



# Jockin has not left the room

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JOCKIN ARPUTHAM (1946 - 2018)

With thoughts on Jockin and the things he taught us from: Father Jorge Anzorena • Arjun Appadurai • Mikael Atterhög • Srilatha Batliwala • Evelyn Benekane • Erik Berg • Joel Bolnick • Somsook Boonyabancha • Robert Buckley • Sundar Burra • Gautam Chatterjee • Beth Chitekwe-Biti • Joan Clos • William Cobbett • Celine d'Cruz • Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara • André Folganes Franco • Arif Hasan • Chris Hoban • Rajiv Jalota • Thomas Kerr • Inês Magalhães • Jack Makau • Jean Pierre Elong M'bassi • Ruth McLeod • Rose Molokoane • Joseph Muturi • Sarah Nandudu • Tim Ndezi • Pär Pärsson • Sheela Patel • Shirish B. Patel • Anacláudia Rossbach • David Satterthwaite • Alex Silva • Lindiwe Sisulu • Rajesh Tandon • Jane Weru

**sdi.**

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## **Acronyms**

ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
BMC	Bombay Municipal Corporation
BUILD	Bombay Urban Industrial League for Development
CCI	Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI), Tanzania
CLIFF	Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility
CODI	Community Organizations Development Institute, Thailand
DAE	Department of Atomic Energy, India
DFID	UK Department for International Development
FEDUP	South African Federation of the Urban Poor
HDFC	Housing Development Finance Corporation
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
MUTP II	Mumbai Urban Transport Project II
NDZ	No development zone
NGO	Non-governmental organisation (or, according to Jockin, <i>Not Grassroots Organisation</i> )
NSDF	National Slum Dwellers Federation
OPP	Orangi Pilot Project
PMGP	Prime Minister's Grant Project
RSDF	Railway Slum Dwellers Federation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres
SRA	Slum Rehabilitation Authority
SUF	UN Habitat's Slum Upgrading Facility
TFUP	Tanzania Federation of the Urban Poor
UCLG Africa	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements <sup>1</sup>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPDF	Urban Poor Development Fund, Phnom Penh
UTI	Unit Trust of India

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<sup>1</sup> In January 2002, its name changed to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introducing this book and how it is structured

*Joel Bolnick, Sheela Patel and David Satterthwaite*

**Jockin Arputham died on 13 October 2018.** A slum leader who redefined the role of slum/shack dwellers first in Mumbai, then in India and then globally. Founder of the first National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and one of the founders of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI). For more than 50 years, Jockin had sought to ensure that the residents of slums/informal settlements and their organisations were at the centre of designing and implementing solutions. In 2014, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, alongside SDI.

**But Jockin has not left the room...** because his incredible gift to us, the federation approach, lives on.<sup>2</sup> His vision of giving voice and a seat at the development table to all the urban poor needs to continue guiding us all.

This approach supports community-managed savings groups all over a city, formed and managed mostly by women to address immediate needs. These savings groups create federations to learn from each other, support each other and help develop responses to larger city issues – with national federations, and with SDI at a global level, supporting and learning from all the savings group-led initiatives. It has been able to support many federations working at scale, sometimes alone but in most cases in hard-fought partnerships with local governments.

There are also all the strategies, tools and methods Jockin developed with women and their communities, around issues that mattered most to them. They are increasingly available to all, so that now they are being used in hundreds of cities in over 30 nations. This approach, pioneered by Jockin, has begun to transform the way that the governments in many of these cities view 'slum'/shack dwellers. It has also transformed slum/shack dwellers, who

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<sup>2</sup> For more details on the federation approach, see Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 1: *Jockin has not left the room*.

have become organised and ready to struggle for and then to work in partnership with local government agencies on a growing range and scale of different initiatives.

This book brings together memories of Jockin from a large and diverse range of people. We encouraged contributors to include stories of working with him and reflections on what he taught them (and he did teach all of us). But the contributions do more than this – they contribute to a deeper and more detailed documentation of Jockin and the slum/shack dweller federations. They fill some spaces in our understanding of Jockin and the momentous social and political changes he drove and inspired.

How do we respond to this legacy? By living and working with his principles and strategies that are described in contributions by Sheela Patel and Celine d’Cruz. Can we prepare regular reports to Jockin on progress within the federations as Joseph Muturi’s contribution does? And keep him in our rooms? As Somsook Boonyabanha notes, ‘Even now, after he has died, when I have some really difficult thinking, or see something happening that disturbs me, I think about him, and carry on those conversations with him in my mind. In this way, I still talk to him, still get inspired by him.’

### The book’s structure

For the reader that does not know much about Jockin and SDI, it may be difficult to make sense of all the stories the contributors tell. To help guide the reader, we have included a timeline, showing Jockin’s work over 50 years and Jockin’s own description of his early life.<sup>3</sup> Box 1 has short descriptions of the key institutions that figure in most of the contributions. Also, throughout the book, there are references to tools and approaches that Jockin developed that are used by all the federations. Brief descriptions are also given of these in Box 2.

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<sup>3</sup> See the timeline in Part 1 and Jockin’s own biography in Part 3: *Developing new approaches for people-centred development*.



## Key institutions

**Mahila Milan:** Meaning ‘women together’, Mahila Milan is the federation of women slum and pavement dwellers’ savings groups in India (see also Box 3).

**NSDF:** The National Slum Dwellers Federation in India that Jockin founded. He was also its president.

**SPARC:** The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres. An Indian non-governmental organisation (NGO) formed to support Mahila Milan and the NSDF.

**The Alliance:** The alliance formed by SPARC, Mahila Milan and NSDF.

**SDI:** Slum/Shack Dwellers International. A global network of community-based organisations and federations of the urban poor that Jockin helped found and was its first president. They are active in 32 countries and hundreds of cities and towns across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each country where SDI has a presence, affiliate organisations come together at the community, city and national level to form federations of the urban poor. These federations share specific methodologies (see Box 2).

After this introduction and Jockin’s timeline in Part 1, Part 2 *On Jockin* begins with Joseph Muturi’s report to Jockin on what has happened in Kenya with the Kenyan Homeless People’s Federation since Jockin’s death. Jockin had worked so closely with the Kenyan Federation and would expect such a report. This is followed by Sheela Patel writing about how Jockin has not left the room.

Part 3 *The history of a grassroots activist* begins with a description by Jockin of his life up to the mid-1980s (the contributions in this book cover Jockin’s work after this period) and how he developed new approaches for fighting evictions and supporting people-centred development. It also has an account by Shirish B Patel on Jockin and the fight to save his home: Janata Colony in Chembur, a suburb of Mumbai, India. Jockin’s efforts delayed the eviction for many years but ultimately could not stop it. The eviction took place in May 1976 just as the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was being

held with governments committing to upgrading – not to eviction. Ironically, Jockin had been invited to this conference to speak about this very issue.

### **Tools and methods used by the federations**

**Precedent-setting projects:** These are initiatives that a federation savings group chooses to design and implement – and uses to show other stakeholders in development, especially local governments and other communities, what they can do. Examples include:

- New design and community-management plans for community toilets
- Community-managed in situ slum upgrading, showing it is possible at high densities with no-one displaced
- Negotiations and hard-bargaining for relocations, where unavoidable, that are acceptable to the households that are affected
- Housing costs reduced through acceptable densification and by having smaller plots, affordable infrastructure development with state financing and incremental house construction
- Cost savings made possible using building materials developed by Mahila Milan and other federations
- Setting up community-driven policing

These not only demonstrate what is possible if government, especially local government, works with the federations but also the kinds of regulatory amendments that are needed to catalyse such innovations in other locations. Each city or state government that accepts (and supports) these sets a new precedent that stimulates other governments and federation groups to try it out.

**Exchange visits:** Local federation teams visit one another and learn from one another's work and then reflect to identify challenges and explorations that produce innovations and successes. Federation members often invite (national and local) politicians and government staff to come with them. Such visits provide a platform from which to explore key issues within a neutral space.

**Mapping, profiling and enumerating informal settlements:** Community-managed enumerations, surveys and maps create the information base needed to plan upgrading interventions. They also serve to mobilise households and informal neighbourhoods. They trigger action and facilitate negotiations with governments and other actors. The 32 national federations have profiled and mapped thousands of informal settlements in over 450 cities.<sup>4</sup>

**House modelling:** This is the creation of a full-size model of a house that has been designed by federation members in ways that meet their needs and fit into their affordabilities and can be developed on a modest plot size. The model house is usually made with a timber frame and cloth walls. It includes internal walls and furniture so different internal configurations can be tried out. They are always constructed in highly visible public spaces. Other federation members, local governments, officials and politicians are always invited to view the model and often to officially inaugurate it. The life-size house models are much clearer and easier to interpret than drawings or architectural designs.

*They explain the logic of the choices made by poor communities for what they want and are explicit in saying what the houses would cost. They facilitate internal agreement and help the negotiations with government agencies.<sup>5</sup>*

Part 4 *Jockin as our teacher and what he taught us* is a collection of contributions from staff from international agencies, national and local governments, academics and NGOs – although accounts of Jockin as teacher are also described in many other contributions, including those from federation leaders in the many countries that Jockin visited.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Byrne, J with Bolnick, J, Dobson, S, Patel, S, Kallergis, A and MacPherson, N (2018) Know your city: slum dwellers count. SDI. <http://bit.ly/2HyX7TB>

<sup>5</sup> See Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 5: *Early innovations of the Indian Alliance triggered by Jockin, 1986–1996*.

<sup>6</sup> See also the contributions by Celine d'Cruz and Sheela Patel on Jockin's strategies, tactics and tools – and their underpinnings of good practice – in Part 4: *How to make the ordinary extraordinary: the practice of community organisation according to Jockin* and Part 5: *Early innovations of the Indian Alliance triggered by Jockin, 1986–1996*.

Part 5 focuses on Jockin working in India, building the alliance, forging links with government and international agencies – for instance, his work with municipal governments to address water and sanitation issues, to manage community-friendly resettlements, to set up community policing structures, and to work with funders and investors. This section includes descriptions of many precedent-setting initiatives such as Mahila Milan savings groups, community-led mapping and the house-modelling exhibitions.

Part 6 describes Jockin’s engagement with the formation and growth of SDI. This starts with Joel Bolnick’s account of Jockin’s first visit to South Africa in 1991 and the strong ties developed between Jockin and the emerging federation in South Africa. Then it describes how SDI was founded to deal with the rapidly growing demand for exchanges and for support for the federations that emerged in many nations. It also describes how SDI developed its role in ensuring that the voice of the federations was heard in international meetings and events.

Part 7 is about Jockin’s adventures beyond India and South Africa, catalysing and supporting federations and the savings groups that are their foundation in Brazil, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and the Philippines. This section has contributions from federation leaders and staff from support NGOs. Jockin’s work with federations or other associations of savings groups in other countries is described in additional contributions – for instance working with the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal and Thailand.<sup>7</sup>

### **What Jockin brought for us: a few words from Mahila Milan leaders**

Below are statements made by three Mahila Milan leaders who were very close to Jockin. Sagira is one of the original Mahila Milan members who lived for many years on the pavement in Dimtimkar Road in Byculla. She is now living in her own “pukka” house in Milan Nagar. Laxmi is one of the original

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<sup>7</sup> See the contributions by Somsook Boonyabanha with Thomas Kerr in Part 4: *Making change happen: lessons and inspiration from my friend Jockin* and Part 6: *Jockin, ACHR and the people’s process in Asia*.

Mahila Milan members who lived on the pavement in Peerkhan Street in Byculla. Phoola Bai is a member of the Mahila Milan Railway Federation. Their contributions here came about from conversations about Jockin and his legacy that were held in 11–12 April 2019.

**Sagira:** Sheela [Patel] told us, ‘Jockin is everyone’s brother. He will work with you.’ She said that she will not always be there, but he will work with you... He came in 1986 and was introduced as ‘*bhai*’. We were all surprised. I myself felt, ‘This man has been put in our midst, how will we talk to him?’ But after a few days, he was like a father and showed us the way.

We learnt a lot [from him]. We didn’t know how to save a single penny. We didn’t know how to talk, didn’t want to go and stand next to anyone, didn’t talk to anyone above us. When he came, we learnt to talk to the police or any officer above us, not to be afraid of anyone – not the *loafer goonda*. We got a lot of strength. We couldn’t save 2 *paisa*, [but] we learnt that. We didn’t know how to open a bank account, but we even did that. We learnt a lot... If there was a problem at home I would go and sit in the office and there Jockin would make us all laugh and forget. All the matters of the house would be forgotten.

**Laxmi:** Sheela introduced us [to Jockin] but everyone began to laugh because he was so small in size. He will do our work! Jockin began to talk to us about what he did in Janata Colony. Padma, Shekhar and others, and how they worked in Janata Colony with children.

He taught us to save. He said that women have ten pockets everywhere and we would laugh. Jockin liked making people laugh and the women would forget their sorrows. We liked that he made us laugh and women would leave their housework to come to the office. We felt, ‘We have a brother who talks so well. We should go sit with him.’ We began saving then. We did not know how to deal with the municipality. He helped us deal with demolitions.

When Jockin *bhai* came, the organisation became bigger. The women became stronger, began saving and wanted to move ahead. Jockin brought people together and showed the whole world a dream, got them a house. This was a dream for the poor. Along with Sheela [Patel] and Celine [d’Cruz]

he did everything. If Sheela had not been there, then Jockin would not have been there and if Jockin had not been there, there would be no Mahila Milan. All three together worked like a family, worked with their hearts. Took no bribes, did not take anyone's bad mouthing to heart. We pushed them away but they stayed with us and the result was a strong organisation. It took us 20 years but that is the work of Mahila Milan.

**Phoola Bai:** [Jockin] sir came and took a place in our hearts, otherwise where would we have been today? It was as though God came and woke us from a sleep [...] We even used to call him *Sai Baba* [an Indian spiritual master]. Whatever he told us we would feel that it is right. So we began to follow the path he showed us. Initially, we didn't even know how to talk. We only knew cooking and washing clothes. But in his company, we learnt how to talk, how to behave with each other.

He said, 'Women can talk better [than men]. They finish their work and can discuss their needs.' So we formed a group. We did not dream of a building but we thought we could build our own home. We are poor but we are not beggars. He opened accounts at the Bank of Baroda for us and we began saving for a house.

I learnt a lot from him. Humanity. Know each other's situation. Talk to others. Help, as far as you can. Share their joys and sorrows. All this and more we learnt from him. All this working for the people I learnt from him. I learnt a lot.

## Stories

When federations meet, they tell stories of what they have done. That is how they share their experiences and reflect on what they have learnt. For international exchanges, this telling of stories somehow manages to circumvent the difficulties of participants speaking different languages. Celine d'Cruz's contribution in Part 4 describes how stories are used in the federations to open the space for collective learning and reflection.

Learning from stories of everyday life is also discussed by other contributors in this book. They include:

- **Evelyn Benekane** on how Jockin supported her group in their engagement with municipal and provincial authorities in South Africa. This helped them secure a 230-hectare parcel of land in Nelson Mandela Metro.
- **Joel Bolnick** describes a conference in South Africa in 1991 where Jockin mobilised housing activists to get organised – the start of the South African Federation and of what was to become SDI.
- **Beth Chitekwe-Biti** on Jockin’s visits to Zimbabwe to encourage and support the nascent Zimbabwe federation and help build ties with a recalcitrant government.
- **Somsook Boonyabancha** on the very first exchange and workshop on savings organised by Jockin and SPARC in 1988 and on Jockin’s support in Cambodia for developing a community-network that became the Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation.
- **Sonia Fadrigo** on how Jockin helped secure national government funding for the Homeless People’s Federation Philippines and opened doors for them at national and local government levels.
- **Chris Hoban** on his visits with Jockin to see community-designed and managed toilets that worked so much better than existing public toilets.
- **Jack Makau** on the difficulties the Kenyan and the Ugandan federations faced in actually doing enumerations and mapping and Jockin’s role in both challenging them and supporting them.
- **Sheela Patel’s** contributions include many stories involving Jockin – for instance on negotiating a community-managed railway resettlement in Mumbai, on developing police *panchayats* and the early innovations of the Indian Alliance triggered by Jockin – including house-model building and seeing the value of Mahila Milan savings and replicating it throughout the movement.
- **Shirish B Patel** on Jockin’s fight to stop the bulldozing of his home Janata Colony.
- **Jane Weru** on Jockin’s support for the Kenyan federation and helping develop positive ties with government.
- **William Cobbett** on the support and leadership Jockin provided for the UN Global Campaign for Secure Tenure.
- **Rajov Jalota** on his time as Additional Commissioner for Water and Sanitation in Mumbai Municipal Authority and its strong and effective partnership with Jockin and the Alliance.

- **Thomas Kerr** on Jockin negotiating for formal housing for those displaced from along the railway tracks.

Many of these stories show Jockin's extraordinary ability to engage very senior politicians and civil servants in many countries and to get them to commit to and support the work of the federations in their countries. He also inspired many senior staff from international agencies, as seen in their contributions to this book.

There is some repetition across different contributions. These were not cut out because they come from different authors and represent different views. *Their stories show that Jockin's gift is still so strongly with us all – above all in the global network of national and city federations that are affiliated to SDI and within their support NGOs, the staff from local, state and national governments, and in international agencies and academic institutions. All are represented in the contributions to this book. By having so many authors, we also get to see Jockin's many different facets – community leader, mobiliser, disrupter, visionary, troublemaker, super-loyal friend, joker, teacher and guru.*



*Jockin speaking with pavement dwellers in Byculla, Mumbai. He conducted a door to door check of their documents that would be needed by the authorities prior to moving into their homes at Milan Nagar in 2006.*



## 1.2 Jockin's timeline

Many of the contributors to this book are mentioned in this timeline and their names are in italics.

1946	Born in Kolar Gold Fields.
1962	Runs away from home and goes to work in Bangalore. Works as a labourer while he learns carpentry.
1963	Moves to Mumbai and settles in Janata Colony but has no home (sleeping in the open).
1963–76	<p>Lives in Janata Colony and works as carpenter/builder with many jobs at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre that was next to Janata.</p> <p>Noticing how children had nothing to do after school, he encourages them to sing, then to have singing competitions. Out of this comes an informal singing school that also helps students do their homework. Initially done in open spaces but later with permanent buildings.</p> <p>To complain about the lack of municipal garbage collection, he organises a children's march to dump uncollected garbage in front of a local municipal office. He organises the scholars to clean public toilets and other local initiatives. Sets up a youth organisation, the National Service Kendra (NSK) ('kendra' meaning a centre).</p> <p>'In 1969, I was still without my own home and was having a bath at the public tap each day.'</p>
1967	The Bhabha Atomic Energy Authority gives notice to the people living in Janata Colony that they should vacate their land, to allow it to expand. No compensation or resettlement is offered.
1967–76	Jockin leads a coalition of many local organisations to fight the proposed eviction. This includes looking into the land tenure status (Janata was actually on land that had been formally allocated to those who settled there after they had been evicted from a more central site). Jockin organises a survey to show how established Janata is, including two churches, five mosques, eight temples, four schools (two run by the Bombay

	<p>Municipal Corporation/BMC), two municipal markets and a police station (also, large numbers of residents were BMC employees or worked in the Department of Atomic Energy complex).<sup>8</sup></p> <p>Jockin is constantly arrested – about 67 times according to his rough estimate.</p>
	Gathers support for no eviction from senior politicians and other public figures.
1971–72	Works with Bangladesh refugees in Kolkata.
1973–76	<p>He fights to save Janata Colony, which generates a lot of international interest.</p> <p>Arranges a meeting with the head of the Bhabha Atomic Energy Commission to see if a compromise could be worked out – but this is refused. Uses the courts to block the eviction order because the Commission has not followed regulations for posting eviction notices.</p>
1974	Gets married and has his own home for the first time.
1975–76	<p>Goes to Delhi to gather political support for Janata. After much delay, gets to see the prime minister, Indira Gandhi. On 25 June 1975, Mrs Gandhi’s government declares a State of Emergency. Jockin goes into hiding to avoid arrest. Janata Colony is evicted but a resettlement site (Cheetah Camp) is negotiated (originally there was to be no resettlement or compensation).<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Jockin had been due to speak at Habitat, the UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1976, but feels that he must stay to help organise the resettlement.</p>
1976–78	Jockin has to leave India under threat of death. Goes to the Philippines to help train community leaders. He is smuggled into South Korea to work with the Jesuits in opposing evictions.
1977	Mrs Gandhi loses the election – state of emergency lifted. Jockin able to return to India.

<sup>8</sup> For more details, see Shirish B Patel’s contribution in Part 3: *Jockin and the fight to save Janata Colony*.

<sup>9</sup> For more details, see the contributions by Shirish B Patel and Celine d’Cruz.

1978	Jockin takes a room in Cheetah Camp but struggles to make a living selling saris. Starts a publication <i>Voice of Slums</i> .
1978–86	Travels all over India – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh – talking about the experience of fighting against eviction for Janata Colony. Facilitates the founding of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) after a meeting he organises for slum leaders and others in Bangalore.
1982	Visits Mexico and Colombia. Helps with a land invasion in Bogota.
1982–83	Jockin is introduced to <i>Sheela Patel</i> who was working in Nagpada Neighbourhood House along with Indian social activist, Prema Gopalan.
1984	December: SPARC is founded and starts working with women living on the pavements of Byculla (Mumbai).
1985	July: SPARC undertakes the “We the Invisible” census of pavement dwellers. October: Jockin comes to the press conference of “We the Invisible” and congratulates SPARC and Sheela for the survey.
1985–86	Jockin sends many NSDF leaders to see how SPARC works with pavement dwellers. In March 1986, at an event celebrating women’s day, Jockin invites SPARC to work with NSDF and commits to working with Mahila Milan which had just been formed by Byculla pavement women’s groups. Pavement dwellers in “We the Invisible” survey are shifted from Dr E Moses Road to Goregaon, Dindoshi, 35km away. SPARC sets up its second Area Resource Centre there. The Alliance is formed by SPARC, Mahila Milan and NSDF, developing their capacity to support community-managed resettlement anchored by savings, enumeration, exchanges, precedent setting projects and negotiations with government agencies.
1986–87	The Alliance negotiates to work on the railway line census for the government of Maharashtra. The Alliance meet UPS Madan, the additional collector of Mumbai in charge of slums.

1987–88	Jockin walks Mahila Milan and SPARC through a strategy to find land for pavement dwellers. This culminates in a house model exhibition in Byculla. (The Alliance and SDI subsequently adopt house model exhibitions as one of their core practices). <sup>10</sup>
	<i>Beyond the Beaten Track</i> <sup>11</sup> is published. It documents the informal settlements that have developed close to the railway tracks. The Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (RSDF) is formed along with RSDF Mahila Milan. These federations make clear recommendations to the state as to how relocation should be done. They adopt the Byculla pavement dwellers' house model from 1987 as a housing prototype. A street children's programme is initiated at Don Bosco School, Byculla.
1987	<i>Father Jorge Anzorena</i> comes to meet SPARC. <i>Father Jorge</i> convinces Jockin to meet <i>Somsook Boonyabanha</i> who was in Delhi to attend an event for the 1987 International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. <i>Somsook</i> invites SPARC to become part of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR).
1987–88	ACHR is formed. It sends representatives from six countries to see Mahila Milan and its savings process (with support from <i>Father Jorge</i> ). RSDF use their presence to build a 14-foot-high house design <sup>12</sup> that Mahila Milan has developed. ACHR helps inaugurate it. The Alliance organises the first street children <i>mela</i> (festival) with 5,000 street children. Children want night shelters so all area resource centres become night shelters and Mahila Milan become their guardians.

<sup>10</sup> For details of the search for land and the house model exhibition, see Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 5: *Early innovations of the Indian Alliance triggered by Jockin, 1986–1996*.

<sup>11</sup> SPARC (1989) *Beyond the beaten track: resettlement initiatives of people who live along the railway tracks in Bombay*. Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres, Bombay. <http://bit.ly/2LbBSsX>

<sup>12</sup> Having the height at 14 foot allows a mezzanine level to be included, significantly increasing the amount of floor space.

1987–88	Jockin assists <i>Somsook Boonyabanha</i> in Thailand to strengthen a savings culture in community groups subsequently supported by the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) and later the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI) that <i>Somsook</i> was to head.
1988	<p>ACHR takes a delegation to South Korea to support Korean agencies who are fighting massive evictions caused by Seoul’s redevelopment for the Olympic Games. Jockin, with <i>Celine d’Cruz</i> and <i>Somsook Boonyabanha</i>, starts working in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Nepal, assisting NGOs linked to ACHR to initiate federations.</p> <p>A community-managed resettlement by NSDF and Mahila Milan in Jankalyan in Mankhurd, Mumbai lays the ground for much larger resettlements.</p> <p>Jockin negotiates for H Sector in Dindoshi, Goregaon to build houses now known as Adarsh Nagar.</p> <p>SPARC starts work with Homeless International (headed by <i>Ruth McLeod</i>) and IIED (<i>David Satterthwaite</i> and <i>Diana Mitlin</i>).</p> <p>Jockin meets <i>Sundar Burra</i> who comes to work with SPARC on deputation. His deep commitment and networks help consolidate federation access to government administration.</p> <p>Jockin meets <i>Arjun Appadurai</i>.</p> <p>The first community-designed, built and managed toilet stimulates the building of other community toilets in Mumbai, Kanpur, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Lucknow (between 1988 and 1996).</p>
1989–91	<p>Homeless International supports the exchange between Colombia and India and becomes a major partner of the Alliance, supporting a significant expansion of their work.</p> <p>The Prime Minister’s Grant Project is set up to redevelop Dharavi slum. A state survey is contested by a Dharavi Community-based census to counter the government project.</p> <p>The Alliance meets with <i>Gautam Chatterjee</i> who is in charge of Dharavi special projects.</p>
1990	The Indian government’s Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and other government departments are

	invited to a house model exhibition in Dharavi, showing the value of the 14-foot-high design. HUDCO promises to provide loans for it.
1991	<p>Markandeya Cooperative Housing Society, Dharavi is launched. It is a community-managed multi-storey housing construction, built to high densities. <i>Father Jorge</i> provides a bank guarantee from Selavip to get an Indian rupee loan from HUDCO.</p> <p>Gregor Meerpohl, Pete Templeton and <i>Father Jorge</i> assist the Southern African Catholics Bishops Conference to initiate a People’s Dialogue for Land and Shelter. <i>Sheela Patel</i> is invited but it is decided that Jockin and <i>Celine d’Cruz</i> should attend. Jockin meets <i>Joel Bolnick</i> at this event.</p>
1992	Jockin’s participation in the South African People’s Dialogue on Land and Shelter is the first among many visits to South Africa where he urges and supports urban poor groups to organize. Jockin invites a delegation from South Africa to India to see the work of the Indian Alliance.
1992–95	<p><i>Celine</i> and Jockin travel with members of Mahila Milan and NSDF to initiate federations in South Africa. In Piesang River, Durban (the home of the federation leader Patrick Magebhula) the first training to do household surveys is done for all leaders from South Africa followed by an exhibition of house models. New exchanges begin: <i>Joel Bolnick</i> brings Zimbabweans, Namibians and others to visit India to explore the federation model.</p> <p>Joe Slovo, the housing minister of South Africa, urges the South African Federation to ‘give me a model’. Through negotiations with his Director General <i>Billy Cobbett</i> a long-term relationship with Housing Departments and Housing Ministers begins. The South African Federation’s uTshani Fund gets 10 million rand from the Government.</p>
1995–96	<p>World Bank teams come to India. The Alliance meets <i>Robert Buckley</i>. Explorations begin around World Bank-funded transport and sanitation projects.</p> <p>Mahila Milan travels to South Africa, Kenya and other federations to share experiences, support social movements</p>

	and expose communities to community construction technologies including the making of <i>ladhies</i> . <sup>13</sup>
	Jockin invites Derek Hanekom (Minister of Land Affairs in South Africa) to come to India, supporting him in his efforts to work on urban land redistribution in addition to rural land reform.
	SPARC ( <i>Sheela Patel</i> ) is invited to be a member of two significant Government of Maharashtra initiatives: the Railway Resettlement and the Slum Rehabilitation Policy for Mumbai slums. Jockin is deeply involved in the process as member of the Land Committee, locating lands for the railway slum dwellers' relocation. Jockin helps the South African federation in the Eastern Cape apply the SDI tools –profiling, enumerations, identifying land, training in construction, exchange programmes. Also supports their engagement with municipal and provincial authorities that helped secure a 230-hectare parcel of land in Nelson Mandela Metro. <sup>14</sup>
1996	SDI founded during the second Broederstroom event in South Africa, initially with six members (South Africa, India, Namibia, Cambodia, Nepal and Thailand) and Jockin as president.
1996– 2000	The Alliance explores ways of improving Mumbai Municipality's intervention on slum sanitation. Jockin designs the first demonstration toilet which he calls the five-star toilet – it is inaugurated in March 2000. The Alliance gets the contract to build many community/public toilets.
1999– 2001	<i>Ruth McLeod</i> and <i>Sheela Patel</i> develop Bridging the Finance Gap in Housing and Infrastructure and get £10 million from UK Department for International Development (DFID) to set up CLIFF (the Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility)

<sup>13</sup> *Ladhies* are moulded concrete blocks with an egg-shelled shape used for upper-level flooring in Mahila Milan houses. The eggshell shape gives them great strength while saving money by reducing the need for cement and steel beams. See *Jane Weru's* contribution in Part 7: *Muungano's beloved friend and mentor*.

<sup>14</sup> See *Evelyn Benekane's* contribution in Part 7: *Jockin in the Eastern Cape*.

	<p>managed by Homeless International and routed through Cities Alliance.</p> <p>Jockin goes to Zimbabwe to attend the first-ever forum of slum dwellers. In addition to four Indian slum dwellers, he invites government officials from Cambodia.<sup>15</sup></p>
2000	<p>January: Indian Alliance meets <i>Chris Hoban</i>.</p> <p>30 March: Railway authority bulldozes 3,000 houses along the harbour line.</p> <p>After much work and negotiation, the government of Maharashtra gets the World Bank to agree to change procurement regulations and allows the railway relocation to be done completely by SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan.</p> <p>The UN-Habitat Global Campaign for Secure Tenure is inaugurated in Bombay. Pavement dwellers get keys to their new houses from the chief minister.</p> <p>SDI builds a house and toilet in the UN building in New York. The SDI brand is established.</p> <p>Global Campaign for Secure Tenure meeting in Durban, where SPARC receives the Habitat Scroll of Honour award.</p> <p>SDI explores working with Pamoja Trust in Kenya. SDI meets with principal secretary of Nairobi, Mr Maina, who visits India with <i>Jane Weru</i>. Indians train Kenyan federations to do a census of Korogocho with support from Father Alex.</p> <p>Jockin uses his trip to the Philippines to accept the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding to visit the president of the Philippines, taking federation leaders with him and telling him about the Philippines federation's successes.<sup>16</sup></p>

<sup>15</sup> See *Beth Chitekwe-Biti's* contribution in Part 7: *Savings and empowerment: Jockin's support for the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation*.

<sup>16</sup> See *Sonia Fadrigo's* contribution in Part 7: *Jockin and his work with the Homeless People's Federation Philippines*.



2001	SDI is invited to work in Uganda and exchanges begin. This is followed by many visits by Jockin and Celine d’Cruz to support mapping and enumerations in Kenya and Uganda. <sup>17</sup>
2002	<p>First UN World Urban Forum in Kenya. Jockin builds toilet on the lawns of the UN Habitat site; President Moi of Kenya inaugurates it. Jockin inspires 200 slum dwellers to fill the plenary hall, waving candles in silent protest against evictions. From then on, large SDI delegations attend the UN World Urban Fora held every two years ensuring that they are heard.</p> <p>Jockin joins others to sign into existence the Urban Poor Development Fund in Nepal.</p> <p>Federations launched in Malawi and Ghana.</p>
2003	<p>With support from Police Commissioner Anami Narayan Roy, Jockin opens police <i>panchayats</i> in the city of Pune.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>Jockin nominated to serve on UN-Habitat’s Slum Upgrading Facility.</p>
2004	<p>Jockin serves on UN-Habitat’s Advisory Group on Forced Evictions.</p> <p>Police <i>panchayats</i> started in Mumbai.</p>
2006	<p>Jockin gives keynote address at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver.</p> <p>Jockin invites South African Minister of Housing <i>Lindiwe Sisulu</i> to India to inaugurate the first houses built on land officially given to pavement dwellers by the State.</p>
2007	<p>Jockin pays his first visit to Brazil. SDI-linked NGO Interação is launched.</p> <p>Jockin goes to Tanzania, where he supports the launch of the Tanzania Federation of the Urban Poor (TFUP) and opens dialogue with their government. Supports the setting up of community policing forums, drawing on the experience in Pune and Mumbai.</p>

<sup>17</sup> See Jack Makau’s contribution in Part 4: *You never map fences: lessons in community enumeration*.

<sup>18</sup> See Sheela Patel’s contribution in Part 5: *Jockin, Anami Roy and community policing*.

	<p>Launch of the SDI Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI)/SDI board of governors, chaired by Minister Lindiwe Sisulu from South Africa and with Ministers, Junior Ministers and Secretaries of State from India, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Uganda, Norway and Sweden.</p> <p>Savings groups are formed in Sierra Leone and a new federation is launched.</p>
2008	Jockin receives an honorary doctorate from Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT University), Bhubaneswar.
2009	<p>Jockin signs memorandum of understanding on behalf of community savings groups with the city of Monrovia, Liberia.</p> <p>Receives Asian of the Year Award.</p> <p>Jockin returns to Zimbabwe for the National Housing Convention to ratify a new national housing policy that recognises the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation as a critical partner.<sup>19</sup></p>
2010	<p>Receives Padma Shri Award – highest award conferred on a citizen by the Indian state.</p> <p>Supports SDI secretariat to secure a seat for SDI on the Cities Alliance Management Committee.</p> <p>Jockin leads the SDI delegation with representatives from the many federations to the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>20</sup></p>
2011	Helps SDI take a seat on UN-Habitat’s Global Land Tool Network (GLTN).
2012	<p>The pavement dwellers of Byculla, Milan Nagar and founders of Mahila Milan in 1985 finally move into their formal homes.</p> <p>Helps SDI take the position of chair of both UN-Habitat’s World Urban Campaign (WUC) and the General Assembly of Partners (GAP).</p>

<sup>19</sup> See *Beth Chitekwe-Biti’s* contribution in Part 7: *Savings and empowerment: Jockin’s support for the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation.*

<sup>20</sup> See the contribution by *Alex Silva, André Folganes Franco, Anacláudia Rossbach* and *Inês Magalhães* in part 7: *Jockin bringing SDI’s experiences to Brazil.*

2013	Receives Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.
2014	Jockin and an SDI team attend the first World Meeting of Popular Movements initiated by Pope Francis – and meets Pope Francis at the Vatican. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Sets up Inqolobane Trust and becomes its chair as SDI seeks to enhance its financial sustainability.
2015	Indian Alliance’s footprint extends to its 70 <sup>th</sup> city. In India, the number of families relocated to formal housing in response to city infrastructure projects and as an alternative to evictions now exceeds 50,000. Jockin leads an SDI delegation to Santa Cruz, Bolivia to attend the second World Meeting of Popular Movements.
2016	In association with women leaders of Mahila Milan and the Myna Mahila Foundation (a women-led Indian organisation which empowers women about menstrual hygiene and ending period poverty), Jockin starts a sanitary-pad manufacturing unit in a slum resettlement area.
2017	Jockin starts the first large-scale renewable energy project in the SDI network, providing electricity from solar photovoltaics to two 9-storey buildings in the Indian Oil Resettlement Colony. Negotiates a feed-in tariff avoiding the need for expensive batteries.
2018	Jockin passes away in Mumbai, on 13 October, 2018

## 2. ON JOCKIN

### 2.1 For Baba

*Joseph Muturi*

This is a report to Jockin of what has happened since he died on 13 October 2018 by Joseph Muturi from Muungano wa Wanavijiji, the Kenyan Homeless People's Federation.

It's almost a year since you left us. I can report that everything is okay so far: no major issues or crisis, no evictions or forced demolitions across the SDI network. So far. The threat of evictions always looms large, like a shadow, but we are vigilant and alert and working hard to make sure they don't happen.

We are still struggling without your presence—to guide us, advise, strategize, help us plan, and to complain to when things get shitty or we don't know what to do. Hopefully we will manage.

I remember clearly when I first saw you: in Toi market in Kibera, Nairobi, 17 years ago, just after we had had many evictions and forced demolitions in the market. I was young and angry, an impatient, hot-tempered activist. I was angry with the bulldozers that came in the middle of the night or the wee morning hours, escorted by brutal police. I was angry with the system: a system that operated with impunity and was carrying out these demolitions on a regular basis. That didn't care about its poor. That destroyed poor people's homes and demolished the little spaces where they had their businesses, leaving them homeless and even poorer. And I was angry at a justice apparatus that operated with two sets of laws – one for the rich and one for the poor – and skewed to favour greedy private developers and land grabbers.

Baba, all that changed when I met you.

We met in Uganda when the Kenyans were helping to build the Ugandan Federation and I was part of a team training on savings and data collection. I

was awed by your charisma. I was mesmerised by everything you said. I hung on your every word. I was amazed by how Ministers, Mayors and Directors treated you with respect, and how at ease you were with them.

You taught me how to mobilise poor communities around savings and collecting their own information. From you I learnt the political power we can have when we organise everyone in our communities and neighbourhoods.

You taught me I don't have to be always angry with the system, that 'they' don't have to be the enemy. Instead, you taught me how to work with them, negotiate with them, using the numbers and information we collected.

You taught me how to use the skewed justice system in our favour to get injunctions and orders – not to win land cases, but to give us time to mobilise and organise. Today, those cases are still there on the court registries, but our homes and communities stand untouched.

You taught me how to negotiate with private landowners, government officials, chiefs, village chairman, and the local mafia. You told me that for every one of those kinds of people I had to deal with, you dealt with twenty.

Baba, you had a dream that one day, poor people living in slums all over the world will have their own fund – you called it the poor people's World Bank – because the poor are discriminated against in formal financial institutions and they don't have access to finance for their housing, land and projects. Formal institutions deemed our money too dirty and created stringent conditions and rules to make it even harder for us. They didn't want us in their shiny glass and marble banking halls. But we were there when your dream came true and we launched the Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI).<sup>21</sup> And now we have our own 'World Bank', the UPFI, and it has facilitated many slum dwellers to acquire land and build homes and sanitation blocks in their communities.

Through the fund, people have been economically empowered to start businesses and build income-generating activities for their communities, and many have gotten employment and incomes. They are transforming their

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<sup>21</sup> See <http://upfi.info/home>

neighbourhoods and cities, and they are changing the rules for how formal institutions relate to the poor. City governments are now embracing and recognising organised poor communities as crucial partners in addressing cities' challenges and problems, a key partner in setting and prioritising neighbourhood and city development agendas. They no longer refer to us as 'those people', as the 60 percenters who live below the poverty line.



*Patrick Magebhula Hunsley and Joseph Muturi at a KYC event, 2010*

The banks and formal finance institutions are also dropping their hard-nosed stance, gradually changing their stringent conditions to accommodate us. In Toi, some of them have set up shop right outside our doorsteps.

Development project wallahs still come to our communities. But the rules of engagement are different now. They play by ours, thanks to the profiles and data that communities possess. They no longer bring us their pea-brained ideas. Communities know clearly what their priorities are: as my fellow

Muongano, Emily, told them in New York, ‘What use to my ass is Wi-Fi when I have no toilet to shit in?’

Baba, everything changed when I met you.

You showed me that nothing is impossible and no challenge insurmountable – if I am committed, have the desire for change, and if I have fire in my belly for justice and transformation. Nothing will be impossible.

Thank you, Baba, for being a father.

Thank you for being a mentor.

Thank you for your guidance.

Thank you for the inspiration.

Thank you for the memories.

Thank you for letting me go with you on this journey.

*Muturi*

## 2.2 Jockin has not left the room

*Sheela Patel*

Jockin has played such a larger-than-life role, embodied in the gift he has given all of us in the form of the federation model of community organisation. It’s hard to believe that he is not with us. Even in the last few years, as his eyesight began to fade and his movements became restricted, he still directed all activity 24-7 (with help from two mobile phones).

For those who don’t know about the federation model - this is what it is:

Poor households take up and manage many issues at personal and neighbourhood levels, but the most critical ones that need recognition by their city and national governments are rarely addressed. Neighbourhood organisations may seek to address these by creating ‘federations’ – associations of all neighbourhoods at city level that create a critical mass, which city authorities are less likely to ignore. Then it is possible to explore this recognition at city level, and to support and strengthen each group’s confidence to stay organised. None of these outcomes are immediate.

Sometimes they take decades, but this self-organisation ensures that federations focus on their own needs and not the needs of external NGOs and their projects, which often are not top priorities for communities.



Jockin saw beyond the city. In other words he saw that being organised and federated at city level is not enough. Provincial/state and national governments need more pressure to design policies that are often outside the remit of city governments. As a result provincial and national federations emerged, initially in India in 1975 out of the fight to save Janata Colony from eviction. In time this model spread to other countries and then all these national federations came together to create Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI).

We who founded the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in 1984, had a vision of an organisation that would be a true partner to community organisations who would develop their own agendas based on their own priorities. We realized that we would have to trigger the first of these organisations and so we began working with pavement dwellers in Mumbai. This was an enormous challenge. Pavement dwellers were invisible.



Their struggle was very hard to place as a priority in a city and country where over 50 per cent of the urban residents were already living in slums.

Jockin, whom I had known since I was at university, came to the press conference we held on the findings of our first census of the pavement dwellers, *We the Invisible*. Shortly thereafter – on 8 March 1986 to be precise – he showed up at our centre in Byculla to say that the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) that he led was willing to explore a relationship with SPARC and Mahila Milan (a federation of savings groups formed by women pavement and slum dwellers, meaning ‘women together’) – and the Indian Alliance was born.



Jockin mentored all of us in the true politics of who gets land and why. He insisted that we had to enable the development of community leadership which could articulate, negotiate and produce solutions that the state or NGOs could not even conceive. His biggest gift to the Alliance was his acceptance and acknowledgement that NSDF had to change its tack and acknowledge and prioritize the central role and contribution of women in the

struggles of the urban poor. It was unacceptable that male leadership continued to take for granted the presence of women in large numbers at rallies and protest marches. Already in 1986 Jockin and the NSDF leadership made a promise that rather than ensuring women get a 30 per cent presence in the NSDF leadership they would always be over 50 per cent – not because of a quota but because of their calibre and standing in their communities and in the federations.

Father Jorge Anzorena<sup>22</sup> whom we lovingly call our ambassador, mentor and guide, is an Argentinian Jesuit priest who has lived and taught architecture in Tokyo through all the time we have known him. Since the 1970s, he has spent six months a year travelling to meet Asian, African and Latin American slum communities and NGOs working with them. He encouraged Somsook Boonyabancha from Thailand to set up the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR).<sup>23</sup> In 1988, our Indian Alliance joined ACHR. At that time, ACHR was an organisation that brought professionals from Asian countries working with low-income communities to fight evictions and explore new forms of developmental solutions. Jockin introduced them to the importance of women's savings groups and community data gathering and demonstrated how in India these processes had produced strong federations. Father Jorge also gave us modest but important start-up finance for many activities we undertook. The first activity was for women, who were designing houses on the pavements of Mumbai for their new houses, to visit other cities in India where communities had already been relocated. This produced the peer learning-exchange processes we now see as the most valuable learning tool within all the national SDI federations.

In 1991, Father Jorge asked me and several ACHR professionals to travel to South Africa to attend an event set up by the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference to meet the leaders of townships across Africa.<sup>24</sup> The idea was to share our experience of post-colonial struggle (and

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<sup>22</sup> See also Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 6: *SDI's godfather – Father Jorge Anzorena*.

<sup>23</sup> See also Somsook Boonyabancha and Thomas Kerr's contribution in Part 6: *Jockin, ACHR and the people's process in Asia*.

<sup>24</sup> See also Joel Bolnick's contribution in Part 6: *Jockin causing trouble in South Africa and laying the ground for SDI*.

disappointment) with radical grassroots leaders in South Africa so that they could begin to mobilize themselves in order to actively engage a post-apartheid state. I did not go myself, but Jockin and Celine d’Cruz went as representatives of the Indian Alliance. Jockin, Celine and Somsook had a major impact on this conference – especially Jockin since his message resonated strongly with the slum dweller leadership that made up over 90% of the 150 strong delegation. This seminal meeting set in motion the beginnings of the SDI movement with Indians enabling South Africans to adapt the federation model to the South African context. Jockin, in his inimitable style pushed for People’s Dialogue (which was the name of the conference) and its co-ordinator, Joel Bolnick, to develop a support organization similar to SPARC that could support an emerging federation in South Africa to encourage urban poor communities to explore their own development solutions in a post-apartheid society. ‘Why should others represent the voices of the poor?’ Jockin said. ‘Why not create space and capacity for the poor to make their representations themselves?’ Jockin crafted a new and very different relationship between federations and development professionals and activists. Instead of NGOs identifying community needs and developing projects to be delivered to targeted populations, the relationships were based on the co-creation and strengthening of community federations at city level, who in turn could make representations from local to city to global levels. There is nothing new about peer-to-peer learning but Jockin embedded it into the DNA of the trans-national grassroots movement that he founded. Through the direct and tangible demonstration of on-the-ground solutions (and learning from failures) Jockin’s federation model evolved and grew. It is also how it sustains and replicates itself, taking grassroots learning and practical radical transformation from one settlement to the next, from one city to another and across national borders.

There is a dynamic blending of strategy and counter-intuition behind this approach. Professionals invariably move on - even the most supportive and committed. Their families, their need for middle class incomes consistently take them to other jobs. Community leaders, whatever they do to earn a living, are there to stay. For them learning, training, mobilizing, struggling and negotiating is lifelong. Now that SDI has a track record of almost 3 decades it is good to notice how some of the professionals who have worked with the

federations have become friends for life of community leaders (and vice versa) and continue to provide help and support. This is one of many ways in which the federating of grassroots networks, from household to international level, is not so much a developmental construct or even an ideological representation of solidarity (although elements do conform to both) as it is an inspired but spontaneous response, rooted in the struggles of everyday life, to deepening injustices and inequality.

Once we understand that it is SDI's rootedness in everyday life, in relationships forged in struggles for survival and for radical change, then we understand the counter-intuitive genius of many of Jockin's favourite strategies.

Some of Jockin's favourite strategies included:

- Make friends of your worst enemies: real solutions require that strange bedfellows work together. Start with property developers, land grabbers, city mayors and administrators who evict or plan to evict neighbourhoods and craft a strategy where you can work together to produce win-win solutions.
- No point fighting a battle you can't win upfront. Try something else – and don't telegraph your punches. It may make you feel good but it is going to result in having to take a painful beating.
- Produce solutions that cannot be set aside simply because they make a great deal of sense.
- A group of women unleashed for a negotiation can do so much more than a bunch of men. They are persistent and focused on their children's needs for a better life.

Even when Jockin was physically fit and in good health, I was often asked what we would do if something happened to him. I recall a common question 'What if Jockin gets killed crossing the road?' My answer then and now is 'Many who initiate something unique and disruptive are a *gift* to such a process – a gift that should be celebrated as long as it is in your presence.' While the pain caused by his death is still acutely felt we were lucky to have enjoyed his unique and disruptive leadership for many years. Many of us across the globe have been able to learn as much as possible as to how he thought, how he disrupted, not as an end in itself but in order to open up

new possibilities. And from this, we can take the work he started to the next level. As Somsook Boonyabanha comments in her contribution, ‘Even now, after he has died, when I have some really difficult thinking, or see something happening that disturbs me, I think about him, and carry on those conversations with him in my mind. In this way, I still talk to him, still get inspired by him.’



*Jockin and Somsook leading a march to claim space for grassroots organizations at the World Urban Forum in Naples 2012*

Indeed, our real challenge now is to encourage audacious explorations by a new generation of leaders who can truly take his legacy onwards – in a world where climate change and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are timebound, making it urgent that development investment is really effective. Federations can demonstrate what solutions work for them and can teach one another, so that solutions spread and grow. They can explore new technologies and manage and maintain them. This is a valuable replacement for the project-by-project approach that mainstream development investment makes today, with professionals organising communities for a

temporary period during a project. Instead, the federations appropriate that space and teach and learn from themselves drawing on support and assistance from a small team of professionals as and when it is needed. Jockin's federation model is a most effective way to meet the sustainable development goals for low-income urban populations.

Jockin's values and perspectives – as seen through this federation model – have beaten a path for others to follow. Jockin has taught a whole generation of peers to create paths for themselves. To not fear what they don't know, to seek ways to learn what they need to know, and to use that knowledge to create solutions that will serve their needs. Much still needs to be done. But we have all that Jockin taught and showed us to draw on. Jockin has not left the room.

### 2.3 How shall I remember you then, Jockin my friend?

*Sundar Burra*

Towards the end, mostly blind, body overcome by disease  
 You fell without notice by the wayside, as you always wanted to:  
 In Dharavi, great slum of Bombay, kingdom of your dreams  
 Amidst your people, the wretched of the earth.

In the hospital, the fluorescent lights masked the pallor on your face,  
 setting off alarms  
 Your flock of men and women  
 from the pavements and slums of Bombay  
 Waited anxiously, prayers on their lips and despair in their hearts while  
 The currents of the Arabian Sea pounded away without pause –  
 whether in sorrow or in anger, we do not know.

How shall I remember you then, Jockin my friend?  
 As your eyes were failing, I brought you magnifying glass after magnifying  
 glass, all to no avail.  
 Even so, your vision spread light to so many  
 All over the world.

How shall I remember you then, Jockin my friend?  
You know you came late for your daughter's wedding dinner  
You were busy in the slums and shrugged it away  
As if it was just another day.

How shall I remember you then, Jockin my friend?  
Crying when you spoke of your beloved far away grandchildren?  
Speaking to your daughters fifty times a day  
Making up for the lost years of their childhood?

How shall I remember you then, Jockin my friend?  
Rubbing shoulders with the Pope, presidents and  
prime ministers of so many countries across the world?  
But always, returning to the pavements and the slums  
Where lay your soul, your sustenance, your salvation.  
That is how I shall remember you then, Jockin my friend  
Full of compassion and love.



*Jockin and Sundar Burra deep in discussion at the Dharavi office*

## 2.4 Conversations with Jockin

*Arif Hasan*

Jockin is dead, leaving behind a huge legacy spread over all continents and affecting the lives of millions of people. His greatest achievement was to help create, nurture and consolidate the processes whereby the poor have recognised and used their enormous power to create a more equitable relationship with their governments' policy and planning procedures.

In this short piece, I do not wish to talk about Jockin's work and achievements for there are others who are better qualified than me to discuss them. However, I will try to illustrate through a few incidents that I picked up from my diaries the Jockin I knew.

My first detailed conversation with Jockin took place in the late 1980s. It was regarding the strong nationalist feelings that were generated during India-Pakistan cricket matches and how politicians made use of these feelings, which sometimes resulted in demonstrations against each other's country. While discussing these demonstrations, Jockin said to me 'These *harami log* (bastard people), all they want to do is divide us, not only do they want to divide us but they want to divide any community that they think can challenge them or disagree with them. So they pay these NGOs and fake community leaders to create divisions. That is how they survive.' This became a recurring theme in our conversations for the future and the manner through which we judged political developments in both countries. During one of these conversations he also said that if people came together, 'These buggers will not last'.

Something else that also figured in our conversations was the wealth that the British had stolen from India. This was also a recurring theme. The first time he mentioned this was at the Manchester Global Forum on Cities in 1994, when he saw the beautiful timberwork in the municipal assembly hall. Jockin said, 'They have stolen all this from India.' 'Why did we let this happen?' I asked. And he answered, 'Because our rulers wanted us to remain divided, just as we are today.'



In February 1995, we met in London for a meeting at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). I asked him if he had ever been around the city. He said no. It was cold and wet but we wandered around Westminster with him in his slippers. Yes, he was cold in his slippers – but he felt very uncomfortable in shoes. He was fascinated by the parliament building. He looked at it and again said, ‘Without India’s wealth, all this could not have been created. But this wealth is going away and they are becoming poorer, so what are they going to do? They will have to find new ways to acquire wealth.’

We wandered around Trafalgar Square and near Cambridge Circus. He saw a white person pulling a rickshaw with two black persons sitting in it. Jockin laughed in amusement and said, ‘Arif *bhai*, can you believe this? Could this have happened when you were a child or a young man?’ We agreed that the world had changed.

What struck me most in my association with Jockin is the sort of respect he elicited from different sections of society. I was in Surajkund, Haryana in 2007 and there was a young NGO person who was critical of NGO leadership which dealt with poverty. He claimed that they were responsible for most of the corruption in the NGO sector. I told him that there were also people like Jockin Arputham and he responded, ‘But Jockin *jee* is not a leader, he is a *mahatma* – you cannot compare him with others.’

When I was working with SPARC on a UK Department for International Development (DFID)-supported project in Lucknow, I travelled with Jockin from Delhi to Lucknow. We met with the government officials and DFID representatives. They had worked out an elaborate programme of what was needed to be done. It was a programme controlled almost entirely by government officials and DFID planners, although it laid a lot of emphasis on community participation. After a brief discussion, Jockin presented his own ideas without contradicting anything that the government officials had proposed – although it was very different from what they had planned to carry out. Jockin’s proposal was accepted without much debate.

Also, during the same visit in the Banjara Tola quarter of Lucknow, I was surrounded by Muslim women who informed me that they had relatives in

Karachi and wanted to send them presents with me. During the discussions, I asked them why Muslims are always complaining about their condition in India. One of them said, 'Our Muslim leaders are hypocrites, and the Hindu leaders are prejudiced.' 'So what is the solution?' I asked. And one of them responded, 'Make Jockin *jee* the prime minister of India and everything will be alright.' I asked them if they were all in agreement with this and they answered, 'Yes, for he understands our problems and knows how to solve them.'

In another neighbourhood along the Pata Nala, we came across a location where the local government wished to demolish a few houses to widen the open stormwater drainage system. One of the couples whose house was to be affected said that unless Jockin *jee* agreed to the demolition, they would never let it happen. I responded that, 'Suppose he did agree, where would you go?' 'We will find a way, but he has given us a voice and we will listen to him,' they responded.

This respect is not limited to India but to all the countries he has worked in. In May 2012 in Kathmandu, a few settlements had been demolished and there was anger in the community and disagreement as to how the communities would be resettled. The disagreement could not be resolved as both the communities and the NGOs on one hand and the government on the other had taken strong positions. Then Jockin arrived from India while this debate was going on. There was silence and the directions that he gave to resolve the dispute were accepted by both sides – although from what I noted in my diary, they were not really followed. The bureaucrats were not happy and one of them said to me, 'I don't know why we have to put up with this Indian, *ye logon ko kharab karta hai* (he spoils people) and creates problems for us.' This deference to Jockin's opinion was because of his reputation and I hope this book will tell us what led to its creation.

SPARC in India and the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Pakistan (with which I was closely associated), were like twins in the 80s and 90s. They were very close to each other. Not only workwise but also through personal relationships. There was a strong bond of language, culture and history. In addition, Karachi and Bombay had strong similarities. Jockin's Hindi or Urdu

as we call it was very similar to that of the Makrani dockworkers in Karachi and he was very much at home in the city.

However, the war in Afghanistan and its spill over into the border regions of Pakistan created further deterioration in the Pakistan-India relationship. Travelling to other's country became almost impossible. Due to the war and Karachi's pivotal role as a supply centre of American arms and ammunition to the Taliban, it was also considered to be insecure. This also isolated Karachi-based projects and institutions from the rest of the world. This was the period when SDI was created and consolidated. The only link that remained between SPARC and OPP was through the ACHR meetings or the meeting of individuals in workshops and conferences in other countries.



*Arif Hasan talking to Jockin (with back to the camera) and Sheela Patel*

Jockin's last visit to Pakistan was in the mid-1990s, arranged by the Water and Sanitation Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank. Sheela Patel and Celine d'Cruz accompanied him. The objective of the visit was for the two organisations to exchange views and ideas on the future on sanitation-related initiatives. Those few days were full of fun, eating and drinking. The representative assigned by the

programme to facilitate our interaction said to me, ‘Arif *sahib*, please can we do some structured work? At this rate, it will be impossible for me to report back substantially.’ However, Sheela and Jockin’s talks were arranged, both at the OPP and the Urban Resource Centre, and a number of good ideas emerged through the after-talk discussions. The community members just wanted to know when Jockin and Sheela would be back and they all wanted to visit them in Bombay to see the work of the National Slum Dwellers Federation and SPARC.

The war in Afghanistan has been contained but the relationships that were established between SPARC and OPP have not been re-established. In both our organisations, new leaderships have developed that do not know each other. However, whenever and wherever we have met subsequently, it has been with warmth and friendship – and often, most evenings ended with a get together in Jockin’s room over a bottle of whiskey. An indication of this warmth is the amount of concern and sympathy shown by our Indian friends when Perween Rahman, the OPP Research and Training Institute director, was assassinated in 2013.

The last time I met Jockin was in Kampala, in May 2016. He was accompanied by his son-in-law because he was not well and needed someone to help him in carrying out mundane tasks like getting a glass of water or food or being walked to the toilet. We discussed his health and the manner in which SDI had changed Africa and how this change would be more radical than in India because Africa, unlike India, carried less *babu baggage*.

The next day, I visited with him the site of a huge vegetable and fruit market that was marked for demolition. We discussed possible options for rehabilitation. At the end of the day, we did not have a get together in his room around a bottle of whiskey. But maybe we will one day, in our next *janam*.

## 3. BIOGRAPHY OF A GRASSROOTS ACTIVIST

### 3.1 Developing new approaches for people-centred development

*Jockin Arputham*

#### Introduction

This is an account by Jockin of his early life and work. It concentrates mainly on how he came to be a grassroots organiser in Mumbai in the 1960s and early 1970s, as he strove to defend the settlement in which he lived from eviction. This account was published in 2008<sup>25</sup> and it is based primarily on interviews and conversations with David Satterthwaite during 2004 and 2005 and supplemented with details from those who have worked with him and from written records. This is a slightly shortened version of the original, with notes added where it links with other contributions to this book.



Jockin's story includes details of how he developed new approaches to be used by slum federations to address the needs of members. These included slum-dweller-led enumerations and maps of their settlements and active

<sup>25</sup> Arputham, J (2008) Developing new approaches to people-centred development. *Environment and Urbanization* 20(2). <http://bit.ly/2SYFgd3>

engagement of the federations in developing solutions to demonstrate to governments what the federations were capable of. It ends with an account of the unique partnership that the National Slum Dwellers Federation came to develop with the Indian NGO SPARC in 1984–6 and with Mahila Milan, the federation of savings groups formed women ‘slum’ and pavement dwellers. Other contributions to this book take up the stories of Jockin after this. A timeline is included to help the reader navigate their way among all the different initiatives, activities and institutions described in the different contributions.

### Jockin’s early life

I was born in 1946 in Kolar Gold Fields and my early life was with my family, living there, close to Bangalore. During my early years, my family was relatively well off. At the age of 16, I left home and went to work in Bangalore and took employment with an uncle. By this time, my family was facing financial difficulties.

My first job was working with a carpenter and this paid 3 rupees and 50 paise a week. This was not enough to allow me to help my family. I changed jobs to one that paid better. After six months in Bangalore, I was getting a good income (15 rupees a day). The money was much needed by my family. But I had to do several jobs and worked from seven in the morning until 11 at night.

### The move to Mumbai in 1963

In 1963, one of my uncles came from Mumbai (then known as Bombay) for the funeral of one of my aunts. He appeared very impressive. He had come by airplane (in 1963 this was still very unusual); he smoked proper cigarettes and showed us a 20 rupee note which we had not seen before. He appeared to have lots of money and to be very successful. He said to me – why not come to Bombay.

So I went to Bombay by train but found that the ‘rich’ uncle did not have much money and that he lived in a slum that was much worse than I anything I had seen in Bangalore. Houses here were made of cardboard. (This was Janata Colony that was to be Jockin’s home until it was demolished in 1976; also what he calls his ‘university’ because of how much he learnt when he

lived there). The uncle told me that he was in the import-export business – but I found that he actually made his money from smuggling. I saw him going smuggling every night – he lived just by the railway. I was devastated. I left his shack and went to sleep in an open space, just next to the settlement. Should I go home? But I had fought with my family. I went back to carpentry and to sleeping outside. There was a local restaurant where I could wash. To find a place to sleep, I would look for a house where there were clothes or saris drying outside – and go and sleep there, wrapped in these clothes. I made sure that I was up and away before the household woke up. I became an expert builder and repairer of huts and also a small contractor. The colony was close to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and at that time they needed a lot of work done – I took on a variety of jobs there – digging pits, removing wastes, building. I never rented a room to live in until after my marriage in 1975.

### Setting up the school

I would finish my work as a carpenter and contractor around 3.30 in the afternoon. One day, I started chatting to some of the kids that were there, playing on the street. Most were seven- to ten-year olds. I asked them what were their names. Then I suggested to the children that they sing. This was a way of interacting with them, of building a relationship with them. So, I started collecting groups of children of different ages; some of 5–6, some who were older. They would sing popular songs – whatever they could sing. Initially, there were 10 to 15 kids who were the core group. On that first day of singing, the group had grown to a small crowd by 6 o'clock. The next day the same group was there. The third day, some older kids joined in.

Then it was Friday and so I thought of what we could do for the next day, Saturday. I asked the children who had gathered to sing – what could you bring tomorrow? Nothing, they replied. I suggested that they could bring anything to use as an instrument or drum – a plate, a glass, a tin can or oil box (from food parcels that charities distributed that were common at that time). I also announced that tomorrow we will have a competition so you have to bring your instruments.

On the following day, Saturday, I arrived a little late and already there was a crowd of children, waiting impatiently. That day we began by everyone

introducing themselves to each other and having a record of who was there. Making the singing groups more formal. More than 200 children had gathered so I started organising them in groups – you two sing together, you work with each other. By 5 o'clock that evening, a huge circle had formed. There were Hindi songs, Tamil songs, popular songs. Many women had also come to listen and they also joined in the singing. Some would also dance.

The singing sessions soon expanded – 200 kids, 300 kids, up to 1,000 or more kids. As the numbers grew, some of the children had already started organising the crowd. So the singing sessions became a big event and a kind of school in this large open space.

Many mothers would come and watch and some started saying to me – do something for the children. So we started a school that was in addition to the singing – doing coaching classes (for standards 4 to 7).<sup>26</sup> We organised this in an open space by the church. There was a washing place close by; also a community hall. After singing, I asked the kids about their schools. Most were going to school but we decided to start our own school so I told them that they had to bring a slate to write on, when they came to the singing. We began with ABC, with the first-year standards 2 to 4, but during the next 15 days, the school expanded and we were doing work up to Standard 7. There were different groups and different classes. Some older children helped with the teaching, others with the management. We had singing from 3 to 4 o'clock, school from 4 to 6 o'clock or 6.30 and then singing 6.30 to 7.30. We also began to do exercises as part of the school.

The number of children coming grew. Lots of volunteer teachers came to help and some were up to Standard 7 or 9. Other volunteers came to help with the administration. Soon there were 50 or more volunteers helping. We attracted so many children; after a month we had up to 3,000 children. (Note that at this time, Jockin was still only 20 years old and he himself had not completed secondary school. So this huge school in the open was in effect started and organised by Jockin and the children and youth themselves).

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<sup>26</sup> In India, children start school in Standard One at the age of six. Standards four to seven are middle school. Standards eleven and twelve are senior secondary school or junior college.



There was no fee for the school and people contributed what they could. After a month, we managed to get milk powder from the church (there was a lot of milk powder available through aid agencies) so we bought the water and every school pupil got a glass of milk after school.

During the monsoon, it was impossible to keep the school going outside so we managed to find a shed and began to meet there. But we could manage only 60–70 kids inside. There were lots of complaints from the children who could not get in, so we moved some garbage and put up another structure. This was my first land encroachment. Then over the next two and a half years, we expanded and more structures were built and, in the end, we had three. At first, I was a teacher but then I became headmaster and then the principal and I ran the school for three years. Some of the volunteer teachers came from the Tata Institute of Social Services that was later to provide us with more help (as described later).

### The garbage picnic

Six months after starting the school we organised our first demonstration. One of the problems in Janata was that there was no municipal service to collect garbage, so lots of garbage had been dumped in the place where we had the school and there were serious problems with mosquitoes. So one Saturday, we decided to meet and to think about how to clear the garbage. The next day, Sunday evening, when talking with the children, I said that we were going on a picnic the next day before they went to their formal schools. All the children had to bring a newspaper and their school bag. The point of the picnic was for each child to collect a kilo of garbage, pack it in the newspaper, put it into their bag and then walk to Chembur, some three and a half kilometres away and dump this garbage in front of the municipal office.

We all assembled at 6.00 the next morning and began this huge procession of children, shouting, singing, drumming. The police thought that the children were going on a picnic so they saw no need to stop us and they helped guide us on the march. We arrived at the municipal council's offices, dumped all the garbage there (the offices were not open at this time) and were all back at Janata by 9 o'clock. The municipal council was furious. They arrived at work and found the whole municipal compound was blocked and stinking with garbage. So they came to see us. But we showed them the garbage

problem in our settlement and began a negotiation. We said that we would organise the garbage collection if the municipality would provide the truck to collect it regularly. This one incident changed my whole life.

### Developing a local organisation: from singing and community action to a social centre

The next Saturday the kids asked, ‘What are we going to do tomorrow?’ Then a discussion began about what to do next. We decided to clean a public toilet that was nearby. This toilet was very dirty and smelly – it probably had not been cleaned in 15 years. So on Sunday we all worked together to clean this toilet and whitewash its walls. Some people contributed tea; others contributed lime so we could paint the toilet as well as clean it.

Then, working together on some initiative became a regular Sunday event. People from different parts of the settlement would ask us to help them do things and we would then organise to do it. So every Sunday we called a camp. We had agreed what to do the previous day – cleaning a toilet, clearing a road, making a new road, collecting garbage. Teachers and children would discuss what we should do the night before and agree what it should be and what everyone should bring and when to start – we often started early before it got too hot. Should we do this? Yes, yes! Don’t worry about breakfast, about soap, we will find this. It’s going to be hot so let’s start at 8.00. Should the young children come? Yes, yes! Everyone can come.

All the kids were involved in the planning and a role was found for everyone. For instance, the younger ones could distribute water to those who were working. After finishing the planning, we would have tea and bread. This was my dinner. By this time, it was generally ten o’clock at night. The tea and bread were all donated by local shops. We also received other donations. There were 300 shops in Janata and many used to donate things for us.

The night before we started, I would visit the site, often with other people from our organisation. We would chat to the residents so they would know that the children would be coming and would need some breakfast – so families there would say, ‘We would give this.’ Often other local people provided donations. And by visiting the site, I would have an idea of how to organise the work the next morning. I learnt to do many things without

money. To work with all this creativity among the inhabitants. Lots of things that needed to be done could be done without funding. Many people asked for water connections so we said that we would help but they would have to collect money to cover the costs.

We thus became an organisation of young people – and we decided to call ourselves a social welfare centre. We had a hut with a small board and a curtain. This was the first place I had had to sleep, since leaving my uncle’s place. After 15 days, I learnt that the term ‘social welfare centre’ was actually a term for a gambling club. When I was walking around Bombay, I found so many ‘social welfare centres’. So, we renamed it NSK – which were the initials of a famous south Indian comedian NS Krishnan. He was a radical comedian and actor, also a member of the Communist Party of India who had been to Russia and had many political jokes: ‘Don’t write sugar on your hand and expect it to be sweet when you lick it.’<sup>27</sup> Most other societies or organisations were named after politicians – but we named ours after a famous comedian that we all liked.

Some people were opposed to the name because the comedian was from South India (which suggested that we only worked with people from South India) or because they did not feel it was politically correct. But by then, our centre was very well known. When you asked kids where they were going – they would say they were going to NSK. ‘Where are you sleeping?’ ‘NSK’. So I talked to lots of people about what we should rename it. Eventually we decided to rename it National Service Kendra (‘kendra’ meaning a centre) so it would keep the same initials and still be NSK. This also meant that more people would come and work with us.

After two years, the Tata Institute of Social Services that was close by (and which trained social workers) became interested in our work. One of the priests, Patrick d’Souza, came to say mass in Janata and saw what we were doing. He then brought his students. Some of them volunteered to help with the teaching. We built a temporary shed and named it in honour of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (a famous Pakistan political leader and follower of

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<sup>27</sup> Jockin explained that this was a commentary on people that write plans for what they should do but without the money to do it. So this is like writing ‘sugar’ on your hand and expecting it to taste sweet when you lick it.

Mahatma Gandhi<sup>28</sup>), when the school was inaugurated in 1964. The contacts with the Tata Institute became strong as I was invited to teach there and many students from the institute came to see what we were doing. Famous people too – Nalina from Kerala and Father Eton from Calcutta.

We were also contacted by a French organisation called Service Civil International that had first come to India to help after the Bihar earthquake (in 1935)<sup>29</sup> and whose help Mahatma Gandhi had requested, in response to earthquakes. They began to work with us in Janata. By this time, we were a very successful young people's organisation. Very little money was needed and what little we did need we received from donations; the priests also helped. In 1969, I was still without my own home and was having to have a bath at the public tap each day.

### Water connections and catalysing change

After a year I had become known as a leader or agitator for the settlement. We would write to the authorities asking them for something or saying that we were making a water connection or planning something else and we would put in the letter, 'If you do not respond in ten days we will assume that we have your approval.'

One Saturday, we installed a connection to the water pipe that was illegal. On Monday, the municipal corporation staff came with the police to remove the connection. At our school that evening, everyone was sad – what small faces. 'Oh, the water connection has been removed.' So we reinstalled it that night and to prevent it from being cut off again, the next morning we had a school organised around the water connection. We surrounded the connection with 200–300 kids, all of whom were studying and loudly saying their ABCs which made it difficult for the corporation and the police to cut the connection. The officials said that there was an illegal water connection and I said, 'No, what do you mean? Look at all the children who are studying.'

That same evening, I trained the kids to play with the police and the municipal officials. One technique was bouncing tennis balls just beside

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<sup>28</sup> For more details, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan\\_Abdul\\_Ghaffar\\_Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khan_Abdul_Ghaffar_Khan)

<sup>29</sup> Service Civil International is a voluntary service organisation and peace movement founded in 1920 with 37 branches and groups worldwide.

them. At that time, the police wore very baggy shorts. So, you could bounce tennis balls beside them with the tennis balls then bouncing right up their legs. We also trained the young children to run up to the police and grab hold of their legs – but not to do this in a violent way. Holding onto their legs saying to the policeman, ‘Very nice’ and calling them uncle. It is very difficult for the police to do anything with young children holding onto their legs. Very difficult for the police to act when the children and also women are opposing them like this.

### Mobilising to avoid eviction: 1967–1969

In 1967–68, the Bhabha Atomic Energy Authority gave notice that the people living in Janata Colony should vacate the land it was built on. I got involved in a kind of community association mobilising against this. I went around, talking to all the different community organisations – cultural, religious, political – and bringing them together. There were 70,000 people in total in the colony. So we got all the community organisations involved and formed an action committee. We got all the Tamil Nadu political parties to agree to work together and to weld all these parties into one.<sup>30</sup>

The Bhabha Atomic Energy Authority was seeking to evict us all without compensation. My work was to bring together everyone to oppose this; a central committee formed with representatives from many different groups – Tamil groups, different churches, political parties. We formed an All-Party Committee with a mandate being no eviction, no negotiation. We organised a huge demonstration – all gathering on Saturday evening, 50,000 people walking around the settlement twice, with lots of noise and shouting. Giving a strong message to the police and to the municipal corporation that we were large and well organised so they could not think of evicting us.

It was unfortunate that the Atomic Energy Commission came to the site near Janata – and it came long after Janata had been established. At first it was the India Kennedy reactor, IKR. Then it became a small research centre. The Canadians were sponsoring the reactor. The management of the Atomic Energy Commission treated us like shit; they demanded that we get out. They would not negotiate with us, they would not recognise us. They would not

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<sup>30</sup> A high proportion of residents in Janata were from Tamil Nadu.

recognise me, even though I had been undertaking work at the centre – but for this I was not dealing with senior staff. This is a very prestigious institution and the senior staff would not talk to us. But whatever I was doing inside the centre, I was collecting information. When I met the commission’s chairman, I showed him that I had been working there.

The threat of eviction for Janata Colony was present when I first arrived there in 1963, but it was only in 1967 that the first public notice to us to move was made. For two years we did not fight but built up the strength of the community, in preparation. It was important to demonstrate that we were a permanent settlement to be able to fight the eviction order and also to use the courts to fight the eviction order. It took six months to work out a memorandum that described how the settlement was formed. So we could fight the eviction by two means, by protests and through the courts. The colony had been formed in 1947 and 1948–50. Three hundred square-foot plots had been allocated and everyone paid rent (2 rupees 50 paise) to the municipality. This proved that Janata was a permanent settlement, not a temporary one. This also meant that we had a much stronger case with which to fight the planned eviction in the courts.

We also documented what was in the colony – the telephones, electric meters, shops, ration shops, flour mills.<sup>31</sup> We found the original landlords. Janata Colony came into existence through a resettlement programme. When they were originally settled in 1947, it was 9km away from Bombay. We began the memorandum with the quote, ‘The gift of freedom in 1947 and we were evicted when we got independence.’<sup>32</sup> People in Janata Colony were from all over the city. Many were moved from a settlement called Air-Conditioned Market. When I first came to Janata, there was no municipal bus only the state bus service (which gives one an idea of how the site was still

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<sup>31</sup> The careful documentation of homes, households and businesses in ‘informal settlements’ or slums by their inhabitants later became one of the most widely used techniques used by the National Slum Dwellers Federation and its partners both in negotiating with the authorities and in strengthening their own organisation. It also came to be used by all the slum/shack dweller federations within SDI.

<sup>32</sup> India finally gained Independence in 1947, after a long struggle against British colonial rule.

separate from Mumbai – and how it was not seen as part of Mumbai). We had to lobby to get the municipal bus service to come.

At this time, there were two main places in Mumbai/Bombay that the authorities wanted to clear – Janata and Dharavi. They could not enter Janata Colony unseen – at this time it had clear space around it so it was possible to see the authorities coming. So we could have the kerosene bottles ready. Even the Shiv Sena could not enter Janata Colony as it was a predominantly South Indian population.



*Dharavi, Mumbai, 2010*

During this time, documenting how Janata was formed, I must have met more than 150 *parisi babas* (respected older men from the Parsi community).<sup>33</sup> All in person. They supplied information and books and helped us a lot. Between 1938 and 1950, they had been the only philanthropists in Bombay.

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<sup>33</sup> Mumbai has long been a place with a high concentration of Parsis.

For three months, I went with Shirish Patel<sup>34</sup> to the Asiatic Library. I took Murthy with me (who works at SPARC). This was before the evictions. We collected information from the old people – then stored it. Then when the *parsi babas* told me something, I would check it with other people. I would sit with the beggars, collecting their stories. Provide them with food. This was not research or ideology. Shirish Patel’s father was a municipal commissioner for a short period and was being briefed about Janata Colony and about what should be done. From that time, as soon as Shirish got news he would come to tell me. He would bring food, chapatti, chutney, we would sit and eat. I introduced Shirish to all the bootleggers and pickpockets. We used to sit and watch what happened. We finally found the municipal commissioner who had arranged the land occupation of Janata Colony – who was retired and living in Goa at this time. So we could give evidence that the land was acquired by the municipality for public purposes – and Janata Colony was thus on land officially provided by the municipality.

After we developed the memorandum (1967), we also brought in the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu who backed us against the eviction. AK Gopalan (at that time leader of the opposition in India’s parliament) also supported us so we were mobilising support from some powerful people for our struggle. We even managed to get great political rivals to agree to support us.

By 1970, I was travelling all over Mumbai, visiting other slum communities (many of which were threatened with eviction). I got a driver from the NGO Bombay Urban Industrial League for Development (BUILD; see later for more details) and he became a good friend of mine, as he drove me from slum to slum. (This contact with other slum communities led to the formation of the Bombay Slum Dwellers Federation in 1969).

### Working with Bangladesh refugees: 1971–1972

When the Bangladesh war started (as what had previously been East Pakistan sought independence), huge refugee flows were coming to Calcutta. Father Patrick d’Souza, who was director of Caritas (also still at the Tata Institute)

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<sup>34</sup> See Shirish Patel’s contribution in Part 3: *Jockin and the fight to save Janata Colony*.



asked me to help. Father Eton, who was with St Xavier's College in Calcutta, also asked for help.

This was a new opportunity. So, with 300 rupees in my pocket I went to Calcutta. I was put in charge of the housing sector in a huge refugee camp at Salt Lake City. There were around 120,000 people there. We had to get the drainage system working but with so much sand it was difficult to dig and to maintain ditches. How could you build these? We had bamboo and lots of empty sacks from the provisions that were delivered there (for instance for the wheat provided by the USA). There were also lots of refugees in need of some paid work. So we mobilised many people to fill the bags with sand and used bamboo mats and sticks to create the drainage system. (The Americans named this construction system after me – Jockin drainage, Jockin platform). This got lots of people working – who were pleased to work for 2 rupees and for supplies of wheat and sugar. We soon had 10,000–15,000 people working on the drainage and also building houses using bamboo, bamboo mats and gunny sacks. I was called *Pagala baba* – mad boss.

This was also when I met Mother Teresa,<sup>35</sup> since her nuns were running the biggest hospital and she would come each morning – say a prayer, and wash patients.

Then I was asked to help with problems closer to the India–Bangladesh border. Refugees were streaming across the border, all trying to avoid the army. They would hide in the jute fields when the army came by – often holding their hands over the mouths of their babies to stop them making a noise as the soldiers searched for them. Babies often died. I arranged for people to be waiting in the jute fields to help the refugees. I also helped them and often had to carry babies crossing the border and walking the 2km to get to safety. I was there for nine months and we built a big organisation to help the refugees – for instance we had 34 vehicles and a budget of 15–20 million rupees. But suddenly, I was given 48 hours' notice to leave by the new Bangladesh government so I moved back to Calcutta.

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<sup>35</sup> Mother Teresa was a catholic nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity and was later to be awarded the Nobel Peace prize.

There were so many deaths. Refugee camps always have mass graves. There is generally plenty of money too with few questions of how you spend it. I then spent much time working with various international agencies – Care, Bread for the World, Caritas. We helped the refugees set up their own pharmacies in the camps, every 200 yards (there were plenty of pharmacists among the refugees).

One of the events that got a lot of publicity at this time was a man who apparently died and then came back to life. Edward Kennedy (the US politician and brother of Robert Kennedy) was coming to visit the refugee camps so Mother Teresa agreed that we had to clean things up and this also meant clearing dead bodies. There were 16 or so dead bodies so my staff had to organise for them to be buried. It is frightening to do this at night. We had all the bodies in the back of a truck and we were driving to a site to bury them when we suddenly heard this loud noise, a kind of screaming, coming from the back of the truck. Very frightening. At first, we drove on but the screaming continued. After another half a kilometre, we got to the dump site. We all got out of the truck and were going to start the truck dumping (raising the back so the bodies tipped out) – but the noise continued. So I got up onto the truck, found the bag from where the noise was coming, cut it open and there was a man alive, saying '*Baba, baba,*' as soon as the bag was opened. So we got him out and then dumped the bodies and came back. But this turned into a big story as the person who was alive claimed that he had died. There were press everywhere.

Then I went to Delhi and had lots of meetings, talking to relief agencies, doing briefings for ambassadors. I also visited St Xaviers in Madras (Chennai).

### The fight to save Janata Colony: 1973–1976

I came back to Mumbai in 1973 as things were getting hot around the eviction of Janata. At this time, the NGO BUILD approached me and sought to support me.<sup>36</sup> They also provided me with many international contacts – in Sri Lanka, the Philippines and South Korea – that I was later to visit. BUILD received support from both the Catholic and the Protestant churches (within

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<sup>36</sup> BUILD is an NGO that was founded in 1973 and sponsored by different Christian churches.

the World Council of Churches) and support from the Catholic Mission Conference.

Father Nyan Goshi from Japan formed this group. BUILD has 20 to 30 people working in Janata. After 1972, a famous left-leaning study group began to meet regularly – and this included three well-known professionals: Jai Sen,<sup>37</sup> SK Das and Kirtee Shah.<sup>38</sup> BUILD existed for ten years largely because of Janata Colony – and it suited all the religious groups.

BUILD got a lot of international attention. SK Das was a planner and adviser to it; Shirish Patel and SK Das were also writing about Janata in *Economic and Political Weekly*.<sup>39</sup> So I gave them all the details of the internal activities, the local economy, the pickpockets, the gambling, lots of stories. I had a secret office at that time. SK Das became an activist and was very articulate – a good talker and good planner. SK and Nita Bhatt designed housing in Bandra that's called Jaffar Baba Colony. This was an innovative colony where housing was developed for only 7,000 rupees per unit. Everyone in BUILD was Karl Marx's brother.

Malcolm Buck was the ideologue for BUILD and for church intellectuals. I attended lots of their discussions. Sunita Patel was also there, with lots of others. I was the only beggar there, all the others were from well-to-do families, good booze, good money. So they would say, 'Today we will reflect about this.' They would ask me to start the meeting off. They told me that I should have a strong ideological background. They would come and pick me up to go to their meetings. After six months, I asked to debate with them: What have we achieved? After almost six months, I had had enough: this ideology flowing up and nothing getting done.

In 1973, with the Atomic Energy Commission pushing hard for the demolition of Janata, I went to see the head of the commission, Homi J Bhabha. He was very rude – called us dirty ugly fellows and told us that this was such an

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<sup>37</sup> Later to found the NGO Unnayan in Calcutta and to work with the National Campaign for Housing Rights.

<sup>38</sup> Later to found the Ahmedabad Study Action Group and to become President of Habitat International Coalition.

<sup>39</sup> A very well-known and widely read national weekly journal.

important project that not even God could stop this eviction. He refused to talk to us. No question of negotiation. So within a week, we organised so much political action and lots of demonstrations to get the attention of the municipal government. We also used the courts. Two days before the demolition was due to take place, we got a stay order from the courts. I went to Homi Bhabha and gave him the stay order and he got very angry. But the basis for the stay order was that the Atomic Energy Commission had not followed the due process of law to serve us with notice. At this time, the regulations governing evictions including the serving of notice were strict.

The court declaration in our favour was a big victory, but we knew that this was a temporary success. We never went to court thinking that we would get justice. The Atomic Energy Commission went to court three days later to claim that they had followed the regulations – but the judge ruled that they had failed to serve notices to each individual household who would be forced to move.

So when the municipal employees came the next week to serve notice of the eviction, we had a plan to foil them. We knew when the municipal staff would come and which block would be visited first – so we made sure that everyone knew that they either had to be out of their house when the municipal officials came or locked inside, ignoring any visitors, pretending that the house was empty. We were helped in this by sympathetic municipal employees. This meant another delay as the municipal officials had to go back to their offices and report that the house had been locked so it had not been possible to serve the notice. They then had to request permission to paste up the notice. But before a pasting order was possible, the house has to be visited three more times. We also took photos of all the locked houses to make sure we had proof of this. These were the kinds of strategies that can make the legal proceedings drag on. Another legal means of getting a delay was through one group in Janata saying that they would accept the notice – and then the setting up of an enquiry where you could present evidence against the eviction and argue and also go to appeal.

Half the municipal employees connived with us. We also sent threatening notes to the families of municipal employees, especially to employees' wives. So women would persuade their husbands not to work against us. It was easy

to get all this organised because there were hundreds of young people like me who were unemployed – so each was assigned activities and we were supported with food and tea from local donations.

When the eviction orders had finally all been served, we went to the citizens' court and won. So the Atomic Energy Commission took it to a higher court and won. We took it to an even higher court and won. Eventually it made its way to the Supreme Court. We had to hire two very well-known lawyers to help us. Soli Sorabjee (later the attorney general for India) and Panwallaker. These were very expensive: 7,000 rupees for ten minutes. Before the Supreme Court met, I managed to get in touch with two judges. I had to go to Lucknow to meet Justice Puntwallah and this was the first time I had been on an airplane. I took five *mullahs* with me, all of whom were known to the judge. He said that he agreed with us all but that he could not do anything and could not appear on the day that the judgement was made.

We won the case. Sanjay Gandhi (the eldest son of the prime minister, who also led the vast eviction/slum demolition programme in Delhi) is reported to have said, 'You are fools that you cannot get rid of this man.' I went to have dinner with Justice Krishnagar who said that justice is so expensive, the poor cannot afford it. He also told me that it was too late to stop the eviction because the prime minister (Indira Gandhi) was personally interested and all the people would have to move on technical grounds.

In 1974, 23 of us went to Delhi to try to talk to the prime minister and to get political support for stopping the eviction. I spent 29 days squatting in parliament in Delhi, waiting to talk to her. We had managed to get an appointment to meet her but the appointment kept being postponed. When we first arrived in Delhi, we went to meet various political parties. We met with the late Dr Kurian, vice-president of the parliament and a member of the Communist Party. I also met Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the radical progressive leaders and he gave us his support.<sup>40</sup>

In the end, only five of us could stay on in Delhi because we had no money, no food, no place to sleep. Every day, we met with the press, but the

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<sup>40</sup> Jayaprakash Narayan was one of the political leaders who led the opposition to Mrs Gandhi's government and to the Emergency.

appointment with the prime minister kept being postponed. We never kept quiet. We went to long meetings with all the different political parties (including the Congress Party that was in power) and their leaders. Remember that the Janata Party that opposed Mrs Gandhi took its name from our fight. We had various slogans – ‘Janata Bomb versus Atomic Bomb’. Sometimes we went to the gallery to watch the parliament. Two or three of us were in effect squatting in the parliament.

Despite the many postponements, I decided that I was not going back to Mumbai until I had a meeting with the prime minister. Finally, after many postponements and delays, we got a meeting with Mrs Gandhi. The meeting lasted for around 20 minutes and included five or six parliamentarians. At first, she would not look at me eye to eye. All the time she was talking to someone else, even though we were sitting in front of her. But finally, she did state that there would be no demolition of Janata Colony before talking to our action committee. I asked for this statement to be put in writing and was asked, ‘What do you mean by this?’ I stressed that this was a major issue that was also in the courts at that time. Finally, she agreed to give me the letter but I sat in reception until the letter was written and signed. I could not leave without it.

Then the next day, I took the train back to Mumbai, with the letter signed by the prime minister. But at Balzar station, around three hours out of Mumbai, some of the key leaders were waiting for us and told us that the police were waiting in Mumbai to arrest us. So all of us planned where to get off the train, when to pull the emergency chain and jump off. So none of us were on the train when it arrived in Mumbai. But it was still difficult to get back into Janata. I used to have a hideout – one of the drainage pipes where I kept my bedding and a pillow.

The next morning, everyone in Janata was expecting a huge demonstration, so we organised this. But to escape arrest, I surrounded myself with hundreds of women so the police could not get near me. No woman would allow the police to get near me. We had this demonstration that lasted for several hours just by a temple. We arranged a public address system with microphones. Then I went to meet the new chief minister (when I went to Delhi, there was one chief minister, by the time I came back there was

another). The Chief Minister told me very nicely, ‘Sit down, let me tell you that your position is very bad.’ I was called by Madam (Mrs Gandhi) at 2.30 in the morning. She said, ‘See that Janata is demolished before I come to Mumbai.’ This even though I was holding a letter signed by Mrs Gandhi saying that nothing would be done before the officials talked to us. This was when we started the court proceedings again.

Many times I was saved from arrest by hiding in the middle of a group of women and I could walk with them for 1,000 yards, without being seen. You could not do this in many parts of the world. Because I am small and at that time was very skinny, it was easy for me to be under the legs of women and they would stand around me. If they moved, I moved. Any woman – you only had to tap her on the leg and she would adjust and hide you under her clothes. I often walked like this, hidden from the police. One of the times I went to the high court, there were lots of police waiting to arrest me. But I had got inside the court without the police seeing me because I had entered surrounded by a group of women who had hidden me. I also got a white coat of one of the court staff and put it on. I also used to go and hide in the judge’s rooms.

On 31 January 1974, I got married. My friend Murti was in Byculla (an area of Mumbai with many pavement dwellers) – and when a girl walked past, he teased her. This girl was trying to get a passport to be able to go to the Gulf. At this time, I was also trying to get a passport. My friend was helping us both try to get passports and the International Social Development Organization was going to arrange a ticket for me to go to Papua New Guinea to talk to community activists there. Through this we met. Our marriage was arranged through my cousin. A special dinner was arranged. Our marriage was a big event and had 11–12 priests who officiated at it. I was told that I had to wear shoes for my marriage but it was very difficult to find shoes that fitted my small feet. In the end, I got children’s shoes but these were very painful. My father came for the marriage.

On the day of the marriage, a film crew from the Voice of America were making a film about family planning. I stood with my wife for half an hour and then went and worked with the film crew and was busy till the evening. Friends in Janata bought us things we would need for our household – two

plates, two glasses, kitchen equipment, stove, bed sheets. I sat with the gifts of money but by the time all the food had been paid for, there was not much left. My wife was not happy with the lack of money and I still had no home – and we had a big quarrel after fifteen days. The second month after the marriage, a small hut was arranged where we could stay.

We began playing militant games. We told the police that we had bombs and that we would blow up buildings if the demolition took place. When 20 of us went to meet the police commissioner, we told him that we would use bombs if you demolish us. The hope was that they would see us as too well organised and troublesome to do the eviction.

### In and out of jail

After 1967, I was put in the jail (lock up) so many times – and usually kept there for 3 or 4 hours. I was arrested some 67 times. As they kept arresting me, I changed my strategy and organised the women. One day in 1974, I was going somewhere when I was suddenly arrested and put in the local police station. After an hour, more than 10,000 people had come to demonstrate. Some of the women opened their blouses at the police, which embarrassed them. The women then got the key to the police station, unlocked it, let me out and then locked the police in the police station. More police arrived and things were very tense.

The police asked me to try to control the crowd because I was now free – and they said that there would be no bail. So I stood up and said that I was no longer under arrest. After that, the police became friendly and some even told me, ‘You are doing a good job’. After that, until the Emergency,<sup>41</sup> when they got an order to arrest me, they did not actually arrest me but would come and get a signature. I was arrested many times without actually being arrested. Much later, after the fall of Mrs Gandhi’s government, in 1977, the state government’s home department withdrew 35 cases against me – for instance, for being out of India, hiding or running away...

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<sup>41</sup> On 25 June 1975, Mrs Gandhi declared a National Emergency, after being found guilty of violating electoral laws, which also led to the arrest of many leaders and suspension of civil rights. This Emergency was revoked on 18 January 1977 and when elections were held, Mrs Gandhi’s party was defeated.



On 16 June 1975, they were trying to organise a demolition and I was there trying to stop it. There was a South Korean film crew there dressed as Muslims in burkhas. When I was arrested, they filmed it.

The staff from BUILD would close the office and come to the police station whenever I got arrested. Everyone would come. In 1976, a legal expert from London, Arnan Grover first appeared in India. He had met SK Das in London, and SK sent him to Mumbai. I was in hiding in my settlement at this time. I was holding a meeting in my settlement and the police heard that I was holding a meeting – so they came to arrest me. So I introduced the police to the people in the meeting and told them that Jockin had just left with such a such a lady – and I introduced Mr Arnan to them, saying he was a legal expert from London. He cried a whole night, saying, ‘Why did you introduce me to the police?’ So I said, ‘If you have this kind of fear why did you come?’ All these people, these experts, thought that they were coming to teach us – but we already had our own techniques that worked very well.

### Blocking phones, using ambulances as automatic handbill distributors

The experts wanted to teach us how to distribute hand bills. But we had already distributed hundreds of thousands of handbills. We had training camps in two locations. One was a *bangla* where we could have 300 people. Another in St Pius college. We could keep organised and in touch with each other with the phones but our phone bill was very low because we discovered how we could use the public phone for free – by inserting a railway ticket into the receiver. This meant we could make all our phone calls to all the MPs. We also learnt how to block the phones of ministers. In the Maharashtra Assembly there were questions asked as to how 30 ministers could have their phones cut at one time. We had designed this in Janata Colony with 100 people assigned one day to go to all the minister’s houses. Blocking their phones takes just a simple wire and two stones. It made it sound as if the phone was permanently engaged. We could block all 30 ministers’ phones at the same time – simply knowing where they were and shorting out their connections.

During the Emergency, we had to distribute material very carefully, because passing out hand bills was illegal. Supported by BUILD, we developed and printed hand bills. During the Emergency, a slum eviction law ordinance had

been passed and we needed to demonstrate against it. We had to have a huge demonstration. Shekar<sup>42</sup> joined this demonstration as a ten-year-old. Before the demonstration, we had a two-day training programme.

So people would go into all the railway stations in Mumbai at the same time with hand bills, rolled up inside chapattis. With one person located in each compartment of a train, just before the train left, everyone would throw up the handbills. I would be on the public phone – checking to see who was OK, who had escaped, who had been arrested. We had people with bicycles and rickshaws standing by.

We also used ambulances to distribute hand bills. You take 5–10 kilos of handbills, wet them, and then put them on top of an ambulance. As the ambulance drives around the city, so the bills at the top dry and blow off. We also used to go to buses and open the emergency gate. Don't travel in the bus. The minute the door is open, handbills are blown everywhere so everyone gets a handbill.

### May 1976 and the demolition of Janata Colony

On 14 May 1976, Mrs Gandhi's government declared the Emergency. This was a few days before the start of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat) in Vancouver, Canada to which I had been invited. But I said that if I am in the lock up or if the demolition takes place I cannot come. Lots of people came through India on their way to this conference to visit us in Janata – which made me realise how many groups were active in fighting demolitions.

In the evening, they arrested 23 of us. They threw me into a police van. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) got news about my arrest and announced over the radio that Jockin and his gang had been arrested. This probably saved my life. A new deputy commissioner of police had been brought in from the outside to organise my arrest because the local police would warn me if an arrest was about to take place. This deputy commissioner asked me how it was possible that the BBC had reported on my arrest so quickly. He had to let me go.

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<sup>42</sup> Who worked closely with Jockin in the National Slum Dwellers Federation.

I had to go to court the next day. The magistrate at the court laughed at the police and said, 'Look at this boy, how can he be causing such a big police force so much trouble?' He freed me for 1,000 rupees bail. The police then pressed another charge and took me back to the same judge later that day. The judge shouted at them, 'What is this? Is this man really an international criminal?' So the judge said 5,000 rupees bail this time. At that time, we had a very dangerous law. The police then booked me on this and produced me again in the same court to the same judge at 3.30 pm. The police and the judge argued for an hour. Then the judge said, 'Look at all the women, they all look like poor people. Look at this man, he does not have proper clothes, he has not shaved for two months.' The judge ruled that I should be given police protection, served by three people from outside the district, that would also ensure that I did not get involved in any agitation. This meant that I was to be given complete police protection for me and my family. From that day onward, I had a jeep and police officers to protect me. I could go all around the city, working, using the jeep, with the protection of the police.

On the morning 17 May 1976, the first demolition in Janata started – with thousands of police and municipal workers. But since I was protected by this court judgement, they could not arrest me. I could go there and help ensure that the demolition would go smoothly, make sure people got their houses, food, allotment etc. It was not possible to stop it. I saw what had happened about two months previously in Delhi, under the direction of Sanjay Gandhi. Turkman Gate was bulldozed while the inhabitants were there and many people were shot.<sup>43</sup> It was clear that the state was prepared to do this in Mumbai too, so we had no choice.

The eviction took place over 45 days and so I was busy working on this – with the move to the alternative site, with ensuring that everyone got resettled (and not just those who had documents and proof they had been living in Janata Colony). Everyone got a site at Cheetah Camp. Toilets, schools, police station, health centre, water standpipes – all had been built and had been waiting ten years to be used. One of the reasons that the authorities wanted

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<sup>43</sup> A large Muslim locality at Turkman Gate was bulldozed under the orders of Sanjay Gandhi in 1976. People had been living there for decades; those who resisted the bulldozers were shot at.

to get the eviction done was that the monsoons begin at the end of June and it is often possible to get a court stay to stop evictions during the monsoons.

### 1976–1985

With the Emergency declared, the police told me I had to get out of India. I went to the Philippines, with the help of the World Council of Churches, to help train community leaders. I was sent out with a three-month visa and went via Japan. In the Philippines, I worked with Denis Murphy. I started questioning their methodology for community organisation and action – there were endless discussions about this and about how to mobilise communities. They had too many rules, too many formulas, very formal reporting (Rajan Singh from BUILD was also there). I used to go to cinemas and sleep there – better than training. Every three months, I had to renew my visa – so I had to go outside the Philippines to do so – for instance to Japan, to Seoul (South Korea), Malaysia (Penang).

I got stuck in Seoul. I had been smuggled in to work with the Jesuits when I was in hiding.<sup>44</sup> I worked with the Korean Gandhian team, and also the exiled president and his wife. But I could not use the usual technique of being surrounded by women that I had used in India. The Koreans were worried that some of the key leaders were likely to get caught in a large demonstration. I showed the Koreans how I had managed to move around a city without the police knowing by hiding within a group of women – but they were horrified and did not think that this was appropriate.

I was out of India for a year and a half. I returned to India as soon as Mrs Gandhi lost the election.

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<sup>44</sup> The Jesuits and other church groups were very active, defending people's organisations and trying to stop evictions. Throughout the 1970s and for much of the 1980s, there were massive eviction programmes in Seoul..



In Cheetah Camp, the site to where the occupants of Janata Colony had been moved, a home had been allocated to me. I was told that I could train trainers – and was discouraged from going to the field ('The captain does not go to the field.'). After ten months, I left my home in Bandra and went back to Cheetah Camp. I took a room in one of the 10 by 10s (ten foot by ten foot) there. And stayed there. Struggling to make a living there, selling saris. Also getting into disagreements with a local NGO – which organised a demonstration on Saturday afternoon, mobilised 200 college students with placards, and held it at 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the municipal office – but the municipal office had closed at 2 o'clock. I had no job, no income, and had two children to support. Fr Jorge Anzorena and Jacques Bugnicourt came to visit.<sup>45</sup> Jacques Bugnicourt started supporting a publication I had started, *Voice of Slums* – through the organisation that had been set up many years

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<sup>45</sup> Fr Jorge Anzorena, a Jesuit priest who met Jockin for the first time in 1976 as part of his work, supporting urban poor groups through the Belgian foundation SELAVIP. See Sheela Patel's contribution on Fr Anzorena in Part 6. Jacques Bugnicourt was the founder of ENDA-Tiers Monde, one of the best-know African NGOs (based in Dakar, Senegal) that also developed affiliated offices in many other nations, including some in Asia and Latin America.

previously, the Social Welfare Centre. This also supported various local initiatives including a community bakery.

After returning to India from the Philippines, I travelled all over India – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, talking about the experience with Janata Colony. Again, making many contacts – mostly with chairs of action committees but also with staff of local NGOs. The Ecumenical Christian Centre in Bangalore provided board and lodging. I also got support for this work from Christian organisations and was I able to organise a meeting of 100 people including many slum leaders, a five-day workshop. At this workshop, we discussed the idea of forming a national federation. It was here that the National Slum Dwellers Federation was founded.

ActionAid supported a programme for 600 kids through NSK and this and other support from them helped fund my work. Local NGOs wanting me to work with them to get them money. In 1984, Sheela Patel<sup>46</sup> came to visit me for the first time – and after a period of visits and discussions, she founded the Indian NGO SPARC with some colleagues and I began to work with SPARC.

Bombay had a huge committee of slum leaders, and many other cities followed this example. All slums with action committees that were organised mainly to protest, demonstrate, march – make demands for land, water, cleaning of public toilets. Officials elected or deputed by these organisations. But they had no budgets. For instance, I endlessly pawned my typewriter when there was no money – so this typewriter went back and forth to the pawnshop. It was during these years that I saw a need to change the approach. I was doing all agitation, breaking this and that, being completely militant, but the material benefit to the people was zero. I couldn't even build one toilet. I had not even asked the government if *it* could build the toilet.<sup>47</sup>

There was also more interest in our work from other institutions at this point – including the Tata Institute where there was an interest in doing a survey of slums. I continued travelling around India: to Delhi, Ranchi, Madras and Bangalore for meetings of federations. We began developing the capacity to

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<sup>46</sup> See Sheela Patel's various contributions in parts 2, 5 and 6.

<sup>47</sup> From the interview with Lorna Kalaw Tirol in 2000.

do slum enumerations. And through SPARC and Mahila Milan, also seeing the power of savings. Now, we developed the tools that were to become central to the work of the federations – mapping, surveys, information collection – all tools for organising. At this time, every NGO was trying to manipulate or use me, except SPARC.

Jacques Bugnicourt from ENDA-Tiers Monde had invited me to go to Latin America – so I spent some months in Bogotá and also in Mexico in 1982. In February 1982, I was in a settlement in Bogotá for three days taking part in an invasion. The invasion began one night starting around 11.00pm and finished the settlement process by 12.30pm before the police came. I was in charge of laying the water line. I coloured myself and changed my dress. Helped with the invasion. I was in the settlement for three days. 'If we ourselves don't know what we want, lots of people like NGOs and big-project *wallahs* will be very happy to come and dance on our heads'.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2 Jockin and the fight to save Janata Colony

*Shirish B Patel*

I'm a civil engineer. I was one of the three authors of the idea of New Bombay and when the government of Maharashtra set up CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra) in 1970 and accepted the idea, I was invited to head the planning, design and execution works of the project. Our planning team of eight multidisciplinary eminent professionals agreed, among other objectives for the new city, that it should have no slums. To understand slums I visited several, including Janata Colony, which is where I first met Jockin.

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<sup>48</sup> Quote from Jockin in an interview with Lorna Kalaw Tirol.



*SPARC Board members and guests, 2006. Back Row L to R – David Satterthwaite, Vijay Agarwal, Celine d’Cruz, Aseena Viccaji, Rajesh Tandon, Sundar Burra. Front row L to R – Srilata Batliwala, BK Agarwala, Jockin, Shirish Patel, Sheela Patel, Meera Bapat, Kalpana Sharma.*

Jockin. What a strange and unique name. Born, as it happens, of Jockin’s kindness to others.

He was Joachim, named after the father of Mary (mother of Jesus) and born into a well-to-do Tamil-speaking Christian family from Salem District in Tamil Nadu. Modest, congenial and unassuming person that he was, he simplified the spelling and pronunciation of his name in later years to Jockin. His father’s name was Arputham. In South India, it is quite common to use the name of the village as the family name, and either use it as an opening initial, rarely expanded, or drop it altogether. Your full name is then a combination of your name and your father’s name, generally in that order. So he was Jockin Arputham or Arputham Jockin, whatever you wanted, he didn’t care.

The family became impoverished. Upset with his family, 15-year old Jockin ran away to Bangalore, working first as a labourer while he learnt carpentry. He finally had a carpentry certificate, but work was hard to find and poorly paid. So eventually, soon after he turned 17, he agreed to accompany an uncle to Bombay. On arrival there he went directly to Janata Colony in Chembur.



That said, this is not the story of Jockin's life thereafter. It is the story of Janata Colony: how it started and how it was bulldozed thirteen years after Jockin fetched up there, to make way for recreation spaces for employees of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

Coincidences are a fact of life. One of these is that it was my father who started Janata Colony. He was municipal commissioner of Bombay for six years, 1946–52. The other coincidence is how I discovered the connection. In the course of designing the Kemps Corner Flyover in 1965, I met and worked closely with MS Nerurkar, the municipal executive engineer in charge of the project. Years later, when I happened to mention Janata Colony to him, he told me that, as a young engineer just starting work in the corporation, one of his early assignments was to clear illegal hutments out of an area in the north of the island city of Bombay. He remembered my father with fondness. The residents were to be moved to a new location at Janata Colony, where resettlements had begun a year or two earlier. He recalled his arrival at the hutments with trucks and personnel all ready to carry out the demolition. The residents appealed to him to please come back a week later, by which time they themselves would have dismantled their hutments and be ready to move. Nerurkar rang my father to ask if he could postpone the demolition by a week. My father said, 'Yes of course, if the hutment dwellers are willing to cooperate, let's give them that extra time.' And sure enough, a week later the residents were ready for the trucks, with their homes dismantled. The removal process went smoothly, without rancour or disruption.

The first residents to move into Janata Colony were a group of 31 people who were cleared out of the Sion-Raoli area in September 1949. The new site was about 10km beyond the end of the city. There was no public transport. No civic amenities. The setting was entirely rural, mango trees and agriculture. The only redeeming feature was that the site abutted the main road that then curved around the Trombay Hill to the under-construction Canada-India atomic reactor.

So the move had not been without resistance from the hutment dwellers. Their leader had gone on a hunger strike and gone to jail. And that early wrangling had won some concessions. After the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) completed the formalities of land acquisition of Janata

Colony's 54 acres in 1953, the hutment residents were issued allotment letters assigning them plots of 15 x 20 foot, some larger, some smaller in a proper layout. When they asked for proper deeds of title, they were issued rent receipts by the BMC varying from 3 to 6 rupees per month. With the Bombay Rent Act in force, they were assured that this was as good as a title in perpetuity. Reinforcing that assurance was the BMC's installation of common water taps, construction of lavatories, paving of some roads and street lighting. The chief minister Morarji Desai repeated that assurance of permanence, as did the mayor, SK Patil. More and more residents continued to arrive in Janata Colony, in batches of sometimes hundreds at a time, as other areas in the city were cleared of hutments.

The Canada-India reactor was commissioned in the mid-1950s. Work on DAE's residential complex started later, and the first occupants did not move in until 1969. But the efforts to shift Janata Colony had started well before that. DAE wanted that particular 54-acre plot because it was a protrusion into an otherwise continuous land parcel abutting the road leading to the reactor. In 1963, DAE offered and BMC agreed to accept a Rs 6.2 million compensation to move Janata Colony to Ghatkopar, another suburb of Bombay that was, if anything, even closer to the city. There were now about 2,300 hutments in Janata Colony. The residents rejected the offer, saying Ghatkopar was low-lying and subject to flooding. So the BMC decided in 1969 to put the 54 acres it had acquired at Ghatkopar to some other use.

Meanwhile, the DAE had bought 47 acres of land a mile and a half further down the same road, but on the opposite side, between the road and the sea. It had also put in some roads and common toilet blocks. The land was low-lying and subject to flooding at the highest tides. It was called Cheetah Camp. It offered this to the BMC in exchange for the Janata Colony plot. By now, the tenements in Janata Colony numbered 3,700. Each family would be allotted a space of 10 by 12 foot, or less than half the space they had in Janata Colony. The proposal was accepted by BMC on 7 July 1969, and the residents of Janata Colony were served notices to quit. Jockin was 23 and had been a resident of Janata Colony since age 17. He was at the forefront, organising resistance when residents protested. Assisting him full-time in later years when I visited Janata Colony in the mid-1970s was a young girl called Vasanthi, 18 years old, who had grown up in Janata Colony and had

matriculated from the adjoining DAE school. Though legal disputes continued, no action on the ground was taken until the forcible eviction attempted in May 1975.

The eight-member multidisciplinary team of professionals that led the planning work of New Bombay was determined that the new city should have no slums. Housing would be provided across the spectrum of all income groups, in proportion to the size of each income group. As part of the process of understanding why slums happen, I went around several slums in Bombay.

Janata Colony was the only so-called 'slum' I visited repeatedly, and the only place where (thanks to Jockin) I once spent a night. The place had 7,450 hutments at that time, in the mid-1970s. What astonished me was the solidity and sense of permanence the huts had about them. The residents not only spent money but also built with a care and attention to detail that can only come from a feeling of security of tenure, the sense that you will never be asked to leave without equivalent alternative or perhaps even better accommodation. There were two churches (of which one was purpose built, the other a Protestant one in someone's house), five mosques and eight temples. The place had four schools (two run by the BMC), two municipal markets and a police station. It was said to hold a population of 72,000, including 600 BMC employees, and 1,200 people who worked in the DAE complex—which means that while the DAE was building its residential complex to house its staff on all three sides around Janata Colony other than the road, it was careful not to build housing for its most poorly paid employees. That omission of course was common to all government undertakings.

On 29 December 1975, the BMC's enquiry officer gave an order saying that the fact that land had earlier been acquired for a public purpose (that of resettling squatters) did not mean that it could not later be re-acquired for a superior public purpose (that of housing DAE staff). How was constructing 700 flats for DAE staff superior to housing 72,000 low-income residents? According to the enquiry officer at the time, 'This must be viewed as a part of an overall project of the Department of Atomic Energy, which is very vital to the interest of the nation [...] It must be left to the Bhabha Atomic Research

Centre to implement its entire project in a manner it thinks proper and no outside agency should be allowed to interfere with it.'

The enquiry officer's order should be seen in the context of the times. Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency in India six months earlier, on 25 June 1975. With so many prominent politicians randomly put into jail, and India being run as a dictatorship, there can be little doubt that bureaucrats and the judiciary immediately became more servile. What happened in Janata Colony might not have happened in more normal times.

The Supreme Court rejected the Janata Colony residents' plea for leave to appeal. The BMC Act of 1888 allows the municipal commissioner to declare that any municipal land required by the corporation for a public purpose must then be vacated. So, there was nothing illegal about what the BMC was doing. The Supreme Court – while rejecting the residents' leave to appeal – asked the BMC not to evict them before 15 May 1976, thus giving them a month's time to move peacefully to Cheetah Camp.

There is something in law called 'estoppel' which means that if someone in authority has given you an assurance that something will not be done, then that assurance is binding and the authorities can be 'estopped' from doing it. The residents decided to use the month that they had to establish estoppel. Unfortunately, there was no clear record of the assurances given by the former chief minister and mayor that their resettlement was permanent. My father had died. PR Nayak, a former municipal commissioner (successor to my father, 1952–55) was prepared to swear an affidavit that the resettlement was indeed intended to be permanent. So was MS Nerurkar, the engineer in charge when some early families moved there.

A suit was filed in the City Civil Court on 15 May 1976, the last day of grace allowed by the Supreme Court. A day earlier, a delegation of the residents had gone to a leading politician, no doubt with Jockin as a prominent member of the delegation, asking that eviction be delayed until after the monsoon, after which the residents would move peacefully to Cheetah Camp. The suit was admitted, but an injunction to stay eviction was denied, the judge saying that verbal assurances could hardly constitute a sufficient

estoppel. Are affidavits verbal assurances? Or is this the heavy shadow of the Emergency distorting justice?

That eviction would take place on 17 May was well known within the colony. On the morning of 16 May, all entrances to the colony had been barricaded by the residents with rubble stones and manned by groups of residents. By that evening, the police had moved in in force, with 35 vans and special reserve police (SRP) personnel brought in from other cities. A wireless station was set up in one of the DAE buildings overlooking the site to coordinate operations. Blinding floodlights were turned on. A number of water tankers were standing by with water cannon. It was a threatening, terrifying scene.

By the middle of the morning of 17 May, the colony was full of police and SRP, almost one policeman per hut. The power line was cut. The municipal demolition squad had only to demolish a few huts before the residents stopped them and said they would prefer to demolish their huts themselves. A few families had already made their move to Cheetah Camp. On arrival there, they found they were expected to sign a statement accepting their new allotments in Cheetah Camp of a 10 by 15-foot pitch on an 11-month leave and licence basis. Nobody had told them this earlier. Resistance again immediately developed.

I attended the public meeting that was held in the market square in Janata Colony that evening. After that, seven women and 11 men leaders were arrested, including Jockin. The next day dismantling and shifting continued peacefully.

The shifting took place a few weeks before the monsoon broke. Jockin was living in Cheetah Camp when I visited him there in July 1976. There was no power supply. I found the area flooded under the high tide. At one point on the road there was a series of stacks of bricks, set up like pillars, to be used as stepping stones to reach a *charpoy* (bed), standing with its legs in the water and the horizontal strings above water level so you could lie down without getting wet. Several people died in Cheetah Camp that monsoon, especially among the elderly and little children, in those impossible living conditions.

It was after this experience at age 30 that Jockin started the National Slum Dwellers Federation.

Decades later, visiting Cheetah Camp again, I found a humming settlement, proper buildings of ground and one upper storey. Shops below, homes above. A cheerful, thriving, energetic, glitzy, dazzlingly lit place. 'How come this sense of security of tenure,' I asked Jockin, 'When the paperwork is so poor?' He said, 'Don't worry. No one will dare to move us now.'

## 4. WHAT JOCKIN TAUGHT US

### 4.1 How to make the ordinary extraordinary: the practice of community organisation according to Jockin

*Celine d’Cruz*

This contribution is a celebration of Jockin my mentor, who taught me, above all, about the nature of power and vulnerability and the capacity of organised communities to transform their vulnerability into an opportunity for the benefit of all the urban poor across countries and cultures.



*With Celine d’Cruz in 1994*



*With Celine d’Cruz in 2011*

I was an intermediary science student and found my time was in laboratories devoid of people. I decided to do my masters in social work and met SPARC staff. I noticed that I was unable to be the social worker I was trained to be

and I was keen for something beyond the traditional social worker-client relationship. I wanted to link my need to stay connected with science and with people and decided to study geography. It was in the summer of 1985 that I first met Jockin at SPARC. I started spending time with him and saw how he got across to the street children and the pavement dwellers. All the pieces fell in place for me. I dropped the idea to study further. With Jockin, I noticed that my lessons in physics and geography were unfolding in front of me. It was all connected. It was magic.

Jockin recognised early on that the 'Big Change' was not going to come from the 'Big Revolution' but from the routine of simply doing everyday rituals. By bringing presence to the ordinary rituals of the federation (NSDF), hundreds of communities discovered the extraordinary. For example, the simple practice of collecting savings and information each day is a new and different experience for every community in every city. When hundreds of communities stay with the practice, they build the resilience they need to adapt to human-induced and natural disasters.

Jockin called himself a 'flying slum dweller'. As the work of the federation grew, Jockin had to literally fly to many cities and regions and meet new communities. While some treated him like god, those of us who worked closely with him in building the slum dwellers' movement witnessed his magic and had the opportunity to experience his wizardry along with his frailties. The ecstasy and the pain felt on this journey with Jockin is not easy to talk about. However, the wisdom I gained strengthened my belief in why going back to the basics is so essential for organisation building. Jockin's fundamentals of community organisation are as relevant today as they were when we started to walk this path with him in 1985.

Jockin's very human approach to leading people came from his life's stories. He was not perfect, nor did he try to become perfect. But as Jockin grew in power, he had to learn to walk the tight rope of pragmatism while responding with his heart. Some of us embraced the richness of this human endeavour as he was always striving to improve conditions for other slum dwellers. This was Jockin's essence and his strength.

Jockin's politicisation started as a young boy in the mining district of Kolar



Gold Fields, outside Bangalore City, where his father was a foreman and a union leader in the gold mines. Here he witnessed the death of many miners.

Jockin ran away from home and moved to Bangalore where he struggled to find work as a carpenter. He moved to Mumbai in 1962 and came to live in Janata Colony. From the late 1960s, Janata faced eviction threats from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Jockin was at the centre of the opposition. His slogan for organising was 'People power against atomic power'. They delayed the eviction for many years<sup>49</sup> but in the end, they could not prevent it. Despite all his efforts with local and national government, Jockin was unable to stop the onslaught of the state machinery. On 17 May 1976, the eviction began and 70,000 people were forced to move to Cheetah Camp.

This incident was a turning point for Jockin as it transformed the way he related to vulnerability produced by evictions, not just for himself and his family but for his community and for other communities in the city of Mumbai. Until this day, residents of Cheetah Camp fly black flags to mark the 17th of May.

For Jockin, the real fight had just begun and he was determined to reduce the suffering of thousands of families that face the fear of evictions in the city on a daily basis. His own experience made him realise why it was so important to prepare communities to do their homework before a dialogue with government. As a young organiser, Jockin adopted Saul Alinsky's tactics of manoeuvring and baiting the establishment.<sup>50</sup> As he evolved as a leader, he saw the relevance of Paulo Freire's work of deeper learning and reflection for teaching communities to break away from their 'culture of silence'.<sup>51</sup> In his work, Jockin used a combination of both.

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<sup>49</sup> For more details on the fight to avoid Janata Colony's eviction, see Shirish B. Patel's contribution and also Jockin's own account of his life and involvement in the fight to save Janata Colony in Part 3.

<sup>50</sup> Saul Alinsky (1909–1972) was an American community organiser and author of the book *Rules for Radicals* (1971).

<sup>51</sup> Paulo Freire (1921–1997) was a Brazilian educator whose ideas on the role of education for the poor are extremely influential.

Stopping evictions and providing secure tenure is not on the agenda of any political party or trade union. Politicians may promise the sky before elections but seldom deliver on their promises. Jockin once stood for local council elections with the hope of delivering to the urban poor only to realise that this path of representative politics was very limiting. He was not equipped to carry his constituency along while building the collective leadership necessary for translating policy into homes for thousands of slum dwellers in the city. This reflection prompted Jockin to seek new ways of organising and mobilising poor communities outside of party politics and to start a pan-Indian movement of slum dwellers called the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) of India, which today works in over 50 towns and cities. Jockin did not know then that 20 years later he would pioneer a platform for over 30 national federations of slum/shack dwellers in Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

In 1978, Jockin designed a one-page questionnaire called a settlement profile. It was designed to collect information about the total number of slums in the city, the land they occupied, available basic services and also information on the various social/political/religious organisations in each settlement. Through this process, he met other community leaders like himself. This was also a starting point for communities when they met each other for the first time and reflected on the new knowledge produced by them on the slums in their city.

Through a process of learning and reflection, Jockin broke many myths about the urban poor. The information collected by them proved that the poor did not impinge on the city's resources but in fact contributed to the city's economy and gave them a right to a decent home and to aspire for a better life in the city.

I remember my first meeting with Jockin with great clarity although I did not realise then that I was about to be re-schooled by him and that SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan were going to be my new family. Jockin chose to partner with SPARC with the aim of strengthening the work of NSDF and was attracted to SPARC's work with women pavement dwellers. The pavement dwellers were poorer than other slum dwellers as they squatted on the pavements, worked in the informal economy and had no access to land.

With Jockin, I experienced his magic so often. He always made something out of nothing when it came to his work with and devotion to poor people. I learnt that when lots of people aspire to something in an organised manner, they develop the power to manifest those aspirations. Jockin himself aspired to the happiness of all the urban poor and until the end of his life worked consistently to reduce their suffering. I also experienced the vulnerability of communities when they were not organised. When you are a poor community, to be organised and connected to a larger network of slum dwellers is a blessing.



*Jockin talking to Sophia Zuber Road pavement dwellers in Mumbai, 2006*

## **The basic practice of community organisation according to Jockin**

### **Begin with the poorest and most vulnerable communities**

This ensures that all get included. Organising the better-off communities does not always translate into opening up space for the very poor to be included. The pavement dwellers were not on NSDF's agenda: in fact, the pavement dwellers were an embarrassment to the slum dwellers as they

squatted on the street. Jockin was quick to see that including them would strengthen the overall agenda of NSDF. He consciously created systems that worked for the very poor communities. I learnt then that when you earn daily and spend daily it becomes easier to save daily. It was so much easier for the better-off families with regular incomes to take loan after loan. However, it was not the same for poorer families who earned irregular incomes and often were unable to pay off even their first loan. A community leader from Kgotsong in the Free State, Rachel Masumpa, opened my eyes when she said that she would avoid going to the saving meetings as she could not afford to give 30 rand (around US\$2) each month.

### The greater the vulnerability, the greater the survival instinct and the motivation to act and bring change

Vulnerable communities are ready to take higher risks as they have nothing to lose and often become good influencers of change. When other women from the slums locally and internationally met the women on the streets from Mumbai their reaction was, 'If they can transform the quality of their life through their organisation, we can also do it.' The pavement dwellers of Mumbai had a burning problem of evictions that occurred daily or weekly. Similarly, women and young girls living on the streets or along the railway tracks were even more vulnerable and, without sanitation facilities, they had to wait until dark to relieve themselves. Such women were highly motivated to change their condition and had the potential of influencing other communities. Jockin saw the value in looking after the more vulnerable groups of the urban poor and in their role in breaking the inertia for those settlements who took longer to change.

### The power of citywide organising

When communities organise citywide, they bring together their collective wisdom, strengths and resources to address their specific and collective needs. Caring for each other's agenda develops the capacity to think about each other's problems and solutions. By collecting citywide information and savings, communities build capacity to negotiate for more robust alternatives. For example, in a city like Mumbai where the land prices are high, without community organising, city authorities would be unlikely to give land to pavement dwellers. It took a long wait of 25 years for the pavement families to find a decent home. Alone, they could not have achieved what

they did achieve. But by building that critical voice along with other groups of the urban poor in the city, they were able to prepare for the marathon. For 25 years, the pavement women leaders supported other communities locally and, through exchange visits, supported federations in other countries to secure decent homes. In doing so, they built the stamina and patience to wait till their turn came. This could only happen because the pavement dwellers were part of the larger citywide network of slum dwellers. It was also easier for government to engage with a single organisation with a voice and identity. In the Mumbai Urban Transport Project II (MUTP-II), NSDF, under Jockin's leadership supported the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (RSDF) and along with SPARC worked closely with the state government and railway authorities to resettle over 18,000 families living along the railway tracks.<sup>52</sup>

### Breaking the enormity of the problem into small parts makes organising manageable

Listing, counting and categorising communities according to land ownership and type of vulnerability made it easier for communities to organise around their special needs, to strategize and engage directly with a particular land authority. The 6 million slum dwellers in the city of Mumbai could be easily organised into federations according to the land they occupied: Airport Slum Dwellers Federation, Dharavi Vikas Samiti (DVS), RSDF, Pavement Dwellers Association and Port Trust Federation. Jockin used the word 'federation' to describe a network of communities organised according to the type of land occupied (state, central or municipal). Communities and their leadership identified issues that were land specific. For example, slums located on airport lands had no access to basic services like toilets. After the MUTP-II was completed, showing community management of resettlement was possible, NSDF/RSDF engaged with railway authorities in other cities within the country and outside. Jockin arranged for the Kenyan railway authorities to visit Mumbai on a learning exchange. Today, the railway authorities in Kenya work closely with the federation in Nairobi to find joint solutions for families living along the railway tracks.

### Women are natural organisers

Traditionally, most community leaders were men. After the Janata Colony

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<sup>52</sup> See also Sheela Patel's and Chris Hoban's contributions in Part 5.

evictions, Jockin admitted that he invited community women only when he needed to add to the numbers in the march against evictions. However, he was quick to realise that he had failed to empower them as leaders. Without women the organisation was much weaker. Jockin learnt from that and afterwards, he opened up space for women to participate in the organisation. He was the first to acknowledge at community meetings that women had communication skills which when used for the collective good of the community had the power to accelerate change and improve the quality of the organisation. Besides, he noticed that women have the stamina to stay with discomfort and pain in order to make change happen. Their instinct to protect their children and families make women invaluable agents of change. Today, Mahila Milan is a strong entity but there is a need to be vigilant and guard their space as it is easy to erode it in the presence of traditional male leaders.

### It is good practice to have separate spaces for men and women to organise

By creating separate and safe spaces for organising, young and adult women do not have to compete with the traditional leadership. Jockin's life's work was to build the capacity of Mahila Milan and redefine their relationship with the men in their community. Jockin and other members of NSDF were role models for the men and helped them set the tone for this new engagement. As women acted on issues that benefited the family and the community, men realised the need to support them. When large number of men do this, it becomes easier for the community to accept and see the value of having women in leadership positions.

### The power of savings and information

Money and information are essential tools that have the potential to improve the collective bargaining power of slum dwellers. A single family with their meagre income cannot afford a house in the city. It seemed like an impossible task, but Jockin taught hundreds of communities to dream and to realise their dream. When hundreds of communities collect their savings and bring it together as city-level funds, they are in a much better position to leverage external finance for land, housing or basic services. Similarly, their collective knowledge of the lands in the city makes them equipped to find better alternatives. The daily practice of collecting savings and information

with diligence builds the capacity of communities to manage the more complex issues. Experience has it that communities who develop this discipline simply become more resilient when they have to deal with a crisis.



*Explaining daily savings to Derek Hanekom at Byculla, Mumbai, 1995*

### Everything is workable when communities are organised

Building trust is essential for organising communities and for strengthening the movement. The methods Jockin adopted seem counterintuitive and continuously challenge mainstream logic. For example, in the formal world, when you take out a loan and default on making repayments you get blacklisted and have no access to the next loan. When communities organise considering the needs of each member, they realise that those who default do so because of some good reason beyond their control such as a personal crisis or a bad family situation. Maybe less than 1 per cent of those who default do so wilfully. Punishing people who default is not a solution and experience has shown that when given a second and third loan, the poorer families tide over their crisis better and can get back on their feet faster.

Building norms and procedures that work for the poorest opens the space for solutions in all kinds of situations. This can only happen when communities are organised.

### Collective learning leads to change

Regular community meetings and exchanges open the space for collective learning, reflection and consolidation. For instance, after an eviction Jockin often made it the practice of narrating what happened before, during and after the eviction. Every meeting started with the story. This discipline and practice established the steps of evictions both from the perspective of the demolition squad and as experienced by the community. As women narrated their stories again and again, they became stronger and confident. They understood the local government structures and the various departments and even the law. The people in the demolition squad and the officers became real people to them. This exercise of telling the story, listening, reflecting, learning and taking action became an art and a science and it was magical to see the shift and transformation in so many women. It removed the fear of evictions and strengthened their collective force to prepare for the next one. There were times when an eviction became a playing field for the community to discard unwanted junk and protect the items that had value to them. This would often surprise the demolition squad who fulfilled their duty of completing the 'demolition' with minimum effort. Jockin turned the terrible experience of evictions into one that empowered the community. As communities became organised and more confident, they would use the demolition trucks to clear their own mess and rubble and fill the trucks with unwanted material that they did not use any more (rusted tin sheets, torn plastic or rotten bamboo).

### From agitation to engagement

Shifting from the politics of agitation to that of engagement changes the quality of the relationship between organised communities and the government. Jockin's experience taught him never to go empty handed to the negotiating table. He always had information about the slums and the lands in the city in the palm of his hand. He always presented alternative solutions when talking to authorities and always had more information than the government. Going prepared with facts and workable solutions often surprises the officials, builds trust and opens the doors for further



engagement. Very often, Jockin gave government officials a taste of their own power. Bureaucrats are unaware that they have the power to influence change even with small actions. He always invited senior officials to visit the community and showed them how small things made a difference, such as giving permission to construct a community toilet and inaugurate it. Sometimes it was just getting the officer to pick up the phone and talk to the right person. Jockin never left a single leaf unturned in his quest for bringing relief to the urban poor.

### Instigate change by walking the walk and not just talking

Jockin always said that we have many beautiful state policies which do not get implemented. By implementing precedent-setting projects, communities learnt to change policy through changing practice. 'Showing and doing' is a testimony of what works and what does not. By implementing small and large upgrading projects, communities bring an authenticity to the practice and can show the city how workable their solutions are. Implementing projects is proof of the capacity of the community to lead, administer, manage resources and work with the complexities of managing construction as well as post-project maintenance. This way of showing and doing has instigated many local governments to give small and large contracts to local federations to implement. In Uganda for example, local government changed procurement rules to include communities.

### Final reflections

Jockin's journey over the last 40 years was about strengthening and building urban poor organisations to enable them to negotiate with the formal city. This endeavour led to thousands of families finding a permanent home in the city.

These days, the speed of development is so compelling and poor communities have to adapt constantly to the changing nature of our institutions. Community leaders today have to deal with increasing complexities. Jockin demonstrated that staying with the basics can help communities navigate complex times. The daily practice of saving, collecting information and holding regular meetings builds the capacity of communities to tide over internal and external threats.

Jockin's authenticity as a leader came from his ability to navigate complexities and step into his vulnerabilities. Jockin taught us that through compassion, common humanity, centeredness and trust we can collectively find solutions. Some of us took that leap of faith and stepped in by his side and I can only say that my journey with Jockin has marked me for my lifetime.

My work with the federation also taught me that when you are too busy following the master you might stop questioning the master seriously. Like the Zen saying, 'When you meet the Buddha, you have to kill it.' Society is built upon false authority. Institutions hoard authority and do everything to appear authoritative. This is a game mankind plays with itself and it brings a lot of pain. With Jockin I learnt not to expect anyone or any institution to give you the truth. You cannot outsource this job to anyone, especially if you are poor. You need to discover it yourself. It has to be totally owned by you. I now understand why it is so important to recall our own authority as people and communities and why one leader alone cannot do it all.

This experience with Jockin and other community leaders has made me contemplate the role of leadership in movement building. How do we navigate these complex times? What kind of check mechanisms need to be put in place to protect the backs of our leaders while ensuring they stay accountable? How do we ensure that the integrity of the basic practices is not compromised? How can we build collective leadership? Why is building an authentic leadership as important, if not more important, than building houses? How can we find that balance between tackling the material aspects of poverty and the non-tangible assets of building resilient communities? How can we do both without compromising one in favour of the other? With Jockin I learnt that everything is workable when communities are organised.

## 4.2 Jockin: my mentor

*Gautam Chatterjee, with Sheela Patel*

It was May 1988. As a young Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, I had just finished my first rural-sector field-posting in Thane Zilla Parishad. I was looking forward to my collector and district magistrate posting, like my other IAS batch mates who had already been posted as district collectors, when the rude shock came. My posting orders as district collector, first to Ahmednagar

and then to Wardha, got cancelled in quick succession, thanks to some overzealous political functionaries of Western Maharashtra and Vidarbha, and I got posted instead as the director of the Prime Minister's Grant Project (PMGP), Mumbai.

Though disappointed at not getting a district collector's posting, reading 'Prime Minister' in the posting heading did excite me with the thought that it would be a challenging assignment. Very soon, I came to know what it entailed. The then-Prime Minister had announced a 100 crore rupees<sup>53</sup> grant for the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan sometime in 1985. But since nothing had happened thereafter, the government wanted a young energetic officer. That is what I was told when I took over as director of PMGP, obviously to motivate me to take up a very challenging non-starter project.

In my first reconnaissance visit to understand Dharavi, I met and interacted with many stakeholders, mainly functionaries of SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan. The one person who stood out among all the rest was the diminutive Jockin Arputham. This short guy who spoke with a heavy South Indian accent was just superb in his communication. Language – whether it was broken Hindi, Marathi or English – was never a barrier when it came to connecting and communicating with politicians, civil servants, developers or the urban poor community. The first lesson I learnt from Jockin was that if you have to do something for the community, you need to listen to them and communicate with them. I knew, in this new sector of affordable housing and housing for the less-endowed communities, the key to success is learning to communicate and Jockin turned out to be my mentor.

Thereafter, in my every interaction with the communities residing in the localities of RP Nagar and Netaji Nagar in Dharavi, Jockin was by my side helping me understand their problems, which needed to be resolved by using the PMGP funds. Indeed, unique solutions emerged in the form of in-situ slum redevelopment as we, along with the communities, planned and executed the rehabilitation of buildings.

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<sup>53</sup> 1 crore = 10 million. In 1985, 100 crore rupees were equivalent to around US\$34.7 million.



*With Gautam Chatterjee at the launch of the Suryodaya Housing Project, July 2000*

We agreed to disagree on many things. But what stood out was that Jockin taught me the art of listening and communicating to understand a problem, articulate possible redressal in consultation with those who are facing the problem, and involving the urban poor community in decision-making.

This art (which Jockin very subtly passed on to me) helped me throughout my career, most of which was in the housing sector. Whether it was formulating the relocation plan for the airport land slum dwellers of Rafique Nagar or communicating with the officials carrying out ruthless demolitions of protected slum dwellers along the railway tracks, every time I found Jockin by my side and I continued to learn from him.

I am sad my mentor is physically not by my side. But I am sure he is pleased that his trainee, supporter and admirer in me continues to fondly remember him.

## Gautam Chatterjee as chief of the Slum Rehabilitation Authority

*Sheela Patel*

Three significant events come to mind involving Gautam Chatterjee and Jockin. Each was important for being ‘precedent setting’ in the sense of showing new and more effective ways to act.

The first was when Jockin wanted to demonstrate how communities could take up Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) projects. In this, the development under discussion was Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society.



*The Rajiv Indira project in Dharavi, around 2005*

Fifty-four households living on collector’s land in Dharavi wanted to take up a joint venture with the Indian Alliance, and their design was to build a ground plus three floor apartment building. Each apartment would be 14 feet high, which would enable community residents to add a mezzanine floor of 100 square feet to the 225 square feet they were entitled to. They also asked for

a wider corridor so that it could provide more public space for the children to play. Most of the other developers who were taking up SRA projects made a representation that this should not be permitted as it would become a demand that everyone else made and would increase costs by 35 per cent per square foot. Gautam not only passed the order to allow this but also attended a ground-breaking ceremony. On the day the residents entered their homes, he and his family (who are very talented singers) came and sang to the community!

The second significant event was the relocation of residents of Rafique Nagar from airport land. As with the extra space for those in the Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society, this was a precedent-setting project. It showed how to design and manage relocation. Around 1,400 households had homes that were right beside the active runway. It had always been a problem for both the airport and the residents. All planes had to take an additional U-turn before taking off, resulting in large additional fuel costs each day. The residents' representation on how to design and manage the relocation was taken by Jockin to the housing department and was delegated to the SRA to take forward. The design and implementation processes were then undertaken by Jockin and Gautam together with the residents, producing relocation for the households. Here was a demonstration that given a good process, the other 98,000 households around the airport could be relocated if they were directly involved... But this is something that still has not happened.

The third significant event which has proved very critical in railway resettlement was the Kanjurmarg slum relocation and the development of the transit housing model. The railway authorities had funds to upgrade the Kanjurmarg station area – but this would soon lapse if not used. Discussions on the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) were suspended even though the policy of relocation had been passed (that in itself was an amazing precedent). The Urban Development Department of the government of Maharashtra agreed to give land across from the station to rehouse the 900 households living in Kanjurmarg slum. But it was not possible to build tenements in that short period, so Jockin and Gautam came up with the possibility of transit housing. Here, communities paid for temporary shelter while the railways covered the costs of landfilling, creating roads and

pathways and bringing in water and toilets to the new site. The land was transferred to SPARC until the permanent houses were constructed. Jockin and Gautam put together the whole design of the process and the management of its various elements.

Before any of this was completed, Gautam was moved to the post of additional commissioner of the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Among his various activities there, he began to work on the policy and strategy for the relocation of pavement dwellers. Pavement dwellers were now included with slum dwellers as being eligible for relocation (although they could not be given permission to build on-site). That was made possible by Gautam and Jockin with and on behalf of the pavement dwellers.

### 4.3 Making change happen: lessons and inspiration from my friend Jockin

*Somsook Boonyabancha and Thomas Kerr*

This text comes from conversations about Jockin that Somsook and Thomas Kerr had in the offices of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in May 2019.

#### Somsook's recollections

I first met Jockin in what must have been around 1987. At that time, I was a board member of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) and was attending one of their meetings in Delhi. The meeting was mostly about the HIC constitution and procedures, all of which was quite tiring for me. I was more interested in seeing how we could use the HIC platform to make the Asia regional process more interesting, more active and more supportive of people-oriented action. At that time, Father Jorge Anzorena was director of Selavip<sup>54</sup> in Asia, and was very active in going around every year visiting key community activists and groups in Asia and writing about them in his

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<sup>54</sup> Selavip is a non-profit organisation that funds housing projects to shelter very poor families living in cities of Latin America, Africa and Asia. See [www.selavip.org/en/home](http://www.selavip.org/en/home).

newsletter.<sup>55</sup> Highly inspired by Father Jorge, I was also very enthusiastic to find ways to support these key people in the Asia region and get them together. Father Jorge always talked about the idea of community exchanges, which weren't happening much then, and he must have proposed the idea to Jockin too. Father Jorge was seeing so many interesting initiatives on his travels around Asia, and he felt that if we could let the community people see some of those things too – not just professionals – it would be highly inspiring to them as well. So since I was in India for that long HIC meeting and had heard so much about Jockin from Father Jorge, I arranged a meeting with him.



*Ezekiel, Jockin, Jane Weru, Father Anzorena, Kenya, 2005*

### When Jockin and I met, we clicked

I was so happy to be talking with someone in the same tone, to be going in exactly the same direction, to be finding we both wanted things to happen. And not many words were necessary. We both understood very easily whatever came up. In the first twenty minutes of our discussion, we agreed that community exchanges must be organised and that the first exchange would start right away. So we found the money to support this first important community exchange from Selavip and we started. Just like that. We took action – no dancing around, no theories. We just did what we

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<sup>55</sup> See the contributions by Sheela Patel on Father Anzorena in Part 2: *Jockin has not left the room* and Part 6: *SDI's godfather – Father Jorge Anzorena*.



thought was the right thing to do. And why do community exchanges? Very simply because the people who have so much energy to do things never have the chance to take part in exchanges. So we agreed we should open up a new arena, a new superhighway, where community people on the ground could see other possibilities, and see change happening in other contexts. But it was also to learn and to be inspired from real things that work and to believe in their power to make similar changes back home.

So exchanges were our first common point of interest for immediate action. We also talked about the idea of community savings and funds, about how to address eviction problems in our countries, about the important role of women and about the newly formed Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR). We talked all about these issues with similar concerns and a common understanding and agreed to work together to organise activities around them.

### From workshops to toilets... the power of exchanges

And so, with these ideas in mind, right away we organised the first workshop on grassroots women's savings in Mumbai in 1988. This powerful event was a joint effort of the SPARC/NSDF/Mahila Milan Alliance and ACHR. We invited teams of community women from each of seven countries in Asia (the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Nepal as well as India), and we had a really good time. It was so enjoyable. Mainly we allowed the community people to share among each other their work and on many issues, with simultaneous translations. We professionals acted only as translators for the community people, not speaking for them. But of course Jockin, and sometimes Celine,<sup>56</sup> helped moderate the discussions a little bit. I just sat with the three Thai women leaders and translated.

I learnt so much from that workshop. I felt like we had come to a new world of what development was about. This kind of peer-to-peer exchange of community people who are searching and working for their solutions is so powerful. And I was struck by how easily these grassroots women could understand each other, despite differences in language, nationality, context

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<sup>56</sup> See Celine d'Cruz's contribution in Part 4: *How to make the ordinary extraordinary: the practice of community organisation according to Jockin.*

and experiences.

Later, we organised an exchange visit to India, and I went with the Thai community leaders to join the inauguration of the first community toilets in Kanpur. We had a lot of fun with that one, and joked, 'We've come a long way from Thailand, just to inaugurate a toilet!' Paa Roi, who was one of the Thai community leaders, was invited to cut the ribbon. And then she actually went into the toilet – *and used it!* The excitement was not for those very small toilets we saw in Kanpur, but for the achievement behind these, the very first community toilets built by the communities in Kanpur. That was a political event for the Kanpur network, which had produced something communal, something concrete, something successful – and on illegal land, with the support and blessing of the local authorities. Something as small and simple as toilets, we saw, could be used to mobilise the community process at city scale and to build a bridge between communities and the authorities at the same time.



*Somsook at the Kolkata House Exhibition, 1998*

I learnt about on-the-ground politics from this event. What the Kanpur event showed us was that any small issue which communities feel concerned about collectively can be transformed into something so significant. People felt so proud of those little toilets. Jockin showed us how you can make any small event into a political process, a change process between the people and the state.

### Believing in the way forward

There were several more events that I joined in India after that – exchanges and meetings. And every single time I was in India, Jockin would manage to organise some kind of big event to go along with the exchange visit: big meetings with large numbers of community people, where he'd invite me and the international teams to speak with community women, with key government staff and other supporters. And every time, he would put me on the stage and get me to speak.

He knew exactly what I would say: that people are so important, that they are able to do things. That governments should find ways to support change by people at scale. That we should even institutionalise that kind of community-driven change, as we have been doing in Thailand, and that it works very well. He wanted this content, and so he put me on the stage to bring it out.

In fact, I'm not that kind of stage-talk person. I don't like to speak English and 'big stage' language. But I always followed Jockin's orders and spoke as best I could. I learnt from his way of inventing this political process at the same time. And every time, when we looked out at the people who came to these events Jockin organised, it was never ten or twenty, but hundreds of people. We only saw fields of heads – 500 or 1,000 people, minimum! And in the eyes of all those people we could see a lot of hope, and a belief in what was happening, a belief that this was the way forward.

Whatever Jockin did, it was always about moving forward. He was proactive and he was realistic, drawing on his deep knowledge about the poor and community processes. He was not one to be obsessed with anger, or to make

people feel only anger at their situation.<sup>57</sup> If he brought up a bad situation people were living in, it was always only briefly, and he did it for a definite purpose: to get people to stand up and start being active, start moving, start working to change things. ‘We can do it right now,’ was his message. ‘We can start saving right now. We can start surveying right now.’ Jockin was a ‘right now’ kind of person.

### The Byculla office, headquarters of the people’s process

I got such a lot of inspiration from those early interactions with Jockin and learnt so much in his Byculla office in Mumbai. That office, the headquarters, was so simple. Just an old storeroom they had negotiated to use, at the back of an old government clinic. We all had to sit on the floor with the people. Every single thing about that office was at the level of the people. The little wooden desks where they filled in the savings ledgers, the mats on the floor and the scratched-up walls, somebody taking a nap, the street kids running in and out, the constant comings and goings of women, their news, their crises, their little bags of sweets or spicy snacks, glasses of hot sweet tea being brought in.

That was the headquarters of the people’s process – in Mumbai and in other parts of India. People had so many important meetings there, so many things were arranged, deals were cut, negotiations were made. They were always doing very big work out of that office: federation building, savings, surveying, meetings. But they stayed in such a humble office. SPARC workers and NSDF and Mahila Milan members also used and worked in this office to support the community process. That office set the value of that work by another community’s standard, without any typewriters or computers or air conditioning. It’s the kind of office that comes from the culture of India’s urban poor people – they felt comfortable when they were there, because they were from that place.

And the savings walk in Byculla! Accompanying one of the Mahila Milan leaders, going house to house, to collect the savings in those crowded lanes of footpath/pavement slums in Byculla. And then some women would come to the office and start telling how much money they had collected, and the

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<sup>57</sup> See Joseph Muturi’s comments on this in his contribution in Part 2.

accountant would record all that in those shabby old ledgers. They kept the money in one box, I remember, and Jockin would open this box and show every Byculla visitor the money inside: money should be something concrete, something you can touch, not something that stays far away and nobody knows about. Everybody could see that money, everyone could get a loan. They were part of this, this money was their own collective power. The whole culture of how poor people themselves would be the leaders, would be the driving force and the main actors in doing that: a visit to Jockin in Byculla made us see all that so clearly.



*Sona Pujari accounting for the money she had collected in the morning with the help of Shakoor bhai at the Byculla Area Resource Center, late 1980's*

### **Jockin the teacher**

And then, of course, there was Jockin's very special way of explaining things. Nobody else could explain things like he could, in such simple language, in such a lively, funny and memorable way. I think I understood almost every single sentence he spoke, as well as the meaning behind it. It was the same

for the community people. It was always so clear, so striking, so true. What a guru he was – a real teacher!

Jockin was a particularly important teacher for me because I wanted to make change. Jockin was a doer, and it was by doing that he would go down into the depth of things. Especially the people's way of doing things: how to build that power in a group of people who were passive, who believed they were nobody and would be nobodies and live like that forever. This was the group who thought they would have to wait for the day when the government's mercy would give some kind of policy to answer their needs. But such policies rarely came. So they just had to be patient victims, waiting for changes to be granted to them by others.

Jockin showed us that there is a great big potential power in that mass of people who probably never believed they had the power to change anything, and that it is possible to bring that power out, in so many ways. Jockin showed me how that works, and how that power could be activated. This is what I had been looking for, because I'm not a community person or an organiser – I'm a professional. I loved working with the people and believed in their power, but I needed to understand more about how to unlock that energy in the people and turn it into an active force of change. I needed the proof of concept. And there it was, as clear as a bell, coming from that little man in Byculla! By seeing what Jockin was doing, I started getting into the right picture, the right understanding of how it can work and could happen. This was such important knowledge, and for me, it was rooted in those days when I learnt it from Jockin.

Being with Jockin, learning from seeing what he was doing and discussing with him in those years, I began to understand this depth more. He confirmed the thing I had been looking for, topped up the things I'd already learnt, and helped me put things into a clearer picture.

### From India to Thailand

Back in Thailand, I found my own way to develop the work, and to develop my own way of doing things. But I did so armed with the knowledge and the belief I got from Jockin, and many others as well, that people have potential, that people can be the key actors, and that people are the scale of bigger

changes. I no longer had any doubt about that. And I have continued to work and preach that message to this day, to all the workers at CODI in Thailand<sup>58</sup> and to whoever else: that people have to be the key actors, and that whatever the development process, the people's process has to be the main driving force. The change we are looking for is not just a technical matter of a few toilets and houses. It is a profound political change, in which a large group of people who have been left out gradually work to claim their power to lead their process of change, working with their governments and their local political realities. It's a shift of power. The question for us is how to adjust the unequal power relationships in our cities and at the same time to do concrete things to address real needs, like housing, infrastructure and toilets. The two happen at the same time: the concrete physical change and the political relationship change. This is something Jockin showed us clearly how to do.

Thailand is a much smaller country than India, and the process of creating institutional change with an organisation like CODI is therefore less complex. But I would say that after all these years of work, whatever I have learnt from Jockin of what development is about – that it is the real knowledge, the real philosophy, the right direction, the truth. You only have to embody that understanding and then find your own way – in whatever political context you are in.

### People are the root of change

What Jockin actually did, and what he taught us, is the truth of what real development is all about. But of course, Jockin lived in the real world, and the real world is full of difficulties. Sometimes, some people may comment on certain issues: The housing unit is too small! The lane is too narrow! The land is too far away! What he did might not look too perfect for some official standard!

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<sup>58</sup> Somsook Boonyabancha was director of the Thai government agency the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) from 1998 until 2009. CODI has provided support to hundreds of community organisations in slums/informal settlements to drive their own development process, mostly through negotiating tenure for their existing site and designing and managing upgrading.

So, we have to be practical. To make things work, we have to be patient and make compromises with the government and the private sector, and to surmount so many obstacles. We may want everything to go in a perfect way, but in reality, we cannot always do things up to that perfect level, because we live in a society that has a lot of problems and contradictory forces and power. To make things possible, we need to compromise on certain things – but maintain the principle that people should be able to conduct their lives and have a new freedom and new ways of organising themselves, and a new breeze of democracy in which they can manage their system, their community, their families and things like that. Change in the people, change in the environment, change in respect for their basic rights, change in the way they can do things – by themselves and as a group. That is probably the part we cannot compromise on. But the other physical stuff might have to be compromised if it is inevitable. And then when people see it, understand it more, then you can probably do more.

### Tom and Somsook

**Tom:** I'm reminded of the time when the railway slum relocations were happening in Mumbai, where new accommodation was being provided to those who lived dangerously close to the railway tracks. There were some young women from Europe doing internships with SPARC. They were quite disappointed that the beautiful little row-houses that Mahila Milan had designed, in their model house exhibitions and in Mankhurd, were not part of the relocation at all, and that railway slum families were being moved into some six-storey blocks of walk-up flats already built by the Maharashtra Housing Board.

The flats didn't have the little loft/mezzanine that had been negotiated in other housing initiatives, or the zigzag grilles or the *ladhies*<sup>59</sup> that Mahila Milan had developed to lower housing costs, and most importantly, they weren't built by the women themselves. These young people were so disappointed! What a job Jockin had clearing away their romantic notions to recognise that what they were seeing was an incredible, historic breakthrough – a large group of poor railway squatters were getting proper

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<sup>59</sup> *Ladhies* are moulded concrete blocks with an eggshell shape; see note 13 for more details.



flats in proper concrete buildings, with stairways and running water and bathrooms and kitchens and secure tenure – all for free! There was no question of saying no to that historic offer and then waiting for land to build their little Mahila Milan houses. The reality was that the Housing Board had all these housing blocks lying empty, so the idea was to use them and quickly relocate Railway Slum Dwellers Federation families displaced for the track expansion project. That was a great achievement – a historical decision for India to provide poor squatters displaced by a major urban transport project with free government housing, through a relocation process that was completely managed by the railway squatters' own federation.



*2000 Railway slums are demolished      2006 Families are rehabilitated*

**Somsook:** Maybe this is one of the things that triggered the policy changes in India that followed – you never know. In so many countries, politicians and civil servants have no knowledge of how this kind of development by people could work, and no confidence that such development could be possible in their context, under their management. They just don't have any idea that it's something possible, something that can work. And the regulations are always so tight that even if they wanted to try, going in the people-driven direction would clash against all kinds of obstacles right away. So regulation-wise, ability-wise, knowledge-wise and policy-wise – it's just not there, anywhere, in many government systems.

When you start creating new possibilities out of an impossible situation, as Jockin did, I think those possibilities have to be compromising possibilities. But such things happened. There was a lot of learning. People saw these new

possibilities and got excited, because they go against the depressing tide of everything that exists in these societies. These new things show that it's possible after all. One breakthrough project can trigger a change process, can start moving the system into a more receptive, more understanding direction. It is an important breakthrough, an important stepping stone for more possibilities. It's changing the impossible into the more and more possible.

**Tom:** Which brings us back to the idea that action is the way to make change, not just ideas or concepts.

**Somsook:** You show the action, and that action becomes learning for the whole society. Learning that comes from something you can see and touch. And everyone learns – not only the community people, but the NGO workers, the government people – the whole society and the whole system learns. This is something different, something new. All that accumulated knowledge and experience finally bears fruit and shows the actual form change can take. One, two, three or four projects is all it takes to start getting the whole society to start understanding. These projects change the bigger perception of what is possible into something that never existed before, and that is a very big change.

In India, for example, we could see a lot of possible new policies opening up after these breakthrough projects that set new precedents. Although it's still questionable whether these policies follow the people's way of doing things. But I think these kinds of projects help shake the existing system into a new way of considering things and open up more room in different ways. That is a very important contribution that Jockin and his work in India have made. Here in Asia, we have so many groups and people, in so many countries, who have gone to see the emerging activities and projects in India and learnt from and been inspired by them. We might have different ideas and impressions about this and that. But the work Jockin helped conjure out of nothing was a new emergence in that society, and we all had respect for it, we all learnt from it.

**Tom:** That's one of our long-held principles of exchange learning, that when people visit other places, they look for ideas and inspirations they can bring home. They can't duplicate the reality of another country, another place.

**Somsook on exchanges:** One thing that was clear from the very beginning was that exchanges were so important to break the ice, to break the sense of limits that prevented groups from innovating, from moving ahead. That's exactly why exchange visits are important. When you stay a long time in a particular situation, you begin to feel that things have to be like that, that there's no other way, you just have to accept all those bad policies, bad practices and bad conditions. You get stuck. But in fact, you can change all those things!

Father Jorge gave us the idea – and the money – for those first exchange visits to India. And then ACHR took up the exchange idea and started working on it in a big way. Later on, we were able to propose a bigger project, supported by DFID,<sup>60</sup> to institutionalise that kind of horizontal learning and turn it into a regional programme, in which poor communities and professionals and government officials and even ministers would learn from their peers in other countries. We worked with Jockin on this exchange learning in several countries, between countries and between regions.

### Somsook: closing thoughts

Jockin is really a special person. It would be very difficult to find another person like him. Over the years, we always talked on the phone quite a lot. And even towards the end, when he was not so strong, I would call him and we'd talk things over. Even now, after he has died, when I have some really difficult thinking, or see something happening that disturbs me, I think about him, and carry on those conversations with him in my mind. In this way, I still talk to him, still get inspired by him.

When I attended his memorial service in Bangalore, the priest was saying that whatever Jockin did in his life was the work of God – he was always giving, he was teaching, he was helping the very poor, he was trying to find a

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<sup>60</sup> The UK Government's Department for International Development.

way to change things that are wrong for the people. It was all very much the work of God.

And I agree with that. I feel that the kind of work Jockin did is a kind of religious work. Religious in the sense that we have a strong belief, we have faith, and we put ourselves out there with all that belief and faith in humanity, without asking. It is as though we were servants to that faith. It's similar to the role of a priest – but perhaps our work is a little more practical than the work of a priest! We have a very important mission, trying to make a more just society and a big change for the better, for a big number of people. This was Jockin's mission in his lifetime.

I feel so grateful that in my life I could know this man and could count him as such a good friend and teacher. We sometimes had different ways of doing things, but no matter how different the situation or the way of working may have been, we always had a lot of trust in each other, and a true friendship.

#### 4.4 You never map fences: lessons in community enumeration

*Jack Makau*

In 2001, Jockin and Celine d'Crux visited Nairobi to help the young Kenyan slum dwellers movement, Muugano wa Wanavijiji, do their first household enumeration in Huruma slums in Nairobi. As a young communication officer of the movement's support NGO, Pamoja Trust, I ferried them between the settlements, the office and their hotel. I photocopied enumeration forms, bought stationery and took pictures of the enumeration. Over the next two years, Jockin and Celine visited Nairobi every two months. Apart from my driving duties, my role in the enumerations team grew.

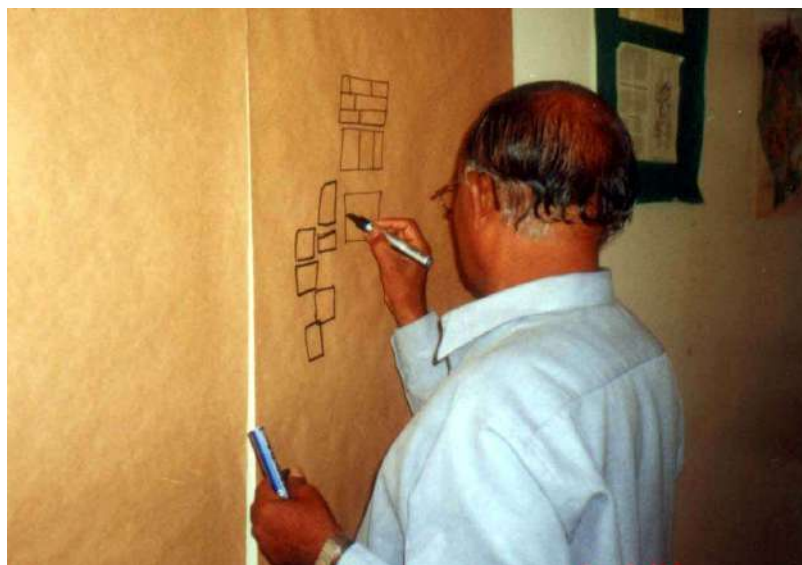
At the first UN Habitat World Urban Forum held in Nairobi in 2002, the Ugandan government invited SDI and Cities Alliance to develop a slum intervention in Kampala and Jinja. In 2003, SDI made regular visits to Uganda. The Indian, South African and Kenyan federations led this SDI intervention.

By 2004, SDI had organised saving groups in the Kisenyi slums of Kampala. To build on this, enumerations were planned. Meanwhile, Jockin and Celine now

not only remembered my name, but a relationship around enumerations had developed.

But there was a terrible mismatch between the accurate survey maps of shacks in Mumbai produced by NSDF and Mahila Milan and the out-of-scale sketches that Jockin was asking us to do. The Mumbai maps were drawn on blueprint paper. Ours were on flipcharts and drawn with felt pens. It might have been better if the Indians had not shown us their maps. We, the Kenyans, were unhappy with the situation. It was our first day of mapping in Kisenyi, which is a large slum that transitions into the centre of Kampala.

We knew that the Indians and South Africans would want to have a meeting immediately after dinner to review the day. So, we ate quickly and stepped out for a pre-meeting. 'There is absolutely no way Jockin's mapping is going to produce anything,' I said. Someone else added, 'Are these flipcharts what we are going to show the housing ministry on Friday?' And the frustration went on and on. 'I cannot believe this is what mapping is about. And what's with these South Africans? Busy saying, 'We are here to learn.'" Learn what? Any idiot can see this is a sham.'



*Jockin showing how to draw maps at the Pamoja Trust offices, Kenya, 2001*

And so, being the NGO data-support staff member among the Kenyan federation team, I was selected to confront Jockin at the review meeting. The meeting took place in Jockin's hotel room. The Indians sat cross-legged on the floor. The Kenyan and South African women sat on the bed. The men, unaccustomed to sitting on floors, sat, then stood – then sat again – then stood...

It did not take long for the report back from the mapping to start. The South African team leader, Nokangelani Roji, unrolled some flipcharts with higgledy piggledy maps drawn on them. She proudly announced, 'Our team did four sections today.' Jockin may or may not have been listening to the report back. He seemed focused on picking at an Indian snack mix.

I cleared my throat to signal that I wanted to say something. Nokangelani, my competitor for data team leader, sighed and paused. I went on, 'We also mapped, but Kisenyi is literally the centre of Kampala. There is absolutely no way these maps will be acceptable to the ministry.' Pointing to the maps I said, 'These maps are a joke.'

Earlier that morning, Jockin had called a meeting of the visiting Kenyan and South African federations, and 30-odd residents of Kisenyi slum who had been selected for the mapping process. The Indian federation would be leading the mapping. This joint team was scheduled to map the whole of Kisenyi. Shekhar, Jockin's second-in-command, and three non-English-speaking Indian ladies would each lead a team of Ugandans and visitors.

The mapping would involve using a tape measure to mark fifty-by-fifty metre-square sections of the settlement. Everything in one section would then be drawn on a one-metre-long flipchart paper. The Indian leaders would show us how that would be done. Each team had two people to measure with the tape, two to put numbers on the houses, two to sketch the map on the paper and one neighbourhood leader to explain to residents what was going on.

At the meeting, to emphasise the frustration with the mapping, I described my team's problems. I said that my team had a young man and a mature mama to hold the tape.



*Mapping Team in Kisneyi, Kampala, 2004*

The fifty-metre sections ended mostly at the centre of a shack. Between the young man and the mama, they could not agree whether to make the section bigger, to include the house, or if they should make the section smaller. The Indian team leader did not speak English and was nodding 'Yes' to mean 'No' and shaking his head side to side to mean 'Yes'. As a result, the sketchers had decided to draw half the houses on one flipchart page and the other half on the next. Even a chicken coop was cut in half.

Jockin cut in. And I thought to myself, at least he is listening. 'Look at this Kenyan Pyjama, he just cannot wait to go have his beer.' Everyone laughed. 'Pyjamas' was what Jockin called staff from Pamoja Trust. I probably will go for a beer after, I thought to myself, but for now Jockin should explain his mapping plan. Instead he said, 'Nokangelani, carry on,' and went back to the snack mix.

### A moment in time, perhaps

Before going down for breakfast, I put our two Garmin 2660 GPS readers in the team backpack.<sup>61</sup> ‘We are going to show them how to do this,’ I said. The units had pre-installed maps on a 2.2GB microdrive. It was 2004 and this was cutting edge. Before we left Nairobi, I had even checked that the microdrive had the map of Kampala.

The best part was that the Kenya team knew how to use these GPS units. They had trained the enumeration team in Nairobi. At home, Kasabuni, a spinach wholesaler from Toi informal market in Nairobi, was joint enumeration team leader with Henry (aka Happyman), a resident and second-hand music record seller from Korogocho slum.

‘By Friday, we will have a GPS coordinate for each shack in Kisenyi,’ we said to ourselves. ‘Anyone wishing to work in Kisenyi can use this data,’ we would say to the housing ministry. We were certain they would like this. ‘It will do good for Jockin to see that communities can use technology and engage government with it,’ I told myself.

After the morning briefing in Kisenyi, held in a rusty zinc sheet classroom, Jockin asked, ‘Mr Pajama, let them go. Stay with me – I want us to meet the *kibanja* (land parcel) holders. We will negotiate for a space to build a toilet.’ This sounded great. Being with Jockin, you were continually being entered into things bigger than yourself. Except for this rubbish mapping business.

We were joined by Musa and Mr Balinda, both among the first members of the Uganda Slum Dwellers Federation from Kisenyi. A local councillor known as Hassan (who also informed us that he was a prince of the Buganda Kingdom) joined the team. In time, Hassan would become leader of the federation in Uganda.

The land of Kisenyi is Mailo land. This means that it initially belonged to the *kabaka* (king) of the Buganda Kingdom. Measured in miles, Mailo land was

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<sup>61</sup> The Global Positioning System (GPS) uses satellites in space to send information to GPS receivers on the ground. The information helps people determine their location. GIS (Geographical Information System) is software that uses information collected from GPS satellites.



passed onto landowners to manage. The landowners in turn parcelled it out and gave it to *kibanja* holders for a ground rent. Some *kibanja* holders built simple houses and rented them out. Sometimes they allowed others to build rental houses for a fee. With urbanisation, densities on Mailo land had grown. Services like piped water and sewers did not grow at the same pace as the housing. Mainly the *kibanja* population relied on communal water points and toilets. The *kibanjas* became indistinguishable from the slums you see elsewhere in Africa. Almost 80 per cent of Kampala had adopted this kind of settlement.

The meeting was in the courtyard of a fenced-out handsome brick house, set within the shacks in Kisenyi. In a style typical of Uganda, the meeting was extremely formal. Personal titles and achievements were laid out in the introductions. Hassan (who had asked me earlier about Jockin's titles) introduced him as, 'Leader and president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India, head and sitting president of SDI, and team leader of the SDI delegation to Uganda.' To these titles, Jockin added a few of his own: '...Friend to the Minister of Housing the Flight Captain Hon Francis Babu, Saver Number One, mapping expert and champion of the poor.'

After a fair amount of talking and translating between English and Luganda, an agreement was reached. Jockin wanted Mr Hadji, the *kibanja* holder, to donate some space to build a much-needed community sanitation block. Mr Hadji, who had been introduced as a businessman, exporter and philanthropist, saw an opportunity to sell some land.

Speaking in fairly fluent English, with great flourish, and not seeing the irony of having taken translation all through, Mr Hadji declared that it was with great pleasure that he was welcoming Jockin to Uganda. He added that he accepted and would sell one of his pieces of land, offering to speak to the other *kibanja* holders and oversee the full transaction, to secure the space for the development of a community toilet, 'For my people'. All this for 50 million Uganda shillings. The same figure that Hassan had earlier quoted for the purchase of a parcel of land.

Musa, Balinda and Hassan looked fulfilled. Surprisingly, Jockin also smiled, shook Hadji's hand warmly and started talking about the toilet having a section for children. Hadji was beaming.

Fifteen years later there was still warmth, and sometimes language translations, between Jockin and Hadji. The land transaction was still being negotiated. However, the federation of the urban poor in Uganda had taken root and grown out of Kisenyi. Perhaps Hadji's elaborate, 'I welcome you to Uganda,' and Jockin's inexplicable smile in the face of a bad deal, were part of a very foundational moment.

### You never map fences

Mapping had stopped when we met up with the larger team. Nokangelani explained that the Kisenyi residents wanted their fences mapped. They also wanted empty spaces mapped and the owners of these spaces enumerated. This time, the Kenyans were on the same side as the South Africans against the Ugandans. No one was sure who had won when Jockin asked, 'Do you think you can take these papers to the government and expect to get a piece of land?' Adding something to Jockin's admission of the map's poor quality crossed my mind. But I also considered that GPS coordinates wouldn't earn you any land either.

Later, in the after-dinner meeting, my Kenyan teammates joined the South Africans in reporting the number of sections they had mapped. The GPS readers were still in the team backpack. They would remain there for the rest of the trip.

My thoughts would have easily remained with GPS mapping, as well as a sneaky suspicion that I had been outsmarted by being taken to the land meeting. It stopped mattering when Jockin poured whisky into two glasses and handed one glass to me at the end of the meeting. Another promotion – or was it? Johnnie Walker Black, it definitely was a promotion.

Jockin explained, 'We are mapping families, not houses. See, all of development is about building houses, building water points, building this and building that. Uganda has learnt this model of development. We are changing how the people in Kisenyi see development. We want them to see

people – see who has food and who is sick, who can afford and who cannot. Then when they understand themselves, they can think about houses. If you map the falling-down house of a poor widow, then, just like that, you give her the same status as her fat businessman neighbour. That's the power you have. You never map fences. If you do, then you cannot change it later. Then what's the use of going to Kisenyi?' He had finished speaking. A lot to take in, so I poured another 'peg' (Jockin's term for tots of whisky).

It followed easily in my mind that community enumerations served to challenge how a community understood their development. What was presented to the ministry on Friday would not matter. Thinking and worrying about how to correct this view with my teammates made for a not-so-easy night. And the idea that the South Africans were right all along peppered the night's thoughts.

At breakfast – and tentatively – Kenyan teammate Kasabuni suggested, 'There is still so much to map, I think on Friday you'll go to the ministry with Jockin. Then Henry and I will stay in Kisenyi to try to map as much as we can.' And I said, 'Yes, I think it's more important that you stay.' A moment of silence and then the conversation moved on. Nothing more was spoken about mapping. The moment of silence said it was understood between us.

## Epilogue

In time, the promise of the GPS did not deliver. The string of numbers and letters showing the latitude and longitude in a GPS coordinates never generated excitement – or elucidation – for anyone, government official or slum resident. The coordinates remained an impotent scattering of black dots on white paper. In contrast, the satellite map had communities completely taken in. Meetings where communities were presented with a satellite map of their settlement turned into a group huddle. People could see their homes and make immediate and previously unseen connections to the things around them.

And because the satellite map spoke so clearly to communities, the Kenyan federation developed an extensive capacity for GIS mapping, which included satellite imagery. The GIS map was important for planning, for advocacy with government, for building partnerships with universities and more. However,

for the federation, GIS was most important because of the understanding that the communities gained from it. Jockin's words, 'You never map fences,' became a key principle of the Kenyan slum movement.



*Jack Makau, Ophelia (Philippines) and Joseph Muturi at the Know Your City station at WUF, Medellin, Colombia, 2014*

## 4.5 Declassing social change activism and theory: lessons learnt from the guru called Jockin

*Srilatha Batliwala*

When I first met Jockin in 1972, I was a raw 20-year-old social work student, doing her community organising fieldwork in what was then called Janata Colony, one of Bombay's largest slums. Jockin had lived there since he was a teenager and had begun building the nascent slum dwellers movement from this base. He used to routinely check out what these hapless students were doing to and with his people, and if he found us relatively innocuous, he would leave us to get on with it.

I was working with a group of adolescent girls, bringing them together in the evenings to talk about their lives, their hopes, their challenges. I had no idea what I was doing but was 'trusting the process' to reveal where it needed to be taken. He would stop by the meeting centre, look benignly – if cynically – at what was going on, and then quietly fade away. But then, one day, he heard about my heroics – intervening in a case of domestic violence where a very drunk husband brandished a knife and threatened to stab me for intervening, and I told him to go ahead and do it so that he could finally be in jail, where he belonged. This gutsiness piqued Jockin's interest, and he decided to take more of an interest in me. He would stop by the meetings and ask provocative questions as I was leaving: 'And then? What if they say they want to study further but have no money, what will you do? What if they say they don't want to get married and the parents are forcing them, what alternative will you offer? And after you leave Tata Institute, and you have raised all these hopes in these girls, what are they supposed to do then? Who will they turn to?'

I wanted to hit him – because I knew he was right, that I had no answers or solutions to offer, that this whole process was extractive, that I was getting a lot of experience but leaving behind nothing sustainable, nothing of value, nothing at all. I vowed I would do things differently when I graduated. That I would work in a way that would rise to these challenges.

It took me years to understand that this was exactly what Jockin wanted – to make me question the facile, superficial approaches we were being taught in

social work school, to provoke me into enabling the girls to find solutions that would work for them, to jolt me out of my middle-class assumption that I was there to liberate them, and had the capacity to do so! Most of all, I later saw that he was trying to make me commit, at a much deeper level, to working with marginalised communities in a much more effective and long-term process that might actually have some impact.

I did not meet Jockin again for more than a decade after this, when he arrived at our garage office in the early days of SPARC, having heard about our efforts to organise the women living in the pavement settlements to look for alternatives. This was exactly when the Indian Supreme Court Judgement went against them in a case challenging their right to live on the pavement. Again, his interest was piqued by our openly Freirian approach,<sup>62</sup> and the way we were working our butts off, night and day, and that we had managed to pull off a real coup-de-grace by doing the first-ever census of 12,000 pavement dweller households in the southern part of Bombay city, in order to challenge the ridiculous numbers being bandied about in the media. Who were these crazy women? He had to know.

We had heated debates. How and why the slum dweller movement (of which he was a founder and leader) had never embraced the pavement dwellers as part of their struggle. How their movement was male-dominated and patriarchal, blind to the very different interests and priorities of women, on whom the impacts of housing insecurity, lack of water, sanitation, toilets, were not only different, but far worse. He took it all in, listening carefully, giving away nothing. Because he was the most intuitive, astute organiser on the planet, he immediately saw the power of what we were doing, of mobilising women as a force for secure housing and tenure – and for triggering much deeper transformations in the patriarchal social structure of informal settlement communities. He would never say it in these words, obviously ('Sri, put it into those nice big words of yours, make it sound nice,' he would say). But he knew we were onto something, and that if he joined forces with us, it could become something really powerful. And so it did: the

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<sup>62</sup> Brazilian educator Paulo Freire developed an approach to adult literacy education where communities of learners learn to read and write by inquiring into their own real-life issues and cultural and personal experiences.

Alliance was formed – our very own SPARC, the emerging Mahila Milan, and Jockin’s National Slum Dwellers Federation.



*Srilatha Batliwala and Sheela Patel co-founded SPARC in 1985*

From the beginning, I watched in awe as Jockin ruthlessly declassed our activism. He was soon a presence in all our meetings with the pavement women. The first thing I noticed was that his language openly poked fun at ours, and his style of intervention made a mockery of our bourgeois politeness. When a woman whined that they were poor and had no money to find other housing if their huts were demolished, Jockin wheeled on her: ‘NO MONEY?’ he roared. ‘If I picked you up and shook you right now, coins and notes would be falling from every part of your body, including parts I don’t want to name in front of these nice decent ladies! Listen to me: Don’t ever go to the government with that sob story! Don’t humiliate yourself and imagine they’ll feel sorry for you. They’ll kick you like stray dogs, which is what they

think you are! Go to them with money in the bank and demand land to build proper houses!’

I cowered in a corner, thinking that was the end – the women would either walk out or pounce on him. Neither happened. They roared with laughter, and hurled good-natured abuse at Jockin, who received it with equal good humour. And in their eyes, I saw something else: respect – a silent salutation – a recognition that here was someone who knows who we are: we don’t need to play games or act out stereotypes now. We can just be ourselves and move ahead. I also saw clearly how much we, the outside activists, carried our class in our language, our manner, our way of interacting. I learnt to accept that while we could never ‘declass’ ourselves fully. As Jockin would say, ‘You are a flat *wala* [an affluent apartment dweller], and they know it. So don’t pretend to be something else. But you are a flat *wala* who wants to support their struggle – they appreciate that. Start from there.’

Before long though, I found myself adapting his raucous, no-nonsense style of communicating, and capturing women’s interest more effectively as a result. Over the years, as I moved on to organise rural women in Karnataka State in Southern India (with his blessing and assurances of support), there had been a fundamental shift in both my understanding of how to mobilise people and build a movement, and consequently, a radical change in my way of engaging people. I was unafraid. I freely used humour, mockery, satire, perverse metaphors. One that he particularly liked, inspired by him, was, ‘If you want to climb a mountain, why are you starting by digging a well?!’ Activists I was training, women in the villages, students in the classroom – they would respond to this style immediately, sensing its authenticity, its lack of false veneers, sometimes to the shock and disapproval of colleagues still steeped in traditional ways of talking down to your ‘beneficiaries/target group,’ or students and trainees. When they challenged me on this style, I would simply say: ‘This is what I learnt from my movement-building guru, Jockin – and it works, as you shall see!’ They soon did.

For me, Jockin took the concept and practice of popular education and participatory research into an entirely different dimension. With him, I learnt that participatory research was not about you designing the research instrument and then getting people to participate in its implementation, but



actually using the process to mobilise people and build a movement – such as the slum enumeration system he pioneered, building on SPARC’s breakthrough methodology of doing a people-led census of pavement dwellers. Participatory research, for Jockin, was about enabling people to lead the design – to ask research questions that would never occur to you, because they know what it is about their reality that they want to show the world, and you can never see that as clearly as they do.

I applied this insight years later when we designed a research study on the status of women in rural Karnataka. We asked the women how to find out who really controls – as opposed to formally or legally owns – the private assets of a household (land, house, livestock, equipment). They dismissed the awkward, convoluted question we had drafted for this, and one of the women said: ‘Why not simply ask: “What can you sell in an emergency without asking anyone else’s permission?” That’s the only thing a person really controls!’ Sure enough, the question worked like magic, and the results were startling, unsettling all our assumptions.

Similarly, Jockin took popular education into realms Freire may never have imagined: illiterate women from slums surveying public lands where they could resettle, co-designing the homes they would live in, and constructing model houses, alongside young architects and structural engineers whom they heckled mercilessly for the ‘foolish’ flaws in their designs. He pushed them forward as the primary teachers/negotiators/advocates in meetings with the World Bank, with government and municipal authorities, with leaders of slum dweller movements from other countries. So for him, Freire’s ‘conscientisation’ was not to be limited to analysis of local realities, but something far more ambitious: how to claim a seat at the table in city planning, how to influence global urban infrastructure financing policies, how to control the meta-data, and how to be in the vanguard of building a global movement of the urban poor.

So it was that no matter where I was located institutionally, I always felt accountable to him, to his politics, to the struggles of the most marginalised that he symbolised. When I became a programme officer for Global Civil Society at the Ford Foundation, I launched an initiative called Grassroots Globalism and funded a range of grassroots movements that were linking up

globally, to speak for themselves in global spaces – including SDI! Later, when I found myself a research fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, researching and teaching about social movements, I found myself running every social movement theory through the ‘Jockin’ lens: I would ask myself, ‘What would Jockin make of MacAdam’s idea that “political moments” make social movements?’<sup>63</sup> And the answer would come, through the ether: ‘Social movements must make the political moment, Sri! Not the other way around!’

This is why Jockin never disapproved of my moving from practice to research, theory and teaching – on the contrary, he strongly encouraged it, because he believed it was vital for practitioners like me to become theory builders, knowing that building theory from practice was a powerful way of shifting the dominant discourse, especially in arenas like development and social justice.

And he was right. Because many of the conceptual frameworks I went on to build – such as the now-benchmark theory on women’s movements and feminist movement building<sup>64</sup> and on feminist leadership<sup>65</sup> – have ironically become not only required reading in academic courses around the world, but also extensively translated and used by organisations and activists working on the ground. And not just women’s organisations, but even major international NGOs! Their authenticity springs from their rootedness in practice, and this is what Jockin wanted me to do. As I wrote *Changing their world: concepts and practices of women’s movements*, in fact, especially the sections on why movements matter, and on the relationship between organisations and movements, I felt Jockin sitting on my shoulder, critically examining each idea, and I rested only when I felt his affirmation flowing into me.

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<sup>63</sup> MacAdam, D (1982) *Political process and the development of the black insurgency, 1930–1970*. University of Chicago Press.

<sup>64</sup> Batliwala, S (2011a) *Changing their world: concepts and practices of women’s movements* (second edition). AWID. <http://bit.ly/2KDLbR3>

<sup>65</sup> Batliwala, S (2011) *Feminist leadership for social transformation: clearing the conceptual cloud*. CREA. <http://bit.ly/2YRNUiZ>



*Women at the inauguration of Milan Nagar in 2006*

In India, many believe that to be a teacher is noble, but to be a guru – a guide who helps disciples actualise their potential – is the highest role a human being can play. It is also believed that your greatest achievement, if you are a true guru, is that even as your disciples may surpass you in their chosen fields, they will never forget your role in their journey, and that through them, you will bring greater justice and wisdom to the universe.

Jockin was my guru. I will never forget his role in my journey. He brought greater justice and wisdom to our universe.

#### 4.6 Jockin and the women

*Pär Pärsson*

I was exhausted the first time I met Jockin. The purpose of my visit was an invitation to participate in SDI's board and council meeting for almost a week in India, February 2017. I had arrived in Mumbai early. I had booked a room in a hotel on Marine Drive to relax on my own for a weekend prior to a conference. I had just entered my room, when reception called and said

there was a driver there to take me somewhere. Meeting me in the reception was a nice young man who told me that Jockin Sir had sent for me, and would I please just come with him.



*This is a block of flats in Indian Oil, a resettlement where Jockin made it possible for thousands of families to relocate from the slums into a new home. During his life, Jockin built more than 30,000 houses in India.<sup>66</sup>*

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<sup>66</sup> An assessment in 2018 showed that the Alliance of the National Slum Dwellers Federation, Mahila Milan and SPARC has provided lower-cost access to good-quality sanitation for more than 163,000 households, directly supported affordable shelter for 11,623 households, facilitated access to government-provided resettlement housing for 32,774 households, improved tenure security for 42,068 households, and financed livelihood loans for almost 8,500 households. See Patel, Sheela, Aseena Viccajee and Jockin Arputham (2018), "From taking money to making money: SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan transform low-income shelter options in India" *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 30, No 1 pages 85-102

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956247818754787>

He took me out to Indian Oil (a settlement where many slum dwellers had been resettled) where I was greeted by Jockin. To him it was simple. I was much safer with him than in that horrible place where all the rich people stay. 'Aahh, you get mugged over there. When you are with me, you will be safe.'

He was sitting in a plastic chair on a street corner. I spent two whole days and nights on that corner, with just a few interruptions – for instance, when we took off to Dharavi or other places he needed to be, travelling in one of his pink *tuk-tuks*. On that corner, he was surrounded by women all the time, and there was an endless stream of people coming to see him. Some talked to him, but some just hung around for a while. I didn't understand a word of what they were talking about, yet I think I got the gist of it all. The women were all responsible for a business – could be managing a public toilet, leading the work in the sanitary pad production or something else. And there were small challenges everywhere, and he was deeply involved in all of it.

The conversations went on forever, and after an hour or so, I was suffering in my red plastic chair. I didn't understand why he had sent for me. I couldn't understand – really – what was going on and I didn't understand if he expected something from me. And being wired from working 65-hour weeks for a long time, I got itchy. Jockin sensed this, and decided it was time to eat. Food materialised from somewhere and we all ate, and he asked me some questions. It was our first meeting, but I understood that he had a pretty good understanding of who I was. We talked about my work and the coming week for a while, and then I asked him something – I can't recall what – about himself. Stay around, and you will see, he said.

And that was what I did. I stayed with him, turned down my stress levels several notches and just hung around on that corner with him and his women. Later in the day, a woman showed up with a tin box of money – the weekly proceeds from a local savings group. The money was counted and taken care of by one of the women.

Jockin told me why he was adamant about putting the women at the core of the organisation he co-founded and was the spiritual leader of.<sup>67</sup> ‘You see, Pär, women are the only ones I trust. Women have the information. They handle money better than men and they understand communication.’ And in the same way that Jockin trusted women, they adored him. He was pampered, fed and listened to. Later, I understood that there was always a close group of women around him, a group that changed over time with better or worse influence on him.

## 4.7 Learning from Jockin

*Arjun Appadurai*

I am very sorry that I cannot be present at Jockin’s Memorial Lecture physically<sup>68</sup> but also very grateful that all of you as friends, colleagues and admirers of Jockin have allowed me to be present today virtually, and to Indu Agarwal for helping with the recording of this interview.

I have had Jockin on my mind a lot in the last few months since his demise because I’m always making some reference or other (in class or lectures) to Mumbai, to urban life, to the politics of hope, to the nature of poor people’s organisations and, of course, to Jockin. My introduction to Jockin, Sheela Patel, Celine d’Cruz and the SPARC and NSDF team was around the year 2000, perhaps even a year before, all through my dear friend Sundar Burra. That history is a continuous history in which a key figure throughout was Jockin, whom we are here to celebrate today.

I owe Jockin many things. First of all, his friendship, which deepened over the years and was characterised by his usual warmth, humour, generosity and acuteness of observation. I met him sometimes in India, sometimes the USA,

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<sup>67</sup> Jockin founded NSDF in the mid-1970s and was also later one of the founders of Mahila Milan in 1986, the federation of women slum and pavement dwellers’ savings groups and SPARC, and SDI in 1996.

<sup>68</sup> This contribution is drawn from Arjun Appadurai’s virtual presentation at the Jockin Arputham Memorial Lecture on *Urban Social Movements and Voices from Below*, 7 October 2019 at Pakhuis de Zwijger, Amsterdam.

sometimes elsewhere through this period, and all these meetings were characterised by these same qualities. But I want to say that the single most important thing I owe to Jockin is the realisation that when you have a remarkable activist, leader and community organiser willing to spend a few minutes with you here and there, you have to be on your best game as an academic. It's not a matter of simplifying what you think or your academic ideas so that the other person can follow. In fact, most of what you have to say is something that someone like Jockin has already thought about and knew ten years before he met you. So it's very easy to say things to him which are absolutely old hat to him. You have to work really very hard, at least I did, first of all to try to diminish the knowledge gap because obviously I was new to urban poverty and mobilisation, whereas he knew it backwards and forwards.

So the knowledge gap was the first thing. But then there was the question of insight. What insight could I bring to someone who had such powerful capacities for knowing, understanding, finding out things, putting them together? That is why I say it put me on my best game. I realised that there is a lesson here, which is that when a serious academic, somebody who is not just there for a day or a week meets someone of Jockin's calibre, then everybody is on their best game.

My questions over the years slowly became better informed, so that even someone like Jockin would have to think a little bit in order to answer, not because it was obscure or abstract but because I was part of his process. Of course, I had to be on my toes to make sure that I had already either thought through the things that I was observing or asking. So this is for me THE biggest message: if you are privileged to be in the company of somebody like Jockin, whether in a social occasion or in his office at the NSDF headquarters in Byculla or somewhere else in Dharavi, or just watching him doing his work with other people, you really have to think in the most creative way about what you know. You cannot just trot out some message you have thought about or parrot some theory you have before. It's all either wrong or boringly familiar to someone like Jockin, so Jockin pushed me to be the best academic I could be.



*Sheela Patel, Celine d’Cruz, Jockin and Arjun Appadurai, Mumbai, 2018*

The other lessons were really even more particular. I learnt for example what it meant to have a cosmopolitan view of the world, even for very poor men and women who worked with Jockin, whose education was either zero or very little and whose academic knowledge of the world was very limited. But they had to deal with differences between them and others all the time in order to survive. They had to deal with the police, they had to deal with the state, they had to deal with collectors, funders, consultants. To catch this quality of these men and women, I used the term ‘compulsory cosmopolitanism’. This means the cosmopolitanism which you have to have in order to survive. It is not voluntary, it’s not like going to Alliance Française to learn French, which is the kind of cosmopolitanism some of us are lucky to have but not the slum dwellers. So cosmopolitanism from below, globalisation from below – all these ideas came from meetings I was lucky to join, between for example the women from Mahila Milan and their counterparts in Cape Town or Manila or Kathmandu. These encounters taught me that there was a way to be global and globalised which had nothing to do with high-level funding, state-to-state contact or corporate



support. It was below the radar but it was none the less global and cosmopolitan.

Likewise, I learnt through Jockin's eyes (as well as from Sheela, Sundar and Celine, and many other members of the various federations) that SPARC, NSDF and the communities that they were working with had already had a revolutionary idea, which is that they could do their own research. And research for me – coming as an academic trained in the United States, who has taught at many institutions – is always seen as something you have to go through, a hundred steps to be able to do. You had to pass high school, do a BA, MA, PhD if possible, get expensive specialised training, and learn a lot of methods, statistics and the like. But I realised in fact that with the census process that these communities were doing, as well as other things which were information-gathering exercises, they were in the research business. And they were in the research business in a way that was connected to advocacy in their issues. It was not abstract or context-free research. It was highly relevant to their struggles for housing, for sanitation and dignity.

It was eye-opening for me to see that research did not require necessarily advanced training. Rather, it required some basic tools that people who were willing to work with you were willing to share with members of poor urban communities so that they could proceed with design, with finding out who was in their communities, with getting records, with seeking out information, and analysing this information. This is research. So for me, the idea of research became connected with something that I wrote about, inspired by my long experience, almost 20 years, with the federations – that there is a right to research which is a human right. Everybody should have it and furthermore when people in poor communities do not have it they have to rely on others. And those others come from far away, they often do not know enough or take too much time. Their results are often wrong, or they are too late. So to my mind, until poor communities further develop these capacities and exercise the right to research which SPARC and NSDF have modelled for us, they will not go far.

These are important points, about the capacities of poor communities and the ways in which they can be globalised, leveraged, expanded and scaled up. All of this I learnt both by talking to Jockin, but also by watching him. And, of

course, reading the news and analysis of the work of this alliance worldwide. But I want to add a point about funds and money – because Jockin was always very humorous about the fact that money was something that could not be ignored. Nor could it be forgotten that one definition of the poor could be that they are those for whom money is always somewhere else. He had two observations – one is that everybody has some money, therefore everybody can save and therefore savings can be a great principle of organisation. But he also realised that savings in itself is not enough, that you also have to build certain financial infrastructures. I believe this part of Jockin’s vision remains unfulfilled because all the world’s forces are tilted against financial capacity building for the very poor. So, a lot of people for example do micro credit and many banks want to make poor people bankable. But they are not interested in the empowerment of poor communities. They are about making money out of large numbers of people, so they are willing to move the poor into bankable communities. But I think the SPARC/SDI vision is different. It is about somehow leveraging independent access to resources which does not require constant negotiation, accountability and asymmetry with donors. I believe that work is continuing across the SDI network worldwide. It’s probably the single most important part of Jockin’s vision and I really wish it unfolds in the direction in which he would have wished.

I could say much more about the ideas that Jockin helped me to formulate, which in turn have helped me to be of some help to the SDI network over the years in ways that I hope will continue. But I did want to end by saying that Jockin always had the greatest sense of humour about someone like me because I was so different from him. I grew up in a very privileged part of south Bombay, I was privileged in my education both in India and in the USA, I was a Tamil Brahmin, at the other end of the social spectrum from Jockin. I was vegetarian while he was aggressively not so... The list went on. So I was always a target for many of Jockin’s most fabulous and incisive jokes, but over the years those jokes became part of his display of genuine affection. It was something I treasured and miss even more than of all his other great qualities.

## 4.8 Travelling with and learning from Jockin<sup>69</sup>

*Rose Molokoane*

### Jockin and the birth of the South African federation

I first met Jockin in 1991, when I was invited to a conference by the chairperson of my civic organisation in my community Oukasie. This conference was held in Broederstroom, funded by the South African Catholic Bishops Conference. I attended the conference, but I didn't know what it was all about. When we arrived there, we realised that there were other countries invited. Almost 150 delegates attended this conference. But for me with my little knowledge, I couldn't understand what was being discussed.

The theme of the conference was 'People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter'. I saw this short Indian guy who was talking and I thought it was a political platform – and I was not interested in politics. So I lost interest. But during the time they gave us for group discussions, Jockin came to my group, the South African group. Then he asked us a question: 'What will you do when Mandela leaves prison?' We then said we will celebrate because we will get things for free. He said, 'But you are poor guys and what is the government doing for you?' So I said to him, 'We've got toilets, we've got schools, we've got four-roomed houses,' although in my community at the time, we were still using a bucket system (we now have flush toilets). So we had everything and we thought, 'Why should we bother to go after the government? When Mandela comes, everything will be nice.'

Then Jockin told us a story. Back in his home in India, they voted in their democratic country and they expected honey and milk to flow on the streets. But after 40 years of democratic government, what they got was one toilet shared by 800 people. I listened attentively to his story. Then later on in the conference, I stood in front of all the 150 delegates for the first time. I was asked to read from the Bible to sympathise with those killed in the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa, 1960. That was the first time I officially opened my mouth.

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<sup>69</sup> This is drawn from an interview with Rose Molokoane by James Taylor on 18 November 2019.

When we were driving in a bus back to the hotel, I went to Jockin and said, 'Jockin you know I am still surprised how 800 people can share one toilet.' He said, 'Yes, imagine if you have a runny stomach, you will have to wait for 15 days before you get into the toilet? What will happen to you?' I was so surprised. Then I asked, 'Is it possible for me to go to India to see the queues of 800 people?' He agreed. I had never gone overseas but for this, I wanted to see how the people were waiting for so long to use one toilet. So that's how we met.

Jockin warned us that we must get organised. 'Mandela will come out of prison. He will be our governor but am telling you guys, go after Mandela. If you do nothing, if you can't be self-reliant, don't expect anything good, because the government will never reach out to all of us. So, start to be self-reliant. In India we mobilised women around savings. So start to do that.' I learnt from those words. That's why I emphasised that I would like to go to India to experience everything that he was telling us.

### Learning from Mahila Milan and its savings groups

After the conference in 1991, I just went back home and relaxed. I didn't bother to do a follow up. But in 1992, we were invited again by Joel Bolnick and Mama Iris Namso who had facilitated the 1991 Conference.<sup>70</sup> This time they had arranged a finance workshop. The Indians were also invited to this workshop. The women from India who were doing their daily savings came with Jockin, including Laxmi.<sup>71</sup> Shekhar, one of the Indian federation leaders also came. So, the women shared with us how they were doing their daily savings and on top of that, Joel and Mama Iris invited the banking sector. But all the big banks from South Africa were not interested in attending. The only bank that did attend was the People's Bank and they told us they couldn't work with us because they didn't have a product that could cater for the poor people. However, the women from Mahila Milan, despite not being able to read or write, showed us how they collected and recorded their daily savings.

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<sup>70</sup> The late Mama Iris Namso was co-founder of the South African NGO People's Dialogue.

<sup>71</sup> See the contribution of Laxmi in Box 3.

Jockin brought these women because he wanted to instil the knowledge within ourselves as South Africans on how to save. So as not to always say that we will depend on the government. Instead, we should start our own self-reliance process: to organise women in savings so that when we speak, we'd talk about the scale of what we have achieved as an organisation.

That's also when we were concretising an exchange programme with India. We were a team of seven who went to India and we stayed there for 20 days, visiting communities to learn how to conduct our savings. At that time, I was unemployed; I was kicked out of my job by my employer on the grounds that I was encouraging people to join the union. So after that, I became self-employed. With the money the savings group gave me, I went and bought some clothes in Johannesburg and came back to Oukasie to sell to the people. That's how I managed to survive.



*Jockin and Sheela Patel with Rose and others from the South Africa Federation, Jane Weru from Kenya and Sonia from Philippines, 2001*

Coming back from India, we had seen how Mahila Milan were doing the savings, how they conducted their meetings. And the striking part to me is when we went to their Byculla office, they had this long filing cabinet and

when they opened the cabinet, money was just falling on the floor. I wondered, 'What's going on here? Why can't they take the money to the bank?' Because I knew that in South Africa, you couldn't keep this money because within a blink of an eye it would be stolen. But the place was very busy, every day people brought their saving while others came to repay their loans. Others came by to withdraw their money so the transactions were happening all day long. It was so interesting and I said, 'Oh, I wish South Africa could adopt the same system!' It was so impressive.

Jockin demanded that we all do one exercise – to go with the women on their rounds as each savings group treasurer visited members of their savings group. Remember, the women didn't know how to speak English and we had no interpreter. I went with the late Sona. We went to her community and she would go to each house to collect money. She showed me the savings book. They also used pieces of coloured paper or plastic for record savings – yellow, green, blue... Pink symbolised 1 rupee saved, yellow 2 rupees, and so on. Back at the small community centre that served as their office, they had youth who did the formal accounting on behalf of their mothers.

It was so exciting to see the commitment of these women who didn't know how to read and write but who knew how to manage finances. It was the most exciting part of my life. Just being in India, seeing how they eat with their hands and all these other activities. This included organising a youth federation called Sadak Chaap.<sup>72</sup> Jockin would be going all around India to collect the street kids and organise them and as I speak to you today, some of them are married and they got their houses in the NSDF Mahila Milan project.

The other exciting moment was when Jockin took us to Bangalore in a train. You cannot imagine how congested it was and at the train station we had to hold each other's hands in order for us not to get lost. There were so many people. Around 20 Sadak Chaap members were travelling with us without paying. They would be inside the train but when the guard came to collect tickets, they would climb on top of the train. Others would sleep under the

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<sup>72</sup> Sadak Chaap is a federation of street children in Mumbai. 'Sadak chaap' is how the children refer to themselves; 'chaap' means stamp and 'sadak' is street – so it means those who carry 'the stamp of the street'. See [www.sadakchaap.org/AboutUs.htm](http://www.sadakchaap.org/AboutUs.htm)

seats until the guard passed. It was so interesting. I liked it. Those are the things that made me like India.

When I came back from that exchange programme, Joel and Mama Iris arranged a meeting with some of the leaders that had been in the first conference so that they could get the report from the team that came from India. I remember telling Joel, 'I can't continue with this thing that you are starting to do.' Then he asked why. We looked each other in the eyes and I said it was because I didn't know what was happening. Most of the time, my colleagues were just fighting about politics and I wasn't a politician so I didn't know whether we were starting a political organisation. Then Joel said to me, 'Rose, we are starting something which we don't know whether it will work or not so let's just start. One day you will be the one who is going to build this organisation.' Then I asked, 'But I don't know how to speak English, so how am I going to work?' Then he said, 'You know what, you are going to become the pillar of this organisation. You and I have to join hands with others and make it work. If it doesn't work, then no problem.' So that's how I got the confidence from what Joel was saying.

So I was the first to request him to bring the Indians to my community. Jockin, Celine, Shekhar and others came. I requested the chairperson to arrange a mass meeting and they gave a report of our visit to India. I remember Patrick Magebhula Hunsley from Durban (SDI South African Alliance) was there. Joel was there and Mama Iris was also there to support me. And from that meeting, attended by almost 500 people, about 11 women came to me wanting to start saving. I was excited because there were a few people who really wanted it and from that, 11 women started saving. That's how I became the convener of the People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter in 1992. Right now in South Africa, we are more than 50,000 thousand men and women participating and then almost 300,000 members benefiting from the organisation.

In 1993, I went back to India with two other colleagues, to learn how to do enumerations, profiling, shack measuring and shack counting, and how to engage with the government. Jockin taught me how to measure a house because you know some houses are not just four cornered. He showed me how to use a sari to take house measurements and how to draw a plan on

paper. We went to this congested community in India to do house measurements and house numbering. Today, I can be an informal architect taught from the ideas of Jockin.

### Travels with Jockin to support newly emerging federations

I remember I told Jockin, 'I am going to be like you and I am going to defeat you (in the number of countries visited)!'. So then he said, 'Let's try it.' So I said yes.

The first country I visited with Jockin was Zimbabwe. That's where we started the first connection of the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation. But before that in 1996, Jockin and the Indians and also people from other countries were brought back to South Africa in the same venue (Broederstroom) to celebrate the fifth anniversary of our coming together. SDI was not yet formed and then Jockin came with an idea. I was there with the late Patrick, the late Mama Iris, Joel, Sheela and Celine. We were sitting together when Jockin said, 'Guys, I would like us to start spreading this gospel to other countries.' We agreed to have a strategic meeting in India to discuss how we would start to build what became SDI. When we went to India, we were a few of us from South Africa. Then we asked ourselves how we would do it? Misereor (a German development agency) and CODE were asked to fund this process of starting SDI. It was led by Jockin because he was the one who was telling us the story of how he became an activist in India. We agreed that we should do it and the first country that we visited was Zimbabwe where we started the federation. After Zimbabwe, we went to Kenya, then Uganda, Namibia and Latin America. Together we went to other countries including the Philippines and Thailand. We were like twins and the good part of that was I was learning the strategies of Jockin. The only problem was that I couldn't learn how to whisper in the ears of the government officials and get them to agree on everything that we were doing (as Jockin could). So I became so empowered, because of Jockin.

### SDI and the United Nations

I remember when we started to influence UN-Habitat. We attended the first World Urban Forum/governing council of UN-Habitat where they allowed Jockin to speak. Then he said to us, 'Let's bring 100 women to this conference with candles.' There was a gallery in the hall where member states were



present. Then we sneaked in, sitting around the gallery and when they started opening the conference, we started to light the candles, shouting our slogans while singing. All the member states were looking up wondering what was happening. Then we held our candles and after that, Jockin was requested to come and speak.

There were lots of things happening which I cannot date. I remember we were invited to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Jockin requested Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General, for permission to build a toilet right in the middle of the United Nations building. It was the story of the day. We built the toilet and then Jockin brought Kofi Annan to officially open it. Kofi Annan had to stop addressing the council and come to visit our toilet. It was amazing.



*Rose Molokoane and Jockin, SDI, 2008*

As SDI, we have attended all the World Urban Forums (organised every two years by UN-Habitat) with Jockin. We were influential in these. I remember one day on one of them, Jockin was asked to speak. He went to the podium and told them that he was sick and tired of talking to them. 'I will always tell you that this organisation is about women and then I am not going to talk. I

am going to call Rose to come and talk to you.’ The theme of that day was ‘cities without slums’. I remember I was telling all the members to say this, ‘Deal with the slums but not with the slum dwellers’ – meaning, don’t act by evicting people when you want to say ‘cities without slums’. And it was a very strong message that went to the member states. This is why Cities Alliance are continuing to work with us and this theme, ‘cities without slums’.

### Working with the government of South Africa

Jockin also helped me and the late Patrick Magebhula when the South African government’s department of human settlements or department of housing was established in what was now our democratic country. The minister of housing was the late Joe Slovo. Jockin came to South Africa and we were lucky to be given space to meet Joe Slovo. Jockin was talking on our behalf, saying, ‘You see these women? They are doing savings, they are organised, they want to change their lives, they are very strong. How can we work together to help them?’ So, Minister Slovo said, ‘Show me the model. We said we will continue to organise savings around women, identify land and build our own houses.’ Then he pledged 10 million rand, which helped our organisation to start our own uTshani fund.<sup>73</sup> Minister Slovo also agreed to pay for three of us to attend the second UN-Habitat conference in Istanbul in 1996. Myself, Patricia and Patrick attended because of Jockin’s influence.

From then on, the connection between ourselves as the South Africans and the Department of Human Settlements was established. It was still standing when in 2006 the now-Minister of Human Settlements Lindiwe Sisulu arranged an international conference. Here, she invited housing ministers from Africa and SDI to come and make a pledge to us in front of everyone. Minister Sisulu was even crying while telling the African ministers, ‘When I look at Jockin, I see my father, the spirit that Jockin has is exactly like my father’s. So from today, I am adopting Jockin to become my father.’ Lindiwe Sisulu’s father, Walter Sisulu, was one of the politicians who was jailed together with Nelson Mandela in Robben Island. He was one of our greatest icons in politics, championing for the country to be freed from apartheid.

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<sup>73</sup> The uTshani Fund (or grassroots fund) is a credit mechanism established by the Federation of the Urban Poor. See [www.sasdialliance.org.za/about/utshani-fund](http://www.sasdialliance.org.za/about/utshani-fund).

And the connection between Jockin and the minister grew. No one could get in between them. Every time Jockin came to South Africa, he wouldn't go back to India before he had seen the minister. So because of this, our partnership with the Ministry of Human Settlements in South Africa got stronger and stronger and we were able to build houses. We were able to acquire land for our landless.

### Federation building

It was not only in South Africa that we got land and built houses. Together with Jockin, we helped convince city and national governments in many countries to work with the federations. Like in Uganda: the Municipality Department of Lands and Housing was working with our federation through Cities Alliance. We influenced the World Bank to support Cities Alliance so it could support us. Water and sanitation was the first priority in Uganda. Then we went to Tanzania, working with Anna Tibaijuka who was head of UN-Habitat and later Minister of Housing in Tanzania. She allowed us to build houses and now services are being given to our people. We went to Ghana when the government wanted to evict a community called Old Fadama. Our interventions as SDI since 2000 helped ensure that Old Fadama is still there. We are negotiating every day and night for it to be changed into a better area or to be developed.

Jockin and I went to Brazil together, where there was a community that was staying in a lagoon. Since Jockin was a strategist, every now and then, he would come up with innovative ideas. In that community, there was a wooden bridge that was so frightening. When we went there, it was shaking. After SDI support for doing profiling and enumeration, their regional government declared the place a formal community. When you go there today, it's a fully-fledged community with beautiful houses and a proper bridge built by the government. Among the Asian countries we visited, we went to Thailand to look at the CODI model.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See the contributions of Somsook Boonyabanha and Thomas Kerr in Parts 4 and 6.

## Final reflections

I wish everyone could understand where SDI and the federations are coming from and then how many poor people have benefited from them. How many poor women have been empowered to know how to deal with their own lives, to know how to bring the people together, to know how to engage with their governments. Because it was not easy for us ordinary women to even walk next to the office of the mayor. But today, through Jockin, we are not afraid to talk to the mayor. We are not afraid to talk to any minister. We are not afraid to talk to any president.

I can say that because of Jockin. Everywhere we go, we are being recognised and his calibre was so unique. I don't know what was within him. I received a Scroll of Honour Award from UN-Habitat in 2005, not knowing who convinced them to do that. But I said to myself, 'It is because of Jockin that these people recognised me.'

Then I asked Jockin, 'Today, you will call me the MC. Tomorrow, you will call me the coordinator. Next, the vice president of SDI? What is my position in this organisation?' But it is not for the position. Instead, I have the passion that was instilled within me by Jockin. He would always say to me, 'Leave these guys, let them do their job in the office. Let's just continue mobilising and organising community.'

So we were having our own agenda: savings, housing, land and poverty eradication. These are the four issues that have made this organisation continue working. Jockin said to me, 'Rose, we are not building a project: we are building a process. So people should understand that this is a process. They should not come and look at us, like people who are building five houses, ten houses. No. We are improving the lives of the poor continuously and that is what I am doing.'

I am going to be 60 years this coming year. When I look back to 1991, based on what Jockin has taught me to do, even if somebody says, 'Step down or step out' I will be a proud person since I have touched the lives of many people. And where Jockin is right now spiritually, he can see that I am still continuing to carry the legacy forward; so too can other leaders who passed on from this world. Their spirit is upon us and their spirit is the one that

makes us to be stronger – because we can't let it fail. If we make it fail, we will be disappointing the leaders who have left this world.

#### 4.9 Jockin Arputham: channelling scholars and franchising approaches to development

*Robert Buckley*

I first met Jockin in either 2003 or 2004. As a World Bank economist, I was observing the progress on a bank-supported urban transport project in Mumbai. Jockin and his colleagues were working to stop the police from forcibly removing slum dwellers who lived near a commuter train service that was being financed. Through all sorts of clever manoeuvres, they prevented the evictions and ultimately were instrumental in rehousing over 100,000 people who had been living inches from the deadly train tracks.<sup>75</sup> That day, I learnt of how community involvement can play a seemingly magic role improving the living conditions of the disenfranchised. I couldn't believe how engaged and effective the community was. As I continued to work in Mumbai, I frequently met up with Jockin and his many colleagues there, as well as in many other places as well.

Many of those who have written pieces for this book worked far more closely with Jockin than I did, and I look forward to reading their stories of his remarkable life and achievements. My comparative advantage in such personal storytelling is not nearly as strong. Instead, I want to focus on how Jockin channelled the ideas of two of the leading scholars of our time, Elinor Ostrom and Arjun Appadurai,<sup>76</sup> and helped franchise an approach to both development and globalisation. His approach demonstrated how developing the 'capacity to aspire' empowered poor people to solve what Nobel Laureate Ostrom shows is almost always a mythological 'tragedy of the commons'. He demonstrated that if given sufficient agency, poor people could solve most of their own common problems, and that the ways to give the poor agency were not so complicated. Indeed, his work shows that such

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<sup>75</sup> World Bank (28 December 2012) Mumbai resettles slum-dwellers on an unprecedented scale to improve transport infrastructure. The World Bank. <http://bit.ly/2GXQTML>

<sup>76</sup> See his contribution in Part 4: *Learning from Jockin*.

efforts could be rapidly replicated or, more prosaically, franchised in poor cities around the world.

Of course, I want to tell the story of Jockin as a channeller of the ideas of leading scholars and as an innovative franchiser as a way of suggesting just what an amazing character he was. His loss will long be felt. But I also want to tell this story to suggest why these legacies of his are, in fact, directions that SDI should continue to follow.

Jockin provides many extraordinary legacies. But three seem to me to be important from an operational standpoint. First, his honesty. Even though his work was undertaken almost exclusively in densely populated, incredibly underserved sections of teeming cities, places often shrouded in corruption, he always insisted on ruthless honesty. Second, he was able to transmit to so many people what Appadurai distilled in the phrase the ‘capacity to aspire’. And finally, he had a strong intuitive understanding of what it took Professor Ostrom so many years to teach the economics profession – that, if given the chance, people can and do solve the so-called tragedy of the commons in all kinds of creative ways. Her work shows that the idea of overuse of a common resource was largely untrue. Time and again, people figure out mechanisms – with trust playing an important role – to solve how common resources can be provided and maintained. This understanding, in turn, along with his strong empathy for others, allowed Jockin to not only help improve lives, but to change the way people think. To make the poor more able to be the masters of their own fate.

### His honesty

For Jockin, honesty was not just a moral quality – nor was it a pose to facilitate his interactions. Of course, it was no doubt an important part of his character, and ultimately, it helped him gain the support of community groups and the many politicians and well-wishers who loved to be seen with him.

The key to his honesty was far simpler: he knew that his argument was so strong that it would prevail if decision makers would only just listen. That is, he believed so strongly in the strength of his argument that trying to bribe or coerce politicians to get his way was not only not needed, it was likely to be

counterproductive. Importantly, it was not that he himself knew what to do, but that he knew how to go about figuring it out, and that meant engaging and listening to those affected by decisions. It meant, as Ostrom emphasised, that people had to trust one another.

Numerous examples of his honesty come immediately to mind. One stands out to me. It comes from a Pakistani policeman who worked for the World Bank's Inspection Panel. In the course of one of SDI's many slum improvement efforts in Mumbai, complaints were made of corruption on SDI's part. Because this particular project involved World Bank funding, the complaint was forwarded to what was supposed to be an objective, disinterested panel of well-known lawyers who did not work directly for the bank. The panel's deliberations were taking an extended amount of time, delaying possible additional World Bank involvement with SDI, with whom I wanted to work. My views were that in a city as seemingly corrupt as Mumbai was at that time, it was almost inevitable that some, I hoped only minor, corruption had indeed occurred. Real estate – particularly real estate occupied by the poor, at that time, and in that place – was not exchanged in simple, straightforward transactions.

So, somewhat pessimistically, I contacted the Inspection Panel office to inquire as to how their deliberations were proceeding, and when might they be coming to some conclusion. I was directed to speak with said Pakistani policeman who was investigating the complaint. In somewhat breathless tones, he informed me that SDI was the most honest organisation he had ever come across in his many years of work. Once again, Jockin, along with his erstwhile sidekicks, Sheela Patel, Sundar Burra, Celine d'Cruz, and Joel Bolnick<sup>77</sup> were found to be exceptionally honest, even if that did not persuade the Inspection Panel to clear their names immediately as the evidence indicated.

Organisationally, then, SDI has been honestly run. This is also attested to by their many grants and awards from the government of India and from many of the world's foundations, their meritorious service awards, and an honorary doctorate for Jockin. This honesty may of course have been the product of the simple fact that the people involved were honest. Or, more

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<sup>77</sup> See the contributions of each of these in this volume.

mendaciously, it may have been something of a pose adopted as a strategy as to what was most likely to succeed, just as the business success of Quakers in the early years of industrialisation has been attributed to their honesty.



*Jockin with Bob Buckley and Melanie Walker, Gates Foundation, Namibia 2009*

But, perhaps most simply, it might be that Jockin (and through him, SDI) understood the economics of what was involved better than most. That is, he knew that by engaging the community's capacity to aspire he could permit its members to solve the strategic behaviour that economists have for so long characterised as an unsolvable tragedy.

### Creating agency

How did Jockin catalyse the so-called capacity to aspire? By combining brilliance with an unassuming, modest and forthright demeanour. As many of the other pieces in this book show, Jockin was an extraordinarily perceptive



person. As a result, he understood many things more rapidly and deeply than did others. But he was never condescending or rude to those who didn't completely understand what were the best options, or even those who seemed to disagree with anything that was proposed. Indeed, he could engage with a good joke or story that made his point in an earthy way. He trusted the community's understanding of what should be done and was confident in his interpretation of what that view was whether he was in a negotiation with an IAS officer, buying floor space index, or clarifying what the most important next step should be in a development discussion. Ultimately, the combination of his non-intrusive personality with his raw intelligence gave him an uncanny ability to move people, and that, unsurprisingly, made community after community ask him to be their spokesman.

So, he carried out his functions as spokesman in an unobtrusive, easy-going way, as a simple person would. He liked a warm whisky, and he loved a good story, particularly if it was revealingly funny about a person, particularly a pompous one. With this sort of personality, particularly after a success or two, he propagated the idea that other 'common folk' like him could also argue about what should be done. In a word, he provided a model of behaviour with which community members could easily identify. In fact, this form of community engagement is one of the core functions of SDI's approach. And, while it seems simple enough, its achievement is something of an art form. For it to be realised required that the members of the community have sufficient agency to be able to actively engage. For this to happen, members of the community must trust in each other, and have the self-confidence and understanding of why and how they should join together to address their common problems.

Jockin's catalytic role allowed slum dwellers to recognise that they had a much better comprehension of what exactly were the problems, as well as the best ways to fix them. By his actions, he helped build what Appadurai refers to as a future-oriented cultural capacity that allowed the poor to be able to contest and alter the conditions of their poverty. Jockin certainly did not see his actions through the prism of Appadurai's well-chosen phrase on aspiration. The idea that what he was doing was, in Appadurai's words, 'a dialogue between aspirations for the future and long-held traditions, linked

to caste or social class' never crossed his mind. Nevertheless, he continuously showed both the community and policymakers that sustained development required the creation of a culture of aspiration built through capacity building. In short, Jockin operationalised Appadurai, or perhaps, more accurately, Appadurai was able to learn from Jockin so that he could succinctly and interestingly synthesise what Jockin was doing, as Arjun has often said.

### Solving the tragedy of the commons

How did Jockin channel the work of Elinor Ostrom? In retrospect, the answer is apparent serendipitously, and only because Jockin won so many awards. But it is not the awards themselves that matter, as Jockin would no doubt agree. It is the recordings provided by the honouring ceremonies that tell the story. These occasions invariably required him to say a few words, and fortunately, many of these presentations are accessible online. These talks provide the only real record of what he believed, and, in that sense, provide the only documented record of how he worked and what motivated him. His talks make clear what all those who worked with him knew: he had no inclination to write up his ideas in grand strategies as to what should be done. He wanted to get things to move and had little time for what he thought of as largely navel-gazing studies.

How then do the talks show Jockin's fundamental adherence to Ostrom's work? For that, we need to make a short detour into her main idea, made succinctly in her Nobel Lecture.<sup>78</sup> A major rationale for her award was her demonstration that in a wide range of circumstances, people were able to figure out ways to solve what had previously been thought of as the problems caused by the 'tragedy of the commons'. The idea of this so-called tragedy is that many goods that are shared end up being overused because people have the incentive to use as much of a shared good as possible without regard to their neighbours. Professor Ostrom made a career out of demonstrating how groups of people around the world and throughout

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<sup>78</sup> Ostrom, Elinor. 'Beyond markets and states: polycentric governance of complex economic systems.' Nobel Prize lecture presented at Aula Magna, Stockholm University, 8 December 2009. <http://bit.ly/2MS9Js9>

history ultimately figure out how to solve the strategic, even game theoretic, problems posed by sharing such goods.

In effect, her argument is that in the long run, the tragedy of the commons is largely the sort of pernicious myth that economists are fond of telling. Instead of focusing on how to optimally share a good, this myth says there is a 'market failure' that requires government intervention. Unfortunately, the market failure view of (for example) slum conditions puts the responsibility for trying to improve conditions in the hands of government rather than the community. That is, unlike Jockin's community-focused engagement, it puts the responsibility for action on an uninformed actor, the government, rather than those who best understand the situation, those in the community.

Jockin's focus on the community is clear in his presentations. He repeatedly calls for a slum-friendly city – and not the impossible slum-free city called for by some. He didn't ask to eradicate slums (an extraordinarily expensive and largely impossible task). Instead, he always insisted that the goal should be to make slums liveable, with access to basic services. Similarly, a constant refrain of his was that slum dwellers do not engage with public officials as beggars, but rather as productive citizens. He often argued that people live in slums not because they are lazy or criminal, or live in chaotic situations (as many claim) but because of the opportunities that cities afford.

To again refer to Ostrom's analysis, Jockin understood that complexity was far different from chaos. The complex environments in which slum dwellers live allowed them to make significant contributions to a city's overall well-being. Accordingly, in his view, the city in turn owes slum dwellers the right to the services that are so basic to health and dignity. Perhaps most importantly, as shown in the World Bank's study on the Mumbai Slum Sanitation Programme, this work cannot be done by city officials by themselves.<sup>79</sup> Large-scale improvements can be realised only if public officials interact with slum dwellers to design workable policies and regulations.

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<sup>79</sup> Sarkar, S, Soma Ghosh, M and Sen, S (2006) The Mumbai Slum Sanitation Program: partnering with slum communities for sustainable sanitation in a megalopolis. World Bank. <http://bit.ly/2YXOoAb>

## Franchising slum upgrading

Jockin and SDI are an excellent example of how communities can solve their common usage problems if given the chance. But they are more than that. They also serve as an example of how the poor can exploit (rather than be exploited by) the forces of globalisation. SDI's ability to link up slum dwellers around the world through the internet has effectively made them into franchisers of techniques for how to improve conditions. For example, in widely heterogeneous circumstances, SDI has repeatedly shown that once engaged, slum communities can solve their basic service problems, needing only the cooperation and good will of those who govern the 'commons' in their cities.

The question is: how do these communities know how to engage with public officials? The answer is through what are effectively franchises, as I learnt when discussing slum improvement efforts in Ghana. While visiting there, I mentioned to a community leader in Accra that his approach was exactly the same as that used in India. He replied that that result was not surprising as he based many of his strategies on SDI's handbook, and he was in frequent email contact with them. It is in this sense that Jockin and SDI work very much in the spirit of Elinor Ostrom. Sanitation, water, the regulations governing housing development, even petty crime and neighbourly disputes are, in their view, community issues that are most effectively dealt with at the community level.

Jockin's many award talks show that he was someone who recognised that the regulations and policies that frame urban living for the poor are often such that resources are wasted on a massive scale. Many urban policies and regulations, in effect, place a tax on the poor by, for instance, making the cost of land so expensive that it is beyond the reach of the middle classes, much less the poor. When Mumbai's housing prices approach those of New York City (even though the per capita income of the former is a fraction of the latter's) it is clear that the host of regulations governing housing in India's largest city are unfair. They make slum living the only option for many, including many policemen and middle-income families who live in the slums there. Just changing those policies and rules would not only improve slum conditions, it would make for much more productive and inclusive cities. Of course, the urban poor can use more resources so that their children do not

unnecessarily die young because of the many hazards in their neighbourhoods. But, as Jockin would remind us, it is almost impossible for additional resources to be put to the best use without the on-going engagement of those in the communities.

In sum, his argument on how to address the appalling conditions in slums throughout the world was simple: elicit the community's views and work with them to implement basic water, sanitation, conflict resolution, and even police services. This perspective remains at the heart of what SDI seeks to do. The unjust, unhealthy and unsustainable conditions of urban slums are not only grossly inequitable, they are extremely inefficient. They waste more resources than the penalties they impose on those who are forced to live in slums. Jockin was, in short, angry that in cities throughout the world, policies are preventing important common goods from being well managed. Policymakers and politicians have yet to recognise what Jockin acted upon, and what scholars such as Ostrom and Appadurai saw.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, if one looks to what is being done, Jockin's argument has not yet been heard. As a result, in many places conditions are deteriorating. For example, most populations in most sub-Saharan African cities already reside in slums, and this is after these countries have had one of their longest periods of sustained economic growth. Unfortunately, according to UNICEF and World Health Organization data, this growth has made little contribution to improvements in access to urban sanitation in sub-Saharan urban areas. Not only was the improvement during 1990–2015 miniscule, open defecation increased by more than 16 million in these cities.<sup>80</sup> Similarly in India, where hundreds of millions of people live in slums, the government's prime urban concern appears to be with the development of 'smart cities'.

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<sup>80</sup> UNICEF and the World Health Organization (2015) Progress on sanitation and drinking water: 2015 update and MDG assessment. [www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_82419.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_82419.html). The 16 million figure is derived from the Table on page 76 in Annex 3. While the table shows open defecation as a share of urban residents in the region fell slightly over the period, the share of urban population increased by so much that the numbers of those openly defecating increased.

My sense is that Jockin and SDI are more positive than I am about the likelihood that slum communities will be allowed to address their problems, much less be helped in doing so. Of course, Professor Ostrom's perspective is also optimistic and provides some comforting long-term perspective based on the evidence. The problem is how long will it take to deal with the highly nuanced problems that are posed by the problems faced by slum dwellers? After all, if the problems were easy to resolve they already would have been taken care of. My more pessimistic outlook does not stem from scepticism as to whether community groups can indeed resolve their difficult problems. Rather, it stems from recognising how demanding the urbanisation trends in many lower-income countries are going to be. The already bleak conditions and the frequently disengaged governments provide a stark backdrop for coming years. Whether these policymakers join Jockin, SDI, Elinor Ostrom and Arjun Appadurai on the right side of history remains to be seen.

#### 4.10 Oh... these NGOs

*Rajesh Tandon*

'You NGOs always want to control us: our movements, our leaders, are not your "slaves". We want to do what we think is good for us.' Thus spoke Jockin in January 2011 at SDI's governing council meeting in Nairobi.

I had known Jockin since the early 1990s, as he and NSDF began to get closely associated with SPARC in Mumbai. I am a founder board member of SPARC, and Sheela Patel and I have worked together for more than three decades on a wide range of development agendas nationally and internationally.

Over this period, I came across Jockin making similar statements on public occasions. The thrust of his argument was that NGOs are different from social movements, and poor people's organisations (especially urban poor) need to have an identity of their own. NGOs should not come in the way of such people's movements.

Yet Jockin realised that NGOs bring several resources. They bring funds (both national and international). They bring social and political networks of middle classes and professional expertise. And they bring English language writing.

He knew that NSDF needed such resources if it was to have an impact at scale.

Perhaps Jockin's early experiences (in the 1970s and 1980s) with other NGOs in India (both domestic and international) were somewhat negative. Perhaps he felt short-changed by them. Perhaps his work did not get him and NSDF the visibility, which was 'hogged' by those NGOs and their 'do-gooder' staff. Jockin brought that largely negative experience to the partnership with SPARC in the early years. However, Jockin hit it off with Sheela Patel and they built, over these years, a mutually respectful and trusting personal relationship. They both were willing to tolerate each other's idiosyncrasies! They both were able to confront each other with disagreements, and still maintain a healthy partnership. That is how NSDF and SPARC have grown together in impact and outreach over this period up to 2019.



*Rajesh Tandon and Jockin at the NSDF Convention at Dharavi, Mumbai in 2011*

However, similar interpersonal relationships did not necessarily exist with others in SPARC, including some of its board members. On several occasions in SPARC board meetings, such dynamics would be visible. When questions about the progress of several projects being implemented by NSDF were

raised, there would be visible tension in the room. Jockin perhaps felt that he should be trusted, and that formal measures of accountability (reports, finances, legal compliances etc) were not his main concern. Conversations would soon veer around NGOs trying to 'boss' people's movements.

Jockin carried this conflictual, ambivalent and aggressive stance towards all NGOs, and his tendency to generalise, without nuances, tended to put off many well-meaning and committed NGO leaders and staff, in India and beyond. Yet, in the broader NGO fraternity, nationally and internationally, he was deeply respected for the strong leadership he brought to the causes of urban poor, and his ability to mobilise them to influence political leaders and officials.



*With World Bank President James Wolfensohn in Mumbai*

But Jockin would rarely publicly acknowledge the support, contributions and investments of SPARC, its professional team, and risk-taking board members. However, in private conversations, he would accept that SPARC's leadership,



staff and board members have taken considerable risks in ensuring the continued partnership with NSDF over these years.

I have intimately known several thousand NGOs in India and internationally for the past four decades. I am acutely aware that international funding mechanisms place unilateral control in the hands of recipient international (less so national) NGOs, and that several of their procedures are unnecessarily cumbersome. Many NGO staff, though professionally trained, do not respect the knowledge and expertise of the urban poor and local communities. Yet partnerships are meaningful among dissimilar others, as they bring different expertise, resources and networks to the partnership, built around shared goals.

Poor people's movements are significantly different to formally constituted, professionally staffed, externally funded NGOs. They are different from each other in mechanisms of accountability, competencies and cultures. It is precisely because people's movements and NGOs bring different resources, expertise and energy that they can develop and sustain strong partnerships when they share common visions. Devaluing those differential assets and resources by either party can weaken such partnerships over the long run. There is growing evidence that sustained progress towards improving the lives of poor communities requires strong organisations of the (urban) poor with charismatic leadership that articulates their voice loudly – and it also needs competent, resourced and committed professional NGOs to provide back-up through data, reports and interface events and so on.

Jockin's legacy must, therefore, include preparing such movement leaders and NGO professionals who can build and nurture such strong partnerships, respecting each other's differences. For SDI as much as NSDF, it may well be an agenda to focus on for a new generation of leaders from the organisations of the urban poor who arise nationally and internationally. Shared visions for inclusive urbanisation may bring organisations of the urban poor and professionally staffed NGOs together momentarily. But long-term, mutually respectful partnerships between diverse actors can only be sustained when each party recognises and values the differential competencies, resources and contributions of the other.

## 5. WORK IN INDIA: BUILDING THE ALLIANCE, FORGING LINKS WITH GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

### 5.1 Early innovations of the Indian Alliance triggered by Jockin, 1986–1996

*Sheela Patel*

Here are examples of some of the innovations that Jockin set in motion: Mahila Milan savings and its value to the movement; financing explorations with Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Bank in 1988 and the Unit Trust of India (UTI) in 1995; and the first house model exhibition in Byculla (Mumbai) with pavement dwellers in 1987.

#### **Mahila Milan savings and its value to the movement**

A lot is written and known about Mahila Milan (the federation of women's savings groups that is a sister organisation of NSDF in India) and about its savings process and its centrality in the federation model of organisation. But many of its features are not as well studied or understood. In an era of the more-popular Grameen Bank microcredit model, most development and grant-making institutions tend to club all savings groups into that space – or seek to look at how aggregated volumes of small savings can attract investor capital. So, without casting any negative aspersions on other forms of savings systems, this note seeks to highlight what is special about the women's savings groups within the SDI networks. What is not understood and sometimes remains implicit is the powerful role and contribution that the savings groups managed by women play in our work.

Within the federations, Jockin maintained a non-negotiable centrality to the practice of daily savings managed in a decentralised way by women. The women of each settlement group together households into clusters of 10 to 40 and nominate one of these women as a leader who collects money daily (known as the treasurer). The treasurers collect savings every single day. The logic remains very simple but very powerful. The savings begin with the logic that each day, women have some spare change from yesterday's purchases

and household expenses. Each morning, the savings rounds begin. This loose change is collected, accounted for and pooled. In the formative years the primary purpose of savings was to demonstrate that the poor can save if the cause was important and also achievable. The pavement women began to save to reach monthly savings targets that would be equivalent to the monthly instalment for a bank loan. Then gradually, it also led to them making other savings to pool resources which would support them in starting a new life in a relocated home.

By collecting money every day, the burden of stashing money away or being compelled to spend it for so many competing needs was resolved. The trust factor is important. No one gives their money, however small, to another person if there is no trust. As the accountability and trust increased, women began to put money aside other than just yesterday's leftovers.



*Jockin showing the money box 'ATM' to South African exchange visitors in 1994*

The giving of loans to address crises within their groups came six months after the first pavement groups started saving. Laxmi from Dimtimkar Road in Byculla needed money to pay bail for her husband who was in jail for 'loitering' (a term that is officially used when men are found walking on the street without 'purpose'). She had gone to a money lender who would charge her 10 per cent per month. So, if she borrowed from the pooled savings, she would return it within a month. The groups gave her the loan and, along with her daily savings, she also returned an instalment of the loan. Soon the groups began to lend money for other crises: money to buy food when no income was earned that day; money to pay for transport to look for a job, money to buy medicines. Women kept all the money that came from daily savings with them in the treasurer's home so they could get a loan whenever needed. Later, when senior bankers from Citibank came to visit Mahila Milan, they referred to this as their informal street ATM.

The pursuit of daily savings helped build community interdependency and taught these women how to manage their money and transactions while exploring finance for addressing housing for the poor (a factor that remains constantly at the core of the federation model). While the front end was demanding acknowledgement of their presence in the city through the stopping of evictions, the long-term pursuit was to gain access to some form of land tenure, housing and basic amenities.

### **Financing explorations with HDFC (1988) and UTI (1995)**

In 1988, the government agreed to give leases of land to two cooperatives, Jan Kalyan and Adarsh Nagar. HDFC (at that time the only housing finance company for the poor) agreed to Jockin's interesting proposition. Jockin challenged the manager Mr Krishnamoorthy who was interacting with us. 'You need collateral? How about we put in all our housing savings into your company and you give us whatever you give savers as interest on the one hand. And we ask you for loans which you give to the members of the cooperative societies that we bring to you and you charge them the interest you would charge borrowers. How is that for collateral?'

The two cooperatives chose to build small apartments that had the height needed for adding a mezzanine floor. They also built with *ladhies*<sup>81</sup> that reduced the amount of concrete needed and thus the cost (by almost 70 per cent). They found that their requirement for a bank loan was about 16,500 rupees and, before we knew it, these two societies received loans based on the negotiations and transactions that were built on the savings of the community. However, subsequently, the Reserve Bank of India changed the regulations so that HDFC could not perform both these transactions. HDFC had to return the savings so further loans could not be explored through this channel.



*V Suresh CMD of HUDCO observes how a Ladhie is made, 1998*

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<sup>81</sup> *Ladhies* are eggshell-shape concrete blocks. The shape makes them very strong and reduces the need for cement and steel beams. They have been used in many housing projects in other federations – see for example Jane Weru’s contribution in Part 7: *Muongano’s beloved friend and mentor*.

As savings increased, Mahila Milan sought to find ways to increase the investment potential of their savings. They approached UTI, India's largest public-sector mutual fund. Its chief executive officer Jayendra Nayak was invited by Mahila Milan to explore how to design a special category of mutual funds that would be available to the informal poor. The fund required the treasurers to look at people's saving books and choose people who had 500 rupees (or multiples of) saved in their account with Mahila Milan. Mahila Milan would then move this money into a UTI account. All Mahila Milan account money was invested in Triple A investments (very safe), which also provided a higher return than the interest earned on savings with banks.

In both these instances, the finance organisations' senior leadership designed and explored this process with communities. By the time the Reserve Bank of India changed the regulations that finally required them to stop these processes, it had just begun to mainstream in the lives of poor people as they put their savings in these accounts. The number of households seeking to put their money into this facility was expanding rapidly. So, although both these experiments were shut down, they helped us understand that financial architecture is not designed to support and assist communities to grow their investments. Instead, it is much more focused on exponentially multiplying the wealth of the elite.

What these experiences show is that financial instruments for the poor are possible and increasingly valuable if the poor save in ways so that their savings are not eaten up by inflation. But the reality is that financial companies prefer to work with high-income individuals – in other words, with a few accounts with lots of money rather than lots of investors with modest money.

### The first house model exhibition in Byculla with pavement dwellers (1987)

As SPARC, we always believed that we should develop priorities that emerged from what community groups (and especially women) wanted. Following eviction threats, pavement dweller surveys revealed that 350 households from seven pavement neighbourhoods wanted secure homes. 'Give us land and we will build our own houses,' they said. 'But where is the land? Everyone says that there is no land in Mumbai.' Jockin (who had just begun

to work with SPARC in 1986) said, ‘Let me show you where there is land. Lots of land.’

So, every weekend, at least 10–15 men and women from each pavement settlement packed a picnic lunch, caught a local train and visited many parts of the city where Jockin showed them vacant land. He then bought the city’s development plan maps and helped all of us from SPARC as well as Mahila Milan to understand the real politics of land. Empty land was marked NDZ or ‘no development zone’. And locations marked and assigned to house the poor were already occupied by some other businesses and in use for some other purpose.



*Underbridge communities’ model house exhibition in Bangkok, 1999*

Then came the part of designing a house. The participants were divided into groups and each had to design a 150-square-foot house. In March 1987, four groups each built a life-size model house in the open area around the Byculla resource centre. The costs of construction material used were posted in a chart and, inside the house, real-size furniture was added. And women even

prepared tea and food. All 48 settlements in E Ward were invited to vote for the house they liked. The professionals we had consulted, including municipal officials and state government IAS officers, all came to see the houses. The house that got the highest votes was and is still called Shakoor *bhai's* house. It was 14 feet high with a mezzanine.



*Jockin shows Kofi Annan the model house built in the foyer of the UN, 2001*

We mention this milestone as it produces in India and within SDI a practice that is taken up by many other federations – so it comes to be called a ritual. In this instance, life-size house models are on display at a community exhibition event which in India is known as a *mela* – which, when translated, means a fete or fair. The life-size house models are much clearer and easier to interpret than drawings. They explain the logic of the choices made by poor communities for what they want and are explicit in saying what the houses would cost. They facilitate internal agreement and help negotiations with government agencies. It is one of SDI's 'rituals' because so many federations have done life-size house models, including life-size house model



exhibitions at the United Nations headquarters, at UN-Habitat and at the Gates Foundation's annual event.

## 5.2 Jockin stories: empowering women, managing resettlement, improving sanitation

*Chris Hoban*

I worked with Jockin in the late 1990s when I was a transport specialist at the World Bank, preparing the Mumbai Urban Transport Project. Part of the project dealt with the slum dwellers living in spaces along the railway lines. SPARC had been working to support and strengthen these communities over many years and partnered with the World Bank to develop resettlement and social action plans. While project preparation was lagging in some areas, there was good progress in establishing resettlement entitlements and procedures for those who had to move with close partnership between the Mumbai municipality, the World Bank and slum communities, supported by SPARC.

### Women's empowerment

My first meeting with a railway slum community was sitting with my back next to the tracks, facing 50–60 people in a very small clearing. Volunteers were watching out for passing trains. The community organisation was very impressive, with women in well-established small savings groups, who were very articulate in their comments about their needs and concerns.

Jockin played a leading role within the slum communities, championing their capacity to take control of their own decisions and engage with public institutions to make their views heard. In one case, a large group of women went to the police station to demand action on the arrests of two of their sons. While individually they were getting no response, the group was able to get some immediate action. The organisation was called Mahila Milan.

### Community ownership of survey data

One form of this community empowerment was the close involvement of slum communities in collecting social survey data for each household. With help from SPARC, they contributed to the design of survey questions, for

example being very frank about occupations like prostitution, but preferring not to identify families by religion, which was considered potentially divisive. Members of the slum communities participated in the surveys and they retained copies of key data, including dated maps and photographs of all dwellings.

### Quick public response to slum demolitions

During one of my visits to Mumbai, a government agency began demolishing slum encroachments near the railway line, arguing in the media that the settlements were recent and did not have any entitlements under project resettlement agreements. Jockin was quick to lead community efforts to demonstrate the long-term nature of the settlements using the survey maps and photos and their identification under project agreements. Jockin was also quick to mobilise public awareness of this information, using his strong reputation and relationships.



*Jockin meets railways slum evictees in Mumbai, 2000*

## Community-led toilet construction

I remember on one visit to Mumbai, Jockin was excited about the recent success of a community-built toilet block. He could see the power and promise of this approach and wanted to establish a community-based construction company to take on further projects.

Toilet blocks in slum areas were mostly built for the municipality by civil works contractors and had a reputation for poor quality and lack of maintenance, of being an unsafe environment and not always meeting the needs of the community. I can't remember how it came about, but one slum community had the opportunity to design and build their own toilet block with community space. They made an unconventional decision to build the community area directly on top of the toilet block, arguing that this was the best way to ensure that the toilets were kept clean and well cared for. In addition, they decided to build children's toilets with no roof, and in clear view of the upstairs community space. As I recall, the project was built to a very high quality and at lower than the usual price, and had been well appreciated by the slum community and outside observers. The toilets were clean and safe, and the community area was well used.

The outcome demonstrated the approach of Jockin (and Mahila Milan and SPARC) to support whatever choices were made at the community level. It built upon their strong capacity for project management, and a good working relationship with the Mumbai municipality.

Our discussion soon turned to the question of how to scale up this approach. With such a big success, why couldn't communities take a bigger role in designing and building their own facilities, with all the benefits of increased ownership and job creation for the poor?

The challenge lay in well-established and well-intentioned rules for public procurement, which aim to minimise favouritism for preferred contractors, and are considered essential for good fiduciary practice. For physical works, these rules typically require sound financial resources, equipment, company structure and work experience: but these are not always the strengths of community organisations. And community ownership and decision-making

are not easy to assess, or to reconcile with municipal responsibility for the completed projects.

While appreciating the risks of too much discretion in public spending, Jockin was very enthusiastic about the benefits of sound community ownership of local projects and was sure that all these concerns could be overcome. Not long after this discussion, I moved to another position, and did not get a chance to see how this discussion played out.

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**Note:** *Chris Hoban retired from the World Bank in 2011, after 19 years working on infrastructure and country operations. The comments here reflect his personal views and recollections, and not necessarily those of the World Bank.*

### 5.3 Learning from Dr Jockin about the water and sanitation needs of slum dwellers

*Rajiv Jalota*

It has been a very difficult journey for me since October 2018 as I have been deeply missing my beloved ‘doctor’ friend, philosopher and guide of the last decade. I had always addressed Jockin Arputham as ‘doctor’ whenever I spoke with him on the phone and as Doctor Jockin when speaking in person. His imprint on me and my family just cannot be expressed in words. We used to meet almost twice a week or more without fail over the last seven years. I first met him at an international conference on slums in Mumbai when I was working on employment and self-employment for my state government in Maharashtra. I heard his candid talk full of critique but real hope for the marginalised communities in the urban landscape, never losing sight of empowered slum dweller women as the changemakers.

My close association with and tremendous learning from my doctor began with my stint in the municipal corporation of Mumbai from January 2011 to January 2015. He came to see me with his very dear friend Sundar Burra. I distinctly remember having pulled Dr Jockin’s leg in the very first encounter in my office, by referring to him as the international figure who has less time for friends like us as he used to be constantly on the move. I cannot forget his

coming to my home a couple of days after our late evening meeting in my office when we travelled together. After that, Dr Jockin became such a frequent visitor to my home that all my family, even from my hometown, became his extended family. His untimely loss has been deeply mourned by all of us.



*Toilet Block with separate entrances for men and women at Govandi. The caretakers room can be seen at the top.*

Since I was responsible for slum sanitation along with several other issues in the Mumbai Corporation, I had frequent official interactions with Dr Jockin, Mahila Milan and the SPARC team. Slum sanitation had not been on the serious radar of the administrators for the last few years. The annual addition of new public toilets in the slums of Mumbai was crawling along. Motivated by Dr Jockin's commitment to this cause and a push from my boss Mr Subodh Kumar (who had long been an admirer of Jockin's) I started looking at public sanitation in earnest. I had never imagined that the work of creating toilets in

the slums of Mumbai would be so challenging since a functioning public toilet was among the topmost daily needs of these communities.

Many of the elected municipal government representatives wanted it executed in such a way that the role of the community would be relegated to the margins. Dr Jockin always reminded me of his vision from the late 1980s of creating this infrastructure marvel: toilet seats for the slum communities created using their planning and designs and subsequently managed by their user associations. I had to design the tender document for the construction and operation of public toilets in Mumbai for the next three to five years. All through this process, extended over a few months, Dr Jockin remained calm while constantly reminding me about the importance of community involvement for long-term sustainability. A series of workshops and the success of convincing elected corporation members culminated in the realisation of Dr Jockin's dream: public toilets in slums that would be created by the communities over the next few years.

His was a fully raw, crude and most practical vision of people's empowerment. He knew the pulse of the people as he had lived with and for them. I also realised his deep insights and motto for life of women's empowerment. His selfless care for them and their families and for all their needs cannot be emulated. He would sit for hours before a junior officer in the corporation just to ensure a public need – for instance a community tap not working – received its due attention. For me, he was a living god, whose every action shed the light of hope on the lives of the marginalised. Personally for me, Dr Jockin has had a lasting imprint on my family, with my daughter following in his footsteps and my son also trying to become a socially conscious individual. Dr Jockin's legacy will forever guide us towards community involvement whenever planning anything relevant for the have nots.

Dr. Jockin was extremely concerned about the day-to-day issues of the slum dwellers, whether they were in slums or had been relocated to buildings. Since I was looking after the water supply for Mumbai, Dr Jockin used to relate to me stories about the daily struggle for water these communities faced. These were eyeopeners to me as reports on water availability and

accessibility from my water staff were quite contrary to what I learnt from the communities.

Dr Jockin also impressed upon me the need to meet the women in these communities to understand their water woes first hand. These meetings were eyeopeners too – and helped me deep dive into the human-created water mess that helped vested interests even at the cost of these poor communities. Through prolonged dialogues and insights provided by these women, the same engineers who served vested interests could successfully make changes in the water distribution system to provide ample water to these water-starved communities. Many such insights from Dr Jockin and his team of women volunteers helped us iron out issues of water distribution as well as drainage and solid waste disposal in these slum communities.

#### 5.4 Jockin, Anami Roy and community policing

*Sheela Patel*

Jockin first met Anami Roy when he was the police commissioner of Pune.<sup>82</sup> Savita Sonawane is one of the Mahila Milan leaders in Pune who at that time was working on settlement improvement issues. She was seen as a troublemaker by the traditional leaders of those areas and they had put in a complaint to the police, which required her to come to the police station to answer the charges. Jockin met Anami Roy to make a representation on behalf of the Pune Mahila Milan members and to explain the work of NSDF and Mahila Milan in Pune. This intrigued Roy. This was how they met and began a long, very close friendship as well as an amazing partnership to produce a new form of community policing. They conceived of a community policing programme in the slums of Pune to create a more sustainable recognition of the need to have police and community leaders working together for safety and peace in settlements.

In most attempts to introduce community policing, community representatives are trained to be barefoot policemen and women and are left to implement this individually in the communities. Instead, Jockin and Roy developed an innovative covenant that had as its foundation Mahila

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<sup>82</sup> Anami Roy later became police commissioner of Mumbai.

Milan and the local commitment of leaders to make their neighbourhood safe. Roy designed a police *panchayat* to be applied in each settlement.<sup>83</sup>



*Jockin and Anami Roy at a Pune Police Panchayat Function, 2003*

A police officer from the local police station is assigned to each slum, to work with three men and seven women residents (usually members of Mahila Milan) to address all local conflicts within and between households. They operate from the local area resource centre on a weekly basis. All cases are registered and listened to and the policing *panchayat* seeks to resolve the problem. If they cannot resolve a conflict, they take the two opposing sides to the police station and facilitate that process there. This gave a gravitas to the intervention and served three purposes. The poor who were always

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<sup>83</sup> In villages in India, *panchayat* refers to the system of local self-governance. Five people or '*panch*' are elected to manage village affairs and together, they form a *panchayat*. Although the police *panchayat* has 11 members, the word *panchayat* was kept as it is synonymous with governance.



frightened of the police now had police assistance in their settlement. The police acknowledged that they did not have adequate numbers to police slums but that now, they had a partnership that also ensured there was no abuse from the police side. And the policing *panchayats* dealt with many small crimes and conflicts, lessening the police's case load.

When Roy became police commissioner of Mumbai, this model was also initiated there. And later, when Roy became director general of police for the State of Maharashtra, his passion to support the policing *panchayat* continued. It does so even until today. It is now commonplace that senior police officers get phone calls from policing *panchayat* members to deal with safety concerns or bring to their attention issues that the *panchayat* cannot resolve.

We in the Alliance also believe that Roy saved and extended Jockin's life. Jockin had faced many health challenges including two heart attacks. But he always refused to get an angiogram. He agreed to take rest (but only with two phones and still directing action from his bed) but was fearful of operations or invasive investigation. When none of us could persuade Jockin to get his heart checked, Roy managed to do so – and then to get the much-needed heart surgery. For this, SPARC, Mahila Milan and NSDF are forever in his debt.

## 5.5 Arjun Appadurai and the Alliance

*Sheela Patel*

Arjun came to know about the Indian Alliance through his childhood friend, Sundar Burra from SPARC. Arjun was a professor of anthropology and a well-known scholar. At the time we were not aware of his reputation.

Arjun first came with his wife to donate Carrom Board and other board games to the street children's night shelter. Subsequently, we all met him and began to enjoy discussions on a range of topics, many which began with him taking a challenging position on some of the things we did. For example, he said that data about populations in a demarcated geography was a means

to own that population for a state or king. It also put a spotlight on many who would have preferred to remain invisible.

Jockin's response was borne out of a perspective that a democracy needed to acknowledge who it was not serving and a census (unlike a sample survey or case study) can provide aggregated and disaggregated data covering people whose presence could not be ignored.



*Arjun Appadurai with his wife Carol Beckenridge visited Rajiv Indira building in 2007*

Later, through a project which gave him time to spend with us, Arjun wrote a series of essays which helped shine a light for us on his interpretation of what we were doing. Through what he called 'deep democracy',<sup>84</sup> he highlighted how federation savings groups all produced democratic systems within communities. And through his essay, *The capacity to aspire: culture and the*

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<sup>84</sup> See Appadurai, A (2001) Deep democracy: urban governmentality and the horizon of politics. *Environment and Urbanization* 13(2): 23–43. <http://bit.ly/2KH48SS>.

*terms of recognition*<sup>85</sup> he helped us see the deep value of how the federation process produced aspirations that were only possible due to collective sustained networks.

He accompanied Jockin and federation members to the Philippines and South Africa and wrote about the huge value of cosmopolitanism from below. Where race, caste and difference divide, we are bridges with shared values and solidarity.

His ongoing interest and involvement in what we do and his deep excitement about the federation project helps us navigate what we do while celebrating new concepts, words and interpretations. These have helped us to articulate what we do, through what he has reflected back to us.

## 5.6 Memories of Jockin and dancing with financial risk

*Ruth McLeod*

I think that I first met Jockin in 1990. I was the newly appointed director of the charity Homeless International and had been trying to set up an exchange programme for women slum dwellers in collaboration with Sheela Patel from SPARC in India, and Catalina Trujillo from Fedevivienda in Colombia.<sup>86</sup> Professionals working in shelter and slum upgrading had been meeting internationally to explore how to work together. But very few people who actually lived in slums had been able to share their experiences. Somsook Boonyabancha, director of the newly formed Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, had helped slum dwellers from Thailand to go to Korea in 1988 to show solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of people being evicted as a result of the Seoul Olympics.<sup>87</sup> But donors were generally quite hostile to supporting a people's exchange process.

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<sup>85</sup> Appadurai, A (2004) The capacity to aspire: culture and the terms of recognition. In: V Rao and M Walton (eds). *Cultural and public action*. Stanford University Press. <http://bit.ly/2KLoF98>.

<sup>86</sup> Fedevivienda is the National Federation of Self-Help Community Housing Organisations (Federación Nacional de Organizaciones de Vivienda Popular) in Colombia.

<sup>87</sup> ACHR (1989) Evictions in Seoul, South Korea. *Environment and Urbanization* 1(1): 89–94. <http://bit.ly/2YCT527>

Homeless International managed to raise some funds to cover two exchange visits between India and Colombia. The process was not straightforward. Apart from nightmare logistics – including cancelled flights, difficulty in getting visas, lost luggage, and the outbreak of the first Gulf war – there were all the cultural challenges of bringing people together from such diverse backgrounds. Food, clothing, religion and differing versions of feminism all proved controversial. There were times when the tensions were difficult to contain. On one particular night during the Colombians' visit to India, it seemed as if the process was finally going to explode. The stress was enormous and people were becoming angry and frustrated. Something had to be done. So I went to find Jockin.

We talked together for some time and it was finally agreed that we would go back to basics, getting everyone together and asking individuals from Bogota and Bombay to tell their personal stories. Jockin was good at that – getting down to the fundamentals that underpinned people's real concerns. Within no time at all, everyone was sitting on the floor listening with rapt attention. Somehow, six languages were being simultaneously translated, and the individual stories that were being told brought everyone back to the reasons behind the exchange – the power of sharing experience in all its pain, struggle and triumph. Tears and laughter, hugs and handshakes changed the whole atmosphere. People who were threatening to leave stayed, and the whole process ended well. Not long afterwards, the Indians were invited to send a delegation to South Africa. The lessons learnt during the Bombay–Bogota exchange were incorporated into the first exchange programme between India and South Africa – a programme that was ultimately to provide the foundations for the emergence of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI).

Jockin was not always the easiest person to work with. I spent a lot of time trying to grasp how he understood the costing and financing of construction projects, particularly large ones. He was hugely knowledgeable about the informal market and could calculate building costs quickly and apparently rather accurately. The difficulty was that how he made his calculations was often obscure to those of us lacking his intuition. That could make it extremely difficult to translate his conclusions into a form that banks and

other financial institutions were able to recognise. This was something of a problem as Homeless International was trying to work with SPARC to develop effective ways of sharing financial risk with the urban poor, by persuading banks to release loans for community-led slum upgrading projects. That meant persuading banks that the perceived risks of long-term lending to the urban poor for complex building initiatives could be overcome. To do that, we had to find ways to recognise, measure and manage the lending risks that the banks were concerned about, and that meant that we needed to understand how Jockin understood risk.



*Billy Cobbett, Michael Mutter, Jockin and Ruth McLeod, 2001*

*According to Berstein, The word risk is derived from the early Italian risicare which means to dare. In this sense risk is a choice rather than a fate. The actions that we dare to take, which depend on how free we are to make*

*choices, are what the story of risk is all about. And that story helps to define what it is to be a human being.*<sup>88</sup>

Jockin was a man who danced with risk. He dared to take actions that increased peoples' abilities to make choices and he did so boldly. It is perhaps fortuitous that his naming was so appropriate. In Hindi the word for risk जोखिम is pronounced Jokhim. In Urdu it is خوف pronounced Jokham. Interestingly there is no word for risk in Tamil, Jockin's first language, which perhaps explains why, when, in English, I asked him how he felt about risk he said the following:

*We don't think about risks when we think about problems. We don't focus on what can go wrong. We know that this is where we are and this is where we want to go. To get from point A to point B we have to go through all these things, and each one is a milestone, and when we cover one milestone we automatically move onto the next. It's a question of time, commitment and conviction – to make people see that this is the way to move ahead.*

Jockin was rather gifted at making people see the sense of moving forward in a particular way. He was a person who could persuade and convince. It was probably his central skill. He applied that skill not just in Bombay but in India and internationally. His conviction led to the formation and influence of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India and Slum/Shack Dwellers International. Jockin's persuasion also convinced many people who were not slum or shack dwellers to think about things differently. I have seen him, during the troubles in Ireland, keep school children from Belfast spellbound, gripping the edges of their seats, as he demonstrated how pavement dwellers sleep during the monsoon. I have watched him charm Prince Charles, leading him off into the narrow lanes of Dharavi with not a security guard in sight. I have witnessed him lead the construction of full-scale models of toilet blocks in the main lobby of the United Nations headquarters in New York, cajoling UN staff into carrying ladders, sawing wood and wielding hammers. I have seen him laugh in sympathy with pole dancers in Phnom

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<sup>88</sup> Bernstein, PL (1998) *Against the gods: the remarkable story of risk*. Wiley.  
<http://bit.ly/2OZZ15U>.

Penh, sharing a snack break with them as they took a brief rest from their work.



*Jockin showing Prince Charles around Dharavi, Mumbai in 2009. This caused some controversy as Prince Charles pointed to some of Dharavi's good characteristics from which UK planners could learn*

Not everyone, however, was persuaded easily. The people that Jockin often had difficulty in persuading were bankers. He often made bankers feel uncomfortable. When 'financial experts' visited the slums where Mahila Milan's extensive savings and loan system operated, they were invariably impressed. The loan products made sense, having been designed by the members themselves. The service charges were effective ensuring that the loan funds remained financially viable. The basic systems were very similar to the systems that formal banks use – even if the terms used to describe things might have been different. The problem was that the bankers were not sure how these community-level systems could be effectively linked to their

institutions. How would the risks involved be assessed and measured? How could those risks be managed and mitigated? If the risk issues could not be addressed how could they, the banks, possibly consider lending large amounts of money, over long periods of time, so that slum dwellers could implement large-scale building projects?

The usual way of persuading banks that risks are worth taking is by developing spreadsheets and financial models that show how the development approach will work financially – what the possible outcomes of differing lending arrangements might be, what the sensitive variables are and how they will be handled. This was not an approach that Jockin was comfortable with. There was no easier way of getting Jockin to vacate a room that getting out a computer and starting up Excel. He was guaranteed to have urgent business elsewhere. This presented an ongoing challenge for those of us who were trying to come up with new ways of mobilising funding for large-scale community-led slum upgrading, especially during the development of the Community Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF), which was being designed as an international venture-capital fund for slum dwellers.

In the end, the banks did become involved with CLIFF backing, and the SPARC–National Slum Dwellers Federation–Mahila Milan Alliance was able to take on the development of complex and large-scale building projects through their construction and development company Nirman.<sup>89</sup> Throughout that process, the tensions between different attitudes to risk remained, and in some cases solidified further. Whilst Jockin may have distrusted formal financial institutions, often with good reason, it is to his credit that the scale of the projects that he dared to imagine, and the commitment with which he pursued their realisation, provided a new space for partnership between institutions from very different worlds. He treated risk as a choice rather than as fate. He dared to take action, and in doing so helped people to strengthen the freedom they had to make choices. His risk taking helped many to define the ways in which they could become more magnificent as human beings.

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<sup>89</sup> SPARC Samudaya Nirman Sahayak (SSNS or Nirman) is a non-profit company set up in 1998 to assist slum communities to take on construction projects in cities to build homes and sanitation facilities for themselves.



## 6. JOCKIN, SDI AND THE GLOBAL AGENDA

### 6.1 Jockin causing trouble in South Africa and laying the ground for SDI

*Joel Bolnick*

I met Jockin for the first time in early 1991. This was a critical stage in my early adult life. It was a short while after I had returned to South Africa having spent more than a decade in exile. In 1991, I was employed by Catholic Welfare and Development, a well-known NGO in the Western Cape, to organise and run a conference on urban landlessness and poverty. In order to gain the support of NGOs and social movements in this sector, I invited nine international housing activists<sup>90</sup> from Asia, Africa and Latin America to attend this conference, which came to be known as the Southern Africa People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter.

Of course, 1991 marked one year since Nelson Mandela and other South African political prisoners had been released and anti-apartheid political parties had been unbanned. The cultural, academic and sporting boycotts against South Africa that had been endorsed by the UN General Assembly as far back as 1965 was effectively lifted. Progressives from across the globe had begun to visit the country, attending conferences and meeting anti-apartheid organisations and activists. I was confident, therefore, that my invitations were going to get a positive response. Indeed, all but one of the invitees responded affirmatively to my request. I received one not very polite refusal. It was from a slum dweller leader from Mumbai, India. He was the president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India and his name was Jockin Arputham.

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<sup>90</sup> A number of these delegates, in addition to Jockin, were to become important to SDI. Somsook Boonyabancha, secretary of ACHR remains one of SDI's biggest allies. Lalith Lankatilleke from Sri Lanka provided invaluable support to both the South African and Namibian federations. Denis Murphy from the Philippines provided training in community organising to a group of young Kenyan professionals who became technical assistants to the Kenya federation. Father Jorge Anzorena from Argentina and Japan remains a mentor and advisor to many SDI country affiliates and to the secretariat (see also Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 6: *SDI's godfather – Father Jorge Anzorena*).



*Jockin and Joel at a SDI meeting in 2005*

Fortunately, I was able to contact Jockin through a mutual acquaintance, Gregor Meerpohl who worked for Misereor, a well-known German development agency. Gregor, who was to become a very good friend of both Jockin and myself, was able to locate someone to deliver the invitation once again, only this time by hand. This was not easy task since Jockin lived in Cheetah Camp, a slum on the outskirts of Mumbai. Cheetah Camp was formalised; it had been provided as a resettlement site when the settlement where Jockin lived, Janata Colony, had been bulldozed in 1976. But it still had no recognised street addresses and no postal services. My perseverance paid off and Jockin, his interest piqued by my determination to locate him, decided to come to South Africa after all.

The five-day conference was attended by over 150 delegates from all corners of South Africa. It was a unique gathering for many reasons, not the least being the fact that 90 per cent of the delegates came from informal settlements, backyard shacks or single-sex hostels. It was a vibrant gathering of survivors and street fighters, buoyed to the point of euphoria by the first

glimmering of a new political dawn, promising freedom and limitless opportunities after generations of brutal oppression.

The entire week was characterised by intense and often heated debate, punctuated with the exuberant singing of freedom songs accompanied with impassioned dance. Future giants of the South African federation and the SDI network were in attendance. But the likes of Patrick Magebhula Hunsley, Eldridge Jerry and Rose Molokoane – already blooded by the anti-apartheid struggle – were dwarfed on this occasion by Jockin, a slum dweller from Mumbai, India, diminutive in stature but huge in commitment and courageous intensity. From the moment he first stood up to speak, Jockin both galvanised and polarised the meeting. ‘Don’t wait for your government. Organise yourselves so that you are ready to help them to help you,’ he urged. ‘Over forty years ago our own National Congress came to power. We believed that milk and honey would flow through the streets, but they didn’t even give us shit to eat.’

Fifty per cent of the audience (including most of the foreign guests) considered this to be incitement against the ANC, South Africa’s ruling party in waiting. The other half, equally buoyant about the end of apartheid, but a bit less sanguine about their future government, thought Jockin’s exhortations made a great deal of sense.

About six months later, I had the opportunity to prepare a visit to India for those who emerged as spokespersons and facilitators for the group that had been persuaded that self-organisation was not an act of treason. This was to be the first of hundreds of visits over the coming decades to the slums of Mumbai, where slum dwellers from countless cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America came to sit cross-legged on the floor and debate and laugh and argue with the man who inspired them to start or to join their own federations of the urban poor.

South Africa was the first country to adopt and adapt Jockin’s practice of mobilising very poor women into savings collectives and then federating them at slum, city and national level. The driving force was Patrick Magebhula. Emboldened by Jockin’s courage and stubborn persistence, Patrick and a team of young shack dwellers across the length of South Africa

risked the ire of the liberation movements and the open hostility of NGOs who at first saw them as undermining the ANC and then later as being co-opted by them!



*Jockin, Mahila Milan women and first South African enumeration exchange team, Mumbai 1993*

Jockin always maintained that the seminal moment in his life's work was the replication of the federation model developed in India in South Africa. This was the trigger for the creation of a transnational movement of the urban poor which in turn was the precondition for the emergence of SDI as a recognised and respected voice on the international stage. While Jockin's work in India was profoundly impactful and influential, it achieved international recognition because of South Africa's prominence on the world stage in the early 1990s and because of the transnational network that came to be known as SDI, which was spawned by the alliance between the Indian and South African federations.

It was not long before South Africa's initiative crossed the border, with women's savings collectives federating across the shacklands of Namibia and Zimbabwe. Namibians like Edith Mabanga and Martha Kaulwa, and Zimbabweans like Rufaro Juma, Shanagu Chimbaya and Rosemary Masimba (who were later to succumb to HIV/AIDS) found inspiration, courtesy of Jockin, in the organising work of the pavement and railway slum dwellers of Mumbai.



*Jockin and the first South African team to visit India in July 1992 that included (from left to right): leaning over in red shirt, Patricia Matolengwe; standing with glasses, Thandi Bosman; kneeling in white vest, Patrick Magebhula; leaning over in black shirt and sunglasses, Eldridge Jerry; kneeling in pink shirt with sunglasses, Rose Molokoane; and standing to the far right, Iris Namu.*

At the same time Jockin was attracting the attention of slum dweller organisations and urban development professionals in Asia. Thanks to his close ties with Somsook Boonyabancha, the head of ACHR, Jockin and his inseparable professional ally Celine d'Crux brought elements of India's federation model to Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

It was for purely financial reasons that in the mid-1990s SDI was formally established as a transnational network of federations of the urban poor. The budgets of the South African and Indian federations could no longer carry the costs of the international exchange programmes that had increased significantly in size and in number.

SDI only achieved sufficient critical mass in the late 1990s to become a recognised transnational movement when the South Africans and Indians combined their efforts to take the federation model to East Africa, West Africa, Asia and Latin America. In every instance, it was Jockin's charisma and vision, his drive and determination that transformed small beginnings into movements of national impact and scale. In Kenya he first charmed and then inspired established grassroots activists like Anastasia Wairimu, Joseph Muturi and Ezekiel Rema and seasoned housing professionals like Jane Weru and Jack Makau. Kenya's foremost movement of the urban poor, Muungano Wa Wanvijiji joined the SDI network in 2001. In Ghana, along with Rose Molokoane from South Africa, he inspired a young community worker, Rabiou Farouk Braimah to start an NGO with the express intention of birthing and supporting a Ghana federation. In Brazil, Jockin and his colleagues were introduced to Paulo Teixeira, who at the turn of the millennium was the secretary for housing in Sao Paulo. The exchange visits that Jockin led to Brazil gave birth to an NGO called Rede Interação. Under the leadership of Anacláudia Rossbach and later André Franco, Rede Interação enabled Jockin's federation model to sink roots in Brazil. Over time, these founding federations in Southern, Eastern and West Africa, in South Asia and Southeast Asia and in Latin America took the tools and methodologies that had their original form in Mumbai, India to over 450 cities in more than 32 countries.

SDI's emergence as a transnational movement of the urban poor was, for the most part, organic and almost spontaneous, carried across borders by women members of savings collectives with family and friends in slums in the cities of other countries. SDI's role on the international stage was more deliberative and, in the beginning, rather vigorously contested within the leadership. Once again it was Jockin who resolved the dispute by doing rather than debating, taking his festive mechanisms of mobilisation such as life-size cloth house models to UN Habitat events. After an impactful start at the first World Urban Forum in Nairobi in 2002, where Jockin inspired 200 slum dwellers to fill the UN Habitat plenary session while waving candles in silent protest against evictions, Jockin and his fellow slum-dweller leaders were to become consistent and persistent voices on the global stage, demanding the recognition and inclusion of slum dwellers.



*Jockin with Somsook Boonyabancha, Joel Bolnick and Sheela Patel, Mumbai, February 2018*

I had the extraordinary privilege of being by Jockin's side for thirty years while he blazed a trail through the slums and cities of the world. I watched him inspire tens of thousands of slum dwellers, awakening their consciousness and self-belief, motivating them to take action, teaching them by example to become fearless and proud. I watched him charm and encourage world leaders to recognise slum dwellers and help bring dignity to their lives. I saw him laugh with Prince Charles and Kofi Annan. I watched him embrace President Lula da Silva and President Mandela. I saw him treat evicted slum dwellers in Mumbai and his close friends South African ministers Lindiwe Sisulu and Derek Hanekom with the same degree of respect, recognising and affirming their shared humanity. It may have been his vision and his unwavering commitment that played a central role in forging SDI, a transnational movement of the urban poor. It was his capacity to befriend and believe in the humanity of people from all walks of life that has kept it glued together.

## 6.2 Jockin, ACHR and the people's process in Asia

*Somsook Boonyabancha and Thomas Kerr*

### The start of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights and the regional process

When we had that first women's savings meeting in Mumbai in 1988, jointly organised by SPARC/NSDF/Mahila Milan and ACHR, it brought together groups from ten countries.<sup>91</sup> We all saw the situation in those countries and saw a lot of problems and possibilities. After the meeting, we were all in the mode of helping those countries. We really felt an urge to do more, to assist those countries to develop the kind of community action that we believe in.

First, there were the big evictions taking place in Korea for the Olympics. One of ACHR's first tasks was to organise a fact-finding mission there. Later, we organised our first big regional event – the Asian People's Dialogue in Seoul in 1989. That gathering was quite unconventional – we made it a sharing of community people from several Asian countries. Jockin was there, with a team from Mahila Milan. It was the very first event for community people to be organised by the new ACHR coalition. Because so many countries participated in that meeting, and because they came with so many stories, we couldn't just stop there. We all felt that we had a mission now to support the work of these groups in the region.

### Cambodia

Cambodia was one of ACHR's first interventions in the early 1990s, and Jockin and Celine came on one of the very early trips to Phnom Penh. We went to visit some of the communities, talked with the NGOs that were starting to do work there, and asked them what a 'community' was in this context that had so recently emerged from a terrible war and genocide. Robert Deutch, an American working there at the time, told us, 'There are no communities in Cambodia now – just groups of people living together in adjacent houses. They may call it a community, but there is no interaction, no system.' There was no information, no support for the poor, no anything at all in Cambodia then.

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<sup>91</sup> See also the contribution of Somsook Boonyabancha and Thomas Kerr in Part 4: *Making change happen: lessons and inspiration from my friend Jockin.*



So, we began inviting people in the communities into a discussion. After several trips, we started the first savings groups, started building a community network and undertook the first survey of informal settlements. We also proposed the first land-sharing solutions in Phnom Penh. We had a very strong commitment to help communities in that country that had just had their first election and were trying to normalise things again after so much upheaval and civil war.

In that early stage, Jockin came to Cambodia almost every month or two, putting a lot of energy into helping get the community process started. I would usually join him, with Celine. We would go from community to community, meeting people and seeing how they could organise a network, do a survey and start community savings. That was the beginning of the first community network in Phnom Penh, which they called SUPF (Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation). We were also able to talk to the city's governor, and, after some good collaboration with the municipal government, were able to sign a memorandum of understanding to set up the first community development fund – the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) – in Phnom Penh, to give loans for community housing and upgrading. The UPDF's capital blended contributions from community savings groups, the municipality of Phnom Penh and ACHR (with grants from Selavip and Misereor<sup>92</sup>).

In those early years, we supported the first model house exhibitions, with full-size cloth house models that were planned by community groups and invited key government officers to inaugurate them. A number of community housing projects were organised for communities facing eviction, with land provided by the government, infrastructure from the UN Habitat programme and housing loans from the new UPDF. These earlier projects and activities made a big impact, and the inauguration of one of those housing projects inspired the Prime Minister to announce a policy to support the upgrading of 100 urban poor communities every year. Later on, similar community housing and upgrading projects were implemented in many cities around Cambodia.

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<sup>92</sup> Selavip is a non-profit organisation that funds housing projects to shelter very poor families living in cities of Latin America, Africa and Asia (see [www.selavip.org](http://www.selavip.org)). Misereor is a German Catholic development assistance agency (see [www.misereor.org](http://www.misereor.org)).



*Jockin and district chief on new land for first housing project in Phnom Penh, 1997*

But the very first housing project in Phnom Penh was largely Jockin's doing. He did all the negotiating, he invited the district chief to Mumbai to see the projects, and he got an agreement about the free land for resettling a roadside squatter settlement. I only had to follow up on that agreement and make sure everything happened according to plan. Once Jockin stepped off the plane, he'd start working right away. He'd go to meet with the government, he'd meet with the district authority. He'd meet with the people and he'd visit communities and hold several meetings with community people, and then he'd make agreements – one, two, three, four! And then he'd tell me, 'Somsook, you have to follow this up, follow that up.' And I always did.

At the end of each day, he'd get the community people to come and have meetings with him in the hotel – every single night. Those meetings were smaller, and I suspect they were partly like a training for the community leaders, partly advocacy, partly Jockin's efforts to get them to understand the

deeper aspects of what they were building in their movement, their projects. I guess these were opportunities for him to speak straightforwardly to those leaders, give them special tactics, or orders. He would always have those special night sessions, and the community leaders loved it.



*Jockin with women federation leaders and Mann Chhoeurn at celebration of the first housing project, Phnom Penh, 2000*

## Nepal

Nepal is another country where ACHR supported community processes from the beginning, giving its full support to the NGO Lumanti, with very active support from Jockin. We went to Nepal very often to assist the work there. Like Cambodia, Nepal was a country with almost no support systems for the urban poor, no programmes, no organisations. For the Indians, who were both geographically and culturally close by, it was very easy for Jockin to go to Nepal. I would say that in the community processes in Cambodia and Nepal, and later in the Philippines, which have grown to such a very large scale today, Jockin was an important contributor to that change. It was Jockin who made the UPDF fund possible in Phnom Penh in 1998, and it was Jockin

who made the Urban Community Support Fund possible in Kathmandu in 2004 to support the very first community housing project there. Jockin had a special way of talking with government officers. He knew how to make things understandable and to feel excited about new possibilities – because it is those good government people who are the ones who can help provide support to make things possible. Jockin had an instinctive gift for talking to governments and making those links.



*Jockin with the Mayor of Kathmandu at the house model exhibition at Kirtipur, Nepal*  
© ACHR

## South Africa

Besides the early work in Cambodia and Nepal, Jockin also went with ACHR to South Africa in the mid-1990s. It was an idea of Gregor Meerpohl at Misereor to try to get the Asian groups to support the people's process in South Africa, after the system of apartheid had been abolished. We were there in the very early stages. I think it was on the very first trip to South Africa that we participated in the Southern Africa People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter, organised in the town of Broederstroom. ACHR sent a team from Asia, which included me, Jockin and Celine, Lalith Lankatilleke, Denis Murphy, Father Jorge and Gregor. Several of our key community leaders and supporters in Asia were on that team. We visited communities, and all of us felt so passionately about the situation of poor people there, which was really terrible. And the first thing we had to do was to start savings groups and link

these communities into a network. We had meetings among ourselves every night, to talk about how to do this.

I love this way of working very much. Going into some country and very much wanting to help the people on the ground. But what to do? After visiting the communities and reading about the situation, observing the politics and the relationships of things, gathering whatever we could from the ground and then figuring out together what kind of intervention to make, right there, on the spot. What to start? What to focus on? Those nightly discussions were always like a parallel process after the day's meetings and community visits. I think we thought about that and discussed things among ourselves before the big meeting at Broederstroom started. At first, we were supposed to be just the invitees, to present stories from our Asian countries – which we did. And the South Africans were to be the meeting moderators. But we felt itchy when they started, and finally Jockin took over, moderated the discussions and brought the meeting to life.



*Jockin addresses federation members in Philippi, South Africa 2011*

That was the very first trip where our Asian group was able to share and help support the people's process to get going, and to assist in the organising of the new community network. A lot of good ideas came out in that meeting, and afterwards, the process in South Africa really took off. Later on, Joel Bolnick came to India to visit Jockin's work, and felt that the knowledge of India was something so significant. Joel probably had the same feeling I had after visiting Jockin's Byculla office. After that, they organised lots of exchanges between India and South Africa. And Jockin and Celine really connected with the South African organisation and cultivated those links, which then later developed into SDI, which, because of all that intensive work in Africa, focused more on Africa than Asia.

### 6.3 SDI's godfather – Father Jorge Anzorena

*Sheela Patel*

Jorge Anzorena is regarded as SDI's godfather and the ambassador of the urban poor at large. A Jesuit priest, he met Jockin for the first time in 1976 during Jockin's struggle to stop the Janata Colony evictions. Part of Fr Anzorena's work was with the Belgian foundation *Selavip*, supporting urban poor groups including their struggles to avoid eviction. Fr Anzorena travelled around Africa, Asia and Latin America for many decades, documenting the urban poor groups he met and the work they were doing. This documentation was circulated initially as an informal newsletter and later became a much more widely circulated journal, *Selavip News*. It was through *Selavip News* that many informal contacts between different urban poor groups were first established within and between nations. This included many groups that were to become part of ACHR and SDI.

Below are Fr Anzorena's comments about Jockin. His words are followed by an example that I recall of the type of networking support and assistance that Fr Anzorena pioneered.

#### [Jorge Anzorena on Jockin](#)

Jockin left us with a tremendous vacuum. There is no other Jockin. But his spirituality and conviction has multiplied in so many leaders. The 38 years in

his company have introduced me to a new world struggling with imagination and resolution for improving the lives of the urban poor.



*Father Jorge Anzorena in Zambia with women who had improved their homes, 2014*

He was a charismatic leader when I met him first. After he joined Sheela Patel and Mahila Milan (in 1986) he learnt other softer tricks. He found the women to be more stable partners, possessing other tools besides opposition. For instance:

- When an eviction comes, the women do not fight but talk to the police instead. Women will dismantle their shacks themselves (while others speak to the police). The police take pictures and leave, allowing the women to then rebuild their shacks.

- Women build one community toilet to show what they can do and then build other community toilets in other settlements – and the government and World Bank give them contracts to do so.
- Women conduct surveys of their own shacks and then extend their skills to surveying full settlements.

A few government officials appreciated these positive developments and supported their activities. Jockin learnt continuously, this serving him well as he prepared for SDI. But the Alliance with Sheela Patel and Mahila Milan was very important.

### Sheela: Father Anzorena's support for our work

One day in early 1987, Fr Anzorena landed in my house in Mumbai when Jockin and SPARC staff were having a discussion. He informed us that it was the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) and he was very keen that the work we were doing with pavement dwellers should get more visibility. Jockin was of course enthusiastic and agreed that I should go to the setting up of CityNet that UNESCAP (the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) was initiating in Yokohama.<sup>93</sup> He also suggested that Jockin meet Somsook Boonyabanha who was setting up the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights and who was coming for a meeting of IYSH in Delhi. The Alliance agreed to be part of this new coalition.

Fr Anzorena came regularly to Mumbai as part of his six months of travelling, visiting and documenting community processes. He provided funds for the first knowledge exchange for Mahila Milan to go to South India and Bangladesh to see how others were managing housing savings and projects.

He has supported the Alliance through some of our toughest challenges. He gave Jockin the first bank guarantee and many other grants through Selavip. Without this support, our relocation work could have never proceeded. Fr Anzorena also persuaded us that we had to go to the first Southern Africa People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter in South Africa<sup>94</sup> in 1991, which Jockin

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<sup>93</sup> See <https://citynet-ap.org>.

<sup>94</sup> See also Joel Bolnick's contribution in Part 6: *Jockin causing trouble in*



attended. Since then, Fr Anzorena has been a constant figure, supporting us in our work and in all the milestones we have achieved.

## 6.4 Talk with government, not fight with them

*Lindiwe Sisulu*

Jockin's tolerance is in the same ilk as some of the great leaders, including Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. 'Talk with government,' he would say, 'not fight with them.' It was not weak and compromising. It was a tolerance of others that came from complete self-assurance and a deep understanding that resolution of conflict came from seeing your own humanity in those that the gross inequalities of life forced you to challenge.



*Jockin and Minister Sisulu, Cape Town in 2006*

## 6.5 Jockin: community developer, communicator and common man

*Erik Berg*

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*South Africa and laying the ground for SDI.*

The first time I met Jockin was in the spring of 2011 at the SDI Board of Governors meeting in Mumbai. The meeting was chaired by the Indian Minister for Housing.

It has been said that the most difficult communication of all is communication between human beings. Jockin will always be an example to the contrary. 'Communication' comes from the Latin verb *communicare*. It means to share and make common. Jockin, who titled himself community developer, was a world leader in sharing. Throughout his life, he continuously shared experience, knowledge and wisdom from his many struggles. Be it against India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi or the developers of Dharavi. Never agitating, always instructing. 'Mwalimu', as they would have addressed him in Kiswahili. That is somebody who is respected as a teacher.



*Eric Berg at the launch of UPFI in Mumbai. Also in the photo are Gautam Chatterji and Kumari Seleja the Minister for Housing, 2008*

One of his most important abilities was to connect effectively with people from all walks of life, installing hope and promoting action for change. Jockin was a real changemaker, negotiating solutions not through confrontation but through dialogue. And at all levels, from the individual to the global. Often with several people almost at the same time. A true ‘multitasker’ long before the word was invented.

While preparing this contribution, I Googled ‘Jockin Arputham’. In a *The Guardian* article by Srinath Perur,<sup>95</sup> I found a photo with a scene I had witnessed. It was titled ‘Jockin Arputham holds court’ and depicted how he met visitors in his Dharavi office.

Like in the photo, I will always remember him sitting on a low sofa at a small table mostly surrounded by women. All patiently seeking his counsel on questions dealing with housing, water, toilets, police or trash – or on their husbands and children – while a stream of people lined up outside the door waiting to meet him.

Unlike most leaders, he had not elevated himself above those who came to see him nor sought ‘defence’ behind a huge desk. He sat at the same level as his visitors – almost below them, given his miniscule figure. He spoke with people, at their level – not to them, from above.

During my last visit in 2013 with Norwegian state secretary Arvinn E Gadgill – whose grandfather had lived in Dharavi – on the small table in front of Jockin lay three cell phones. He spoke into a fourth, folding it between his hands. Almost like praying. When I met him for the first time in 2011, he only had one. Although he was ‘born before technology’ (BBT), cell phone technology and social media opened up unique opportunities for the extrovert Jockin. His outreach and effectiveness increased tremendously. He learnt how to master the phones almost to perfection. A single phone was no longer enough to manage the volume of calls he got.

One phone rings and he picks it up to talk. No sooner has he finished, then another starts to ring. He picks that one up, and then the first one rings

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<sup>95</sup> Perur, S (12 June 2014) Jockin Arputham: from slum dweller to Nobel Peace Prize nominee. *The Guardian*. <http://bit.ly/2YT1Fde>

again. Not one look at his visitors. This goes on for a few minutes until he suddenly turns all phones over and hits the 'end' button. Then he gives his full attention to the people sitting at his feet. A messianic scene. Yes, Jockin literally fed millions and turned water into wine. Not by miracle but by action.

One might say that during his later years he communicated with the outside world through four channels. One phone for his wife, one for his children, one for Sheela Patel – the SDI chair – and one for the general public. His use of phones reflected unique social capabilities and capacity, energy, impatience and an ability to handle many challenges and opportunities at the same time. Jockin recognised that it takes time to complete things. And that it was important to utilise the time while waiting.

Cell phones can isolate people. But I never saw Jockin alone. He was always part of people, sharing his wisdom with humour and laughter.

## 6.6 Jockin and small stories

*David Satterthwaite*

I first heard about Jockin and the fight to save Janata, the settlement he lived in, from eviction in 1976. I had been lent by my institute (IIED) to the Canadian government to help organise the NGO forum for Habitat, the UN Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver in 1976.

The Canadian government had provided funds to allow us to invite 'experts' to come and speak at the NGO forum. So, it was appropriate that Jockin should be included. But the eviction from Janata started just before the conference opened and Jockin knew he had to stay to help manage it and the resettlement to Cheetah Camp. SK Das, an architect who knew and had worked with Jockin, came to the UN conference and spoke on behalf of Jockin and all those threatened by eviction.

It was in the late 1980s that I began to hear about Jockin's work with SPARC and Mahila Milan through contacts with Sheela Patel. We committed to help document their work – especially through the journal *Environment and*

*Urbanization*.<sup>96</sup> This included publishing a profile of SPARC's work with Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation in 1990. Some years later, I began to visit SPARC every year and this annual visit always included some days spent with Jockin. It also included interviewing Jockin – from which came his account of his life and work up to 1990 (that is included in Part 2 of this book) and a series of short articles (including a blog) about enumerations, saving the Dharavi slum in Mumbai, the police *panchayats* and how to use data in negotiations with government.



*David Sathertwaite and Jockin in Mumbai, 2008*

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<sup>96</sup> Over 80 papers have been published on the work of the federations, most written by staff of the local NGO that supports the federation and often co-authored with federation members. See <https://journals.sagepub.com/action/doSearch?AllField=federation&SeriesKey=eaua>.

All these were based on interviews with Jockin. These would be squeezed into Jockin's hectic schedules. Jockin would also take me to see new projects or initiatives, and the time we spent going to and from these by car allowed us this interaction. We devised an unusual way of checking the accuracy of the text I had put together from the interviews: I would read the draft to Jockin and he would respond with comments, corrections and additions. In the course of these conversations about his life, suddenly events I had never heard of would be mentioned. That he had helped organise a land invasion in Bogota, Colombia. His involvement in helping those fleeing from the civil war in Bangladesh. We once decided to count the number of countries that he had visited – it came to 58. Much to my annoyance, more than me.

Spending several days each year with him also allowed me to attend his meetings with grassroots leaders and senior civil servants, as well as sitting in his office in Dharavi where a constant stream of people came to him for help or advice.

**In meetings with civil servants, Jockin got biscuits:** When you visit a senior civil servant in India, if you don't get asked whether you want tea or coffee, you know that they want to get rid of you as soon as possible. If you get offered tea, coffee and biscuits too, you know that you are being taken seriously. For all the meetings Jockin had with senior civil servants that I was at, we got biscuits. The meetings were also very action oriented – for instance, when Rajiv Jalota was additional municipal commissioner for water and sanitation in Mumbai, I accompanied Jockin to a meeting where they were identifying particular slums where water supplies had been cut off and Rajiv Jalota was making sure they were reconnected.

The contributions in this book include one from Rajiv Jalota<sup>97</sup> and also one other from a very senior civil servants, Gautam Chatterjee.<sup>98</sup> One of Sheela Patel's contributions is on a third very senior civil servant, Amani Roy and his work with Jockin on community policing.<sup>99</sup> They also include a poem by

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<sup>97</sup> See Rajiv Jalota's contribution in Part 4: *Learning from Dr Jockin about the water and sanitation needs of slum dwellers.*

<sup>98</sup> See Gautam Chatterjee's contribution in Part 4: *Jockin: my mentor.*

<sup>99</sup> See Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 5: *Jockin, Anami Roy and community policing.*<sup>78</sup>

Sundar Burra who worked with Jockin and SPARC for many years, after being an IAS officer.<sup>100</sup>

**Meetings with grassroots:** Jockin took me to many meetings with Mahila Milan leaders and to many savings group meetings. These included many where Mahila Milan members told me about their work. One of the most memorable was a meeting that Celine d’Cruz and I had with Mahila Milan leaders in Pune where they gave a very detailed and insightful assessment of how much each of the last seven municipal commissioners had supported their work.

**Jockin at the UN:** At a United Nations meeting on urban poverty, Jockin had been invited to speak – in a large theatre with representatives from most governments. Before Jockin spoke, there were various contributions on reducing urban poverty that were the usual general pious stuff that national government representatives loved to say but with very little in common with their current policies on the ground. And with almost no mention of the urban poor.

Finally, it came to Jockin’s slot. Jockin looked across the theatre and said, ‘You silly bloody buggers. Do you think you can reduce urban poverty without us?’ That got their attention, as did the rest of his presentation.

**Sorting out local difficulties:** Jockin used to stay with me whenever there was a meeting relevant to SDI in London or when he visited his grandson who was studying in England. Jockin’s two mobile phones were often busy – mainly Jockin sorting out some local problem and without mentioning that he was in London, not Mumbai. One of his trips included meeting with Prince Charles, who had invited Jockin to visit him. This was after Jockin had shown Prince Charles around Dharavi.

**Tea stalls for the police:** I was taken to a police station in an area with many informal settlements and high crime rates. The police regarded the informal settlements and their inhabitants as ‘the problem’ while the residents told of how they could not get a police response to their complaints. So local

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<sup>100</sup> See Sundar Burra’s contribution in Part 2: *How shall I remember you then, Jockin my friend?*

members of Mahila Milan (the federation of women slum and pavement dwellers) were invited to open a tea stall **inside** the police station. It proved so popular with the police that the women increased the range of food available. All the police got to know the Mahila Milan women, which also changed their attitudes and their responses towards them.

**Changing the game:**<sup>101</sup> Many of the contributions in this book describe crucial changes or choices made by Jockin that at that time were pragmatic responses to what was happening on the ground – but they were later to have enormous significance in catalysing and driving change for slum/shack dwellers and local governments around the world.

**Becoming a community leader:** Jockin never intended to become a community leader. He was in his late teens, living in Janata Colony but without a home, sleeping rough. Schools and his work ended at 3.30pm. He suggested to some kids that were hanging around with nothing to do that they sing – which became a small informal singing competition that grew into a large informal school with homework and singing (and Jockin as the principal even though he had never finished secondary school). Jockin also organised the children/youth who came to sing to do community projects – for instance clearing garbage piles. This contributed to him having a growing role as community leader accepted by the different groups in Janata Colony.

**His recognition that slum dwellers had to be organised** led from the first protest with the children involved in singing groups (see the garbage picnic described in Jockin's account of his early life in Part 2) to the long struggle to save his settlement, which ultimately led to the formation of the National Slum Dwellers Federation.

**Gathering data:** Part of being organised was gathering detailed data about the settlement you lived in. Jockin launched and helped manage the first community-driven slum survey in the early 1970s. Jockin's amazingly simple idea was that for any settlement under threat of eviction, record all the businesses, houses, religious buildings, water connections, telephone lines...

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<sup>101</sup> Each of the issues mentioned here are covered in greater depth and detail in other contributions



This showed its aspects of formality and importance to the city economy and workforce.

**The change from protest to offering government partnership and the tools and methods used:** When Jockin had to get out of India in the mid-1970s during the Emergency, he reflected on how they had not been able to save Janata despite being organised and having powerful allies. As Celine d’Cruz notes, Jockin shifted from the politics of agitation to that of engagement with government.<sup>102</sup> This was to change the quality of the relationship between organised communities and governments.

**Recognising and supporting women** and their federation of savings groups (Mahila Milan) to organise, lead and take action. In 1986, instead of seeing Mahila Milan as taking power from the National Slum Dwellers Federation, he saw the huge potential of an alliance with them.



*Jockin with Mahila Milan in Pune 2010*

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<sup>102</sup> See Celine d’Cruz in Part 4: *How to make the ordinary extraordinary: the practice of community organisation according to Jockin.*

**Recognising the supportive roles that NGOs can have, as long as it is the savings groups and their federations that lead** – as seen in the partnership with SPARC.

From the above came all sorts of innovation in India – police *panchayats*, new ways to fund housing, the vast expansion of community toilets, community-managed resettlements... Many of these innovations did not involve extra expense – typically, they worked instead by changing the governance framework (as with the police *panchayats*) or by making better use of existing funds – as with the community toilets funded with what the municipal authorities had previously spent on public toilets.

**Community-led gathering of data** went from being a one-off initiative to fight Janata’s eviction to one of SDI’s core practices. Jockin was very clear about having strong and relevant data for every meeting with government agencies – and how the data needed had to be relevant to and specific to the government official or politician. So the data needed to generate action for the ward-level politician or local staff member of (say) the water utility was different from data for negotiating with the district officer, which in turn was different from the data and maps for senior officials in the municipal government.

**The community-led police *panchayats*:** The idea of setting up police *panchayats* came out of a meeting between Jockin and Anami Roy when Roy was police commissioner in Pune. The meeting was to sort out a dispute between a Mahila Milan leader and some traditional leaders. This was the start of the very positive relationship between these two – with support for police *panchayats* extending to Mumbai when Roy moved there as police commissioner.

**The global possibilities that Jockin saw in South Africa:** Joel Bolnick recalls how Jockin always maintained that the seminal moment in his life’s work was the replication of the federation model developed in India in South Africa. The key meeting that initiated this was in South Africa in 1991. Jockin saw the relevance of the federation model to South Africa – which in turn catalysed

the formation of the South African federation and then over 30 other national federations.

Joel Bolnick notes that this was the trigger for the creation of a transnational movement of the urban poor which in turn was the precondition for the emergence of SDI as a recognised and respected voice on the international stage. This also led to refining and adapting tools and methods used in India and then in South Africa for application in thousands of informal settlements and hundreds of cities. Joel also notes how SDI only achieved sufficient critical mass in the late 1990s to become a recognised transnational movement when the South Africans and Indians combined their efforts to take the federation model to East Africa, West Africa, Asia and Latin America. In every instance, it was Jockin's charisma and vision, his drive and determination that transformed small beginnings into movements of national importance.<sup>103</sup>

**Then there were the community exchanges:** These started from a small idea using small funds and became so integral to federations and their allies within nations and globally.

**Transforming small successes into political processes:** Somsook

Boonyabantha notes how any small issue such as a community toilet which a community feels concerned about collectively can be transformed into something so significant. 'People felt so proud together of those little toilets. Jockin showed us how you can make any small event into a political process, a change process between the people and the state. Something as small and simple as toilets, we saw, could be used to mobilise the community process at city scale and to build a bridge between communities and the authorities at the same time.'<sup>104</sup>

**A final note:** In interviews about his past life and work, Jockin does not dwell on the hardships he faced. We get some sense of these in his account of his work from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s in this book. He makes light of the

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<sup>103</sup> See Joel Bolnick's contribution in Part 6: *Jockin causing trouble in South Africa and laying the ground for SDI*.

<sup>104</sup> See Somsook Boonyabantha and Thomas Kerr in Part 4: *Making change happen: lessons and inspiration from my friend Jockin*.

dozens of times that he was arrested. Of constantly being on the run and regarded by the state as a dangerous criminal. Having to leave India very suddenly when the Prime Minister launched the Emergency that included curtailing civil liberties and imprisoning political opponents. Having to survive in the Philippines and South Korea. And surviving all this with very little money. More recently, making light of his health problems including his difficulty seeing. Yet throughout the hardships, he never quit. Never failed to be positive. Never stopped pushing for change. Never lost his uncanny political sixth sense. Nor – for those of us lucky enough to have known him as a friend – his warmth, trust or good company.

## 6.7 Working with Jockin to support poor but proud shack dwellers

*Mikael Atterhög*



I remember so well the first time I met Jockin which was in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2007. I was representing the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) at UN Habitat's Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF) project. Their project in central Colombo had been stalled. SUF had forgotten that it is so critical to secure some type of land rights at a very early stage of a slum-upgrading project and many promises had been made to the

inhabitants in the community. Jockin was able to arrange a personal meeting with the mayor of Colombo and managed to convince him that the community should obtain rights to the land they occupied. Access to land was critical for the success of this project and it would not have been successful without Jockin's personality and efforts.

I have always strongly believed in the power of letting people decide for themselves. From my background as a housing researcher, I knew the history of how poor people in most countries in Western Europe gained access to decent homes 100 years ago – by uniting themselves and putting pressure on

the people in power. The governments were not just giving them a home – they ensured that their voices were heard and they were many. Jockin taught me so much about how this can be done today in the Global South and about the power and pride of people who have very limited means but who also have a right to a decent home.

Jockin had this ability to convince influential people through his exceptionally humble but yet very determined approach. One should actually never compare anyone to the great Mahatma Gandhi, but in many ways Jockin's approach inspired people in a similar vein as this role model. People listened when Jockin spoke. I believe that played a strong role behind Jockin's nomination to the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

In 2008, I was made responsible for Sida's dialogue with SDI, which implied a closer personal relationship with friends at SDI. I started to attend meetings with SDI more frequently and I had the pleasure of meeting Jockin and his colleagues at SDI more often. I specifically recall a day that we spent together in his hometown Mumbai in 2010, back-to-back with annual consultations between SDI and Sida. Jockin took a lot of his precious time to show me, Norway's representative Erik Berg and a few other people from the Global North both Dharavi and some of the new SDI housing projects. I specifically recall the pride in the eyes of the people who had recently moved into new homes with modern facilities. I remember how Jockin patiently explained how this had been possible because of the sacrifices made by SDI's members and the ingenious and long process from the identification of the land to the construction of the homes. We were all very impressed in how communities could get together and make all this possible.

I am so impressed by how SDI has been able to grow from a very small organisation with few members in few countries to the big, impressive and influential organisation that it is now. Jockin had a key role in making this happen. He set an example himself through continuing to live humbly in Mumbai. I would also like to mention that he played a key role in mentoring a large number of potential community leaders in many countries. In fact, my organisation Sida contributed just some small monies to SDI some 14 years ago. But SDI has over and over again showed the power of putting people themselves at the 'front of the cart' and that it is serious in establishing

structures and methods to enable communities in the Global South to be able to help themselves through their hard work and joint efforts. This has resulted in Sida increasing both its support to and trust in SDI. During the times that Jockin came to Sweden, he met with ministers, state secretaries and headmasters, etc. He had admirers in Sweden from different sectors and, after meeting him, many of them offered to do voluntary work or provide voluntary contributions to SDI.

Many decades ago, it was Jockin's visionary efforts that started all this. During the growth of SDI, Jockin was its heart and soul, helping to steer the organisation from its infancy and managing to imprint the vision of SDI onto a very large network of community-based organisations in so many countries. He inspired so many people and gave them hope for a better future. Whether in an Asian, African or Latin American city, Jockin's humble approach and visionary ideas resonated so well in communities and he attained respect and understanding among people in power.

I really miss Jockin. He was unique and he has meant so much to me personally.

## 6.8 The global campaign for secure tenure

*William Cobbett*

I came to know Jockin in the mid-1990s during the first of many visits to Mumbai to learn about his work with NSDF and Mahila Milan and the relevance of their strategies for other slum dweller organisations. He also worked with me in launching UN Habitat's Global Campaign for Secure Tenure to which he brought his particular skills, vision and courage.<sup>105</sup>

In 1996, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (popularly known as Habitat II, and dubbed the City Summit) was convened in Istanbul, Turkey.<sup>106</sup> It was hailed as a breakthrough for the UN, insofar as it made space for the participation of both local governments and civil society organisations. The official outcome of the summit was the Istanbul (political)

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<sup>105</sup> See <http://mirror.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=24>.

<sup>106</sup> See [www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/UNCHS\\_1996.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/UNCHS_1996.shtml).

Declaration, and the more detailed and programmatic Habitat Agenda, a lengthy and aspirational volume of painstakingly negotiated text.

The United Nations entity given the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda was the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), but universally known as UN Habitat. It was based in Nairobi and very much on the outer fringes of the UN system, both geographically and organisationally.



*Talking to Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Ranganathan at the launch of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, 2000*

For its part, post-Istanbul UNCHS was in poor shape, through a combination of financial mismanagement, lack of status and changes in senior leadership. When the executive director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Professor Klaus Töpfer was asked by the UN secretary general to also assume the role of acting executive director of UNCHS in 1998, he appointed a small revitalisation team to advise him. At that time, I had just left the post of director of housing in Cape Town and was recruited to be a substantive

member of this team, responsible for advising on urban development strategy.

One of the most important outcomes of this process was a recommendation for UNCHS to promote the two main themes of the Habitat Agenda (Shelter for All and Sustainable Urban Development) through two advocacy campaigns: the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance. To maximise the impact of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and make it relevant to those to whom it mattered most required new thinking and a new approach from the United Nations. The most obvious and important beneficiaries of security of tenure were those most threatened and impoverished by its absence – the world’s estimated 800 million slum dwellers.

The next steps were obvious and came from a different trajectory:

### South Africa

In 1988–1992, while running Planact (the pre-eminent urban NGO in Southern Africa), I had been introduced to the growing strength of organisations representing the urban poor, which later emerged as the South

African Homeless People’s Federation.<sup>107</sup> These were grassroots organisations that offered a very different approach to South Africa’s problems. They asked to be recognised as development partners in the incoming post-apartheid national and local governments. They also did not believe that the state had – or should have – the answers to all problems. This was particularly the case in helping overcome the huge housing backlog inherited from decades of apartheid policy. The slum/shack dwellers believed they could help produce better products, better communities and, ultimately, better cities.

Joe Slovo, chairperson of the South African Communist Party, was President Mandela’s surprise pick as Housing Minister in May 1994. Soon after, I was appointed by Joe as the director general of the Department of Housing. Faced with a combination of intractable problems and enormous and

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<sup>107</sup> See [www.sasdialliance.org.za/history](http://www.sasdialliance.org.za/history)



legitimate expectations, Joe began his tenure by scheduling a programme of meetings with all of the major players in the housing sector – the bankers, developers, professionals etc. However, one of our first official meetings was with organisations that were subsequently to form the South African Homeless People’s Federation. Joe found their organisational capacity and savings-driven model to be compelling and offered the federation a grant of 10 million rand.<sup>108</sup>

Through Rose Molokoane, Patrick Magebhula Hunsley, Joel Bolnick and members of the Homeless People’s Federation, we were increasingly introduced to the growing international network of slum-dweller organisations, the most important of which was SPARC, where Sheela Patel and Celine d’Cruz provided the link to Jockin and the National Slum Dwellers Federation that he had founded. We became regular visitors to Byculla, the resource centre in Mumbai formed by the pavement dwellers, learning the rituals of the federation and of Mahila Milan and their strategies for engaging the authorities, particularly the state government of Maharashtra.

Elsewhere, we were introduced to the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights in Bangkok, where Somsook Boonyabancha and Paiboon demonstrated the power of daily savings groups, the sharing of risk and reward, and a completely different approach to development. They engaged and even partnered with government but did so while being clear what the urban poor brought to the table, and the complementarity of clearly defined state and community roles, as well as their respective limits.

In 1996 (the year of the City Summit in Istanbul) Slum/Shack Dwellers International was born out of a number of national federations of slum dwellers. It created the conditions for the forging of the unique partnership between the United Nations and an international network of slum dweller federations.

### Launching the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure

While the actual decision-making processes that led to the launch of the global campaign are somewhat foggy, the major elements of the decisions

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<sup>108</sup> Around US\$2.9 million.

remain crystal clear: the campaign had to be launched with – and by – slum dwellers. It had to signal the beginning of a process of transformation, and not be just another typical UN event. And it needed a partner that had the necessary capacity and credibility to help drive a truly global campaign.



*Jockin and Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General at the UN General Assembly in 2001*

With these goals clearly understood, the decisions largely made themselves. First, the global campaign launch had to be in India with its huge numbers of slum dwellers in cities of all sizes. Second, it had to be led by the SPARC–Mahila Milan–NSDF Indian Alliance and therefore, Jockin had to be the organiser, leader and figurehead. After a relatively brief period of negotiation and preparation, on a *maidan*<sup>109</sup> near Victoria Terminus in the centre of Mumbai, the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure was formally launched on the 16 July 2000. Through the organisational skills and efforts of Jockin, NSDF and the Indian Alliance, hundreds of buses from different parts of India delivered over 6,000 pavement and slum dwellers in a riot of colour and noise. The crowd was clearly dominated by the women (who continue to

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<sup>109</sup> Open space used for public meetings

provide the backbone for urban poor organisations in every country). Dignitaries included national and state ministers, diplomats and staff from bilateral and multilateral organisations, including the World Bank.

Officially, the launch of the campaign was managed as a partnership between the United Nations (represented by UNCHS) and the world's slum dwellers (represented by NSDF through its president, Jockin). UN-Habitat, SDI and other partners subsequently followed up with mass launches in South Africa and the Philippines – in each case, Jockin was at the very centre of the organisation, design and delivery of the launch.

Later that year, 150 heads of state met in New York to adopt the Millennium Declaration which, for the very first time, included the needs of slum dwellers in a global development framework, the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>110</sup> The goal – of substantially improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers – identified secure tenure as the key indicator. The following year in 2001, SDI was a very visible organisation at the Istanbul +5 meeting to review and appraise progress five years after Habitat II, building a shack in the grounds of the UN Headquarters in New York, with Jockin showing Secretary General Kofi Annan around. And, in 2002, on the back of the slum-upgrading target, the United Nations General Assembly upgraded UNCHS to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

The real legacy was in two main areas. The first was the global campaign. It directly addressed one of the most critical policy issues affecting slum dwellers, tenants and marginal communities in all regions of the world. Secondly, it pioneered a formal partnership between organisations of the urban poor – many of which were ignored or vilified by their own city and national government – and the United Nations. It took the particular skills, vision and courage of a leader like Jockin to make this happen.

## 6.9 Remembering Jockin

*Joan Clos*

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<sup>110</sup> See UNDP, Millennium Development Goals, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/mdg\\_goals.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/mdg_goals.html).

Jockin was an extraordinary leader. I recall his participation in the governing council of UN Habitat where he insisted on building a slum dwellers hut to show to politicians the reality of slum life.

Later, I had the opportunity to visit Jockin at his place in Mumbai where he showed me directly his work on a kind of vertical slum. He was a pragmatic, solutions-oriented person always in search of how to improve a little bit the life of the people. That means that the quality of life of today and tomorrow is even more important than the 'definitive solution'.



*Arvinn E Gadgill, Joan Clos and Jockin, 2010*

The relevant question is improvement and it doesn't really matter in which field: street safety, gender, poverty or any other specific improvement. It is not often that you find such a qualitative leader with a grassroots ideological strategy.

It's quite often that reformers are engaged in the big picture, forgetting sometimes the small steps. Jockin was able to build his particular *raison d'être* precisely on these everyday improvements and this has been his greatest achievement. That allowed him to talk with ministers, ambassadors

and everyone else ready to listen to him. It was clear what he wanted to transmit real improvements to the everyday lives of slum dwellers.

And this was how unexpected things such as hut enumeration became a very specific approach to the slum question. Far away from grandiose solutions involving huge amounts of resources, Jockin's pragmatic approach introduced community engagement as the real solution.

A great lesson that came from a truly committed person. I appreciated his contribution very much since the UN quite often tends to resort to rhetoric. He was the best vaccination against formal bureaucracy and its risks. He reminded me of some of the neighbourhood leaders that I found from the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Barcelona in the 1980s. People who have suffered in the past and, because of that, were able to value every step in the improvement line. He was happy because he had quite a long list of small improvements. We will miss Jockin a lot. He had in his mind a very clear idea of the full dignity of a slum dweller.

## 6.10 Slum dwellers and dignity

*Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi*

I first met Jockin at a meeting organised by Cities Alliance in Uganda in 2007. First of all, I was impressed by the quiet authority that emanated from this small man, but that inspired so much respect. We were visiting a slum near Kampala with the Ugandan authorities, and Jockin explained to the minister of local government why the authorities were wrong to ignore people in informal settlements, if only in their own interest. What would they do if they did not benefit from the presence of this part of the population to cook in their homes, babysit their children, run shops or repair workshops in the neighbourhood? Or to constitute an electorate for the political elite? This direct and educational speech by Jockin was given without reservation from Delhi to Johannesburg, from Harare to Accra. It is the clarity of this discourse and its constant and determined commitment to the recognition of the vital role of informal settlements and slum dwellers that has made Jockin a world leader. It is not surprising that he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, which made his position and speech even more credible.

I was all the more enthralled by Jockin because I had spent part of my professional life working on upgrading informal settlements in the city of Douala in Cameroon, in a neighbourhood in the southeast of the city called Nylon. At the time, the World Bank was part of Project Nylon, which was seeking sustainable solutions to address the problem of the growth of informal settlements. These settlements often house more than half of the population of Africa's main cities.



*Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi at Habitat III, 2016*

As the director of this project, I quickly realised that the technocratic approaches favoured at the time had little real concrete impact on the lives of the inhabitants. I then undertook to change my approach in 1983. I began promoting participatory approaches by relying on the mobilisation of the inhabitants and their structuring into associations of groups. These carried out their own census and participated in exercises to restructure the district and locate infrastructures and facilities. The project initiated the creation of savings groups for access to land ownership and the renovation of buildings. These savings groups joined together in the Nylon Credit Union (Caisse Populaire de Nylon), which diversified its activities to include the financing of income-generating activities, school loans and healthcare expenses. What

seemed at the time to be an innovation strictly related to the particular context of the Nylon zone in Douala proved to be an approach at work in other parts of the world. This is what I later discovered through my participation in the Cities Alliance policy advisory board, where I met activists dedicated to defending slum dwellers such as Somsook Boonyabancha in Thailand and Sheela Patel in India. Sheela Patel later connected me SDI and its president Jockin Arputham as well as the main leaders of this network in South Africa, Rose Molokoane and Joel Bolnick.

Jockin Arputham inspired me, especially when he drew my attention to the need to accord more importance to the dignity threshold rather than the poverty line even if obviously the two were quite closely related. The dignity threshold is defined as the level at which the population loses self-esteem because it is denied any social utility, to the point of being considered in its own eyes as inferior within urban society. The only way out for here is either violent revolt or the shameful acquiescence of their condition. Jockin perceived rightly that the real issue for slum dwellers is the negation of their existence in the planning and management of the city for whatever reasons. Putting slums areas and slum dwellers on the city map and into city life was the prime objective of Jockin, and one can say that this goal was largely realised before he passed away. What Jockin was interested in was building inclusive cities where no one is left behind. This is the duty he left for his successors to strive for and fulfil.

Jockin was a game-changer agent and a strategist with a positive mindset. Always looking for solutions, putting the slum dwellers themselves as the prime movers to improve their living conditions. He changed the spirit of slum dwellers from that of agonising and confrontation with city governments to one of gaining recognition and making proposals for better inclusion of slum dwellers in city planning and management. His approach was revolutionary in that he identified women as the lead drivers for change in slum areas. He therefore insisted on the need to start any organisation and action in slums by engaging women and caring to take up their concerns. Hence the priority he accorded to access to water and building toilets as the entry point to improving the living conditions of slum dwellers, with the right to shelter of course. Hence also his insistence of having women as cornerstones in the building of slum dwellers' saving groups. He was a

believer in self-reliance and thought that the best agents for it are women. He relied on women to rebuild self-esteem within the communities, knowing well that without self-esteem and hope, you can't move people towards progress.



*Jockin and community women in Pune to discuss the slum upgrading program, 2010*

At United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) of Africa, we have also identified women in local and regional governments as key agents for change at the city and the state/provincial government level. Thus, it was not that difficult to identify common ground between Jockin's view on the centrality of women in any meaningful positive change in slum areas, with our resolve to set up a network of city and state/provincial government leaders and locally elected officials, also known as REFELA (Réseau des Femmes Elues Locales d'Afrique or Network of Local Elected Women of Africa). It is not surprising either that UCLG Africa and SDI came together to launch the Know



Your City Campaign with an aim to favour the partnership between city and territorial governments and slum dwellers' organisations. Jockin strongly backed this campaign. We should amplify this campaign and scale it from 'knowing' to Transforming Your City so as to comply with SDG 11, and to apply concretely the motto of leaving no one behind proclaimed by the international community when adopting the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals.

Jockin's spirit will continue to inspire us in our resolve to build a win-win partnership between slum dwellers and city and territorial governments. UCLG Africa will stand firm on this commitment. It is ready to partner with any organisation, institution, network or people that are determined to work towards a world of cities without slums, in order to make real the dream of a world where all human beings are granted equal dignity.

## 7. SDI ADVENTURES IN BRAZIL, SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA, KENYA, UGANDA, ZIMBABWE AND THE PHILIPPINES

### 7.1 Jockin bringing SDI's experiences to Brazil

*Alex Silva, André Folganes Franco, Anacláudia Rossbach and Inês Magalhães*

Thinking about what to write about Jockin, we realised that the best way of being true to his memory is to talk about the fruits generated by the generous seeds he spread all over the places he went: in the case of Brazil, the story was not different.

Anacláudia Rossbach first met Jockin in South Africa in May 2006 during the SDI International Conference in Cape Town, as co-founder of Rede Internacional de Ação Comunitária (Rede Interação), the Brazilian affiliated NGO of SDI. Inês Magalhães was minister of cities and secretary of housing under presidents Lula and Dilma (2005–2016). As the highest-level authority on housing in Brazil, she signed a cooperation agreement with SDI in 2006, also during the SDI International Conference in Cape Town, and has served on the SDI board since 2008. Subsequently, through the work in poor communities in Osasco (a city in the metropolitan area of São Paulo), contacts were established with Alex Silva, a community leader who met Jockin in 2006 during an exchange in Durban and many other times in Brazil, India, Sri Lanka and Africa... André Folganes is the current manager of Rede Interação. Although he never had the chance to meet Jockin, he strongly pursues the continuation of Jockin's legacy in Brazil and Latin America.

The seeds that Jockin sowed in Brazil generated a diversity of fruits. It changed the histories of many lives, certainly those of all four authors of this piece. It gave birth to a new institution, the NGO Rede Interação, which brought to Brazil SDI's methodologies. It also created a partnership between SDI and the national secretary of housing from the Ministry of Cities in Brazil, which inspired the use of new tools of community participation in housing policies. Above all, it brought a robust relationship of mutual friendship, respect and admiration.



*Jockin in Várzea Paulista slum, São Paulo, Brazil in November 2007*

Jockin came twice to Brazil. He came first in 2007, to participate in the National Conference of Cities where we witnessed the amazing encounter of two remarkable leaders on the same stage: Jockin and Lula.<sup>111</sup> Brazil had the honour of a second visit from Jockin on the occasion of the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro in 2010. Jockin came accompanied by approximately 70 representatives from the many federations that make up Slum/Shack Dwellers International worldwide – and their active participation significantly impacted the event.

Countless exchanges took place before, during and after Jockin's visits to Brazil. Knowledge and spiritual links were created that will unite us for life in

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<sup>111</sup> Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (known as Lula) served as the 35th president of Brazil from 2003 to 2010.

the hearts and minds of many communities, professionals and public servants in the global south.

### **SDI, Rede Interação and community leaders**

The history of SDI in Brazil combines both Rede Interação's and Alex's history, like many other stories of people living in poor and vulnerable urban settlements. At the end of 2004, the Rede Interação was founded by a former local government staff member in São Paulo, with the main objective of bringing SDI's methodologies to Brazil's informal settlements.

One of the first engagements was at the Portais community, in Osasco, a city that falls within the metropolitan area of São Paulo. Alexandre Moraes da Silva was born in one of the many poor communities in the city of Teresina, Piauí, 43 years ago. Piauí State is in the northern part of Brazil and characterised by strong out-migration.

In 1994, aged 18, Alex came to São Paulo to try his luck. Upon arriving, he moved to a wooden shack in Jardim Rochdale, a slum in Osasco, where he remained until 2000. From there, about 500 families were removed by the local government to another area in Osasco with the promise that they would only stay for six months before going to a definite location. In 2005, they were still there when Rede Interação arrived with a proposal for creating a community organisation supported by SDI. Also, in 2005, the first savings group was created, with nine people. Alex was incredulous at first and did not join this group.

However, noting that his organised neighbours were initiating dialogue with the local government, he later joined the savings group. He soon became treasurer. Alex was not alone: many other leaders followed – both women and men – from many other communities. This set up the basis of a strong social organisation that overcame the borders of their communities and spread their ideas throughout the city, in the country and internationally. This growing and transformative action changed the lives of Alex, his community, other communities in Brazil and Latin America and Rede Interação.

The settlement of Portais was mapped by the community and upgraded with significant infrastructure and new housing development. So too was the neighbouring community, Colinas, where savings groups had also formed. As a result of exchanges, savings groups emerged in Vila Real, another precarious settlement located in Várzea Paulista, a medium-size city in the region. Together, these formed the pillars of community organisation and the social capital foundation for a census and mapping process that culminated in the design of an upgrading project. Both upgrading projects in the cities of Osasco and Várzea Paulista were jointly funded by national and local governments with tangible results in terms of infrastructure and social development for the people living there.

When Jockin came in 2007 to attend the National Conference of Cities, he also took the opportunity to visit Várzea Paulista, where the savings groups were growing and a close relationship had been established with local authorities. Várzea Paulista is a city of approximately 100,000 inhabitants, not as important in the regional urban system as the capital city São Paulo or Osasco.

However, according to Alex, 'Jockin made a point of visiting the city and walking through Vila Real, where the savings groups were, significantly strengthening SDI's work in the city and region, since he was an international personality'. But Alex also said, 'While he was a personality, he did not lose connection with people, with locals, even those who were not involved with SDI – he did it very well. His simplicity was too much! Being a personality as he was, having the importance that he had in the world, in the Asian continent, in the UN [...] When I went to his community in India, he showed us the community, he showed us the projects that were there and told us he was visited by guys such as Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations [...] He was a guy that was high up, but he had not lost his essence. Although he circulated in all spheres, he continued to maintain a solid connection with the base. He arrived in the communities and did not have this status thing, he was the same Jockin of India, from that poor community from where he arose, in the same way, he continued with that same identity.

'I think, for Brazil, his importance was that he believed a lot in our work. He did not push for data and stuff. I did not have that with him. He had always

been the welcoming guy who advised. He was always that guy that calls you, asks how you are. Every time we were together, we talked. He had the simplicity of himself. I had the limitation of the language, but the way he spoke, I always understood the message he wanted to convey, so it was fantastic!’

In Recife, Pernambuco (an important state capital in the northeast region of Brazil) another very important SDI experience was consolidated. Not only was the community of Ilha de Deus mapped and upgraded, but its leaders now stand out in the urban social movement – all thanks to the continuous and robust support of SDI, Rede Interação, Alex and other leaders.



*Jockin and Sheela with Rede Interação, Alex and other leaders, Brazil, 2008*

Today, Rede Interação, Alex and leaders from Osasco, Várzea Paulista and Recife (men and women like Fátima, Elivânia, Lourdes, Neuza, Cláudia, Gilson, Marluce, Alessandra, Estela, Inês, Primogênita, Mirtes, Joana, Marlene, Nininha, Iza and many others) are legitimate and recognised among social and governmental organisations. They spread their ideas and experiences

throughout many more cities in Brazil and in Latin America through projects and knowledge exchanges nationally and with countries like Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Mexico and Colombia. Savings groups and another organisation was created in Bolivia, where political influence at the city and national level generated significant changes for its urban agenda. These leaders also crossed the ocean, sharing their lifetime experience of transformation with African and Asian countries, and in Europe.

For Rede Interação, Jockin – as SDI leader – was someone who had a vision of the importance of SDI’s presence in Brazil, because of the strategic importance of the country in Latin America, and for the growing recognition of Brazil’s inclusive and people-centred urban policies globally. Therefore, he has always been supportive of SDI’s work in Brazil, regardless of circumstantial difficulties.

### **Jockin, Lula and Brazil**

Improving lives of slum dwellers was a dream shared by these two amazing leaders, Jockin and Lula, both coming from similar poor roots, fighting to survive and struggling to improve people’s lives and changing the world in their unique trajectories and context. Both had a tremendous impact not only in their countries of India and Brazil, but worldwide, sharing their ideals, experiences and inspiring us all.

Former President Lula, as a result of his own life story, has always had housing as a high priority on his agenda. For this reason, during his two political terms housing was an essential component of an economic development project that was strongly targeted towards overcoming poverty and inequality. This approach was carried on during the period of 2003–2010 and later continued by his successor Dilma Rousseff.<sup>112</sup>

For the first time in Brazil, slum upgrading was incorporated as a component of the national housing policy in Brazil. This was a time when investments, innovation and much more flourished. In this context, the partnership with SDI and Jockin enabled a process of sharing knowledge and know-how among

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<sup>112</sup> Dilma Vana Rousseff is a Brazilian economist and politician. She served as the 36th president of Brazil from 2011 to 2016.

different continents. There was also debate and even disagreements about the role of social movements at local and national level, its relationship with the state, public policies and in advocacy.



*Jockin and Inês Magalhães, then director of the Ministry of Cities in Brazil, signing a memorandum of understanding in Cape Town, South Africa at an international housing conference co-hosted by SDI and the South African government.*

Brazil and Brazilians learnt a lot from Jockin and SDI, at all possible levels. The federal government's Ministry of Cities incorporated in its policies and regulations the mechanism of self-mapping and enumeration which aimed to leverage the active engagement of communities in their own development, expanding access to data, information and technical knowledge. The city of Osasco recognised the savings groups-based organisation as a legitimate political voice in the city and institutionalised the methodology of self-mapping and enumeration that was then replicated in several communities.

Lula and Jockin joined hands in promoting and advocating for more inclusive and fair cities during the World Urban Forum in 2010 in Rio de Janeiro. The presence of SDI leaders on the main stage leveraged the voices of slum



dwellers from all over the world. This reached a large and relevant international audience – all these leaders together, hand-in-hand with Brazilian social movements leaders. It was a unique event, never saw before or after in gatherings of this magnitude and status.

Jockin left us with no doubt that he did accomplish his mission here. His words and activism are more important than ever in defending popular participation as an instrument for strengthening democracy.

## 7.2 Jockin in the Eastern Cape

*Evelyn Benekane*

I first met Jockin in 1995 at a conference that was held in Kleinskool, Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. At that time, I was living in a shack which was in the middle of a floodplain in an informal settlement called Veeplaas (Cattle Farm).

We the federation members in the Eastern Cape were all so fortunate to have had Jockin in our lives. He is still our hero. His philosophy of reason still rings true for us. This philosophy is about saving on a daily basis, holding regular meetings to discuss issues around our needs and combining the two to find solutions to our poverty. From our exposure trips to his headquarters in Mumbai and his visits to our shacks in Port Elizabeth, he strengthened us in understanding that our knowledge and our savings are our power and that it can never be taken away from us.

He left us with the very best tools to prepare the next generation – our children – for the future: profiling, enumerations, identifying land, training in construction, exchange programmes. All together, they build our power and enable us to meet our shelter needs and to fight for policy change.

Jockin supported us in our engagement with municipal and provincial authorities. This skill in negotiations helped us secure a 230-hectare parcel of land in Port Elizabeth – just near Veeplaas and Kleinskool. This was in 1996. He brought the South African Minister of Land Affairs to this land that we had occupied when our shacks were flooded and we negotiated with the landowner, the Minister and the local government until the land was

transferred to us. We called it 'Joe Slovo' in honour of our first Housing Minister.<sup>113</sup> This was simply amazing. There is all this talk now in South Africa about land redistribution. With the support of our SDI leader, Jockin from Mumbai in India, we did this 23 years ago. Since then we, the community, have built 3,500 houses on this land. This is a real eye opener about the international solidarity of the urban poor.



We did not stop at housing, though. Even after some houses were built, we were inspired and pressured by Jockin to put in our own infrastructure. Can you imagine! We put sewer and water lines into two lanes for over fifty households – even after there were formal houses standing. In spite of angry disagreements with the engineers from the council, not one house was damaged.<sup>114</sup> As Jockin said, 'When you do formal housing you first get the title to the land, then you get services installed and then you construct your house. When you build informally, you first build your house (normally a

<sup>113</sup> Joe Slovo was appointed housing minister in 1994 by President Mandela. See also William Cobbett's contribution in Part 6: *The global campaign for secure tenure*.

<sup>114</sup> In 1998, our comrades from the Namibia Federation came to see how we were installing infrastructure. Today, they are the SDI champions of community-driven infrastructure installation.

shack) and then you put in services – and then if you are lucky you get the title to the land.’ We followed the informal way in the beginning, until the council decided they could not allow us to continue in this ‘roundabout’ way and so they formalised our settlement and provided us with services while we continued to build houses, either ourselves or through contractors. Jockin was a vast ocean of ideas. When he saw that many city federations in South Africa were moving in terms of land and housing, he came up with income-generation and employment projects. He helped us set up community construction teams and enterprising people in our communities became housing subcontractors. He did not stop there. He encouraged us to challenge the local governments to give community-based contractors the right to tender for projects in their neighbourhoods.

When he saw that our membership-based approach was leaving people behind and that governments could isolate us by giving opportunities only to our members, he encouraged us to connect with existing community structures that did not follow our SDI methods but were representative of large communities. This led to the formation of the Informal Settlement Network and we the women in the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP) became the engines in these communities, driving upgrading and development.<sup>115</sup>

The urban poor still have a very long way to go. The formal world in general still sees us as the problem or at best, they expect us to participate in their own processes – even though those processes continue to fail to address poverty and homelessness. And then sometimes they blame us for these failures. When I think of the way Jockin inspired us I always remember the lines from a poem by Patrick Magebhula, Jockin’s counterpart in South Africa and the late President of our federation.

*Why did we look so clumsy?  
 Why could we not keep the beat?  
 Why were we out of tune?  
 Because we had rehearsed to dance the people-centred waltz.*

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<sup>115</sup> See [www.sasdialliance.org.za/about/fedup](http://www.sasdialliance.org.za/about/fedup) and [www.sasdialliance.org.za/about/isn](http://www.sasdialliance.org.za/about/isn).

*Instead, the band played the top down cha-cha.*<sup>116</sup>

### 7.3 Jockin's legacy: challenging professional perceptions on how to address the urban poor

*Tim Ndezi*

Jockin's life was a tremendous gift to the development world. He is still living through his words and wisdom. His life was so full of inspiration in many spheres of life. I first met him in 2000 when a team from Tanzania including staff from NGOs, utilities and Temeke Municipal Council were invited to visit Mumbai, India to learn the new approach of addressing urban poverty and development. This was a time when Tanzania had not yet started the savings schemes or federation processes. As a young engineer arriving in Mumbai for the first time, alongside official engineers from the local government and utility and Temeke municipality, I was keen to learn how the engineers in India were working to address housing and sanitation challenges in the most challenging slums.

However, rather than spending time with officials and engineers at the federal state's office, Jockin organised our trip to work with Mahila Milan, a self-organised federation of female slum and pavement dwellers. The key lessons we learnt were how the female urban poor were organising and managing their daily savings and using this approach as a mobilisation tool for collecting neighbourhood information. We also learnt how the grassroots teams within Mahila Milan were collecting detailed data and information about their settlements. And how this information was the basis for negotiations with municipal and state officials for improving housing and developing sanitation solutions. This was my early understanding on how poor communities could develop agendas for solutions, negotiated with officials.

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<sup>116</sup> Hunsley, PM (undated) The government and its people: while the band played we danced out of step. In: South African SDI Alliance (2014) *The life of Patrick Magebhula Hunsley: memoirs, tributes, poetry & song*. <http://bit.ly/2H6f2Ay>

My next encounter with SDI and Jockin was after 2004, after my NGO the Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) and the Tanzania Federation of the Urban Poor (TFUP) had already been established. In particular in 2007, Jockin visited Tanzania. During my encounter with him, he was very clear about his vision and commitment to empower the urban poor to manage and master the development process. Alongside this, he was committed to supporting the organisation and mobilisation of community leaders who are able and available to manage these community development processes. He advocated what came to be known as SDI's 'rituals': savings schemes, community-driven mapping and enumerating or profiling informal settlements, exchanges, advocacy and partnerships with government, and establishing precedent-setting projects to show community capabilities.



With Tim Ndezi, Director of the Centre for Community Initiatives in Tanzania in Cape Town at a Board and Council meeting, April 2011

Learning about these skills and concepts has been a great asset to CCI and the Tanzania federation. They have enabled us to implement many projects with great success. Over a number of years, CCI has embarked on a learning journey and continued to acknowledge and utilise these skills and provide space for communities to drive the urban poor agenda. Moreover, Jockin's legacy on advocacy and lobbying to support the urban poor agenda at local government level and at national and international levels remains strong. Indeed, he was a man of influence in Tanzania. Jockin was instrumental in establishing relationships with the Ministry of Housing and Lands. He also

helped to unlock institutional support for affordable housing – which was very hard to do.

Apart from his personal encounters with ministers and officials, he also opened opportunities for them to learn how other countries are implementing affordable housing, through exchanges to India and Thailand. Other influences which he supported in Tanzania included ensuring the Tanzania police force supports the Tanzania federation. Through this, he championed the establishment of a community policing programme (policing *panchayats*).<sup>117</sup> This was done through building relationships between the Tanzania federation and the police, supported by exchange programmes between India and Tanzania. Jockin had already worked with the municipal police commissioner to set up policing *panchayats* in many slums in Mumbai. His capacity to establish linkages and collaborate with higher officials and networks will long be remembered and missed.

Throughout his life, Jockin demonstrated the importance of the deep engagement of the urban poor in building cities in a very articulated approach. He emphasised that the urban poor are not powerless. They have skills, knowledge and abilities that need to be recognised and utilised in the planning, implementation and sustainability of city developments. He emphasised the importance of professionals working to realise the potential of local communities and find ways so that this potential can be utilised in a collective way. He always challenged professionals and conventional thinking that give so little space to the urban poor in the development processes. He was always keen to find spaces and opportunities through which he could support the federation and the urban poor. Though he is gone, his knowledge, skills and tactics for urban development will continue to live through the many SDI affiliates and urban poor communities in many countries of the world.

## 7.4 Muungano's beloved friend and mentor

*Jane Weru*

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<sup>117</sup> For more details of community policing see Sheela Patel's contribution in Part 5: *Jockin, Anami Roy and community policing*.

I first met Jockin in South Africa in 1995 when I attended a conference organised by People's Dialogue and the South African Homeless People's Federation.<sup>118</sup> From my very first encounter, I was struck by Jockin's passion for the plight of slum dwellers. I was also impressed by the breadth of his practical knowledge in finance, construction, community mobilisation and the building of relationships with government. To me, Jockin was a teacher and mentor: he was a true guru.

The Kenyan federation Muungano wa Wanavijiji was created in the 1990s as a movement of the urban poor to resist evictions.<sup>119</sup> For many years, Muungano vigorously fought private landgrabbers' attempts to demolish slum settlements to take possession of the lands the slums occupied. In its resistance, the federation frequently stood up against an authoritarian and often brutal government. To survive the vagaries of this regime, Muungano realised that it needed to have a fluid structure where it organised people for specific events such as demonstrations, vigils and prayer meetings and immediately dismantled any structures created once the event was accomplished. This organising strategy made it more difficult to pinpoint slum leaders and protected them from victimisation by the state.

The beginning of the new millennium saw heightened political pressure on the state to reform. The first presidential transition under the Moi government<sup>120</sup> was imminent and the new millennium promised change in the way the state functioned. It was during this time that a group of people from Muungano, the Catholic Church, and civil society organisations decided that it was time to build an organisation that would not only resist evictions but also grow the knowledge, skills and strategies that would enable the realisation of the dream of the urban poor for secure tenure and better homes. For this to be achieved, Muungano needed to organise differently – by creating an organisation of the urban poor that would be there for the long haul. How to build this institution was now the big headache.

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<sup>118</sup> To read more about these organisations, see [www.peoplesdialogue.net/our-vision](http://www.peoplesdialogue.net/our-vision) and [www.sasdialliance.org.za/history](http://www.sasdialliance.org.za/history).

<sup>119</sup> See [www.muungano.net](http://www.muungano.net).

<sup>120</sup> Daniel arap Moi, former president of Kenya.

For a number of years, Muungano had been in conversation with SDI on the possibility of the Kenyan federation joining SDI as an affiliate. With a fast-changing political climate, the time was opportune for this. So, in the year 2000, Pamoja Trust was created as the Kenyan support organisation for Muungano, which was affiliated to SDI.



*Principal Secretary, Nairobi, Jockin, Celine, Rose, Jane and Sheila Patel*

And so the exploratory journey of the Kenyan SDI affiliate began and at its helm was Jockin. He came to Kenya with Celine d’Cruz and persuaded us that to build hope in Muungano’s ability to push for a better life for the urban poor it was imperative that we create a real vision of the better future the people hoped for. A future where there were no evictions and where mothers, fathers and their teenage children would not be squeezed into ten-by-ten-foot squats<sup>121</sup> without toilets but would instead live in decent houses with running water and toilet facilities. To believe that this was possible, slum dwellers needed to see and touch examples of homes they could aspire to live in.

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<sup>121</sup> Roughly 3 metres by 3 metres.



That urging and prompting from Jockin and Celine pushed us to begin to explore the possibility of upgrading five informal settlements in Huruma. These settlements had a population of about 1,500 households and were situated on land owned by the city council. After many exploratory meetings between the council, the federation and its support organisation, the city council agreed to release the land on which the settlements were situated to the residents. However, this was on condition that we worked closely with the residents of Huruma and mobilised the necessary financing for the construction of houses and the development of infrastructure. The federation agreed to these conditions and signed a memorandum of understanding with the city county of Nairobi.

Our big problem now was how we would deliver on this promise. We had no money and none of us had ever planned a settlement. Jockin and Celine were there for us. For two years, they came every three months and lived with us for two weeks. Through these targeted exchanges, they taught us the importance of saving. We learnt how the handling of money was the best way of building robust, inclusive people's institutions, because as Jockin liked to say, 'Your heart is where your money is.' He taught us not to be sloppy and to always aim for the best by painstakingly taking us through the different savings records that a savings group needed to keep, to safeguard members' money. Through him, we learnt the importance of recording every financial transaction, of holding weekly savings group meetings that would help build the trust and relationships required for the struggle. He taught us that trust alone was not sufficient and that members needed to be active and to keep their leaders accountable.

With the help of SDI, Muungano slowly embarked on developing a settlement layout and house designs for one settlement in Huruma, Kambi Moto. Jockin and Aaron Wegmann, a Swiss architect, played a key role in developing these designs. Eventually – and after extensive discussions with the residents – the 'Kambi house' was developed. This house is brilliant in its design as it allows for incremental construction, is affordable and also pleasant to live in.

Once the house was designed, Jockin taught us how to build it by literally supervising the construction of the first house. He sent a team of Indian

women who taught Kenyan federation women how to build *ladhies*<sup>122</sup> thus bringing down the cost of construction. Till this day, *ladhies* are emblematic of Kenyan federation houses and *ladhy*-making skills have been passed on from one federation building site to another. Many federation members, especially women, now earn a living from making and selling *ladhies*.

Jockin was smart and pragmatic with an instinctive feel for what would work for slum dwellers. For the Huruma upgrade, he quickly calculated an affordable interest rate and monthly repayment plan on the back of an envelope. That plan has been adopted by most federation projects in Kenya and has remained largely unchanged right up to today.



*Jockin helping to make ladhies in South Africa, 1995*

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<sup>122</sup> *Ladhies* are moulded concrete blocks with an eggshell shape used for upper-level flooring in Mahila Milan houses. The eggshell shape gives them great strength while saving money by reducing the need for cement and steel beams.

To identify who would benefit from the Huruma slum-upgrading project, it was necessary for us to identify who the residents were. Again Jockin, Celine and the Indian team came in and trained us on how to conduct an enumeration of an informal settlement. They taught us the importance of numbering each house. They trained us on how to prepare a questionnaire and how to train community enumerators so that they could carry out the enumeration. An analysis of the data collected from this first enumeration revealed an important finding: that most of the residents in Kambi Moto were tenants who payed rent to a handful of structure owners. The federation now needed to make a decision on who would benefit from the upgrading. Would it be the people who had built the houses in the settlement and were collecting rent – or the people occupying these homes? This was a highly contentious question with the possibility of splitting the federation in two as both the structure owners and the tenants were members of the federation and part of the same community.

Jockin was there as we addressed this issue. He was a great sounding board and stood by us as we struggled with the tenant/structure-owner question, a question that was at the heart of Muungano's reason for being. After many meetings, agonizing and soul searching, Muungano eventually resolved that the person affected by the living conditions in the slums, including the tenant, should be the beneficiary of federation upgrading. A decision that was truly revolutionary and is today the national policy for identifying beneficiaries of government slum-upgrading projects.

Jockin was a man who cared deeply for the struggle of the poor. He showed his immense commitment by unstintingly giving his time, knowledge and skills to all of us. He hated mediocrity and pushed each federation to strive for more. He understood that the problems facing the urban poor were huge and could not be solved by piddly little NGO projects. Wherever he went, he made sure that he made big promises to the government officials he met and set each federation up to strive to achieve these promises.

He also taught us how to be fearless and to believe in the impossible. One of our largest and most contentious enumerations was conducted in a large informal settlement, Korogocho, in 2003. The Korogocho structure owners had organised themselves into a strong association that managed to speak to

the president and persuaded him to allocate the Korogocho land to them. On learning about this, Father Alex, a priest who lived and worked in Korogocho, came to see me and asked whether there was any way we could change the proposed execution of this project. Somehow, we managed to get an appointment with the Minister responsible and he introduced us to the Provincial Commissioner for Nairobi who was in charge of the project. We met the Provincial Commissioner with Fr Alex and managed to persuade him that it was important to carry out an enumeration before making any land allocations. We then informed SDI of this opportunity and Jockin, Celine and Sheela Patel (from SPARC) immediately came to support us. They met with the Provincial Commissioner and invited him to India to see how large-scale enumerations are conducted. A very successful exchange visit to India was carried out and at its conclusion it was agreed that an Indian team would travel to Kenya to support the Kenyans to do the enumeration.

The Korogocho enumeration was the most difficult enumeration we have carried out. We faced resistance from the structure owners from the beginning. They were opposed to the questionnaire containing any question that would collect data on their tenants and therefore vowed to forcefully disrupt the enumeration. After lengthy discussions between ourselves, Father Alex, the Indian team and the provincial administration, we agreed that we would not be intimidated by the structure owners' threats and that we would proceed to collect information from the tenants even if it would be done under armed guard. And that is exactly how the enumeration was carried out: by a team of dedicated Muungano and Pamoja Trust staff. In the end, we enumerated over 20,000 households, the majority of whom were tenants.

Jockin was a true teacher and mentor to us. The lessons he taught us have, over the years, held us in good stead. They have enabled us today to foolishly and fearlessly plan an upgrade of 100,000 households in Mukuru without a budget line!

Jockin was also great fun. He had a special name for each of us. He called me the African Queen because of my penchant for wearing African jewellery and head dresses. Joseph Muturi, a key federation leader, was Bloody Mountain because of his height (compared to the diminutive Jockin, Muturi is a towering 6 foot 4 inches). He often chided us and teased us into action.

When we were timorous and slow to take up a challenge, he would call us the Pyjama Trust and we would know it was time to wake up!

Today, Muungano has grown tremendously with active savings groups that are able to mobilise resources from their members, the state, and private and civil society organisations. The federation has actively engaged the state and influenced numerous policies and legislation that have impacted the lives of the urban poor. Its activism for secure land tenure for urban poor communities has also protected over 100,000 households from eviction.

## 7.5 The impact of Jockin lives on

*Sarah Nandudu*

Jockin Arputham worked for more than 40 years in slums, building representative organisations into powerful partners with governments and international agencies for the advancement of urban living. Jockin was the president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India which he founded in the 1970s and of Slum/Shack Dwellers International, a network of slum and shack dweller organisations and federations from over 30 countries across the world. The National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda is one of the federations that he mobilised in 2002, causing an enormous change in the lives of the urban poor.

My life is a case in point. I am a federation member from the Jinja region in Uganda who struggled to meet the needs of my family with my small business because I did not know how to save the proceeds from my business. Banking in formal banks was the worst thing one could do because of high bank charges, which made saving impossible. Jockin's mobilisation of the urban poor and promotion of the creation of women's saving groups and the component of savings was the beginning of a breakthrough in my life. I embraced savings and that has completely changed my economic life.

Savings as a group and using it to improve our livelihoods through small loans has marketed us even to the formal banks that ignored us in the past. Before savings started, we the urban poor could never acquire a loan in a formal bank. To get a loan would mean raising collateral, which in most cases has to

be a land title. Where does a slum dweller get a land title to secure a loan? While savings has enabled some groups to acquire land, this is still the exception and not the rule. However, because of the solidarity, discipline and commitment of group members to make repayments on the small loans acquired from their savings, the banks started building their trust in the group – even without land titles. Now, banks entrust us with money in terms of loans. This has enabled my group to do a lot of things for ourselves. I used my loan to complete a diploma at a higher institution of learning. That has helped me get a better job so I have been able to afford to send my daughter to secondary school. If it was not for the process that Jockin brought, I would still be a nobody.

If there was one thing that was really difficult for me to do, it was how to interact with people, let alone to talk to them. Today, take me to any crowd and you will be surprised! This is also a result of the process started by Jockin. His approach gave us practical learning. We became learned without chalk and a blackboard.

In 2008, the community in Jinja was mobilised by the South African and Kenyan federations. Jockin had a hand in organising them as well! It is from here that I joined the saving group called BAMU (Bring Amber Court Members to Unite) which is found in Amber Court Market in Kimaka settlement, Jinja.

Through my savings, my business grew and, in a way, led to me being nominated as the secretary for my group. One of my jobs was to read the minutes and that is how I learnt to speak in front of a crowd. This played a major role in helping me unleash my potential and I found myself being nominated to different leadership positions. I became the Jinja federation's regional secretary – a position I held for three years. Then, as the federation formed its national structures, I was nominated to serve as the vice president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda.

It was in this position that I started to sit close to Jockin. I am what am today because of his counsel. I cannot forget the times we would sit for meetings, late into the night and yet one never felt tired because each word he spoke had an impact on oneself. I will never forget his encouragement in the late

hours of the night asking us to be leaders, demanding that we should speak even if we were worried that we would make a mess, assuring us that the secretariat and the SDI leadership would clean our rubbish.

That is how I derived the confidence to speak my mind, not only in my community but to ministers and on the global stage. Jockin taught me to be unafraid to 'put my dirty linen out in public' because I was assured that I was not alone and that a huge movement of slum dwellers would always be there to back me up.

This might sound funny but it is very, very real. I was born in poverty in one of the poorest countries in Africa and then with my poor education background, I got onto to airplanes to talk about land and housing to world leaders. I can thank Jockin for that.



*Sarah Nandudu at Habitat III held at Quito, Ecuador, 2016*

Today, I am the leader of the biggest slum organisation in Uganda. I am proud to be the national coordinator of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda. This is thanks to the qualification I earned from Jockin's school of informal education – without a paper certificate, but with a practical knowledge certificate. This knowledge has made me sit on so many fora in

the world where I would never have even dreamt to be, had it not been for Jockin giving birth to our movement. Now I serve as co-chair of the SDI board and I have been entrusted to represent SDI on UN-Habitat's Global Land Tool Network and at Cities Alliance board meetings. This helps me take the local message of the people to the global level and makes me stronger as a leader.

Jockin taught me to reason with evidence. 'When the government asks you how many people live in your settlement and how many toilets do you have in your settlement, don't say "I am not sure" or "I don't know" or "plenty". Collect your data and tell them the correct number. That's what we mean when we say that information is power.' Ah, that was Jockin for you. Demanding something without knowledge and without reason sounds so unrealistic to me now. I have learnt to always reason with data. That's what Jockin taught us.

Memories and stories about Jockin are endless. They start with late-night planning meetings in the slums and they lead to hard negotiations in the mayor's chambers. Before we met Jockin, we never imagined that a minister would ever sit down at the same table to share a meal with a slum dweller. It was unheard of. Thanks Jockin, you narrowed the widest gap between slum dwellers and the high class. May the almighty God rest your soul in eternal peace. You departed from us but your memories and the seeds you planted will always remain, impacting the generations of the urban poor forever.

## 7.6 Savings and empowerment: Jockin's support for the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation

*Beth Chitekwe-Biti*

Jockin was someone you experienced – he was not someone you just met. My first experience of Jockin was in December 1999 when he came to the first-ever forum of slum dwellers in Zimbabwe. For the preceding six months, we had travelled around five cities with a budding group of federation leaders from two informal settlements in Harare, Dzivarasekwa Extension and Hatcliffe Extension. We had managed to mobilise women into saving schemes in all the informal settlements we came across.



The forum was going to be our first ever big event. We were as anxious as we were excited. As things went, we could not get visas for the Indians to travel to Zimbabwe before they left Mumbai and so could not 'officially' invite them to the forum as was the requirement. For one, we were not a formal entity – just an idealistic young planner and a group of slum dwellers hoping to pull off this gathering.



*Jockin builds the frame for a cloth covered model house in Mbare, Zimbabwe in October 1999*

As I was to later learn, Jockin did not do things in small measures. In addition to the four Indians coming, he had invited government officials from Cambodia. So, the logistical nightmare of getting eight visitors began. I had to learn quickly to speak to government to get official clearance to get this group of people into the country. Tears and lost luggage later, we managed to get the eight people into Zimbabwe in time for our first-ever annual forum. Ten years later in 2009, Jockin returned to Zimbabwe for the National Housing Convention to ratify a new national housing policy – this time, at the invitation of the government of Zimbabwe, with all the trappings that come

with that. The new housing policy specifically mentioned the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation as a critical community partner in the delivery of affordable housing in cities across Zimbabwe.

Jockin was a proponent for women taking charge of money. He argued that poor women had an inherent capacity to manage money. They have to manage it so carefully. As Jockin often noted, they had so many pockets to keep money in. The brilliance of this strategy in empowering women is often understated. In a patriarchal country like Zimbabwe, using money and savings to organise women in these seemingly innocuous groups resulted in an empowered movement of women across all the major cities. Women gained confidence in managing money and when the groups became federated across a number of cities, they were able to negotiate for tenure and begin building their own homes.



*Jockin with Gautam Chatterjee and Zimbabwe Officials in Mumbai, 2009*

Besides the practical benefits of having their own homes, having been responsible for 'bringing this asset' to their families also positively shifted how the women were viewed by their partners and wider families. I recall very distinctly how one woman told me that often when she had visited her husband's relatives, it was always with trepidation. There was always an

assumption she only visited to ask for help. With her own savings scheme, she now had somewhere to borrow money from if she needed help and she could hold her head high within her own extended family. Jockin often used the analogy of a smoker saying 'If you are a smoker, you cannot be in the habit of asking for both the cigarette and the lighter,' arguing that if you had your own cigarette, the moment you put this to your mouth someone else with a lighter would light your cigarette as it was quite obvious what you needed.



*Beth Chitekwe-Biti and Jockin in 1999*

The Zimbabwean women savers soon learnt that their own savings were critical in leveraging support from others. At the 1999 meeting, Jockin challenged the nascent Zimbabwean Homeless People's Federation to set up their own urban poor fund. Within the first year of its existence, the federation had set up the Gungano Urban Poor Fund. '*Gungano*' means gathering in Shona and each saver committed to building the capital of the fund by contributing the equivalent of the cost of a Coca Cola soft drink every month. This concept of indexing the value of members' contributions to the cost of a soft drink has been maintained over Zimbabwe's highly unstable economic environment. This and other strategies to cushion the fund have

enabled it to weather the significant volatile inflationary period between 2004 and 2009. To date, the fund supports savings schemes with loans for land purchase, water and sanitation, housing construction and capital for small businesses. Savings paid into the fund since 2009 (when the Zimbabwe economy dollarised) stand at around US\$804,000 and land savings at around US\$1.2 million. The fund has also managed to leverage funding from other donors in excess of US\$5 million, enabled 15,642 households to secure tenure, 7,776 to access water and sanitation, 2,011 to improve access to energy and 3,118 to build housing.

Jockin had the capacity to mobilise the urban poor, city government, national politicians and international development practitioners alike. He was at home both sitting crossed legged in the Mahila Milan Byculla office in Mumbai or giving a keynote address to the UN. His capacity to be relatable in all these fora came from the simplicity of his message and his conviction of the capacity of the urban poor to drive their own change agenda with the right kind of support. The Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation and all the other federations have emerged from the conviction of this one man: that women are critical and central to changing slums. His success is a testimony to his capacity to be relatable across geographies, religions and socio-economic circumstances.

## 7.7 Jockin and his work with the Homeless People's Federation Philippines

*Sonia Fadrijo Cadornigara*

I first met Jockin in India in 1998, during my first learning exchange visit to Mumbai together with other SDI federation members. His work in Mumbai and in other parts of India had a big impact on me. I may not have been so

committed to working with communities to this day, if it weren't for what I saw there. While accompanying him on savings collections in Byculla, Jockin and Father Bebot<sup>123</sup> would say to the Mahila Milan women, 'No questions

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<sup>123</sup> Father Norberto Carcellar (1951–2014) was affectionately known as Father Bebot, and was one of the founders of the Homeless People's Federation Philippines.

means no answers... Ok?’ In that way, we did our best to communicate with the pavement dwellers who could not speak or understand our not-so-good English. After the visit, we went back to the Philippines with our heads and hearts full of overwhelming knowledge and inspiration. The Indians and the Filipinos understand each other by signs, by feelings and by actions. I told myself, ‘If the Indians can do it, we can do it too.’



*Jockin and Father Norberto at WUF Rio de Janeiro, 2010*

Jockin would always tell me stories about running away from India to the Philippines and hiding in a Redemptorist church in Cebu when the government wanted to put him in jail.<sup>124</sup> He understood the politics of the Philippines and how the urban poor had been treated and discriminated against. After he won the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding<sup>125</sup> in 2000, Jockin went to Malacañan Palace in Manila for a courtesy visit with the president of the Philippines. He brought along with him some federation leaders and, without hesitation, challenged

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<sup>124</sup> Jockin had to leave India during the Emergency. See also Jockin’s story in his own words in Part 3: *Developing new approaches for people-centred development*.

<sup>125</sup> The Ramon Magsaysay Award (named after the former Philippine president) is internationally recognised as the Asian counterpart to the Nobel Prize.

the president. ‘Mr President, these people are doing community savings so they can buy land of their own. They have saved millions of pesos on their own. What is your counterpart?’ The Philippines president immediately gave a cheque worth 15 million pesos. That was the first ever Urban Poor Development Fund of the federation and with it, we were able to open more doors and establish engagement with national and local governments.



*Jockin and Sonia Fadriago, Mumbai, 2018*

I remember those times when the Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF)<sup>126</sup> was to expand to other SDI countries after India and Kenya. At SDI, there was a meeting about the process of selecting which would be the next CLIFF country. I was attending alone as Father Bebot was not available. Jockin seriously recommended that the Philippines be the next country to implement a CLIFF project. I was so scared and I strongly said, ‘No! Our federation doesn’t have the capacity to implement such a huge housing project yet. We are not ready!’ Jockin was angry with me. During the tea break, he had to pull me into the corner and in a strong voice say, ‘We keep

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<sup>126</sup> For more on CLIFF, see also Ruth McLeod’s contribution in Part 5: *Memories of Jockin and dancing with financial risk*.

looking for money to support countries like the Philippines for their housing projects. Yet here you are, you keep running away. You all can do it Sonia: just believe in yourself. The federation in the Philippines is very strong, and you have to have resources to demonstrate your strength.’ Very powerful words, coming from a man who never doubted the power of organised poor communities.



*Jockin helping in the construction of the model house for the Security of Tenure launch in Payatas, the Philippines, 2000*

Jockin always thought about what was good for all of us in SDI. He took care of everybody – even beyond federation concerns and needs. He would always personally ask me about my children and my family. When he knew I was sick and couldn't attend SDI meetings, he would likely ask me if I needed help, to which I would always say, 'I can manage!' so that he wouldn't worry.

Jockin is gone now, our father, our friend, our mentor and our challenger. He left us with so much love in our hearts.



*The banner above includes a quote by Andy Bolnick, South Africa*



## 8. THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Alexandro Moraes da Silva** is a resident and community leader of the Portais community in Osasco, Brazil. He has been working on mobilisation and organisation in his community, with the support of Rede Interação and SDI. He has also supported other communities, sharing his experience through meetings and exchanges and has participated in numerous exchanges to Africa, Asia and Latin America.

**Anacláudia Rossbach** is the regional manager for the Latin American and Caribbean region at Cities Alliance. She works on low-income housing issues and has worked for several institutions including the municipality of São Paulo, the World Bank, Instituto URBEM and Rede Interação/SDI.

**André Folganes Franco** is an architect and urban planner, with extensive experience in managing urban and social development projects in the public and private sectors. Since 2012, he has been on the board of the Rede Internacional de Ação Comunitária (Rede Interação).

**Arif Hasan** is an architect/planner in private practice in Karachi, dealing with urban planning and development issues in general and in Asia and Pakistan in particular. He has been involved with the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) since 1981. He is also a founding member of the Urban Resource Centre (URC) in Karachi and has been its chair since its inception in 1989.

**Arjun Appadurai** is Goddard Professor of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University and Senior Professor of Anthropology and Globalisation at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. He has written extensively on cities, global social movements, populism and media. His forthcoming book, co-authored with Neta Alexander, is *Failure* (forthcoming, Polity Press 2019).

**Beth Chitekwe-Biti** recently joined the SDI secretariat as deputy director. Before moving to SDI, she was the founder-director of Dialogue on Shelter, a Zimbabwean NGO that works in an alliance with the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation.

**Celine d’Cruz** is an urban practitioner and started her work with pavement and slum communities in Mumbai and supported the building of the urban poor movement in India and between regions. She is a founder member of Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Mumbai and Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) where she worked for most of her adult life. She presently supports and mentors communities and young professionals in Asia through the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights network.

**Chris Hoban** retired from the World Bank in 2011, after 19 years working on infrastructure and country operations. The comments here reflect his personal views and recollections, and not necessarily those of the World Bank.

**David Satterthwaite** is with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and a visiting professor at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London. He is also editor of the journal *Environment and Urbanization* and has sought to encourage, support and publish papers on the work of SDI and its many affiliates.

**Erik Berg** is a former senior advisor (urban), director of evaluation, country director (Bangladesh) and ambassador (Eritrea) with the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway. He is presently chairman of Habitat Norway, vice-chair of Un-Habitat’s Advisory Group on Gender Issues and board member of SDI’s Urban Poor Fund International.

**Evelyn Benekane** was born in Mdantsane in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Evicted once from her slum and instrumental twice in land occupations, she has been a member of the South African federation since 1995. She is the regional coordinator for the Eastern Cape. She heads up the development committee in her settlement (the village of Joe Slovo). Under her supervision and with constant support from Jockin and SDI, Joe Slovo has been transformed from a sprawling shack settlement into a fully serviced neighbourhood with formal housing and a slowly expanding commercial space.

**Father Jorge Anzorena** is a Jesuit priest based in Japan, who has been travelling round Africa, Asia and Latin America for many decades,

documenting the urban poor groups he has met and the work they are doing. Part of Fr Anzorena's work was with the Belgian foundation Selavip, supporting urban poor groups including their struggles to avoid eviction.

**Gautam Chatterjee** is a senior civil servant who has worked with Jockin and in support of the federations since 1988 when he came to direct the Prime Minister's Grant Project for Dharavi. This includes working with the Alliance on housing for pavement dwellers and resettlement.

**Inês Magalhães** was national housing secretary and minister of the Ministry of Cities in Brazil between 2003 and 2016. During her term of office, she coordinated the restructuring of the housing sector and the implementation of two housing programmes – one for housing production, the other for slum upgrading. Together these provided for over 5 million families. Currently, she is working with multilateral agencies on housing and urban development.

**Jack Makau** started out in 2001 as a technical support officer for community enumerations and mapping for the Kenyan slum dwellers' federation, Muungano wa Wanavijiji. He continues to support SDI-affiliated slum federations in Kenya and Africa in different capacities. Currently, he leads the technical support team for Muungano wa Wanavijiji and serves on the board of SDI.

**Jane Weru** is a lawyer by profession. She helped found Pamoja Trust, a non-profit organisation in Kenya that mobilises and supports grassroots movements of the urban poor. She has also served as executive director of Kituo Cha Sheria, a legal aid and human rights organisation in Nairobi, as a board member of SDI and as team leader for the Kenya Railway Relocation Action Plan. She is currently the executive director and founder member of Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT), as well as an Ashoka Fellow and a member of the national task force for the preparation of the Community Land Bill and the Evictions and Resettlement Bill.

**Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi** is secretary-general of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) since 2007. He has worked for over 45 years on issues of urban development and planning, local economic development, municipal and local governance, housing and slum upgrading.

He is also co-chair of the World Cities Scientific Development Alliance (WCSDA), and deputy secretary-general of the China–Africa forum of local governments. He also set up the Africities Summit.

**Joan Clos** was appointed executive director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and under secretary-general of the United Nations in 2010. He directed Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016. Prior to joining the United Nations, he served two terms as mayor of Barcelona, and also served as Minister of Industry, Tourism and Trade in the Spanish government and as the Spanish ambassador in Turkey and Azerbaijan.

**Joel Bolnick** began to work with organisations of the urban poor in 1991 when he coordinated a workshop of shack dwellers in South Africa, the People’s Dialogue on Land and Shelter. This was where he met Jockin and linked him to informal settlement leaders throughout South Africa. This was the beginning of a very close working and personal relationship, spanning three decades and four continents. Joel remains the coordinator of the SDI secretariat but focuses primarily on mentoring a new generation of professionals who work with organisations of the urban poor. He also assists with the establishment and development of new initiatives in the SDI network, such as youth and media, and inclusive impact investment in slum upgrading and incremental housing.

**Joseph Muturi** is national coordinator of Muungano wa Wanavijiji (the Kenyan slum dwellers’ federation) and coordinator for SDI in East and West Africa.

**Lindiwe Sisulu** is Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and former Minister of Human Settlements in the South African government.

**Mikael Atterhög** is Deputy Head, Unit for Global Cooperation on the Environment (GLOBEN), Department for International Organisations and Policy Support (INTEM), at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). In 2008, he was made responsible for Sida’s dialogue with SDI.

**Pär Pärsson** is creative director of Strateg (formerly known as YouMe Agency) in Stockholm, Sweden. He has been working with international brand development for over 30 years. Since 2016, Pär has been developing the SDI visual identity and supporting the organisation with its brand and storytelling in different ways.

**Rajesh Tandon** is founder-president of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) in New Delhi, India. He pioneered participatory research methodologies for empowerment of the excluded and has built capacity of grassroots groups for the past four decades. He is a co-founder of SPARC and continues to serve on its governing board.

**Rajiv Jalota** joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1988 and has held many senior posts, including commissioner of employment and self-employment of Maharashtra State, before joining the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai as additional municipal commissioner (projects) in 2011, from where he worked closely with Jockin and the Alliance.

**Robert Buckley** is at the Urban Institute. He was a senior fellow at the New School, managing director at the Rockefeller Foundation, and advisor at the World Bank. He has also taught at a number of universities. He has written widely on urbanisation and development in both the popular press and academic journals and has helped prepare projects in a variety of places.

**Rose Moloakoane** is a coordinator of the South African Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP) and on SDI's management committee. Since SDI's foundation in 1996, she has helped build SDI and its member federations. She was awarded the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour in 2005 for her struggle to bring land and homes to the poor.

**Ruth McLeod** is a senior teaching fellow at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London. She has worked on urban development issues for nearly 40 years. Ruth originally became involved in community housing and construction issues in Jamaica. In 1989, she became the founder-director of Homeless International where she worked for nearly 20 years seeking to develop and implement innovative financial approaches supportive of community-driven processes.

**Sarah Nandudu** is the national coordinator of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda and co-chair of the Board of Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

**Sheela Patel** is the director of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) that has worked in the Alliance with Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (and Jockin) since 1986. She is one of the founders of SDI and is chair of its board.

**Shirish B Patel** is a civil engineer and urban planner, one of three original authors who first suggested the idea of New Bombay (now Navi Mumbai). He was in charge of the planning, design and execution of the new city during its first five years.

**Somsook Boonyabancha** is a Thai architect and planner who worked with Thailand's National Housing Authority from 1977 to 1989, with the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO, which she helped set up) from 1992 to 2000, and with the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), where she was appointed director and continued in that post until 2009. She was also one of the founders of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in 1989.

**Sonia Fadrijo Cadornigara** is founding member and regional coordinator of the Homeless People's Federation Philippines. She is on the SDI board and a member of its management committee.

**Srilatha Batliwala** is a Bangalore-based international feminist activist-scholar with a long history of grassroots movement building, research, teaching and training young women activists around the world. She is best known for building theory from practice and creating new conceptual frameworks and analytical tools for practitioners.

**Sundar Burra** was in the Indian Administrative Service during which he spent many years in rural India with the Government of Maharashtra and also in Delhi and at the National Academy of Administration for the Government of India. He took premature retirement in 1996 and then joined SPARC to work with Jockin, Sheela and Celine for about 20 years. He lives in New Delhi.

**Thomas Kerr** is an American architect who has worked in Asia since 1989, first with the NSDF/Mahila Milan/SPARC Alliance in India, and from 1996 with ACHR in Bangkok, where he helps coordinate their English language publications.

**Tim Ndezi** is a water and sanitation engineer who has worked with rural and urban communities for more than 20 years. Since 2004, he has championed the formation of the Tanzania Federation of the Urban Poor (TFUP) and has developed community savings schemes and various development projects on land, housing and shelter, water and sanitation, and climate resilience.

**William Cobbett** is director of the Cities Alliance, based in Brussels. He was previously director general of the Department of Housing in the Government of National Unity under President Nelson Mandela. When subsequently based at UN-Habitat in Nairobi, he oversaw the design and launch of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure.



Jockin Arputham redefined the role of slum dwellers - first in Mumbai, then in India and then globally. For more than fifty years, he sought to ensure that the residents of slums and informal settlements and their organisations were at the centre of designing and implementing solutions. He founded the first National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) in India and was one of the founders of Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

In this book, forty people describe their work with Jockin and reflect on what he taught them. These people range from government ministers, to staff from international agencies, to academics and senior civil servants and to NGOs and many members of the slum dweller federations he helped to found. Their accounts include descriptions of Jockin's work with federations in many nations. These written pieces fill in many gaps in our knowledge of Jockin and the momentous social and political changes he drove and inspired.

Jockin received many awards and accolades, including the Magsaysay Award, the Asian of the Year Award and the Skoll Award. He was also nominated for the Nobel Peace prize, along with SDI. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Shri Award. But this book also describes the years of Jockin's work in the 1970s, when he began organizing to fight evictions, and was constantly in jail or on the run.