faced these processes is a most valuable learning, and works for communities and for the officials.
- The transition from informal to formal has to constantly be studied in order to ensure that good practices in one don't get substituted with bad practices of the other.
- The complete process that is optimal needs communities to be organized in advance. This somehow does not happen unless federations pre-exist in the relocation. Paradoxically you don't want non-federated households to loose out.
- There is no comprehensive urban relocation policy in India that specifically addresses the challenge of the impact of infrastructure investments on informal settlements.



## Reflections and the Way Forward

Responses of the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan when their work is criticized -

- National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan always respond to criticism about negative impact of relocation with a demand for a reality check about the situation that people lived in before relocation.
- They also always say that if you ask people what are your problems you will get many, but the question you have to ask is do you want to go back? It's what is never asked.
- Most of the leaders in Mahila Milan have been relocated themselves and deal with positive and negative aspects of relocation, they say that often people who come to do studies forget their larger journey of migration, of endless evictions, of lack of security.
- Their long term commitment to stay within federations, to assist the poor households who have no income, their attempt to explore new livelihoods remains their strength and why the communities trust the Alliance.
- Of course there are always disgruntled households, people who want more than one house because they have large families, which the federations have not yet got into policy and will not dishonor it.
- In some instances organized communities within federations have to face negative elements who also got moved along with them, but that is a reality they faced even in their old neighborhoods.



**To date the Alliance has a vision about relocation and its role -**

- **Relocation is the last option after all attempts for in-situ are not viable.**
- **With the additional focus on climate linked vulnerability, more relocations are going to be demanded.**
- **National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan believe that building their own capacities to interface with households facing eviction or relocation has to be an integral part of their roles and functioning.**
- **For a long time to come, these processes will be imperfect and part of our role is to deepen and strengthen rituals and practices to strengthen what can be done to prepare households and the state to make this work.**
- **Building more realistic alliances with scholars and academics to study and consolidate learning needs to occur instead of the ongoing tirade against relocation without understanding the deeper politics of why these options were taken.**
- **The Alliance will never take on a contract for relocation for the "job" or money, but only when the communities can and need mediation and assistance.**
- **Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and its affiliates are also seeking robust strategies and rituals to undertake relocation and building a strong role for slum dwellers in such a situation.**





### Multifaceted Value of Sanitation

**Sanitation has become one of the most critical interventions that is an end in itself as well as a means to develop deeper and sustainable engagement between informal settlements and the city administration.**

- **It is an END because it serves a crucial need of the poor, and ensures safe defecation that prevents fecal matter spreading all over peoples habitat, affecting water sources and creating health hazards for the poor as well as the city.**
- **It is a means to create a bridge between marginalized informal settlements locked in a war of attrition with the city to one of working towards universal sanitation that gradually leads to other possibilities of engaging for education, health, slum upgrading.**

**Sanitation is a valuable governance indicator for the alliance.**

- **Good governance must ensure inclusion, and in cities access to a clean safe place to defecate is a powerful indicator of the city's roles and obligations to its citizens.**
- **Through slum profiles and assessments of lack of access to sanitation, the Alliance has sought to create a city level project design to build community toilets to cover all informal settlements.**

**Community managed toilets take time to work well.**

- **Building capacity within communities to work as a team takes some time.**
- **Involving residents to engage with the city is not an easy skill, especially when the city is not capacitated to work with them; it becomes challenging for everybody.**

Many who have criticized Community Toilet Blocks have often characterized it as a neo liberal response. Federations have no time for this particular criticism. Getting the state to pay for capital costs of construction, they believe, is a validation of citizens demanding the nation state to deliver basic facilities to the urban poor. The act of creating organized communities to manage sanitation is clearly a means to build networks that can proceed to make other deeper demands on the state.

As for the construction and management linked flaws, of course there will be many when a process moves to scale. The real testimony of commitment is that the federations keep improving practices, go back to those communities and cities to improve the process, and try and explore ways to change the external factors as well as their own practices so as to improve the overall process.

Arm chair reflections without actually examining and exploring strategies and solutions and learning from experiences has been a major factor of why sanitation outcomes remain such a huge challenge.

**Who will take risks to explore scalability?**



## How it Began and Where it Stands Today

Exploring new solutions and designing and constructing toilets has been an ongoing process in the Alliance for over two decades now, with more cities financing the capital costs of construction over time. The current Mumbai contract for toilet construction is now in its fourth phase. Although this city-wide scaling up of sanitation in slums through community sanitation facilities has been undertaken in many cities, the process of reviewing what has been done, and what can be learnt from it has now been taken up in Mumbai.

In 2012 an enlightened senior administrator in Mumbai, the Additional Municipal Commissioner for Projects (AMC-P), saw the need to create a database of existing sanitation facilities. It was clear to him that, apart from funding and supervising the construction of the slum toilet blocks, the city needed a system to monitor toilets once built, and to liaise with the community co-operatives. Together NSDF and the AMC-P worked to develop a project management unit called the Slum Sanitation Program (SSP) that was established within the Sewerage and Solid Waste Department. This unit was intended to design and execute the municipality's slum sanitation work, contract NGOs to assist the effort, monitor all constructed toilets and to develop a protocol on how to build and strengthen both city and community capacity to manage these assets. The process, just recently begun, is still being crafted through discussions, reviews and joint explorations by the city, the federations and SPARC. But some systematic data collection, clarity of roles and responsibilities and data management have already indicated the value of this process.

Central to the success of all of this was the creation of a relationship between ward administrations and the community organizations. Slum dwellers rarely meet their ward officials, so the first step was to invite all the committees managing toilets to meetings in the ward offices. This helped committee members to understand how the ward functioned and to meet the people in charge of water, waste management and so on. The Ward officers were initially not very interested in meeting with the communities; however when lists emerged and solutions were devised and they looked at the community's responses and reactions the cycle of negativity is transforming into positive relationships. The issues to be raised and things to be studied and explored will continue but even in the early stages of this collaboration, much has been learned.



Sanitation had emerged as a critical issue when the Alliance first began their efforts in the late 1980s. Most government-built shared toilet blocks in the city were very poorly maintained and many did not even work. The World Bank and other global agencies had long decided that community toilets were a bad idea because of these maintenance issues. And even where toilet blocks were functional, women hesitated to use facilities shared with men, and children always ended up squatting outside -- they could not compete with the adults to use the toilets, nor did they really want to use these dark smelly places with their big frightening openings. Out of the women's assessment of the possibilities and realities came their concept of city-financed, but community-managed, toilet blocks with separate seats for men and women, separate spaces for children, and with provision for maintenance.

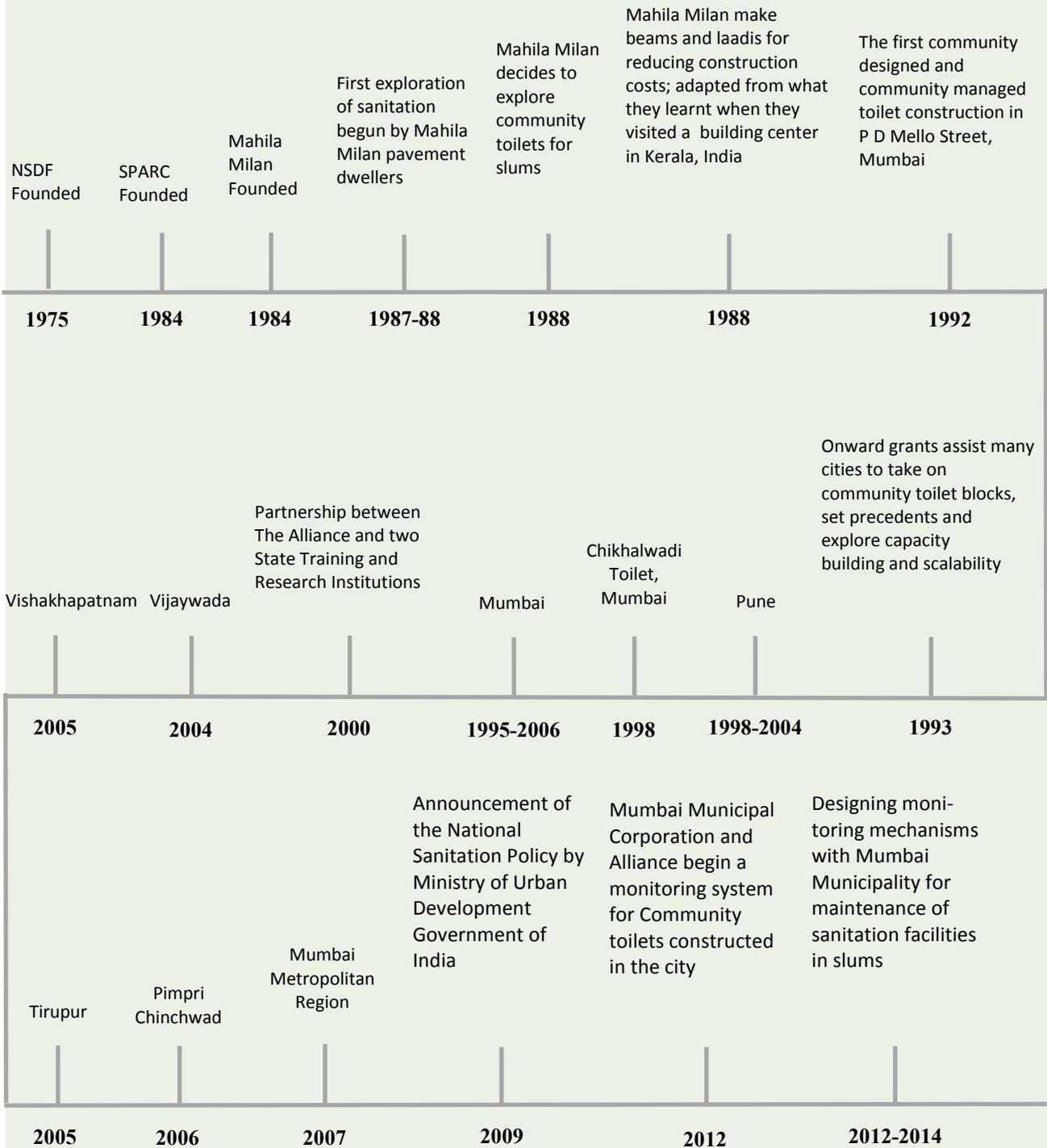
In the years before and after the first municipally-contracted toilet was built at PD'mello Road, the ideas developed on the pavements of Mumbai were being explored by others in India through peer exchanges. When poor communities in Mumbai and other cities around India undertook the process of designing, building and managing their own toilets, it was a change in roles. They were no longer supplicants, begging the city for services. They were able to invite city officials to come and inspect what they'd done. They owned the process, and were the ones telling the city how they would like it to move.

The Alliance's early experiences with community-designed and managed toilets in Mumbai and four other cities were largely donor-funded examples of what organized communities could do to solve their own sanitation needs. To take this to a larger scale, though, meant moving from grant-supported precedents to involving municipalities as active partners, with slum sanitation actually figuring in their budgets. Pune was the first municipality to allow construction of community toilet blocks and by 1998 the Alliance had constructed 114 toilet blocks in the city. Since then, the Alliance has constructed more than 650 toilet blocks with 14,500 seats or more in Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

# Working for Sanitation



## Time Line



1988-2014 ongoing: Regular exchanges with ACHR, SDI Donors, National Slum Dwellers Organizations, Politicians and Administrators to see the projects and to seek help for setting up these systems

## Slum Sanitation Strategy

### Exploring a city wide slum sanitation strategy: what does our experience tell others:

- **It was a quantum leap** to even imagine the possibility of impacting a city through a citywide slum sanitation strategy. Clearly it was the experience of working in many cities, dialogue with city and state government officials and a constant review of what was being explored that produced this vision.
- **It was a collective vision**, one which envisaged stages and phases through which change would take place. On hindsight it seems so natural for a collective vision to produce and organize learning to produce distinct processes and systems, but it takes time, is extremely messy and full of many problems and challenges.
- **It was a means and an end.** Means to sustain the value of federations for slum dwellers, providing them with a path to move on, from fearing the city to dialogue with the city, and through sanitation to explore access to tenure and other basic amenities. The access to safe sanitation is a clear and important end in and of itself. It is often easier to discuss sanitation than it is to discuss land tenure, but through these interactions, views and images about slums and slum residents change in the eyes of the city and municipality.
- **Taking collective risks.** When starting something new, mistakes are made, and challenges keep getting flung at the leadership. However these risks get better managed when and as more people explore the strategies in several locations, distribution of risks is spread, and the learning becomes greater.
- **Demonstrating a bottom up advocacy approach.** Creating change from below is never seen as something the slum dwellers can do and this was a demonstration of what and how it was done. NSDF and Mahila Milan believe that there is a clear and effective path in exploring possibilities, testing them, getting a buy-in from the communities and then sharing this strategy with the city through precedents and then exploring how to expand the scale.
- **Challenging the deep angst against community sanitation.** Without even considering the production and demonstration of options, most professionals and administrators are against community toilets. They never believed that these can be maintained and also that the idea was scalable.
- **Of course the problems that are presented exist but they need to be resolved. Community toilet blocks are the only possible sanitation intervention in dense un-serviced slums.**
- **Builds slum federations' collective ability to be the champions of this particular process.** Too many NGOs "tell" communities and cities what to "do" but never actually participate in the process of creating the strategy. Ultimately, becoming a critical stakeholder in solving community problems requires patience, capacity and confidence building, and it requires the federation leadership to take the lead in assisting professionals or NGOs to assist and support, not lead and guide.
- **Facilitates the refinement and detailing of running a scalable program.** No concept gets converted into a perfect solution. There are many failures, imperfections, mistakes and mismanaged actions. Only experience and monitoring produces refinement and learning.
- **The process of action, reflection and learning cycle has to accompany the process.** There are no short cuts. Each phase has different sets of learning and ultimately the city and the community have to develop a joint learning process. To date this has been achieved with the Mumbai Municipality and the federation.
- **A whole community of leaders across the Alliance have to step up to make this happen.** For such a scale, there has to be substantial mobilization of communities; either while undertaking the program or before.





### Toilet blocks constructed in collaboration with cities in India by the Indian Alliance(1998-2014)

City	Construction period	Total Blocks	Total seats	No. of users
Pune, Maharashtra	1998	111	2,062	1,03,100
Mumbai, Maharashtra	Nov-1999	320	4,047	2,02,350
Pune, Maharashtra	Jul-2004	23	259	12,950
Vijaywada , Andhra Pradesh	Apr-2004	17	128	6,400
Vizag , Andhra Pradesh	Apr-2005	19	323	16,150
Tirupur , Tamilnadu	May-2005	14	254	12,700
Pimpri– Chinchwad, Maharashtra	Nov-2006	7	90	4,500
Mumbai	Dec-2006	150	3,000	1,50,000
13 Municipalities in MMR	Oct-2007	373	8,473	4,23,650
Mumbai	Dec-2011	90	1,800	90,000
		<b>1,034</b>	<b>18,636</b>	<b>9,31,800</b>

- The Pune project had four phases, after which the program was discontinued as 80% of slums were covered.
- The last contract that began in December 2011 in Mumbai is the only active contract at the moment.

**Initially the federations wanted sole source contracts based on their demonstrated abilities, but finally conceded to applying for tenders that were modified to accommodate NGOs and federations. In all instances the cities' contracts with the Alliance were based on changed procurement rules that had to be negotiated extensively. All projects financed the construction through a blend of city, state and central subsidies.**

#### Every toilet project has a set of steps that emerged out of the experimentations.

- Locate areas where explorations could be done.
- Discuss with the communities if they wanted a toilet, had space to construct one or had an old dilapidated toilet they wanted to reconstruct.
- Check with the Slum Sanitation Program whether that location was acceptable to them.
- Survey the slum, and estimate how many seats were needed; as well as check how many people were agreeable to participate in the scheme where they would pay Rs.100 per adult which was their own startup capital for maintaining the toilet.
- The clearance of the location, the payment of 10% of the contribution and a general layout formed the basis of the work order.
- The detailed architectural and structural drawings once submitted led to the work order being confirmed. And estimates were drawn up.
- A contractor was appointed for the project and if he or she was a Mahila Milan or NSDF member, they got 10% of the cost to start the project; others who were contractors had to put in their own 15% before they began.
- There were five stages of inspections and billing and bills were prepared after joint measurements of the construction undertaken were done.
- All households were provided with a family pass and were to make a payment between Rs 30-60 per month for use of the facility. Their society was registered.
- Caretakers were appointed by the committee and paid from the maintenance budget.
- Once the toilet was completed, the local elected representative of the community's choice would inaugurate the toilet.

## Lessons Learnt from Sanitation Projects

### The challenge of facilitation

The greater problem in sanitation is that there are very few off the shelf solutions and even fewer catalysts or facilitators. In the case of the Alliance of SPARC, National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan, our unusual history sought to push the process and the communities also championed the process, but this process cannot be sustained without a partnership with cities. Our challenge remains in how we can embed this process in institutional systems. It is not very difficult to demonstrate the deficits through data, and to explore some alternative solutions; getting them to become a program is the challenge. Involving the residents in design and construction is also crucial but this takes time, so time over-runs always happen.

Construction businesses that can build toilets (and most don't like to build toilets in slums) can fulfil the contracts, but the real challenge is to organise communities that will partner the city in managing and maintaining them.

Increasingly cities are seeking to be "SMART" which implicitly means how can they attract national and global investments. Yet universal sanitation for all, education and livelihood training for all, good quality health and peace in the city that are all the fundamentals of a good, safe and liveable city somehow don't show up in the smart city criteria.

**Sanitation facilitation is a challenge for organizations and networks of cities, for social movements and for development interventionists at national and international levels.**



### The city wide slum sanitation process needs to seen in a new light

Whenever we reflect on sanitation, our imageries are always "in the midst of creating a strong process" which is at odds with the seeming finality of constructing a community toilet block and commissioning it which represents the completion of a project.

The inherent non-construction related issues that ultimately ensure whether the sanitation facility remains "a means and an end" drive the nature of ongoing preoccupation for engagement. No activity within slums, other than sanitation, is so necessary for itself and yet is a means for linking the city and slum communities to each other.

Citywide coverage of slum sanitation has somehow assumed a number game where completing the construction of 'N' number of toilet blocks is the goal and it is assumed that it can be done in an urgent "Mission" mode and "completed". In reality, in almost all cases, this is a multi-decadal ongoing commitment to sustain and improve the conditions of sanitation in slums, and inevitably includes, not only their maintenance, but better access to water, energy, and through these engagements, improved health and hygiene.

The most valuable outcome of a good sanitation project is a relationship that links communities and their leadership to the city and to other communities. Cities need an ongoing deepening engagement with its more vulnerable population and no administration can reach every household. Thus organised settlements with their leadership structure, familiar and comfortable with rituals of engagement and actions are invaluable to the city. These values developed during the sanitation delivery then become very useful to address issues of safety, to manage disasters and to undertake any other goal the city and citizens have to further address developmental challenges.

### Converting a precedent into a national or even a state policy still remains a challenge in practice

Sanitation is increasingly becoming an important subject in development. India's newly elected Prime Minister now champions that cause. But the reality is that although many cities may have started this process, it has not sustained itself nor moved to the next level. Strong leadership, ongoing and sustained commitment of subsequent administrative and political leadership are critical to maintaining both qualitative and programmatic process. In most instances the Alliance has been able to initiate interest in cities, but the cities have not retained commitment to this process after that one set of administrators leave. When a cause has no champions, it dies. Often most initiatives start with many challenges and achieving perfection remains the biggest challenge; even more so when informal settlements are the arena in which solutions are explored. Unless improvements are explored, changing capacity levels and learning from what goes wrong does not happen, the project dies down and can rarely be resuscitated.

## Monitoring and Evaluation



Construction of community toilet blocks in Mumbai has been going on since 2000. Informally, NSDF and Mahila Milan have been keeping tabs on what happens in these facilities. Then in 2012 an enlightened Additional Municipal Commissioner-Projects saw the need to create a data base of existing sanitation facilities. A division called Slum Sanitation Program was established under the Sewerage and Solid Waste Department. It became clear that apart from being involved in the supervision of the construction of the slum toilet blocks the city needed a system to monitor existing toilets and to liaise with the community co-operatives.

He argued that such a project needed to be financed by the MCGB, and SPARC, NSDF, Mahila Milan and other NGOs were invited to bid for the contract to study about 500 toilet blocks built in the earlier years and to work with the Slum Sanitation Program to systematize this new element of their work.

The contract was for two years, the toilet blocks were in 10 of the 26 wards of the city initially, and their names and locations were provided for the first phase of the project.

The location of all toilets were compiled on a Google Earth image and sanitation data was available on a drop down note that included details of committee members. The data base that emerged created the architecture for the interventions. Converting the data into simple EXCEL sheet tables allowed easy creation of lists by ward, by problems, by issues so they could be prioritized. Next, the team devised indicators for various issues and ward wise and issue specific lists were produced very quickly.

**The real 'ah ha' moment was simply the ability to make lists.** To be able to cross link these lists with a wide range of departments in the municipality that needed to be engaged to address the issues raised was a very powerful experience.

Initially it was assumed that most of the problems lay in the internal relationships and modes of functioning of the committees and the NGOs involved would solve the problems faced by them. However, it was clear to the Alliance that there were clear roles and responsibilities for the municipality, the contractors, the NGOs and the community committees. And central to all this was creating an engagement between ward administrations and the CBOs.

**As we seek to highlight the governance element of how sanitation plays a role, we see that the city officials have been trained to focus on the demands and expectations of the formal city. Regardless of whether the city has or does not have sewers or water, making it available to the formal city is never negotiable. Our work on sanitation for slums is creating a path for connecting informal settlements to the city administration.**

Exploring new solutions and designing and constructing toilets has been an ongoing process in the Alliance now for over two decades. Over time, cities have begun to finance the capital costs of construction, and ongoing organisational review and monitoring of what happens when toilets get constructed and communities manage them have produced a range of refinements and changes in design and management of construction. However in all instances it has generally not been in the purview of the municipalities to undertake institutionalized monitoring of these 'assets' that have been created.

There has always been a presumption that the Alliance will do the "needful". However as the scale of the projects expands, the Alliance has been over-stretched to sustain its informal monitoring. Besides, in discussions with the municipality, feedback about what the city needs to do or what the politicians need to do, has never been taken seriously because the officials felt they had already done a lot by building the toilets.

Discussions between the senior administrator, the Additional Municipal Commissioner and NSDF sought to develop a project management unit where NGOs could be contracted to assist the Slum Sanitation Program of the MCGB, to design and execute the monitoring of all constructed toilets and to develop a protocol of how to build and strengthen both city and community capacity to manage these assets.

A survey was commissioned for toilet blocks in 19 different wards of Mumbai, with 10 wards being contracted to SPARC. The number of toilets in each ward depends on the number and expanse of slums in the particular wards. In our surveyed list of toilets, while some had just 2-3 toilet blocks existing in the central part of the city, some other wards such as the R wards in the suburbs had 28-30 toilet blocks. In the first phase, the SPARC team took up the study of 104 toilet blocks.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

### Surveys for Monitoring and Evaluation

At the heart of the monitoring process has been the creation and testing of a survey format that would form the basis of monitoring. Initially while it was tested and refined, it was done by the SPARC team in discussion with the federation, however ultimately it would be an instrument that can and will be administered by the community leadership through peer review.

The survey questionnaire was created after testing out various questions, and brainstorming sessions between the city and the participating NGOs. All parameters that relate to each other and affect the quality of maintenance were considered. Post survey, when the collected data was available, it became imperative to contrast and compare the factors not just between toilets, but also between wards and the city as a whole. Observations during the survey brought in unintended indicators which were then drawn out just on the basis of the collected data.

The first set of indicators are issues linked to land, amenities in the locality, seat to population ratio and whether there was any open defecation in the area where the settlement is located. It, first of all, indicates that most of the slums in this project are on municipal land. Through the discussions that are emerging with the municipality, the leadership accepted that most of the municipal financed toilets were on municipal land.

Similarly when results of each segment were discussed, the issues raised either led to more inquiry or to action that explored ways to address the challenges. The most significant outcome has been that the data has produced discussion and reflection on relationship between slums and the city, and about expanding this interaction.

#### The project itself is in three phases -

1. To develop a questionnaire to document what was actually happening in each community toilet; its physical status, its structural integrity and its management.
2. To explore issues and challenges that require the city and communities to interact so as to address the challenges that emerge.
3. To look beyond the sanitation maintenance and to see the engagement between the city and community to address other issues such as solid waste, education, health, locality management and so on. (This is clearly our own agenda, and is yet to be accepted by the Municipality). Teams visited each community block, understood the issues, identified their problems and made commitments to return with solutions or at least strategies for exploring possibilities for a solution.

### Interaction between Communities and the city

Slum dwellers rarely meet ward officials, so all committees managing toilets were invited to meetings in the ward offices. This first step to introduce the administrative leadership of these projects helped committee members to understand how the ward functioned and to meet the people in charge of water, waste management etc. As the ward level meetings began, it became clear that communication flows had to improve; senior leadership in the municipality needed to intervene not only for clarification of roles and responsibilities but also to explore policy matters on issues that the survey produced.

The most urgent issues initially discussed were the water and electricity charges. Individual community committees or ward officials could not have done this on their own and senior officials at the level of AMC-P had to intervene with documentation sent to the regulators of electricity and water to change the tariff.

For the long term, the department engineers and the NGO team will develop a strategy to help communities monitor the levels of sludge in septic tanks to make sure that gas is not trapped, and to create a joint clearing mechanism. Soon a procedure to help committees maintain these tanks better and get them cleaned collaboratively once in two years is being devised.

For the engineers and staff in the sanitation division, these processes are often alien. However when lists emerge and solutions get devised and the community's response and reaction makes things work, the cycle of negativity transforms into positive relationships. The issues to be raised and things to be studied and explored will continue. But even this first phase has a lot to teach us -

1. Creating a network of people who share similar tasks at various levels within the municipality is important.
2. Horizontal or peer learning is a powerful process and watching what others say and do creates better readiness to change their own behavior.
3. Connecting committees with different levels in the city administration is equally important. Municipal administration is often hesitant to deal with slum dwellers - the line of accountability gets hazy, and many slum communities would feel hesitant to make demands on the city administration.
4. Most important - it demonstrates the commitment of senior political leadership and administrative officers to address the challenges that slums present to the city.
5. The overseeing leadership role played by the senior management of the municipality is invaluable. It helps make the boundaries of accountability and responsibility clearer and sharpens the message that the city must relate to its slum dwellers.

## Other Programs Ongoing and Emerging

**In parallel, reflections on critical urgent needs emerging from global discussions on urban issues and the concerns of the poor themselves have led to these three areas being explored using the process architecture through which many of the earlier process and project issues were explored.**

- Define the issue as seen by the poor themselves.
- Highlighting what is the same and what is different in how the mainstream looks at it, how the communities view it.
- Exploring the solution that emerges from the discussions and study.

**Taking up pilot precedents is vital. It is important to test strategies.**

- How the precedents work to solve the challenges that people face.
- How the process engages other actors.
- How embedded the solution is in the choices that people can make.

**Some programs are older, like Sadaak Chaap, the organization of street boys that was set up in 1987. and Community Policing which began in 2003 in Pune and in 2004 in Mumbai.**

**Other program studies like Poverty as Defined by Communities began three years ago in 2010-11, Exploring Chronic Disease in Slums began in 2012-13, and Energy Justice and Climate Change has begun this year.**



The projects we presented on Housing, Relocation and Sanitation now operate at scale, facing challenges from operating at the city level at scale.

As federations take over more and more roles and functions in processes, projects and programs that have evolved, new explorations continue and some ongoing programs that impacted policy and practice continue to be sustained and refined.

The two ongoing and vital activities important to the federations and Mahila Milan are:

1. Sadak Chaap or support for the children, especially boys who live on the street, and
2. Community Policing that is undertaken in collaboration with the Police and community leaders for safety and security in slums.

Their critical characteristics are:

- They sharpen and define an issue that has emerged from the experiences of their constituencies, and help define the roles and contributions of communities to address the issues faced by them.
- The solutions present challenges to the existing and ongoing strategies of working on these issues.
- They involve the city government, law enforcement and communities to explore solutions together.
- The delivery and impact and monitoring is done by those involved in the process and the role of the Alliance is in providing support and foundation building.



## Night Shelters for Street Children through Sadak Chaap

Prior to 1993, the “Official Vocabulary” of post-independence India did not contain the term “street child”. When in the 1980s, UNICEF introduced the concept of the Street child, all children, those with families like pavement dwellers’ children as well as children who were living by themselves on the streets were called street children.

Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) became involved in these definitions and discussions for a variety of reasons. Many leaders of the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) had run away from home and were aware of the hazards that young children face living on the street. Mahila Milan felt that in their own context, children living in poverty but with their families were different from children who had run away and faced different challenges.

As a result of the discussions, UNICEF commissioned a study that the Alliance undertook. The report called “Waiting for Tomorrow”, published in 1988, studies two sets of very poor households, one a pavement dweller and the other working in the construction industry and staying on construction sites. These two groups represented children with families. Children who had run away from home, and boys who were working in hotels were the groups studied for those who live by themselves.

In 1989 National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan set up a Sadak Chaap Mela. Young boys who had run away from home colloquially referred themselves as *Sadak Chaap (with the stamp of the street)*. During the study and after, they were asked what their major challenges were and the most significant collective response was:

We need a safe place to sleep, we need to get acceptance that we ran away because of difficulties at home, and we will go back when we are strong and in control, and we need “protection” from being picked by the police and taken to the Chiller room (Children’s Home)” from where we have run away many times.

Mahila Milan encouraged the young people to use their community centers as night shelters. Every afternoon and evening children and Mahila Milan leaders cooked a simple daal and rice with vegetables which the boys ate together, they saved with Mahila Milan savings groups, and borrowed from them for work. All younger children up to 14 years were encouraged to attend school. Mahila Milan were often accepted by the police as their guardians. Soon State agencies began to explore this grey area, acknowledging informally that the juvenile justice system was not working for the child.

Through Sadak Chaap Mela’s where 3000+ street children attended, welfare ministers and officials began to dialogue with the representatives of the street boys and night shelters for street children were specifically allotted to be run by NGOs.

Most of the boys from the 1980 and 90s are now working and married into federation member families and are treated as “children” of Mahila Milan leaders. Many work within the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) while others have explored other vocations. Mahila Milan has got them ration cards; National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) has created a program where the RTO facilitates driving training and gets them licenses when they pass the test. Most of those who have grown up have reconnected with their families and many support their parents.

We are often asked why not for girls? Mahila Milan have taken many young girls in their homes, but have resisted the loose arrangements they have agreed upon for the boys. Extending the Area Resource Center facilities as night care while working for the boys would never do for the girls, and accepting that their federations could not run institutions for girls has been a regret for the Alliance.



In the early 1990s, facing pressure from NGOs, the Indian government created the “Scheme for Assistance to Street Children” which was launched in February 1993. Since their entrance into the policy arena with the Scheme, street children have been included in some other policies and programs as well.

The Indian Council of Child Welfare has included street children in their programs, and in the 8th Five Year Plan a scheme for children in 6 metropolitan cities was set in place. The Ministry of Labor has also included street children in their livelihood training programs, though this has been met with minimal success because many street children do not have the education necessary to participate in the programs.

# Police Panchayats and Community Policing

Policing for peace and safety are crucial governance functions and nation states and cities have been unable to provide this facility to the poor. Both in terms of posting of police to the informal settlements as well as legal frameworks and the justice they deliver to the poor... both have very bad records. This makes the urban poor fearful of the police, and many laws also criminalize what the poor do for work and habitat.

Women, especially, face a multiple challenge. When their men folk get picked up, women need to find an intermediary whom they have to pay something for his services, as well as pay a bribe, through him or directly, to the police to get the men released. Often in local quarrels, people who can bribe the police get their position accepted. The police always accompany the demolition squads for evictions, and seem to protect the opposite side. When thefts occur for the poor, commonly, it's a gold chain worn around the neck that gets snatched, the police don't do anything. These and many such experiences and folklore have made the poor very suspicious of the police and courts.

In late 1990, Savita Sonawane, a Mahila Milan leader from Pune faced criminal charges brought by some residents from a neighborhood who were opposed to Mahila Milan organizing the community and setting up women's savings groups and lodged a complaint of extortion against her. To cut a long story short, when the Alliance sought to intervene, the Pune Police Commissioner set up an inquiry after which he invited Mahila Milan Pune to work with the police to create a more supportive rather than adversarial relationship between the police and communities.

THE POLICE PANCHAYAT CONCEPT WAS BORN and seven women and three men, and a deputed police representative formed an eleven member Panchayat. They held public meetings where either both sides or one side represented their grievances, and after investigations they were presented with some solution and judgment about their problems. If that was acceptable to both sides they signed off; if not the Panchayats accompanied them to the police station, ensured the FIR was done, and the course of formal investigation and further court matters were followed.

Later when the same Commissioner came to Mumbai, Panchayats in Mumbai were inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and over the years these relationships have deepened and have taken up several serious challenges like rape, kidnapping, domestic violence theft and so on. Now police reforms in the state are examining how to institutionalize this process for urban areas, acknowledging that there is not enough policing in slum areas.

### What has worked:

- Clearly there is a need for organized communities, with women and their collectives, strong enough to instill confidence in other women to come to seek assistance. National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan give their full support to this process.
- Both police and community leadership see this as a mutual and balancing power process. The idea is to build confidence and trust in the Panchayats for people to present their problems.
- Success is that both sides come to the table and where reconciliation is necessary this is the right format for it. Where women, especially, come with their issues, they get very strong support although in some instances women are often the perpetrators of the crime as well.

### Yet there are many challenges and weaknesses:

- Difficulties in sustaining the integrity of the program beyond personalities. As in all initial instances there is a quantum leap in institutional accountability to the poor which becomes possible when a senior administrator takes the risk of exploring such challenges. However officials gets transferred and not all new replacements want to explore this space. Often the rate of growth or refinement gets slowed down when senior officials loose interest in the project.
- Even when institutionalization is undertaken, which to a great extent has been done in this instance, unless there are empowered and organized communities, the poor don't drive the process.

Herein lies the challenge, the overall governance conditions do not facilitate empowered, democratically managed community processes. But developing such possibilities and demonstrating their accountability to local situations remains an important function for the Alliance to champion.



## Public Health Challenges of Urban Poor

### Police Panchayats and Community Policing contd...

The Alliance through the Police Panchayats has developed a positive relationship with the police and now has a special partnership with Mumbai Police during the various major festivals that are held in the city. For example at the time of the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations when the Ganesh pandals are set up across several venues in the city, the police involves Mahila Milan leaders who are part of Police Panchayats in various aspects of managing the huge numbers of people that visit the pandals.

NSDF and Mahila Milan leaders are informed of the arrangements made by the police towards security and crowd control and volunteers are assigned duties that range from managing the flow of people in and out of the pandals to patrolling the vicinity to keeping an eye out for rowdy elements.

This mutually beneficial outcome is due to the trust developed over the years between the communities and the police when they interacted and worked together in the police panchayats.

#### Case Study at Gautam Nagar, Mankhurd

An old lady gave out her house on rent for 11 months but it turned out that the middleman had sold the house to the 'tenants' and absconded with the money. A dispute arose on the ownership of the flat and the woman approached the police panchayat while the 'tenants' approached a journalist saying that the woman in question was trying to extort more money out of them. The journalist accused Mahila Milan of wrong doing and the matter escalated.

The police panchayat leader then approached the Senior Inspector at the Deonar Police Station who called for a meeting of all the parties concerned. Once the facts were presented to everybody they realized that the tenants had been cheated by the middle man who had duped others in a similar manner and had even sold his own tenement to 8 different people and absconded with the money. With the intervention of the Senior Inspector the case was resolved in favor of the old woman. The middle man was also apprehended with the help of people and put behind bars. The incident also brought to the notice of the people that tenements were being rented out and Mahila Milan looked into the issue.



Police Panchayats in Mumbai - 152  
Number of cases solved - 600

Chronic diseases have just recently begun to demand the attention of the city and social movements. The impact of communicable diseases and their relationship with infrastructure were the focus of preventive health care and are better understood by communities although there too much work needs to be done.

A very modest initiative undertaken by Mahila Milan and SPARC involving some relocated households from pavement settlements to Milan Nagar in Mankurd is crafting this initiative.

Using the data from the household surveys, height, weight and waist and hip measurements were taken for every adult in a household. Young men and women in the building volunteered to work with the Mahila Milan and SPARC initiators of this process. Everyone got their blood pressure checked for hyper tension, and their blood tested for diabetes.

The goal of this exploration is two fold:

- To examine what activities in early detection can be done by a neighborhood association, and how the local collectives can then use local public services to get detailed investigation done and medications prescribed.
- To explore within the constraints of their home and financial situation, what lifestyle changes and dietary changes can they collectively explore.

Attempts to link to city programs for scrutiny and treatment of these chronic problems are now being explored. Discussions with local and state hospital units dealing with these issues will be carried out and they will be connected with communities to build a linkage that helps preventive and curative issues to be discussed and scaled up through exchanges.



# Section III: Reflections

## Refining Practice, Advocacy and Learning

### The Power of Collective Reflections

**Without exploring possibilities, executing them and evaluating their impact there can be no change and unless communities of the urban poor build skills and capacity to do this they cannot drive change**

**Since the Alliance began its work three decades ago -**

**Issues to explore collectively**

- Emerged from what community or households could not do by themselves.
- Leaders, especially women, focused on the outcomes they sought, what they could undertake themselves and where they needed others to assist.

**Once the strategy was developed it was taken up as a precedent activity.**

- This was often imperfect and needed a great deal of course correction.
- Peers were involved in the process and were free to start their own explorations and together they refined possibilities for the next trial.

**Each scalable milestone was seen in the same way - as a process that had to be improved upon and partnerships that had to be deepened.**

- The inability to improve, to scale up or to refine would be analyzed and reasons for lack of progress understood so they could be worked on.
- Often it was their own capacity, in other instances it was their co-producers' capacity, in still other situations it was time frames, finances and scale.

**Since some years ago, in Slum Dwellers International (SDI) deliberations this is referred to as the LME system.**



The Learning Monitoring and Evaluation (LME) gave a name to what we in the Alliance have been doing for many years and believe to be the basis of our growth, our ability to explore new possibilities and to take risks.

Discussions, debates and reflections fulfill many of the Learning Monitoring and Evaluation (LME) elements and since 1996, when we became part of Slum Dwellers International (SDI), the transnational process demands more rigor and testing for concepts since adaptation, scaling and transfer need the process to evolve to a certain level for peers to examine, and take it away and build on it.

Often the mistakes, the risks where we lost out are never discussed immediately in the public domain and for that the Alliance often gets criticized. The logic that the federation leaders provide is that they need space to self correct, those who make mistakes need to change what they have done in a space that is safe, and federations need to support the risk takers otherwise households and communities would be fearful of taking risks.

Paradoxically they also feel that when poor communities undertake to design and manage projects there is an assumption that things will fall apart. Being able to survive those phases and build self confidence and capacity despite these set backs is crucial to developing sustainable and scalable strategies.

## The Process of Learning Monitoring and Evaluation

**The process of reflections and Learning Monitoring and Evaluation (LME) intersects with the activities of doing.**

**Creating a framework and measuring where we are on a scale is helpful when processes, projects and activities occur over different time scales.**

**Some simple measures we use on a quarterly review within the Alliance:**

**Issues, sectors and areas of inquiry for new explorations can come from -**

- Communities and federations.
- From the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) network.
- From SPARC or external professions.
- From cities or government agencies.
- From bilateral or global discussions.

**We believe that no single activity/ritual that we as an Alliance follow fulfills a singular outcome or is expected to achieve a singular thing.**

**Each activity:**

- Is a means and end to many issues.
- Has immediate, midterm as well as long term impacts.
- Is tested for adaptation, scaling up and transferring.
- Explores potentials for community participation in general and women's participation in particular.
- Seeks to change, modify or explore new options for policy arising from practice.

**We are a crucible to explore innovative linkages where bottom-up and top-down approaches meet each other.**

**All activities follow a certain process map:**

- Articulation.
- Evaluate the need.
- Explore what interventions the federations can undertake.
- Test robustness and assessment of initial impact and learning.
- Examine what policy, resources others can contribute to take it to scale.

**The challenges we face with external evaluations**

The Alliance has yet to feel very good about an external evaluation. All grant makers want evaluations at some point and those that we have had have not been helpful to us to build on or add on to our knowledge or our strategy development for future gazing. It was not as though the evaluators were incompetent or bad, or meant us any harm, somehow our frame of reference in actuality, despite all attempts to align these, were different.

Almost none of them could separate the social movement and the organizational or institutional aspect. Recently in our trustees discussion, Srilatha Batliwala helped us with an articulation that helps separate what we do as an Alliance with institutional features and what we also do as a social movement. When the two are not looked at separately, strengths and weaknesses of each can be confused.

All our work is decadal, and benefits never appear immediately, within the frame of the grant period. Almost all practical outcomes and outputs are often from past grants and in most cases the staff of grant agencies who commissioned those projects are long gone from those organizations or the organizations themselves no longer support those causes. But the evaluations framework always demands output of their grants.

Our goals of building capacity, developing community driven solutions and negotiations with the state for co-production seem very lofty or often too fuzzy for evaluators who want clean measurable outputs. Finally and most sadly almost all evaluators have strong experience in rural project evaluations or urban experiences in other continents that have different political and organizational trajectories.



# Exploring Monitoring, Reflection & Research

### Building on Strategies: Land Tenure

The act of formally obtaining land tenure remains elusive to most slum dwellers. However de facto secure tenure, and as a federated organization of slum dwellers squatting on a particular land has demonstrated, fighting to retain that has impact. In the short run, it has ensured reduced overall evictions, a time given to collect data, to present some alternatives to evictions, and a potential for upgrading in some instances. The Government of Maharashtra and its Slum rehabilitation Authority (SRA) policy and Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) have provided secure tenure or a commitment to relocation for most slum dwellers although its market based solution has not worked for a majority of households who still live in slums. At an all India level, the different policies of each state or the lack of policies means that organizations have to work separately in each state and outreach and sustained advocacy presents challenges. States with a lower percentage of urban populations are those who should sort this out fast, but all postpone these decisions at their own peril.

### Building on Strategies: Housing

Even though almost 95% of informal dwellings are constructed by the poor themselves with finances they gather over time, incremental housing remains outside the policy of Indian financing of habitat. While government subsidies in JNNURM and more recently new policies seem to be large outlays, they neither serve the neediest nor do they reach many. Market based subsidies of the Government of Maharashtra such as SRA have such poor governance that they do not serve the interest of the slum dwellers while opening land for elite housing. The Alliance has tried to undertake each type of financing and construction as much to build capacity, interact with city and state governments as well as to demonstrate what is possible and what will not work. Clearly using state subsidies for tenure security and amenities, and financing loans for incremental housing will lead to scale, yet the transition toward this reality will take a long time, in the meanwhile the federations and Mahila Milan continue to explore all options.

### Building on Strategies: Relocation

While evictions of one kind to remove slum dwellers have reduced, eviction due to infrastructure for public good is on the increase. In Mumbai and some other cities, projects like the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) have shown that good relocation that is citizen and community managed is effective and peaceful, and projects move fast thereby making a contribution to alternative accommodation. This is worthwhile financially and also helps poor and vulnerable households get secure tenure. Federations are clear that they explore these options with clear accountability to the households and undertake relocation only when there are no better options. In the past the relocations contracts financed only obvious costs anticipated at the time of contract, with all unintended emergencies being paid for by grants the alliance had. Now gradually, more experience and many project experiences later, the contracts seek more detailed expenditure coverage and federations seek contracts to cover all these costs.

### Building on Strategies: Sanitation

Sanitation remains a very important and critical MDG target that was a huge failure and remains a huge challenge globally. The numbers that in South Asia are said to be 50% of the global one million open defecation statistics, are also very disconcerting. Sanitation remains a huge challenge in India; while this challenge is formidable in rural habitat as well as urban, the issue in each sector and geography are different.

Sanitation is a big item for campaigns in manifesto of the new national government, and while that is heartening, the urban sanitation conundrum is complicated by the fact that it is deeply linked to infrastructure deficits in general and the general neglect over decades by cities. Whether it is schools that need toilets for girls not to drop out or slums, sanitation is completely dependent on regular water supply and safe removal and treatment of fecal matter, something that cities have a huge challenge in and of itself. Most cities in India do not have a sewer system and formal habitat outlets of fecal matter are often drains or canals. This makes the simple clarion call for safe sanitation by households in urban areas unviable and needs a deep, long term commitment to sanitation. Thus the fierce determination to engage cities and state governments remains central to the Alliance commitment to sanitation, often plodding ahead with city officials as both federations and cities explore roles and relationships.

The eventual advancement of obtaining a commitment from the MCGM to explore working with the Alliance to build and deepen the capacity of community committees and that of the municipality remains an important milestone. Much depends on whether this will remain in place and get built on.

## Building and Refining on Issues and Activities

### Developing Indicators from Enumerations and Profiles

While slum profiles have begun to serve as means to organize communities and network them to present the city with information about the informal city, they have this year formed the basis of the Know Your City campaign of UNHABITAT. SDI and the Indian Alliance have begun to develop indicators of the state of slums in their cities by creating indicators. These are being tested as this report gets published and will become the basis of advocacy campaigns at local and national levels to indicate what areas should be the focus of intervention, and also used as benchmarks to see how investments by communities and cities bring in change for them.

### Study of Incremental Housing & Sanitation Options and Developing New Financial Interventions

The habitat upgrading process is a situation where it seems to deny the reality that the poor build and finance their homes. International and local norms and financing systems attempt to demolish houses to build new dwellings, or provide finance at such terms and amounts that most of the households will either not afford, or will not repay. Somewhere in this policy formation, there is a deep bias against what people build themselves and also that the houses do not conform to standards of architecture and safety that the city adheres to. Given that for a long time to come the required 6% of GDP will not be allocated to housing finance, the focus of the alliance to engage communities, cities and financing agencies to look at a strategy to lend what the poor can afford on terms that are sustainable and with ongoing innovations in design, material and construction practices which will scale up where the poor live and produce neighborhoods. The demand from the national and state policy is to invest in land security and basic amenities in settlements leaving the housing to the residents.

### Exploring the Possibilities of Ward Wise Slum Data for Comprehensive Coverage of Amenities for All

The comprehensive data collection of all informal settlements in the city has been a long term commitment of the Indian Alliance, and while it has been achieved in many smaller towns, it now seeks to develop this in medium and large towns, starting with Mumbai. The strategy is to build community ownership of data, build indicators to ensure development investments and monitor impact and outputs that are shared with the city and state who make these investments and policies.

### Exploring Climate Change and Energy Justice from the Perspective of Communities of the Urban Poor

Worldwide the energy sector accounts for more than 60% of greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing energy consumption is being associated with the proliferation of an urban lifestyle and it is a fact that globally around 67% of the total energy is consumed in cities. However, these figures lump the energy consumption of slum dwellers together with the urban middle-class which becomes an oversimplification and international development agencies, research bodies and governments working on sustainable energy provision for cities and the need for adaptation to the impacts of climate change seek to design solutions for these issues that are then applied to the urban poor in the same measure as the middle class. The poor are still being treated as subjects in the solution-finding processes and not as the most relevant actors. At the same time it's often the urban poor who are most affected in cities by the consequences of climate change. SPARC's strategy will be to gather data about energy consumption and usage by the urban poor and of their needs and requirements so as to share it with those who seek the solutions and alternative strategies.

### What is common in all these processes?

The most important common threads that run through these different work areas is that informal settlements, their residents in general and the poor women living there in particular are the creators of the data base, they build capacity to create priorities and engage with cities and each other to change their status. It all is based on the belief that everyone wants change that will improve their lives and that of their children and neighborhoods, but often do not have the building blocks to do that. They also get support to look at these issues from a political lens because assuming that someone else will give them these outcomes has not worked. Finally strategies and solutions that work help produce scale as poor communities mentor each other and assist others from other cities and countries to come and learn from them.

## Slum Dwellers International (SDI): A Global Network of Peers

### What value do Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and the Indian Alliance contribute to each other?

The Indian Alliance first explored transnational exchanges with Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) in 1988 when exchanges between Asian community leaders and Indian National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan began to share learnings. In 1992 these explorations expanded to Africa and in 1996 Slum Dwellers International (SDI) was registered.

### Why is Slum Dwellers International (SDI) an important part of the Alliance and its functioning?

- Most importantly the federation model developed by the alliance forms the main strategy for organizing communities, their relationship with each other and their learning strategies.
- This provides us with a valuable ongoing engagement in refining, reshaping and building a new organizational method in a world where social movements and NGO led development interventions can explore working in partnerships.
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) provides a new platform to demonstrate new formations of global advocacy that is driven and led by the poor themselves.

### Slum Dwellers International (SDI) reflects an institutional architecture that emerges from processes of internal reflection and external development challenges.

- Creating a strategy for the urban poor to represent their perspective, solutions that work for them in the global discourse that are accountable to local realities remains the focus of Slum Dwellers International's advocacy.
- Challenging global instruments for measurement of poverty, census of the urban poor and designing interventions that the poor can drive remain critical to the advocacy process.
- Its real power lies in demonstrating scalable solutions designed by the urban poor that can be financed by national and international development investments.

### Some highlights of this year

- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has begun to aggregate the slum and household data gathered by affiliates and digitalize it.
- India, Uganda, South Africa and Ghana will be learning centers for the affiliates thus deepening knowledge transfers.
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) now sits in the executive committee of Cities Alliance and contributes to the debate, discussions and project delivery of Cities Alliance
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is deeply engaged with other social movements of the urban informal poor to develop a collective platform to champion the inclusion of the informal in the cities of the future.
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) was recognized by the Skoll Foundation and nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, in both instances it is seen as a part of deepening recognition of the challenges of urbanization that exclude the urban poor.
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has developed strategic partnerships with UCLG and AAPS which will help build local partnerships between cities, mayors, urban planning professionals and slum dwellers.
- Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is deeply involved with many other international networks and associations to ensure an urban goal in the SDGs and to ensure that the urban informality is a central part of the Habitat III discussions and outcomes.
- This year Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has undertaken sanitation as an area of focus in partnership with IIED and other agencies.



For the Indian alliance this is a transnational extension of what it does in India.

## Slum Dwellers International (SDI): A Global Network of Peers

### Developing a data base of household and slum profiles within Slum Dwellers International (SDI)

Having initiated the process of “KNOW YOUR CITY” as a campaign that UNHABITAT has inaugurated, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) now explores ways to assist its members to digitalize their data on the net for local use and global aggregation for advocacy. Through creating some standardized questions for the survey questionnaires, the plan is to build a data base of slums across the city, rather than its own membership, to develop benchmarks for services at the city level, but also to aggregate data at the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) level to produce community collected data to challenge information on slums.

### Aligning our LME with that of Slum Dwellers International (SDI)

Learning Monitoring and Evaluation strategies that have initially been explored by each Slum Dwellers International (SDI) affiliate, when collated and negotiated with those who provide grants for Slum Dwellers International (SDI) have led to an interesting mechanism that echoes many of the processes of all affiliates, especially India. Documentation of activities, resource center data on savings, surveys, households assisted, explorations undertaken have all begun to be consolidated to produce the spine of an Learning Monitoring and Evaluation (LME) process that each affiliate can build on while maintaining the base information such that aggregation is possible.

### Building systems to become a learning center of Slum Dwellers International (SDI)

Recently Slum Dwellers International (SDI) also consolidated four centers in each HUB (India is in the Asian Hub) so that innovations explored, projects undertaken, organizational practices consolidated and partnerships developed in each of these centers becomes a location for skill building, exposure and learning activities. In return, the hosts sharpen and deepen their articulation and teaching skills, and use feedback to improve the refinement of the practice. It also helps local and national partners recognize the value their local initiatives with the Alliance when they become inspirations for others.

### Linking national advocacy and research with Slum Dwellers International (SDI)

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) produces many opportunities for strategies, research definitions and action research as well as precedents to be explored across many countries. There is value in reversing roles where slum dwellers develop strategies and engage local universities, cities and others in a global study rather than always being included by others and this again strengthens the value of local and national advocacy.

### Participating in Global events as Slum Dwellers International (SDI) representatives

- SANTA FE INSTITUTE 13-17 JUNE 2013, CAPE TOWN



CONCEPT OF DISRUPTIVE CHANGE 13 JUNE 2013, BELLAGIO

- ACHR ACCA MEET 25-29 SEPT 2013 MUMBAI



STDM WORKSHOP 22-25 OCT 2013, PHILIPPINES

- IHPF HOUSING CONFERENCE 13-14 APRIL 2014, HAGUE

## Understanding Poverty and its Dimensions - New Possibilities

### Cities exclude the urban poor in many ways.

- The poor especially slum dwellers are never accurately and completely counted.
- Their needs are never recognized and they are all assumed to have uniformly the same challenges.
- The assessments tool to measure their level of vulnerability is always flawed.
- Resources to address these problems of the poor (when and if allocated) never reach the poor OR solutions are never based on strategies that the poor approve of.
- The poor never have space and resources to design and demonstrate what works for them.

### Accurate disaggregated data about slum dwellers serves several purposes;

- It produces a collective identity and knowledge about themselves and their settlements.
- It produces new identity and new communities and networks.
- Planning, outcome and impact of investments can be assessed.
- Seeking collective priorities based on data is both essential to the federations as well as for advocacy on issues when in dialogue with the city.
- This data helps produce bench marks to assess future progress after solutions are found, and also act as a foundation to explore scaling up the solutions that are being presented.



### IIED: How the poor define poverty?

In collaboration with IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development) and its Human Settlement Program, the Alliance has begun to explore how the poor themselves define, characterize and measure poverty. This has emerged from the realization that national measurements have always been based on definitions given by those who know rural poverty measurements well, and do not appreciate the cash based basket of expenses the urban poor have to pay for.

Besides, the state has always failed in identifying the poorest in cities as the surveys somehow often allow the better off to obtain these poverty cards, and households accept that when there is a competition, community spirit dies.

Within the Alliance there is a deep commitment to separate goods, services and resources that should be universally provided at settlement level to all, such as secure tenure, water, sanitation and basic amenities.

However those with acute or chronic poverty have to be dealt with differently.

There is a plan to link these indicators within the household survey of the Alliance and to use it in intra settlement strategies

### IDS Sussex: how can the poor help explore non financial aspects of poverty?

Consolidating on the poverty assessment there is now another research to sharpen the discussion on poverty by exploring how households describe their situation and circumstances. IDS Sussex (Institute of Development Studies Sussex) in their preliminary research sought to explore how households describe themselves in the three major categories of STRUGGLING, SURVIVING and THRIVING.

The Alliance especially SPARC participates in these explorations as they widen and deepen the non financial perception of the poor themselves to deepen and make more complex the discussion on poverty and address the self imagery of households and settlements in the debate on urban slums and cities.

## How Can Research Influence Policy and Decision Makers

### University of Manchester

The main findings from the five cities are listed below. The findings are based upon the field visits and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders:

- City Development Plans (CDPs), were prepared by consultants who had little knowledge of the city; few linkages between urban infrastructure projects and basic amenities for slum dwellers; water, sanitation and transportation issues were not taken care of. CDPs did not embody any VISION of the city.
- CDPs were prepared without community participation and hence there was a disconnect between project design and community needs.
- Projects were approved on the basis of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), also prepared by consultants. Most often, these consultants had little local knowledge and prepared DPRs on lands that were unavailable.
- One of the key issues is the provision of tenure to slum dwellers. Since most Governments did not have laws or mechanisms to put this in place, they chose to take up projects where people already had tenure or there was vacant and available land. The question then arises as to whether the most vulnerable slums were in fact selected at all.
- External consultants – without local roots – were expected to prepare a list of beneficiaries. The lists prepared were either incomplete (they omitted the genuine) or were incorrect they included the ineligible) resulting in delays and necessitated many revisions to the DPRs.
- In many cities, the concept of upgrading the existing house was taken to mean that it should be torn down and rebuilt in a standard way by contractors. The earlier investment became infructuous and the new product not always acceptable. The approach of ‘One size fits all’ does not work. Standard designs of ground + 3 floors houses do not take into account matters like the availability of land in the different cities.
- In many cities, houses have been built at locations with little or no transport, amenities and/or infrastructure and hence remain unoccupied.
- In the absence of cost escalation clauses and given delays, housing remains incomplete or corners are cut.
- In many cases, people are unaware that the projects were, in fact, for them and they are also unaware of their financial liabilities. The impact upon livelihoods and home-based work was not considered.
- There are serious limitations of capacity at the level of the Urban Local Body (ULB) which is meant to implement the project.



### Influencing policy elite on issues of the poor

This study is part of a larger study by the University of Manchester that seeks to examine specific local issues and challenges linked to poverty and to examine what can influence the elite who make policy. The assumption is that rarely do the elite discuss or debate this with the poor, even rarer is there real monitoring and course corrections and capacity building to design and execute projects are rarely part of the announcements of anti-poor financial and policy pronouncements.

The Alliance is very deeply involved in such matters as its advocacy seeks to embed innovations and possibilities developed by the poor to influence the policy making. This research also facilitates debate within the organization to sharpen and reduce time frames for effective advocacy for the inclusion of what the poor want and need in such policy drafting and execution.



SHARIFNAGAR, PATNA

## Section III: Reflections

# Research, Studies and Documentation

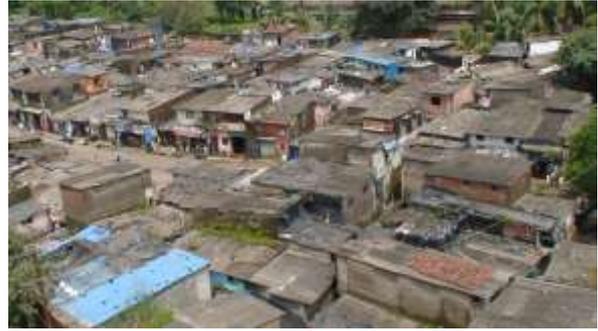
NAME	YEAR	TYPE	SUBJECT	COLLABORATOR
Study on the Organization's History	2009-2010	Book	A history of SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan	SPARC-Equal in Rights (a Dutch NGO)
Incremental Upgrading	2010 - Ongoing	Book	Study on Incremental Upgrading.	SPARC
Apna Street	2010	Book	Apna Street – a book by Julian Crandall Hollick in collaboration with SPARC on the life of Pavement Dwellers.	SPARC
Re-Dharavi	2011	Publication	Re-Interpreting, Re-Imagining and RE-Development.	SPARC-KRVIA
Cuttack Book on Data Collection	2011 – Ongoing	Publication	On the process of data collection for design and proposed house and settlement designs in Cuttack	SPARC
BSUP -11 Cities Review	2011	Report	BSUP -11 Cities Review Report	SPARC-NTAG
Sanitation Analysis	2011	Report (In-house)	Impact of sanitation facilities on diarrhea in infants	SPARC
Victims or Warriors	2011	Document	Victims or Warriors: Transformation for Human Rights - Implications of slum dwellers especially women being organized and working on their habitat and basic amenities	SPARC
Unintended Consequences	2012	Report	Unintended Consequences Report on post-relocation changes in rehabilitation projects by SSNS.	SPARC
Procurement Guidelines	2012		Compilation of the limitation of current procurement guidelines for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs).	SPARC
Lessons in Empowerment from Urban Odisha	2013	Report	Insights and experiences of the UDRC-SPARC Alliance.	SPARC
Integrating Land Governance into the post 2015 Agenda	2014	Report	Prepared for presentation at the “2014 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty” to describe how community managed data collection can produce secure tenure for slum dwellers while ensuring effective resettlement of households to make way for the implementation of large scale redevelopment programs.	SPARC
Poverty & Vulnerability Study	2010-2012	Report/Paper		SPARC
Inclusive Cities	2013-Ongoing		Understanding reasons to account for the specific nature and impacts of state interventions to reduce urban poverty in India and the influence of civil society on such interventions, through a study of government programmes including the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission in five cities.	SPARC-IIED
Gendered Spaces	2013		A Socio-Spatial Study in the Informal Settlement of Dharavi in Mumbai.	SPARC/Sweden
Ongoing		Website	SPARC, SPARC NIRMAN website.	
Ongoing		Blog	City watch is a blog for Alliance activities	

## The Ongoing Challenge of Relating to the State

Since we live in a global community concerned with development goals, and increasingly, numbers from the benchmark of whether change is occurring and transforming people's lives, SCALE of intervention has become very critical. How do social movements and civil society address this issue? Based on our reflections and discussions on this issue centered on our work and project linked experience, we believe that:

- The numbers of individuals and households whose lives have to change is very large. They live in different geographical and cultural contexts and often the only commonality is their unequal access to what produces their poverty and vulnerability. For impact to happen they have to participate in the transformation necessary to change their lives; this only gets celebrated when they feel they are part of a large movement where many others share their aspirations. In an increasingly urban world, the networks of slum dwellers or those in informal livelihood stem from major groupings. Traditionally, rural landless workers, tribal and indigenous communities, and many others similarly formed movements to address inequity that smaller groups could not address.
- The formulation of institutional forms that facilitate communication, a sense of membership, of creating opportunity to learn and to have a voice are all critical in the formulation of this critical mass of people. This requires time and patience. In a globalizing world, these institutions have to have a local, national, regional and global identity and a capacity to engage other actors. Today, development investments rarely acknowledge the power of this process although their capacities to produce outputs that are measurable are quickly capitalized. So the challenge is who and how are these aggregations of vulnerable going to be produced and nurtured?
- Solutions emerge from co-production and have to be robust; solutions have never started with being PERFECT. How will the crucibles to experiment and negotiate the test occur? Who will support and legitimize this? Who will develop levels of scalability and its adaptability to different locations and the wide spectrum of challenges it will face to truly fulfill a global or universal goal? Many goals have not been properly achieved, measured and even formulated considering the wide variation of outputs that are essential to serve diverse realities.

The Indian Alliance and SDI represent the crucible through which these explorations have been occurring, yet their processes have not been understood, and their potential have yet to be explored.



## Reflecting on 30 Years since SPARC Began

### What we started with

When SPARC was conceived, for us as founders, there was a deep commitment towards exploring institutional arrangements that would allow us as professionals in the development arena to work in partnership with communities of the urban poor.

We had some ideas on how to work with the communities and we sought to build knowledge and capacity within communities of the urban poor but at that time we had no planned strategy of how to do that.

Participation of the poor in processes often requires relinquishing of power by professionals and they have to change the forms of strategies to explore new alternatives and options.

We sought to ensure that women would be in the center of the processes but had no clear vision of how this would play out in our association with the NSDF.

We always wanted to engage with the State and from the beginning we believed that we did not want to encourage self help from within the communities only, but also to demand notice from the state and ensure that it paid attention to the needs and aspirations of the urban poor.

We had dreams of setting precedents and devising new ways of solving problems for the poor, but had not yet visualized a clear path to actualize it.

After we began working with the women in slums, before long they wanted to focus on secure tenure and basic amenities; issues about which we knew next to nothing.



### What has changed and what remains the same

Today, the process that we visualized has been validated and our Alliance with NSDF and Mahila Milan further substantiates these possibilities. Yet we had not envisaged the range of activities we would be undertaking over the years nor the extent of the outreach the process would have.

The process of building a strategy based on data emerged from a chance decision to undertake a survey, savings were started so as to demonstrate that the poor could plan for their future and the creation of the federation model as a means to trigger a social movement was most unplanned.

Actually, living with the spirit of real participation with which the poor drive the process and yet retaining a spirit of partnership is tough for professionals. We have lost many partner NGOs and talented staff who could not deal with this reality.

Yet partnership and participation means discussions, arguments and occasionally long fights to produce solutions that work for the partnership without SPARC behaving like just a back stop and a secretariat for the communities.

We knew we had picked a tough path and yet we had never considered how long a time it would take to produce tangible results.

The Alliance now has a clear strategy on how the poor get access to habitat and shelter. Today, NSDF and Mahila Milan lead the movement of the urban poor and have appropriated leadership roles and functions that SPARC played in the early years. This has created a new challenge for SPARC to find new roles and functions for itself.

As we reach thirty years, clearly, we have entered the third phase of our Alliance. In the first phase we developed content, a strategy for federation building and the terms of our engagement. In the second phase, we developed a global alliance with others like us and set up SDI which demonstrates how the poor can create a local to global continuum and lobby globally to produce local benefits. Through local and global explorations, many partnerships and many possibilities were explored.

At the end of three decades, we face new challenges and are looking at several questions. Do we continue to have an appetite for risks? Do we still have major issues that have to be explored together? Have our roles and functions changed? How should the founding leadership move to create spaces for the next generation?

## What the Future Vision Could Possibly Be

The 21st century is clearly an urban century. Local, national, and global governance systems have to face the fact that more people are living and working in urban settings than ever before. However, the global development apparatus, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations and philanthropists, academics and CSOs have yet to accommodate this reality. For example, the legal frameworks that guide our courts, and justice systems in general, have yet to address the challenges that urbanization poses in terms of rights to property, voice, and dignity. Urbanization is in the process of transforming the basic aspects of social organization. The question is whether these changes will produce peaceful and dignified co-existence, or a chronic war of attrition between what can be termed the formal and informal parts of the city. In most cities in the global South, a significant proportion of the population lives in informal settlements, that have grown and expanded outside any formal system, for example, land-use regulations and building codes. Many such settlements also occupy the land illegally.

The proportion of city populations living in such settlements is often over 20% and can reach up to 70-80% in some cities. Most settlements lack basic infrastructure such as paved roads and footpaths, piped water supplies, provision for sanitation and drainage and often schools and health care. In addition, in most cities, a high proportion of the economically active population earn incomes in the informal economy, that operates outside of government rules and regulations, for instance small unlicensed manufacturing units, vendors, informal markets and service providers (many of whom spring up because of the inadequacies in formal provision). But the formal city also depends on these informal service providers.

Those who live in legal homes and undertake legal jobs rely on this informal economy that provides them with maids, drivers, cooks and a range of services. City economies depend on the informal economy for labor and for many goods and services. Much of the construction in cities draws on informally employed construction workers. Yet most of those earning a living in the informal economy receive incomes that are inadequate in relation to the cost of food and other basic needs. In many cities such divisions have co-existed for a long time.

Indeed, perhaps almost all cities have relied on informal workers. But as cities grow and the formal parts of cities need more spaces for business, homes and infrastructure, clashes and conflicts have increased. This contribution is informed by the experience of the past two decades of federations of 'slum' or shack dwellers or homeless people that are now active in 33 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These city and national federations came together to form the Shack/ Slum Dwellers International (SDI) network. Similar social movements on habitat and livelihoods have also sprung up in the global South, in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The formation of such networks reflects at least, in part, the inability of development agencies to incorporate the needs and aspirations of urban poor people into the development agenda.



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