

## **Title: Community driven provision of Universal sanitation in Cities in India<sup>1</sup>:**

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### **I. Introductions**

1. This presentation seeks to reflect on the series of opportunities that have emerged within Indian cities in the last five years. While it has worked in close partnerships with a wide spectrum of partners, SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF who are the presenters and case study writers reflect and make statements on our own behalves on perceptions as viewed by the organizations making the presentations. So while we have very strong linkages with both government and municipal institutions, and other private and public sector organizations, whose commitment to work with us has made this a powerful exploration of bringing changes into the city, this is the way we look at the changes.
2. To the poor in cities and the Ngos that work in partnership with them, the two Habitat Conferences have been vital in bringing the issues that the urban poor face on the global agenda. In Vancouver, there was the vital and necessary acknowledgement of the role and contribution of non state actors in the provision of shelter, and the need to focus on issues of participation as a vital element of addressing survival needs in which habitat was a foundation. In Istanbul, the most strong message that emerged was that there was a global exploration for decentralization, in which cities which were to house more and more of the world's population needed to be equipped to address the Habitat issues and needed to be brought in the center of the development process.

It also created a language about the reality of increasing informal settlements in urban centers. The need to see cities as engines of growth and transformation globally, and the need for National governments to hand over local development investment to cities, and explore its investments in development through local multi stakeholder partnerships. Clearly evident in all the discourse was the priority to address issues of ensuring security for habitat and provision of basic amenities was vital to both the city and the survival of the poor in these cities.

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3. We share a little about ourselves as a national and international alliance because we see the public acceptance of this process also coming more strongly in the past five years. It might be worthwhile to examine both the nature of this association and the Habitat Agenda's presence that created additional space for organizations of the poor to explore partnerships with cities and other stakeholders in cities. SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF are an alliance of three organizations, which operate in about 40 cities in 6 states of India. This partnership between an NGO (SPARC) and two people's organizations (Mahila Milan and NSDF) reflects the ingredients in long term relationships. We have perceived this to be vital to begin to create space for the poor in cities to work with other civil society institutions, private and public sector organizations and the three tiers of government in cities in India (National Government State provincial government and Municipal Corporation or councils). This alliance was started in 1986 and has presently continued to grow and expand nationally while extending its linkages with ACHR in Asia and through SDI in Asia and Africa. What these peer linkages and associations with others in countries who face the same situation of addressing the issues of being poor in cities. Our peer exchanges have shown us is that while there are many political, social and cultural differences that arise out of our countries, we face similar issues of lack of security in cities, lack of basic amenities, and lack of resources for managing to bring transformation in our lives.

The experience over the last two decades has also helped us to demonstrate that sustained mass movements of the poor have to educate and organize themselves internally while exploring partnerships with the city and others externally. It is absolutely vital that partnership does not merely mean "being consulted" or agreeing to what others do in your name. It means instead that communities, that communities bring into a multi stakeholder relationship, certain vital elements and ingredients that other members cannot and that makes them essential to the solution. It is important that organizations of the poor redefine the meaning of the word participation to be more than being consumers of development. This has meant that in order to become vital members of the transformation of cities, communities of informal settlements have had to create a large enough number of groupings to first agree on the priorities they have internally. There has been a need to create institutional arrangements that ensure that the solution they represent is acceptable to all inside this association. And it has been vital that they participate in the solution itself, which means they need a wide array of skills to manage and execute the activities within the solutions developed through these partnerships.

IN short our experience seems to indicate that there is a possible strategy to create expanding associations, organizations federations of the informal

settlements. It is possible to build their institutional capacity to drive development in which they sit on the drivers seat with the city administration and seek support, assistance and create solutions which work for the interest of the larger city and also for the poor. And most vital of all, once one group begins this exploration, many others linked into this process through the networks can watch and learn how this moves so that they begin to see these possibilities. Later they can be assisted and helped in their own process by those who have already undertaken it. These are the basic peer learning principles which form the glue in the local national and international networks of the urban poor that we participation. We mention these briefly in this presentation because we wish to acknowledge that the space to explore these partnerships to seek financial assistance to explore these educational and capacity building networks emerged from the Habitat Agenda. Our countries accepted this and consequently by the various agencies who assist the NGO and CBO sectors internationally and nationally. As a result of our own initial investment in this process and the exploration of those who work with us, locally nationally and internationally, we began to get additional space to explore this new set of partnerships.

## **2. The Presentation of the story:**

4. The presentation revolves around the partnerships which are primarily between the alliance of SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF with three Municipal Corporation two of which are in Maharashtra which are the cities of Mumbai and Pune, and one which is in Karnataka which is Bangalore. While the main activity of this engagement is the provision of minimum sanitation to the informal settlement dwellers, it becomes a vitally exciting story. This is both in what it explores in the relationship between the Municipal Corporation and the communities federated by the alliance, but also because it is a starting point to many other relationships which had to be undertaken to actualize the outcomes required for its success. At another level, the provision of universal sanitation can be viewed as a starting point for the exploration of many other issues in which the Municipal Corporation and the communities can explore joint ventures.

Between 1984 and 1996, SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF have worked in 32 cities in which communities of the poor living in informal settlements have been federated and began to set their priorities about what issues they sought to work on. Clearly the issue of security for their homes and basic amenities was their priority agenda. Yet as we began to examine how we imagined the delivery of these vital resources, we saw that we expected the city government and the state to “deliver” it to us. Yet the evidence was that this was not happening. At which point we made what we consider our most important choice. We either continued to agitate and demand that the state deliver these vital resources to us, or we begin to examine why this delivery was not occurring and begin an exploration of whether we could play a more active role in this change that we so wanted.

IN the countless meetings and local national and international conventions in which we participated as SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF along with other poor communities we began to explore why the poor don't have access to these vital survival needs of water, sanitation and other basic amenities. Our explorations helped us put what was happening to us and around us into a simple observation. That the urban poor, although a vital and essential part of the city both economically and politically were invisible. This invisibility was a result of decades of neglect about the rapid urbanization in our countries as a result of which many rural communities migrated to cities of their survival. Yet most development planning and resource allocations saw this migration as temporary and continued to make investments in rural sectors in the hope that this would stem migration.

This perspective more than any other has curbed investments in addressing the issues of the poor in cities. Policy makers and planners in national and international developmental circles even today continue to treat rural verses urban as choices for development investments rather than seeing this as a continuum of habitation directed by the global economic choices that are impacting all of us today. Individual and community groups make choices to relocate based on social economic and political considerations and many of them have linkages to what is happening world wide. **We are moving into an millenium in which more and more people will live in urban environments.**

Our reflections also began to show that in this changing world, the relationships between the national and local governments were changing rapidly. The very city, which was so hostile to the poor and constantly, created the dread of evictions in the minds of the poor. It was now to be the agency, which was to be in charge of delivery of all services, and resources to the poor and to the city as the National agenda for decentralization took place. Yet cities themselves were struggling to explore their relationships with provisional and National Governments. They also have a strong bias against working with issues of the urban poor created by other groups in Civil society who continue to ignore the relationship between the poor and the upper income groups. Almost all the Municipal Corporations were facing problems in delivering services. They were constantly being presented with choices to privatize these services because evaluations indicated that the costs of delivery by the Municipal Corporation were too high, the outreach was very poor and this detracted the Municipal Corporation from doing its city management task.

Communities on the other hand had no capacities or organizational ability to make demands on what kinds of changes they sought, simply because their past activism was to make demands on the city and state, not to demand for participation in the design of the solution. Many strategies designed by

professionals for the poor lacked vital ingredients to make them sustainable, economically viable and scalable. Yet the lack of its own experience limited the ability of the poor to demand changes, to seek a more active and central role and to seek to drive the solutions. The solutions clearly lay in DOING many things concurrently. One such area of our work was to address what the communities of the poor needed in the area of sanitation. Sanitation remains the most strategic of all areas of our intervention, and one which is first among all the various requirements of the poor that cities have begun to respond. It is possible that this is because almost everyone in the city rich or poor has begun to acknowledge that health and hygiene in the whole city is dependent on how cities manage human waste. It is in the interest of the poor and the others in the city to ensure universal sanitation to all.

Our strategy had three dimensions.

- a. To heighten the debate within the federated communities.
- b. To examine what is the status of sanitation in the cities we work in and establish a dialogue with the cities ready to begin this discussion with us.
- c. To seek to change the very paradigm of sanitation delivery through changing roles and relationships and make organizational investments in this process.

Within communities this began by seeking to encourage communities to construct design and manage their sanitation and taken on pilot projects to demonstrate to the government and to Municipal Corporation that

- a. Universal sanitation is critical for both issues of equity health and management of cities.
  - b. That such a process of creating sanitation strategy without involving communities of the poor was a waste of money.
  - c. That poor people have solutions which the state has not even thought about.
5. Between 1992-95 pilot projects financed by many grants assisted communities of the poor to begin to shape this new process. Communities began to seek a dialogue with the municipalities to construct toilets “at their own costs” in their own neighborhood.
- This helped the conceptual design of how community toilets, which provide the initial minimum sanitation, needs of the poor get refined and develop. It also assisted the local leadership to go to their Municipal Corporation as “equals” and not supplicants seeking favors.
  - It was training exercise to design manage and execute construction which communities wanted to manage since their observation was that “others” who were construction contractors paid by the city often did not do a very good job. It provided them an opportunity to compare what they produced in a certain amount of money with what others produced. Clearly theirs was a superior product.

- Their dialogue with cities began to help them understand the crisis of finances that cities faced.... Many cities had a mix of budgetary and subsidy provisions for covering capital cost of construction but not the money to cover recurring costs of maintenance. Since communities (in any case were unhappy with the lack of accountability of the municipal financed arrangements for maintenance) this helped explore the solution in which this cost burden was shared between the city and the communities of the poor.
- As the demands from many cities and their federations increased there was a gap between the ability of cities to start working with communities. This came from lack of procedural arrangements within the guiding norms of the Municipal Corporation which in turn lead the alliance to seek financial support from other actors to sustain the momentum of practice. We found that similar discussions were also occurring among the various development agencies locally and internationally. Whether it was UNCHS World Bank UNDP as multi-laterals, or DFID and others as Bilateral agencies, and our own national institutions HUDCO, HSMI NIUA and ministries dealing with this subject, the issues of balancing sustainable strategies, costs and delivery at scale were every agencies' preoccupation. Now the organizations of the poor had something to contribute to this debate other than just being a consumer whose willingness to pay was signal of participation.

Between 1995-and 1997 the language of participation and involvement of the poor, the need to be vital stakeholders was clearly in the discussions but the process continued to elude us. There was a quality of the unknown in exploring a partnership with the poor and their organizations. Its hard to make a choice in which most outcomes are not demonstrable at least at scale. But three Municipal Corporations have actually taken that leap and begun this exploration.<sup>2</sup>

Discussion with Pune, Bangalore and Mumbai all major metropolitan cities began in 1997-98, and discussion of creating partnerships between the city and community with support from state governments began. Today as this report gets written, all three cities have a partnership with SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF to provide universal sanitation to informal settlements. Each

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<sup>2</sup> **Partners**

Name, address, contact person and type of organization of partner organizations.

1. National Slum dwellers federation (CBO): A Jockin
2. Mahila Milan CBO Celine D'cruz
3. Municipal Corporation of Mumbai: Mr Shrivastava Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Subhodh Kumar Mr Gautam Chatterjee Additional Commissioners in charge of the project, presently, and Mr Ranganathan, Mr Anupan Dasgupta, Mr Rahul Asthana, who have been involved in the past.
4. Municipal Corporation Pune, Mr Gaikwad , Capt Deshpande, Mr. Benjamin ( the three Municipal Commissioners who have been associated with this process)
5. Municipal Corporation Bangalore Mr Shantanu Caunsul
6. Government of Maharashtra Mr Ranganathan, Chief Secretary of Maharashtra
7. Government of Karnataka
8. World Bank (Water and Sanitation Division ) for Mumbai sanitation. Mr Shymal Sarkar Team leader.
9. UTI Bank (for Bombay sanitation) Dr Nayak, President of UTI Bank.
10. HUDCO CMD Mr Suresh.
11. Homeless International UK,
12. Selavip (Japan),

city has developed a different financial strategy to manage financial resources, however the fact that communities and NGO design and manage construction is universal to all.

IN PUNE, the federation costs the project, city pays for the capital costs, and communities take over the management and maintenance. The finances for the capital costs are shared by the subsidies from Government of India, Government of Maharashtra and balance comes from city budgets. And this paper acknowledges the ingenuity of administrative management in designing this to the Municipal Commissioners in Pune and the government of Maharashtra to have supported this. In Pune many Ngos have been invited to take on contracts provided they fulfill some criterion at costs agreed upon by the Corporation. SPARC Mahila Milan and NSDF is one of these many NGOs but can take the credit of initiating this exploration and demonstrating projects in the city to show it is possible. By June 2001 all the slums in Pune will have basic sanitation.

IN MUMBAI: the first phase of 320 blocks are financed by the Municipal Corporation or Mumbai through a project known as Mumbai Sewerage Disposal Project (This is a small part of a larger World Bank loan to upgrade the sewerage and sewerage disposal treatment). This represents only one third of the total requirement of the city's informal settlements. However the policies and strategies designed for these toilets will form the basis for the long term sanitation strategy. The Municipal Corporation and the World Bank had to change its entire tendering strategies and procurement systems to create an equal playing field for NGOs to compete for construction of toilets in this project against contractors. SPARC NSDF and Mahila Milan, which have refused to tender in the past, agreed to compete because of this changing process. Yet it has meant seeking financial assistance in the forms of Bank Guarantees that almost all Banks we know having no experience in giving to NGOs for such a task. UTI Bank, a private bank has taken such a step to explore this possibility as its own exploration of new possibilities. Homeless International and Selavip are two NGOs which have taken a very keen interest in the explorations of the alliance to participate in construction and have begun to provide support in the form of counter guarantees to the banks. This project has also forced local communities, Municipal Corporation staff, elected representatives of the various areas where construction is proceeding and the alliance to explore new partnerships to deliver 6400 seats in 320 blocks in 20 wards of the city in a period of a year ending October 2001. There are clear indications that this strategy will be scaled up on the basis of this experience within the city.

IN BANGALORE: The growth of the city and its expanding image as a world city with a huge software industry has required the city to undertake many of projects one of which is improving the situation of informal settlements. As a result of many years of exploring partnership options, a tentative start has

been made. In the discussions with the Municipal Corporation it began to get clear that the cost of the projects as estimated by Municipal Corporation exceed more than twice of what the community estimates its costs of construction.<sup>3</sup> Thereby a interesting formulation has emerged. The municipality makes estimates of what it would have cost them to construct toilets, and nay community infrastructure that the alliance can take up. It will pay the SPARC Mahila Milan NSDF alliance half of that amount. This costs contribute to all the out of pocket costs that the federation needs for the construction, and its supervision management and maintenance investments is what equals their contribution to the city. All training and capacity building in this first level will be subsided through grants. But gradually will be incorporated in the project design in future scaling up.

<sup>3</sup> **Type of Partner involvement**

For each Partner, specify the principal type of involvement (Financial, Technical, Political, Administrative, etc...)

National Slum dwellers federation (CBO): A Jockin	Financial Political, Administrative
Mahila Milan CBO Celine D'cruz	Financial Political, Administrative
Municipal Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Mumbai: Mr Shrivastava Mr. Subhodh Kumar Mr Gautam Chatterjee Additional Commissioners in charge of the project.	Financial Technical
Government of Maharashtra Mr Ranganathan, Chief Secretary of Maharashtra	Political, Administrative
World Bank ( Water and Sanitation Division ) for Mumbai sanitation .Mr Shymal Sarkar Team leaders	Financial Technical
UTI Bank ( for Bombay sanitation) Dr Nayak, President of UTI Bank	Financial
Municipal Corporation Bangalore Mr Shantanu Caunsul	Financial Political, Administrative Technical
Government of Karnataka	Financial Political, Administrative
Municipal Corporation Pune, Mr Gaikwad , Capt Deshpande	Financial Technical Political, Administrative
HUDCO CMD Mr Suresh.	Financial Technical
Homeless International UK, Selavip Japan	Financial

**Financial Sources**

**In Bombay :** The slum sanitation project of 440 million rupees comes from the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai which in turn has taken a loan from the World Bank . SPARC has taken a guarantee from UTI Bank of 15% to execute the project, and HI will give a counter guarantee to UTI.

**In Bangalore:** The Municipality and the state governments slum board will estimate costs of sanitation and will contribute half of that to the projects. The other half will be contributions of local community groups and the federations in Bangalore with assistance from SPARC NSDF and Mahila Milan . HUDCO acts as a conduit for state subsidies. Bridge funding from Hi and Selavip

**In Pune:** Municipal Corporation pays for the entire construction, of which one third is its own contribution, the government of Maharashtra pays one third and the central government through HUDCO pays it the other one third. However this economics works because the costs of construction by communities itself is almost half that of the contractor would have taken. So it's affordable to the Municipal Corporation . SPARC 's bridge revolving fund financed this project, and training for managing infrastructure came from a HI and Selavip.

### **3. Our reflections and conclusions:**

6. There are several impacts of this already huge scaling up: Let us examine this from a wide range of lenses or perspectives:
  - a. Smaller towns and cities are beginning to explore these possibilities. With three major cities adopting different approaches, they can choose any. Since in both States, the State governments have to be associated in agreeing to explore this possibility, it has made this range of options to be examined by other cities and towns in the state. While not all of them either want to work with the alliance directly ( we ourselves cannot service everything either) we find that it has opened spaces for such partnerships and we can assist through encouraging Municipal Corporation and community groups to come for visits and learn from their counterparts what they can do to get into such partnerships.
  - b. As community leadership and Municipal Corporation work together this is almost automatically focusing issues of tenure and other basic services and already there is discussion about looking at other tenure and upgrading issues. In many of the instances in the past... this relationship between the poor and managers of the city did not exist .yet when you begin to work in one area, it begins to lead to opportunities to explore the process in other areas. Now similar explorations for other amenities, credit and land tenure have begin.
  - c. Many bilateral and NGO donors are looking at this as a strategic intervention and in some cities which have not been able to finance projects some bilateral involvement seems possible. This discourse is seeking to look at how this work we do can be adapted. In one instance to work in areas where either the alliance can assist such relationships between other actors similar to the ones we see as vital for this partnership. In other instances, such a range of groups comprising of parallel stakeholders have begun to come and see what they can do in their situation using this inspirational process.
  - d. In a paradoxical way, sanitation has become a demonstrable governance issue, and one, which captures the involvement and participation of all in cities in a manner that other issues don't.
    - It requires the need to “govern” to be actualized in the form of provision of a amenity that is universally acceptable and needed for the health of the poor and the city.
    - By that very fact it means that you have to accept the presence of a large number of people you did not want to accept as citizens and to whom this service was denied because they were treated as non citizens by default.

- It required a transparency of how resources are procured how they get allocated and how they are monitored by the Municipal Corporation.
  - By allowing communities to participate centrally it creates greater depth to the ability of the city to create space for the poor to participate as citizens and make vital contributions to the city's projects.
  - Addressing issues of equity, arbitrating between the needs and demands of the various groups in civil society is a vital governance function, which the local governments have to actualize as their governance indicator. This is demonstrated nowhere else than in the sanitation agenda.
- e. By taking on construction, its management and maintenance, communities of the poor are getting trained in employment and seeking opportunities that were close to them in the past. By present theories of development of past, creating dual agendas in addressing urban poverty require creation of new opportunities of emplacements and skills on the other and opening up more spaces for participation of the poor in workings of the city. In seeing the delivery of services to the poor who represent half of the city's population, as a market that can absorb the skills and capacity of the poor, three issues are addressed. First the poor actually participate in creating accountable services to their constituency. Good quality assets from development investments are made and communities know who has created them and can demand quality (which they begin to understand the ingredients of). Secondly, since this is an area in which there are many local negotiations which external agencies can rarely undertake, communities use their real advantage of being the very group which needs the services to work out win-win solutions internally. In turn this very competence makes them bring in a very valuable contribution to the partnership with cities that is hard to substitute. Thirdly, when community members get paid for working in such jobs, there is greater circulation of money in the communities. More importantly the exposure to institutions hitherto feared and unknown increases confidence and articulation which in themselves are inhibitors of citizenship participation.
7. One of the most exciting discoveries in this process has been the realization that the issue in discussion is not about whether this is the perfect or only solution to the problems of sanitation in slums. It is not an announcement of discovery of a new one-shot solution either or that we are the only messiahs able to deliver this new panacea for all development ailments. Instead we see this experience as having occurred at a time when almost all development actors are seeking new ways of working together. Each one of us has to get out of the paradigm in which we operated traditionally (whatever it may be and who

ever we are) . We all need to develop new perspectives and new visions to acknowledge that no city problem is going to be solved by any one of the actors.... however powerful, well resources and strong we may be. Each of us in our own way have a piece of the jigsaw puzzle that solved the problem and we need new ways to explore how we can fit it together. Traditional adversarial actors now need to work together and engage in exploring each others roles strengths and weaknesses and bridge the divide of hostility, resentment anger and suspicion with new forms of partnerships which replace these traits with confidence in complimentary strengths.

International events such as Habitat + 5 and stock taking by an assembly of nations at the UN. By undertaking to bridge this local and global divide play a vital role of creating both space and opportunity to build these new relationships by placing them high on the agenda of all the member countries, and other non governmental institutions.

Sanitation and through that access to basic amenities and a secure place to stay are vital ingredients for all in cities. By creating a positive environment for the delivery of this through Municipal Corporation there are local and international signals that acknowledge that while we make our cities the engines of economic growth, and encourage trade and global markets to inhabit that space. We need to accept very early on that inclusion into cities of all people who live in cities is vital for the peace and collaborative existence needed for this economic growth and financial investment to come in. Equity and inclusions of diversity in cities create peace without which no investment comes into cities. Making proactive choices to create this atmosphere in cities creates win win solutions that work for the city and for its poorer citizens.