



SPARC

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers

Annual Report

2014-15



Reflections on a year gone by

The federation model as it evolves: The power of numbers and aggregation of collective aspirations drives the federation process of the urban poor in India at a pace that communities can sustain. In parallel is the global frenzy from global events that continue with very little new thinking on urbanization. The Global discourse comes in "sound bites" and one line buzz words and frenetic advocacy to influence Habitat III, Climate Change conferences and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). At the heart of the discussion on urbanization, the focus is on cities being accepted as the engines of growth. However, the same cities that successfully play that role are also locations of extreme inequity of wealth and of land ownership. This exacerbates and highlights the absence of governance mechanisms to create a realistic minimum safety net for all in terms of habitat security, education, health and wellbeing. The federation locates itself in the midst of this global and national context: in the pursuit of creating an internal focus on what networks of the urban poor and people who are invisible do.

The creation of institutions and building their identity: The federation process is a learning crucible: The power of knowledge creation, and the setting of priorities and negotiating for them is a new and alien process for the urban poor. It is one that forms the foundation of the federation model. Building capacity to create consensus and to experiment with ingredients for a robust solution which works to address the needs of the poor is central to the pursuit of knowledge creation; having confidence and resilience to fail while trying, are qualities that the poor have never had the "luxury" to explore. The federation facilitates this possibility through its critical mass of membership so that when something works, it becomes collectively owned knowledge that all the urban poor can use. Strategies to bring change do not come magically, they have to be created, experimented with and tested for their potential to address solutions that work for the urban poor. The knowledge quotient of the federation process is "a content litmus test" for its efficacy and commitment to sustain mobilization. This is because it is this hope that maintains the long term sustainability of the federating process.

The pursuit of creating an identity and its rituals has never been more crucial than in this decade when the connections of local agenda setting to global discourse and vice versa are so linked and intimately connected. **The power of self-collected data**, its value in creating an identity and building the foundation of the demands and expectations from the state are invaluable. Technology facilitates many things but base information still has to be generated to ensure that its focus is on what the poor need. It must have priorities that they set and it must help set critical aspects of many data sets that remain outside the reach of the poor, on whose lives this data has such a huge impact.

Facilitating women's central participation in federation building: At the heart of the whole federation process is the role and contribution of women. In a distinct way, through a process generated from explorations and experimentation, National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) which was a clearly male organization, worked with SPARC, a group of women professionals working with women pavement dwellers and transformed Mahila Milan from a pavement dwellers women's collective, to a partner organization of NSDF. NSDF in the 1980s had realized they were effective in "*morchas*" and demonstrating and agitating, yet their strategies never produced sustainable impact on their members. They realized that they had strategies to ensure that women participated in the agitations but not in the process of strategy building or in what needed to be done should the attention they sought from the state actually come through. The women who were already involved in Mahila Milan and SPARC before NSDF came in, not only actively explored this new Alliance when it was formed in 1986, but made amazing contributions to the process and content towards the possibility of women becoming leaders of this process. They sought to be involved in creating solutions rather than just seeking government handouts; they wanted to manage money so they were not begging and trapped with money lenders, and they created a collective mechanism through managing their local savings and lending groups to both learn as well help themselves and their communities. Over the last three decades women now form 70 % of NSDF leadership.

The projects as the golden eggs of the federation goose: SPARC never saw itself as being part of a project delivery mechanism, this was an unanticipated progression that emerged almost naturally from the conceptual framework of explorations and solution designing process that Mahila Milan and NSDF initiated through which they created knowledge about why their needs were not met by the state. When needs were identified, and there was clarity that

Reflections on a year gone by

they had to participate in creating the solution, designing the solution seemed a logical step. Whatever the poor designed as a solution to their needs was somehow not automatically within public policy and outside the accepted norms. It led to creating “precedents” or strategies that were demonstrated by the Alliance to show why change in what should be provided to the poor in cities must occur. It also questioned the delivery mechanisms whereby the entitled groups never received what the policy should be offering them. And so came the projects; each project started as a demonstration of what should be designed and how it could be executed, however it also became a learning process and federations in different cities explored these possibilities through peer exchanges and created more and more projects. The Alliance claims even today that the scale, however large it seems from below, is not even a drop in the ocean of demands of the urban poor in India. So our role continues to be to keep those possibilities alive, not letting them drown and forgotten in an urban space where inequities only grow.

Develop plans for cities and their weak data underpinning's: Slum Dwellers International (SDI) campaign about “KNOW YOUR CITY” takes real meaning in India where the city collects data about slums but it's never accessible to the poor and in many instances it does not cover all the slums. There is little evidence that the data itself plays any role in addressing the challenges of informality for the city. The city wide data on informal settlements created through slum profiles designed by the Alliance and now initiated by Slum Dwellers International (SDI) facilitates communities of the poor to take charge of their data and to seek to influence city plans.

Redefining what constitutes ingredients of smart cities: The NDA government and Prime Minister Modi's clarion call to create 100 SMART CITIES has many interpretations mostly to do with technology and IT. Our challenge is to explore the potential for 'smart' to mean truly inclusive... can we make the urbanization decade ensure that development investments reach the poorest 30% in cities as a means to address poverty?

The poor mapping vulnerability and tenability: The challenge of defining vulnerability and mapping poverty is now big development business. Global and national definitions are constantly developed, national surveys undertaken, all of which in the urban context do not actually compute the costs of surviving in the city, its local food transport and habitat costs etc. So, in recent years the federations have begun to look at creating a vulnerability index of settlements and households, and while doing that have begun to articulate acute and cyclical dips into impoverishment vs. chronic poverty. There is also a deeper insight with the realization that slum dwellers often end up competing with each other when subsidy targets are focused on households and the better off among them take over the resources as opposed to building collective good where it benefits all. This work is now linked with various academic institutions to influence their strategies for defining poverty and wellbeing, understanding how state policy gets influenced to develop pro poor policies. All these explorations are presently ongoing.

The paradox of absorption challenges of state budgets for urban welfare and development: The discussion on poverty faces a terrible paradox, not enough money is allocated to service the needs of the poor in general and specially in cities, yet the absorption rate or the utilization of that allocation, however minuscule, is very poor. An analysis of why this happens invariably leads to a lack of interest in the political and administrative leadership to address, along with many other challenges, the challenge of provision of resources to the poorest, the badly designed delivery mechanisms and poor targeting. More serious is the complete ignorance or lack of interest in the political representatives of constituencies who often fight for resources but never for their usage.

Coproduction or co-option: The focus of the projects that the Alliance takes up is often to make these resource deliveries work, to involve communities in redrafting the delivery, changing procurement and specifications and demanding administrative involvement in these changes. These actions are often deemed by many in the development sector as being a co-option of people's processes by the state and seen as creating a conflict of interest. NSDF and Mahila Milan see it as co-production of new possibilities that are demonstrated for the state to scale up. Cities and the needs of the poor have to start with well designed and locally financed solutions to produce real, inclusive and equity driven development. The federations believe they have a vital role to play here.

CSOs - to be or not to be: The challenge of creating dialogue and linkages between the state and urban poor has for long been facilitated by civil society organizations and financially supported by philanthropy and international grant makers. Today two sets of challenges besiege the overall civil society sector: one, the national governments' deep

Reflections on a year gone by

suspicion of any dissent perceived that is seen as 'against' its policy and practice, and second, the deepening scrutiny and punitive action against those perceived to be against the interests of the state's view of development. Another aspect is the waning of financial assistance from grant makers to Indian CSOs. For most of the three decades of our existence national and international grant makers have approached us to support what we do, learn from it and champion this approach. In the last few years as Indian billionaires have begun to explore philanthropy and bilateral and multilateral agencies have begun to withdraw from India, those of us working on contentious urban issues such as land tenure, basic services and entitlements of urban citizens have begun to lose financial support to undertake our core activities of building and strengthening a grassroots social movement of the urban poor. The Government and the city continue to contract projects to the federations. However the grant funding needed to sustain core organizational activities, though a modest amount, has been essential to sustain the learning and support that communities need for the projects. We see this crisis continuing as both state and corporate continue to be blind to this need and continue to support health, education and others. Will CSOs survive this dual challenge? And more importantly, can what CSOs aspire to do survive?

Expanding options and opportunities: In the end the purpose we serve as civil society is to create a deepening of democratic governance that facilitates inclusion of all those who may have diverse contexts and situations to be included in the national development agenda. Within institutional frameworks that have existed for so many decades, civil society in India has been both valuable and crucial in developing inclusive strategies which emerged from creating voice, examining aspirations and developing a wider spectrum of options through which this aspirational quest could help state and markets to reach those who were disenfranchised.

The grant maker's crisis: We believe that national and global grant makers, foundations and philanthropists are also in transition themselves. Do they support commitments to transform society that others make or do they create their own intervention and finance its delivery? Increasingly professionalized approach and private sector management approaches are being explored to scale up and bring in new investments. Yet the fundamental governance and political basis of inequity cannot be ignored. The Alliance has no problems in accepting that robust solutions at scale can have the market as partners, but there is little evidence that the market can serve those who remain invisible or whose individual purchasing power is too little to enter that market space. Many go back to the trickle-down theory of starting with the "better off" amongst the poor and moving down though over 50 years of the past development delivery data shows that nothing trickles down.

The 30 years journey and its reflections. These last two years have been ones of deep introspection for SPARC, its senior leadership and trustees. We have far exceeded our original expectations of what we set out to do and our Alliance has led to communities and federations taking over all SPARC used to do and more. Should that be enough? With grant funding going down and the government clamping down restrictive measures for NGOs coupled with our own reservations of where the sector is going, where do we stand? To date we continue to examine future possibilities.

What happens next? The overall feeling is that when we examine our fundamental values and beliefs of how change occurs from below, our commitment to women centered development and our passion to make organized urban poor work with the state to make change work for them stands as strongly today as it did when we founded SPARC. Only now it's got evidence that it is possible. We see the next decade as one where we push for scale, champion what people do and keep that evidence alive, and work locally, nationally and globally to create space and legitimacy for the poorest and most vulnerable to demonstrate how much they contribute to make cities work for all.



Contents



SPARC

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



NSDF & MM

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



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



SSNS

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

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01 Process of building knowledge

The Federation of the urban poor

The Alliance and how it functions

The Federation Model: While SPARC remains an NGO with a modest number of people working for it, NSDF and Mahila Milan are based in 9 states and over 70 large medium and small towns. The federation model is clearly a crucial foundational organizational strategy in which large numbers of settlements form an organizational entity that know each other, whose leadership is widely dispersed and yet have a cluster of beliefs, aspirations, mechanism of communication, an agreed set of priorities and a deep commitment to change their own lives and that of the city. The membership is not at individual or household level but at a settlement level that aggregates at a sub city level based on the land typology the settlement stands on as it is the primary function of the federations to seek land security. It then aggregates all the federations and forms a city federation, then aggregates at the state level, and then at the national level as National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF). Mahila Milan creates and networks women's collectives initiated through savings groups to take on leadership at the settlement level and take charge of local agenda setting of city organizations.

How the Alliance functions: NSDF and Mahila Milan undertake a wide range of activities and through these build network solidarity as well as set the agenda for action and activities. SPARC works with both these organizations as their legal face - developing proposals, projects, negotiating for contract finances, managing administration, and audits and fulfilling financial, legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

A symbiotic Alliance that produces partnerships: The relationship which began three decades ago is a symbiotic one in which the contracts are in the name of SPARC but all activities, actions and impact outcomes are set by NSDF and Mahila Milan and together the process moves.

Division of roles and functions

The division of roles and functions are dynamic; however in principle and practice, whatever NSDF and Mahila Milan can do SPARC will not do. Whatever roles that SPARC plays today the Alliance will explore how they can be transferred to NSDF and Mahila Milan. Within NSDF and Mahila Milan also whatever can be done locally will not be taken up nationally.



Cities the Alliance works in

	Cities	Settlements	No. of Savers	Settlements Profiled		Cities	Settlements	No. of Savers	Settlements Profiled	
TOTAL	71	527	48685	7274						
MAHARASHTRA	Mumbai	29	12964	495	KARNATAKA	Bangalore	21	1200	654	
	Pune	26	1500	133		Mysore	8	600	26	
	Pimpri	25	536	216		KGF	8	700	35	
	Ahmednagar	11	287	121		Mandya	8	400		
	Nashik	39	1435	378		Chickmagalur	6	240	3	
	Malegaon	9	150	126		Raichur	1	25		
	Jalgaon	12	132	26		Madur	10	400		
	Bhadgaon	11	755	30		Bohinahally -Taluka in Kolar district	1	25		
	Kolhapur	6	250	129		Gulbarga District	1	25		
	Nanded	1				Hassan District	5	200		
	10	169	18009	1654		Karwar District	1	25		
	ANDHRA PRADESH	Hyderabad	19	350		24	K.R.Peth Taluka	1	25	
		Rangareddy	12	200		314	Muthiyalpetth Taluka	1	25	
Secunderabad		12	200	32	13	72	3890	718		
Nizamabad		5	500	211	PONDICHERRY					
Vijaywada		1	25			Pondicherry	5	340	124	
Vishakhapatnam		3	100	690	Kariakal	1	20			
6		52	1375	1271	2	6	360	124		
TAMILNADU	Tiruchy	6	400	78	ODISHA					
	Madurai	6	400	16		Bhubaneswar	50	2250	377	
	Tiruvanmalai	7	370	63		Puri		989	73	
	Dindugal	5	280			Paradeep	11	532	38	
	Tharapuram	6	440	37	Cuttack	12	3500	585		
	Thiruvalluvar	1	25		4	73	7271	1073		
	Kanchipuram	5	50	7	WEST BENGAL					
	Valliyur (District Thirunelveli)	1	47	33		Kolkata		970		
	Thirupattur	5	150	31	Barhampur					
	Chengam	5	25	62	2	970				
	Arani	4	50	52	UTTAR PRADESH					
	Pollur	5	50	28		Kanpur	37	9623		
	Tirupur	2	50	160	1	37	9623			
	Ariyalur	4	100		DELHI					
	Ambur	2	25	51		Delhi	1	200		
	Vellore	1	25		1	1	200			
	Erode	3	50	12	GUJARAT					
	Salem	1	25	113		Surat			97	
	Nammakal	1	25			Ahmedabad	14	3000	1299	
	Pandavapura	1	25		2	14	3000	1396		
	Pudukottai	3	50							
	Tanjavoor	1	25							
	Vandavasi	1	25							
	Thenni	1	25	133						
	Thirukoilur	2	25	58						
	Villupuram	2	150	70						
	Chennai	20	1000							
	Tandrapattu	1	25							
	Chetpet	1	50							
	Cuddalore	0	0	34						
30	103	3987	1038							

Creating an institutional identity

When asked how they will assess themselves, the main focus for reflections are based on the broad aspirations of the Alliance: Three decades ago, when the organizations agreed to work together there were many objectives for the Alliance. First and foremost was to build an institutional identity that would serve the poor. Secondly, to build its fabric to withstand extended delays while waiting for the results that they wanted and were negotiating for to appear for the poor. Thirdly, to develop an ongoing capacity to generate knowledge, to build capacity, to share, to support each other and teach and learn from each other. Fourthly, to demonstrate what the poor can do collectively for their own transformation and finally, to change their cities as they change their own lives.

Its characteristics are:

Critical mass - Given the insecurity which envelops the poor living under the constant threat of evictions and being denied basic amenities and citizenship entitlement, there is no substitute to the value of a large critical mass of poor households seeking and demanding the same thing over a long period of time. In reality the state should actually see this action by the poor as critical feedback towards its own development planning but clearly most administrative or political leaders don't see it that way. Until they do, this persistence and sustained pressure to seek alternatives has to be undertaken by the networks. Unless large numbers of the poor make demands over long periods of time, their needs are not fulfilled.

Horizontal learning and mentoring - There are many ways by which older leaders mentor younger leaders, and it is an important feature of leadership to be able to demonstrate how their ideas and actions can mobilize new members to explore the federation way. It also demonstrates the fact that all leaders are hands on, can start savings groups, do surveys, address large numbers of people and get them interested in exploring the possibility of changing their lives, and so on.

Creating instruments that all the poor can appropriate and undertake - Therein lies the real reason for the success of sustained mobilization of large numbers. The federation has devised activities, strategies and actions that all poor men and women, illiterate or educated, can undertake to produce knowledge, act on it and demonstrate its value to others and themselves.

Building up of a motto: everything is possible "sabh sambhav hai" - The motto of NSDF is that everything is possible if very large numbers of people agree that they need it to improve the quality of their lives. It transforms the mindset of the migrant, the invisible person and the "beneficiary" into one of a doer and a change maker.



What produces dialogue and negotiations for outcomes and impacts

The ingredients to sustain a mass movement: Powerful possibilities need an institutional base. The arrangements that the Alliance has developed have deepened and developed character, values and systems over time and all three organizations have invested to ensure that there are increasingly locally owned and networked networks.

Area resource centers: There are over 100 area resource centers (ARCs) in the cities where NSDF and Mahila Milan have their memberships. These are managed by communities where meetings are held, savings are documented and so on. While these are primarily used by members, a much larger network benefits from what is done here and it is open for all to visit, learn and join as members or just benefit from what the members do.

Women's central participation: There can be no sustained mobilization for habitat if women are not at the center of the process and many activities and rituals of the Alliance ensure that women's collectives are at the center of the process. Starting from savings, managing projects, police panchayats etc. are the various activities that get initiated at the ARCs.

Undertake surveys and enumeration for multiple reasons: Later we will discuss surveys of different types that are now carried out by the communities where they analyze the information and develop priorities. Increasingly these surveys are now accepted by cities and external stakeholders, making it one of the most effective basis for negotiation after a dialogue on the nature of surveys.

Precedents that work for the poor and for the city: There are now many instances where solutions developed by the federations that work for the poor work for the city. These examples are often presented by communities that have already taken up projects, when they speak with the city officials from other cities and towns and invite them to accompany the communities on exchanges to see for themselves. As a result these visitors become champions within their organizations for exploring these projects.

New forms of scalability: There is no question that development projects need to demonstrate scale. The question is at what scale? Most projects initially take time to develop, many elements have to be refined, and changed, but when they do demonstrate the potential for bottom up projects that can operate at scale, (as will be seen in the project section), they demonstrate that it is possible to achieve impact at scale due to community involvement. As a result, increasingly, the federations get invited to participate in projects by the city and state governments. However we still feel that after we demonstrate that they work, they are not getting adopted at state and national level for real scalable impact.



Enumerations - collecting data about ourselves

In Mumbai, apart from a census of surveying all the pavement dwellers under the *Mahatma Gandhi Pad Path Kranti Yojana* (Mahatma Gandhi Policy for pavement dwellers), an initiative of the State government of Maharashtra for pavement dwellers in Mumbai, to clear pavement dwellings by providing them alternative accommodation, the Alliance has now stepped into profiling all informal settlements at the city level. The Mumbai Municipal administration has divided Mumbai into 26 wards falling under 10 zones. With an estimated 60% of Mumbai living in informal settlements this is a huge task, but one the federations are planning to take up. So far, four wards – R North, K East, K West and R South wards with a population of 18,89,520 people have been profiled. Slum profiling is a continuous process and it does not matter if people live in a slum or on the streets. The residents demarcate their boundaries and name their neighborhood. The settlement profile process allows the leaders to explore new goals for change and to explore these possibilities. The challenge is to create goals and pursue them.

Data to prove visibility: Way back in the 1980s, for the first time, the Alliance had profiled all the pavement dwellers who were invisible to the government in the E ward of Mumbai. Initially all data gathered is to produce collective identity and to gather people facing the same challenges. Community organizations of the Federation and Mahila Milan have been using enumerations and settlement profiles influence resource flows and development opportunities. They not only collect and analyze the data about their settlements, but also work towards making their communities noticeable. Slum profiling is a continuous process, it starts by making sure that the city includes you in the list of slums it has, it looks at what the status of a settlement is, vis a vis, land tenure, basic services and many other features. As the legitimacy of communities gathering data has become accepted by the state, the Alliance has begun to undertake surveys and enumerations for designing housing projects, sanitation and relocation projects from time to time. The surveys are at a household and individual level and at times at the settlement level.

To make assessments of what needs to be done Most housing and relocation projects need household data through a basic socio-economic survey to fix entitlements and design projects. After relocation, communities undertake surveys to check how the households are doing, since the community has to adapt to issues of health, education, employment and the social environment. These follow up activities also help communities that first organised to seek habitat to now work to manage their new neighbourhoods.

SURVEYS/ENUMERATIONS 2014-15

	Settlements	Households
TOTAL	484	864
R & R Projects	17	864
Settlement Profiles	467	

SURVEYS/ENUMERATIONS CUMULATIVE UP-TO MARCH 2015

	Settlements	Households
TOTAL	8080	203102
Housing Projects	647	60981
R & R Projects	1448	141635
Sanitation Projects	1942	
Settlement Profiles	4021	
Disaster Projects	19	338
Post Relocation	3	148

To create identity While doing surveys to establish identity, the Alliance found that it also produced organizations that federated or linked the communities based on their common problem - that they had all encroached on land that had the same owner.

Comprehensive study of slums in wards in the city In Mumbai each ward is like the size of any city. This year the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan decided to undertake ward wise surveys of slums as a benchmark of what their status was. 436 slums, from 3 wards have been done so far, with 3,96,918 structures with an approximate population of 15,15,925.

Its value to development and planning : This data that the community themselves gather has great values in forming policies that work best for the urban poor contributing towards their development as well as for the government to work out priorities for investments. NSDF and MM seek to realign the relationship of the poor with their political leaders and local municipal authorities on the basis of this data. Self-enumeration gives these urban poor communities an opportunity to speak about the knowledge they have about their settlements as they have access to the data and information. Though the accuracy of the information collected by them is often challenged, however, in many cities that the Alliance works in, especially in Mumbai, this has formed the basis of the Alliance being part of government projects and has been a role-model for

A more recent development this year : ward wise data collection of slums

Ward	Total	Average	K East	K West	P North	R South
No. of Settlements Profiled	509	127	179	73	174	83
No of Structures	474991	132306	127612	78073	177130	92176
Population	2226620	472380	604865	373595	826785	421375
Land Ownership						
Private			63%	55%	57%	46%
Municipal			16%	8%	5%	18%
Central			0%	27%	1%	37%
Don't know/ Can't say			4%	3%	20%	8%
Sanitation						
Community sanitation (No of seats)	12909	3227	3951	948	5279	2731
Ratio	856	1seat :214	1seat :153	1seat :394	1seat :157	1seat :154
Water supply - individual/community						
	57329	14332	31845	3905	5259	16320
Electricity access						
	430281	107570	115018	84280	149502	81481

other cities to take up community-led process. Once the data has been analyzed based on land ownership, basic amenities of water, sanitation, electricity etc. and needs prioritized, they begin to negotiate with their city and local government to upgrade settlement.

Santa Fe Institute and the Alliance: The global slum profiling project of the SDI and the Santa Fe Institute (SFI) aims to aggregate and analyze the 4000+ settlement profiles collected by the federation in almost 48 cities across India. The exploration is to link big data with locally collected data. Technology has made many advances that help manage and look at larger volumes of data on the web. While the Indian federation feels that data of the communities collected by the communities is very important for interventions with the city, in the early days both the city and the communities did not fully understand the importance of collecting data and that different settlements have different planning needs. Now that SFI and SDI want to put all data together on one platform, the Federations' main concern is that the data should be presented in a way that the communities/federations are included. The community and the professional voice should be aligned.



Savings and loans

TOTAL CITIES/SETTLEMENTS SAVING CUMULATIVE UPTO MARCH 2015

States	Federated Cities	Total Slums	Federated Savings Slums	Savers
10	72	10278	528	48685
Maharashtra	10	1062	169	18009
Tamil Nadu	30	1929	103	3987
Andhra Pradesh	4	1100	52	1375
Pondicherry	2	125	6	360
Gujarat	2	2857	15	3000
Orissa	6	1018	73	7271
West Bengal	3			970
Uttar Pradesh	1	390	37	9623
Karnataka	13	1320	72	3890
Delhi	1	477	1	200

Learning to manage money Savings and credit are used as vehicles to mobilize communities and demonstrate the value of the knowledge of managing financial transactions with confidence and trust for leveraging development finance. This strategy draws on more than thirty years of experience with community based finance facility. The process extends affordable credit to communities otherwise denied credit through formal institutions like banks or obtained at exorbitant interests from local money-lenders. The communities say, 'when we save we are collecting people as well as money', bringing members in contact with one another this way helps them discuss and identify their common development priorities, builds trust and provides loans while taking into consideration the economic and financial status of the households.

Internal collective choices strengthen external confidence Money managed by women benefits the women themselves and communities and demonstrates their capacity to undertake collective action. Their collective ability to save and give loans leverages external resources initially for income generation but later for housing and basic amenities.

Proposing new collective ownership and maintenance protocols At the end of the day, the urban poor can only protect their power and assets and operate as a collective identity when nothing else seems to work in their favor. It means new ways to manage their resources collectively and this starts with managing their savings and loans.

Value in community agreement to women centered focus The savings and credit process serves many purposes; first and foremost it creates conditions to ensure that women are central to the process, their existence has become recognizable by men. The financial management skills that they acquire have not only given them access to other financial resources but have also changed their role within the community and increased their status. Secondly, it is a decentralized, accountable and a transparent process. This also creates the basis for large participation that is needed for large-scale interventions and changes.

S/N	B/L	BUILD. NAME	SAV.	RMK	RMK	M.M.	M.M.	BYCULA	W.D.
1	1A	VISHVA SHANTI	40						685
2	1B	SAI KRUPA	70						724
3	2A	SHI DHAM	2520						305
4	2B	SHREE - SAI	1010	181					266
5	3A	GRITA	270						340
6	3B	PRACHINATI	730	178					1529
7	4A	VISHVAHART							
8	4B	SHREE BHOMI	440				4000		210
9	A	SARVAPPA SIDDHI	1040						42
10	B	VEERAVANI	70						30
11	6D	GA. DEVI							50
12	7C	TRA. CAMP	4875				10000		17
13	11B	PATNA DEEP	230	230			34200		25

Horizontal Exchanges and what they produce

Seeing is believing: It all began when federated communities came to see others like themselves transformed; taking decisions, solving problems, negotiating with government and designing solutions. The Alliance has always used these peer **exchanges** to explore new possibilities, test the value of new explorations by whether they sparked responses from others who engaged with the new ideas, and through these interactions whether the ability to passionately present possibilities begins to be articulated by those who innovate in informal settlements.

Managing crisis of insecure tenure with numbers: A critical element in all our work is the fundamental value of secure tenure and the coping collectively with the ongoing threats of evictions. NSDF and Mahila Milan networks very strongly believe that secure tenure is never provided in reality by laws or by policy but by setting precedents where the poor participate in large numbers to change who can stay where, sometimes by defending where they live despite evictions, at other times, making tough choices to move and find a new place to live.

Creating solidarity while learning from each other: All poor people know that no small group can achieve the changes they need, and networks and long term strategies to support each other require that people know each other and believe they all have the same cause. Engagements in learning from each other and supporting each other is all part of the sustained mobilization necessary for the long drawn process through which the poor presently get security of tenure and basic services.

Collective ownership of the innovation pool: Often the poor never 'own' ideas, possibilities and strategies. These emerging Alliances and transnational networks now collectively own many ideas that they have demonstrated work at scale. So, although ideas may emerge from a specific community, they belong to all of them and are shared with everyone. The transformation of their collective imageries is linked to their own perception that they are change makers.

Types of exchanges:

1. To meet peers: slum dwellers from within the city, from other cities, other states and other countries visit each other.
2. To see new innovative practices and precedents: when someone has done something new or developed a new strategy others come and learn from them.
3. To study a project that they agree has potential and they bring their professionals or government officials to meet their counterparts to learn about it.
4. Exchanges to support, teach and encourage others to explore: those who have done interesting things visit others to explore how their own strategies can be of use to them.

All area resource centers plan their own exchanges and they play hosts and guests which is also part of the increasing collective experience of what works. National leadership is involved when many groups meet at state or multi-state level or national levels, or when there are international exchanges.



Projects and the federating process

What are projects in the Alliance's perspectives? The urban poor get organized to improve the quality of their life, have a sense of wellbeing and get recognition as having citizenship rights. At the foundation is the need for a better habitat and transition from generational deprivation of basic amenities and habitat. Just articulating what is being denied or being dissatisfied with what the state provides is not enough for the federation members of NSDF and Mahila Milan. Their transforming self-image demands that they develop and demonstrate what they want and how it should be designed and executed.

Why take up projects? The design and development of projects become a means to showcase what they need, both within the organization as well as to the city and government and to refine and improve upon it through project cycles. No aspiration produces perfect processes at the first time, many ongoing cycles of projects produce improvement and capacity, and projects that the Alliance takes up seek to demonstrate their design application as well as capacity.

Who drives the selection and what are the criteria for selection: NSDF and Mahila Milan federated communities produce demand, the leadership of the Alliance builds on that need and defines the framework of the project. In some instances the demand may come from a grant maker or the state, in which case the exploration within the Alliance examines whether it is really within their sphere of priorities. If it is, the project is taken on.

What have been the main areas of project development: The main areas for project design and execution that have advanced are housing—where communities have designed and constructed houses; relocation, where in the face of threats of evictions due to a variety of reasons the Alliance has negotiated for relocation rather than eviction and helped households to actually move to new locations; and in sanitation where provision of household or community sanitation is undertaken by the federation members.

How is capacity building undertaken for project execution? The first goal for capacity building is to develop an articulation of the elements of design and execution of a project that are necessary and which of those elements the urban poor can take on and participate. The second goal is to create management and technical support for communities to play these roles. Finally, over time, the goal is to encourage the federation leaders to take on as many of the management and technical roles that they can take on. In most instances these capacity building functions are financed by grants as presently government or city project finances don't cover these costs.

How are the risks assessed and managed? Cost over runs, and building capacity to work with the poor are the main risk. The externally perceived risks are often greater than the ones envisaged internally, yet they do exist. Especially when the external environment does not provide adequate time and phasing of projects to facilitate community capacity building. Professionals also need capacity building since they too are not familiar with the projects to be undertaken in general, and have rarely experienced working WITH community members, and together this may lead to making mistakes that need repair and reconstruction, leading to cost overruns. Yet the greatest risk is the inability of the state to accept the value of community participation in its real form.

What are SPARC and SSNS roles in projects? The roles that these two organizations play mainly comprise of backup for legal and professional interventions. SPARC works on initial negotiations with cities and government and developing the idea of community driven projects. Once the projects are developed they have to be passed on to SSNS which then provides support - technical, legal and financial and also assists in overall supervision.

Why is precedent setting important? What are the different levels of precedent setting? The legitimizing of what communities want and how it should be designed and executed is often not in procedures and procurement practices of cities, and unless these get included the solution remains one which does not work for the urban poor. So PRECEDENTS as we call them are taken on to show which changes are needed and what their elements are. Initially the concept is demonstrated through a single model design and construction of a unit (eg., house toilet) where the design aspects emerge. Then if the city agrees, a cluster or the first scalable project helps develop engagement with the city regarding its tendering and procurement which need to be changed to allow NGOs and communities to participate. Then comes the creating of resources to build capacity and obtain finance to start projects. At the next levels are the larger projects with more management challenges as they move to different geographic locations and managing cash flows etc. Much of the refinement in design and practices occur at this level.

How does the Alliance envisage where its project portfolio will go? The issues of housing, relocation and sanitation remain the main part of our repertoire for the next three years but will be explored in more locations and cities. Gradually, energy, provision of water and amenities will begin to be added.

What is the manner in which the Alliance views leverage? The most valuable transformation we see as leverage is

Housing

the change in self perception of the NSDF and Mahila Milan membership as drivers rather than beneficiaries. But at a more practical and tangible level, we first and foremost see value in asset creation for communities that can improve and hopefully begin the transformation of their lives in areas they could not change themselves. However, actual utilization of government allocated subsidies remains the most satisfying. **To date most subsidies remain unutilized in most cities for the urban poor.**

TOTAL ALLIANCE HOUSING PORTFOLIO

	Total Housing units	Constructed so far
Subsidy	3541	2715
TDR	3388	3063
TOTAL	6929	5778

NB: The total for 'Constructed so far' is the sum of completed units + completed under ongoing projects

Why housing? Delivery of housing projects by the state or through market delivery for the poor have failed to produce scale and meet needs. The Alliance members, especially women, explore membership within the Alliance with aspirations of a secure home. Although in the long run we want to seek universal amenities for all informal settlements while developing housing its design and construction and maintenance are important milestones for the movement of the urban poor in its dialogue with the state on habitat policy.

What are the various types of housing in the portfolio?

When we began housing designs we wanted the state to give the land and the poor would borrow money and build their homes. In 1995 the SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Act) in Maharashtra created the possibility of redevelopment using a market subsidy (see [SRA website for policy](#)) and it became imperative to demonstrate how the poor themselves could design and build houses. These were thus included in the portfolio. Other city federations began to explore the possibility of building housing where the city or state had a housing subsidy and initially under Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) and later Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) many city federations began to build subsidy financed housing. Most of these projects were undertaken under SSNS. (see [SSNS annual reports](#) for more details about these projects).

What learning and insights have these projects produced for the Alliance? The most important and valuable

insight has been that there is no substitute for 'doing' to build capacity. As basic learning happens, suggestions and improvements become easier to absorb and internalize. Project time frames have to provision for a lot of time to accommodate this learning rather than considering completion of construction and obtaining a certificate of completion as the only outcome. Capacity building is not just that of the federation personnel and NGOs but also of the city and state officials who have to accept that these tasks are being done by slum dwellers.

What challenges are there for post housing delivery period?

Moving into a new home is just the beginning of a new learning phase in which individuals, households and neighborhoods have to learn many new things. On an average it takes anywhere between 2 to 5 years for cooperatives to be registered, to be able to manage their finances and take up obligations to keep their areas clean, collect dues and pay bills and manage the housing society.

Which projects will be the focus of the future?

TDR and SRA projects though most expensive also produce surpluses that cross subsidize other projects. However basic amenities and incremental housing are the areas that can reach more households with least costs faster than any other housing projects. Yet both will require changing policy and financing frameworks and the creation of new design protocols that federation leaders can undertake to produce the scale needed.



Sanitation

ONGOING SANITATION PROJECTS 2014-15

Project Name	Total Toilet Blocks	Total Seats	Constructed Blocks	Seats
MSDP Lot 9, Mumbai	100	2000	17	366

CUMULATIVE INDIVIDUAL TOILET LOANS MARCH 2015

LOANS FOR INDIVIDUAL TOILETS	SEATS	Amount
Maharashtra -2013	10	100,000
Andhra Pradesh-2010	5	50,000
Karnataka - 2001-11	323	3,022,000
Pondicherry-2003-04	39	145,000
Tamil Nadu - 2004-07	606	3,585,000
Completed	983	6,902,000

Note: No loans were given in 2014-15

Sanitation has been described as India's shame. Of the billion people in world who still defecate in the open, well over half live in India. Most of those who make do without sanitation live in rural areas, but many millions of them live in crowded urban slums, and their numbers continue to grow. Two thirds of these slum dwellers have no access to a sewerage system, and one third still get by without access to an indoor toilet. Even where public toilets are available, they are often so rundown and filthy that defecation in the open remains preferable. The impact of these conditions is profound – not only on health but also on human dignity. This affects the way slum dwellers are seen by others, but even more important, it affects how they see themselves. SANITATION REMAINS ONE OF THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE ALLIANCE AND IS A VALUABLE STARTING POINT FOR CHANGE.

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF OUR WORK ON SANITATION?

The federation wants a city-community partnership in which whatever form of sanitation is viable at present is undertaken to ensure no open defecation, and communities manage and maintain that facility while the city manages its collection and treatment. In large, dense locations community toilets are the only solution, in smaller towns individual toilets are feasible but treatment of fecal matter is still a challenge. The Alliance has worked at many levels to push for policy and allocations for sanitation and changes in procurements to allow communities to participate. For more information see older annual reports, publication and articles on this subject on our website www.sparcindia.org



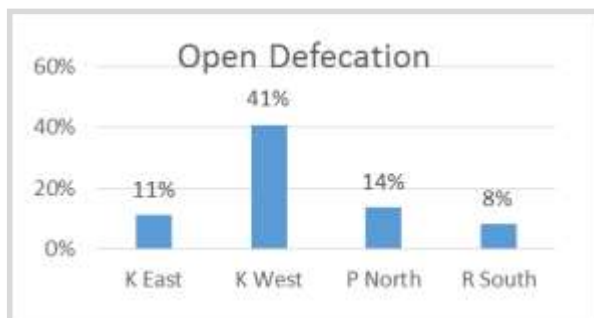
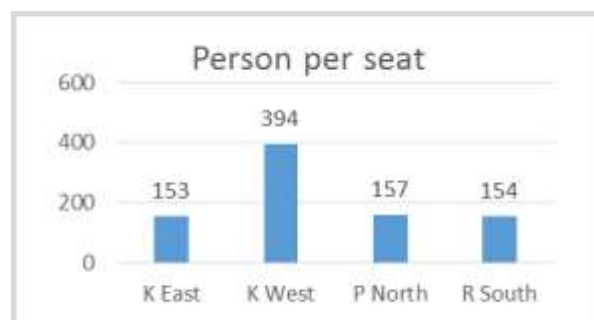
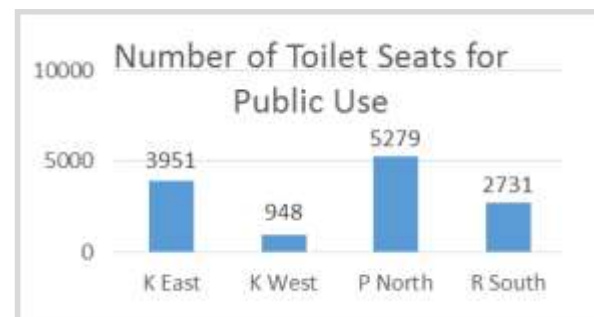
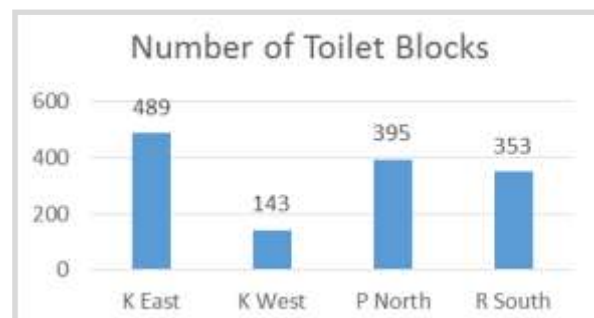
City	Construction period	Total Blocks	Total seats	No. of users
Mumbai	1997 – Ongoing	580	11,929	5,96,450
Pune	1998-2004	146	1614	80,700
Vijaywada	2004	17	128	6,400
Vizag	2005	19	323	16,150
Pimpri Chinchwad	2006-2007	6	102	5,100
Tirupur	2006-2007	14	254	12,700
Erode		1	12	600
Hyderabad (Demonstration block)	2004-2005	1	20	1000
Bangalore (Demonstration block)	2004-2005	1	20	1000
Ahmedabad (Demonstration block)	2004-2005	2	40	2000
Cuttack (Demonstration block)	2006-2007	4	63	3,150
Paradeep (Demonstration block)		1	18	900
Puri (Demonstration block)	2006-2007	1	20	1000
TOTAL		793	14,543	7,27,150

02 Projects

What the ward survey shows about sanitation in four wards of Mumbai

Examples from Alliance Surveys on Sanitation in four wards of Mumbai

No. of Settlements	509
Total Households	520043
Total Structures	474991
Total (Individuals)	1889520
Total Population	2226620
Total no. Of Toilet Blocks	1380
Total no. of existing Seats	12909
Required no. of Seats	31623



From the above analysis, we observe that open defecation in K west ward is the highest because of a lack of sanitation facilities as compared to K east, P north and R south wards. The number of toilet seats for public use is only 948 for 3,73,595 people that amounts to 394 people/seat, which is a huge number of people in K west. Also there are only 311 private toilet seats in K west ward. All these observations tell us that there is poor sanitation facility in the ward compared to the other three wards. Whereas, P north ward has more public toilet seats than the other three wards, K east ward has the most private toilet seats as compared to the rest.

Relocation

Cities are dynamic and constantly changing, in the past informal settlements were evicted for formal development investments. Increasingly there is a demand that relocation and improved rehabilitation be taken for those households and settlements that the city has to move for development. Relocations are a choice taken up after other options are explored and fail to sort out tenure security.

CUMULATIVE Relocation projects UP TO 2015

Projects	HH To be Relocated	Relocated
TOTAL	58361	30980
MUIP (Mumbai)	30441	12282
MUTP (Mumbai)	23734	17049
Tata Power Phase I (Mumbai)	238	245
Tata Power Phase II (Mumbai)	275	173
Tata Power Phase III (Mumbai)	393	64
Tata Power Phase IV (Mumbai)	240	104
MbPT (Mumbai)	1700	483
Warje Relocation (Pune)	1340	580

The standard operating procedure for the relocation process has emerged in the last two decades

Protocols for developing a plan of action for relocation starting with pavement dwellers - the relocation option is often chosen by the communities when they find they have explored other possibilities and failed.

1. Starting with discussions and debates about the choices to be made the option for relocation is taken up only after the people agree to it. However, there have been many occasions when the state wants to evict households but the people there are not organized in which case the preparations don't go as smoothly.
2. The baseline socio-economic survey, cadastral mapping, house numbering and savings networks form the next stage and the more organized the communities and greater the involvement of women, the more robust the strategy.
3. Where possible, the decision of where to relocate is done jointly by the land owner and slum dwellers, in other instances where choices are not great, the process becomes tough about whether to move or not and people end up choosing the lesser evil rather than the best option.
4. Then comes planning and executing the relocation and moving to the new location. Breaking old houses and selling whatever can be salvaged by the family is encouraged as this money is useful for purchasing things for the new house.
5. Post relocation, the residents form cooperatives, select committees, learn to live in tenements, pay for maintenance and utilities and find schools, hospitals and livelihoods.



Tata Power Relocation,
Bhakti Park



Garbage collection at
Warje, Pune

Relocation

Some challenges that persist

Being poor, not having assets and having to face financial challenges persist in peoples lives and many find themselves longing for their earlier life. Often when asked, this is the response, yet few who feel supported in exploring their new options move back. Those who leave the area are often compelled by desperate financial burdens and seek to cover those costs with the house which is their only asset.

Households come into cities and build homes and neighborhoods despite a constant fear of being evicted. The Alliance seeks to build federations and confidence in the people to address these issues collectively since settlements on their own can rarely undertake action to stop evictions. Most federations associated with NSDF and MM will undertake surveys to start a dialogue with land owners. The strategy behind this is simple yet very powerful: the federations boldly state how many settlements squat on any particular land and that they will not vanish but move to another locations, so there is a need for a dialogue to find a solution that works for both. In such instances where the land is leasable the federations seek a policy to redevelop in-situ. However, if the land is not viable for habitat, if it is on slopes or in flood prone areas or if it has to be used for public good then people need to move. Only when there are no options does the Alliance consider relocations.

Exploring the tenability index:

The purpose of doing a city wide survey for government

has been to undertake long term planning for upgrading, redevelopment or relocation. With the Alliance undertaking slum profiles for over a decade, and more recently, cities in India developing a complete profile of slums under the Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY) here is now a very good opportunity to utilize the concept of tenability to develop a transparent mechanism to ascertain which slums can be developed in-situ and which are not tenable i.e. they need to be moved.

The GOI has set up a committee under Prof. Amitabh Kundu to develop a tenability index which he has shared with the Alliance for purposes of exploring its value which also matches with our indicators. When tested against our slum profile data it indicates that 75 to 80% of the settlements are on tenable land and can be upgraded in situ. In a committee chaired by Sheela Patel, Director of SPARC, set up by Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA), Government of India, the committee recommends this tenability index as the foundation of facilitating community participation by developing a publicly transparent assessment of tenability of slums allowing communities to participate in this process. Once these issues are addressed, building community organizations to address relocation challenges gets a better time frame, has institutional underpinnings and has an improved preparation to address challenges of relocation sites, transport arrangements, livelihoods and services like health and educational access.



Survey map of a slum in Pune



Energy Justice and Climate change

In the global discourse on climate change, there is very little discussion about the challenges the urban poor face in cities across the world, and in India and in Slum Dwellers International (SDI) there is a growing recognition that we need a response and not a reaction to this invisibility. Many cities are turning into urban heat islands, eg., Delhi and Mumbai. Changing seasons and weather challenges are also creating a constant flow of the rural poor affected by droughts and unprecedented rain migrating to cities and then settling in these informal settlements that are often located in low-lying areas, steep slopes and other hazardous areas.

The energy justice story is an embedded part of the climate change challenge that nation states and the global community faces, but it is equally embedded in the exclusionary practices of the city where often formal institutions don't provide electricity to the poor because they live in informality and lack a formal address. The poor in informal settlements are the first at risk because the quality of their houses is poor and not resistant to extreme conditions. They lack basic amenities and services and their locations make them the most vulnerable. Often rather than address these challenges, cities "evict them to protect them" adding a double jeopardy to their already vulnerable status. Further, at government level the general "invisibility" of slum dwellers in state and city documentation makes the state response or linkages to respond to their needs or to disasters like storms and floods delayed and sometimes unavailable.

The focus of our initial intervention was at two levels, one was to explore the manner in which we can create connections between the city and slum communities prior to any disaster occurring by including in our slum profiling the names of community leaders the city could contact in times of disasters. The slum profiling also helped communities make assessments themselves about measuring their own vulnerability. Secondly, the Alliance began to develop and test a questionnaire communities could use to assess the access to electricity, its usage and affordability levels. It was only after these processes produced some tangible insights that the discussion of what strategies would facilitate exploring alternative energy sources, or improve ways to make settlements less vulnerable to climate change would be taken up. The initial questionnaire results are based on a household survey in 8 large and medium cities in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka where residents from 25 settlements were interviewed. The purpose of the survey was to get a better understanding of the energy challenges faced by the urban poor and planning the interventions.

The results:

Access to Energy: 70% families paid more than 20% of their income towards electricity bills. Energy poverty is a problem that is more prevalent in medium and smaller cities; energy efficient appliances and bulbs are still rare. Only 7% households had no access to electricity and of those households connected to the grid about 18% had illegal connections, mainly because they had difficulties in providing the necessary documents for a legal connection.

Cooking Fuel: many households who cook with kerosene had to buy half of their kerosene in the black market, where the price one of 1 liter of Kerosene is up to four times higher than the subsidized prices. In government schemes like DELP (Demand Side Management based Efficient Lighting Program) people have to preregister on a website, however, more than three quarters of the households in the energy survey did not have internet access. And every 5th household had no bank account and has therefore been excluded from the LPG subsidy.

Challenges: Results show that accessibility and affordability are the major concerns for the urban poor. Even if families go in for energy efficient appliances to reduce the expenses on energy the investments are too high, so affordability is a major road block to using clean energy. In cities like Mumbai and Bangalore where electricity is privatized in many areas, the tariff structures and charges are highly unequal. Smaller and medium towns are struggling to connect to the grid and therefore turn to the illegal connection option. Solar energy has its own limitations in the country like India where monsoon season is for four months and recharging the batteries or the appliances will be challenging.

MAHARASHTRA AND KARNATAKA

Cities/towns 8

Settlements 25

Household Surveyed 242

Observations

70% of families paid more than 20% of their income to pay the electricity bills making them energy poor households

Of the 70% energy poor households more than 50% are located in the medium cities

Only 13% of all households had completely replaced all bulbs in the household with energy efficient ones

7% of the household had no access to electricity and of those households connected to the grid about 18% had illegal connections.

Police Panchayat

The most amazing by product of Mahila Milan collectives in neighborhoods is the evolution of the police panchayat. This is a strategy through which local community leaders, 3 men and 7 women, work with a police constable from the local police station and address the local law and order challenges the residents of their neighborhood face. Initially this strategy emerged as much to deal with the need of the police to extend their outreach in informal settlements where they had poor presence and equally to ensure that police were viewed with a degree of comfort instead of anger, hostility and fear which is the basis of how the police and the poor relate to each other. Now over 200 such police panchayats have been established, of which about 103 work very well. These Panchayats deal with neighbors fighting over small issues to domestic violence, rape, and in some instance assist in kidnapping and murder cases in slums. In all cases the complainant and the accused come to present their version, after the "case" is registered. The panchayat presents possible resolutions, and if accepted, both sign off and if not the panchayat takes the case to the police station and ensures that due process is maintained and enquiries done. Many retired police men volunteer to work with Mahila Milan. Each year the annual function of the police panchayat is attended by senior police staff and occasionally the home minister of Maharashtra.

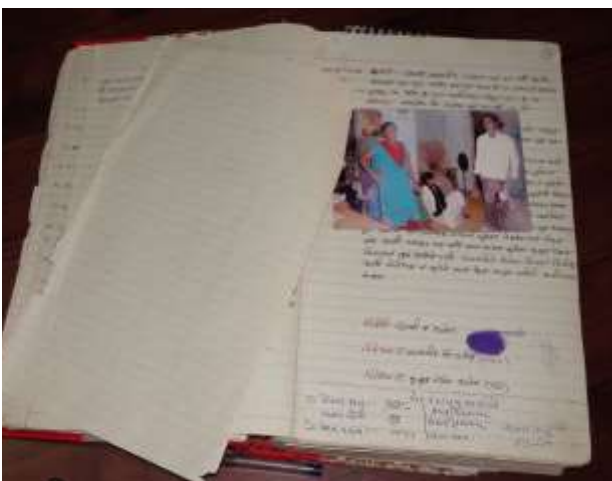
From the files:

Members of Mahila Milan and Police panchayat were invited to the wedding of the daughter of another Mahila Milan leader. However just five minutes before the wedding the groom said that he did not want to get married. There was chaos! All the preparations had been done, the food cooked and all the guests had arrived and now this problem. Everybody felt that if the girl did not get married her life would be ruined.

Mahila Milan intervened and asked the groom the reason for his not wanting to be married. He said that his mother had not been shown any respect, she was not welcomed and was not offered a chair to sit on and that is why he was angry and did not want to get married. The leaders explained to him that this was not the right thing to do, so many people had come for the wedding and there would be social issues. The groom was very arrogant and said that he did not need anything explained to him and he didn't want to get married.

Once, twice, three times the leaders tried to reason with him but finally one of the Police Panchayat members took him aside and told him that he was looking at it as a game. Did he think the girl was a toy, on the one hand he said that he loved the girl and wanted to marry her and suddenly he said that he did not want to get married for a superficial reason and made a mockery of the girl and her family. She told him that either he got married or she would call the police. It is another matter that she did not know the number of the police station but that is the Mahila Milan style.

The groom finally agreed to the wedding but now the police panchayat threatened to take him to the police station so that he could be taught a lesson. They made the groom and his family sign an affidavit that they would not harm the girl or repeat this kind of behavior in the future and the wedding finally took place. They have been happily married and live at Vashi Naka with their four children.



Shelter and Welfare

Street Children

Night shelters vide a supreme court judgment have to be set up by all municipalities for homeless individuals and families. However the municipalities want NGOs to run them and they produce a huge challenge for the Alliance. The rules and regulations are perceived by NSDF and Mahila Milan as almost being akin to a prison and while the shelter is temporary there are no long term plans by the state and city to rehouse these individuals or families so in the end they face evictions. The spaces provided are rarely enough for 3-5 families, and so in large cities what use are they?

We continue to stay with our commitment to provide night shelters to street children and are now concerned about the 18-22 years olds who have to find a place to stay in slums as they are now too old to be in the night shelter. Of the 2000 young boys who come and go, many have been with us since they were very young. Over half now have found work, are married and many have reconnected with their families. Others began exploring work initially with NSDF and Mahila Milan as helpers and gradually moved to other jobs. They retain the networks they developed when they lived at night shelters and come and visit often.



Food safety net

For the past 15 years, the NSDF and Mahila Milan collectives identify between 150-200 households each month that have no food to eat that month and they are given supplies from the Alliance.

- About 120 are chronically poor households, others come and go. Each month the Mahila Milan groups review the households in their own neighborhoods and refresh lists.
- The lists are consolidated and twice a month whole-sale orders are placed, and the food is weighed, packed in bags and each neighborhood team takes it back to their homes and delivers it.
- The chronically poor are households with a diseased main bread earner or chronically ill adults, women headed households and aged couples with no financial support.

More recently young women from each neighborhood have been encouraged to undertake this work. Mugdha anchors this in the NSDF-Mahila Milan center and coordinates it. She proudly claims that she now gets it done in one day!



ESID and State Choices

ESID (States in Development) is a center for research at the University of Manchester which works in Collaboration with SPARC to study a major urban investment in India, JNNURM and its BSUP program. The central feature of this study is to examine what influences a nation state to develop pro poor programs.

What has been done so far

Specific city studies on five cities in five states have been completed and documentation has been finalized for the case studies. These documents will be further framed in a study report and articles for publication and strategies to further use these insights are being explored.

What has its usage been to the Alliance

The evidence from the study and from the Alliance participation in JNNURM and BSUP both in its own work and in facilitating the communities to participate indicates that while the design and initial rhetoric for making allocations was a huge step forward and a new form of investment in urban areas, they did not reflect in the execution and in developing learning to leverage from its direct impact into exploring a long term sustainable strategy to upgrade slums or build land security protocols for the urban poor.

What does it tell us that is useful for cities, state and national governments

The government has since changed and now it has a new policy for urban development. The most important lesson for us which we have sought to share with the state institutions is that while policies change, the institutional structure for delivery, for project execution at state and city level remains the same, and thus weaknesses in those institutions will also impact new advances in policy making and execution.

What were the activities undertaken in the year

The team working on this study visited all the cities, met communities, city and state level officials, prepared detailed documentation of their visits and prepared reports on their findings. These have been shared with the Ministry for Housing and Urban Poverty (HUPA) and the city officials, and plans are being explored to see if any states are interested in exploring the issues and challenges they face. An initial meeting was set up in Odisha whose impacts and outcomes will emerge in the coming year.

What are the plans for the coming year

The study itself winds down and the Alliance plans to explore how it can take these insights to work with some of the states and link these findings to make the new 'habitat for all' strategy of the new government work for the poor in informal settlements.



Ishapur, Patna



Analysis of the participation of the poor in the JNNURM program through various research projects taken up by SPARC show little or no community participation. If present, it is only in the form of acceptance to participation, or contributing financially as their share of the total subsidy. Institutionalizing community participation requires formation of guidelines that cities and states can follow while structuring delivery of public goods to the urban poor. A committee constituted at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) is currently entrusted to do this, and SPARC contributes directly to this committee.

Wellbeing

Measurement of poverty has been a topic of great debate in India. With the different committees – Hashim Committee and Tendulkar Committee being assigned the work of defining poverty, as well as poverty definitions by international grant makers and development agencies, the measurement has seen various changes over the years. With initial focus on simple calorific intake, to daily earnings, to a bouquet of necessities, and various indices such as the deprivation index etc. The poverty definitions have been within the realm of professional experts. However, we forget one important component of it, the participation of the poor themselves. How do the poor view poverty? What do they think are factors causing poverty? Are all the people living in a particular slum settlement poor? Is there a value in understanding how the concept of wellbeing can be measured and what factors produce wellbeing? How are aspirations linked to wellbeing, and what factors improve or decrease the sense of wellbeing. What factors push people further into poverty, or what factors bring them out of poverty? Which external factors reduce people's sense of wellbeing? The research inquiry on poverty and vulnerability focuses on some of these questions with an underlying agenda of 'how the poor measure and grade poverty?'

The Alliance explored a research study on 'Wellbeing in the urban slums', seeking to develop a methodology for communities to explore this possibility with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) this year. The study is basically an extension of the poverty and vulnerability study with a special focus on gender and livelihoods. The study was carried out in two phases in the cities of Mumbai, Raipur and Visakhapatnam. The Alliance was involved in the first phase and held group discussions with groups of men and women in slums, where collective perspectives on poverty, wellbeing, what the communities see as important for living a comfortable life and how they categorize the different families living in their settlement as doing good, ok and bad were discussed. In the second phase, based on the findings from the discussions, a detailed questionnaire was prepared and individual men and women from the same settlements were interviewed by a different team to gauge individual perspectives. The research outcomes clearly challenged the traditional definitions of poverty and added a vast range of other factors that directly affected the lives of people living in informal settlements, which are otherwise not accounted for to call people as 'poor' or their vulnerability towards become 'more poor'.

This year, the Alliance continued with the research inquiry on effective states and inclusive development,

with the BSUP as the focal intervention.

As the study goes deeper into its basic goal, it becomes much clearer that, the capacities of states and cities to undertake urban development that is inclusive is very low, and so is their capacity to absorb funds that are made available for such a purpose from the national government. Development projects that target the poor fail miserably due to little or no community participation which is taken for granted and is considered an insignificant part of the projects. Social programs such as access to basic services, and housing are considered as pure engineering feats and do not do well when such engineering products are put to their actual use. Cities produce the foundation for the sense of wellbeing and create aspirational choices for all when they ensure security of tenure, access to basic amenities which then help people to improve health, educational and livelihood options all which improve their sense of self and wellbeing.



Phule Nagar, Mumbai

03 Reflections

The changing external environment

International development places too much focus on success rather than the learning and experimentation of development interventions. Learning and experimentation are considered too risky with uncertain results yet traditional time tested methods do not produce long term effects. Grant makers and donors see the value for their investments only if it produces visible immediate effects. Very few grant makers see value in the investments for the federation activities, considering them as 'regular organizational overheads', and not fitting acceptable outputs.

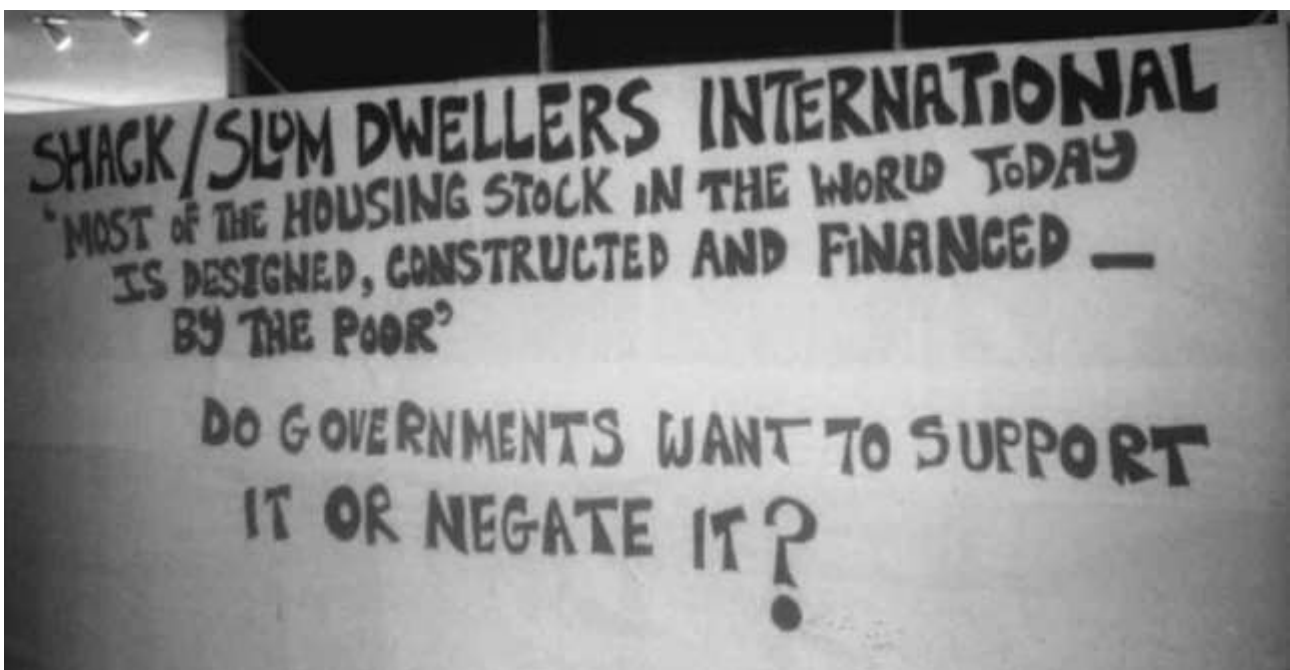
We create instruments of short term measurements of processes that produce long term investments. The core processes of the Alliance, the savings, slum profiling, and exchanges are now standard operating procedures. They are both a means to sustain long term organizational processes, as well as serving the poor to obtain quick returns. Its long term investments build skills and potential for mobilized communities and they are able to withstand the stress of prolonged negotiations for land, basic amenities and services. Measurement of the data and membership are often taken to measure outputs in the short term, but what federating produces is, mobilized communities that along with the federations produce, experiment with, negotiate and test solutions for their development problems. In the long run they become the agents of change which is the Alliance's long term goal.

Is this potential capacity of the organized poor a valued asset or not? How does the city and state view them? In all governments there are some political leaders and administrators who view the bottom up empowerment process as a valuable asset and work to link state

project investments with these initiatives.

However by and large development intervention and its investments are traditionally seen in a top down manner where the poor are expected by the governments and grant makers to be thankful for benefitting from their benevolence. Increasingly the work of the civil societies, especially those supporting the organizations of the poor that fight and demand for what is rightful development, are considered by critics as obstacles to development, and therefore not in the interest of the country's development. In this view, national governments and cities increasingly view international grant makers that support such organizations with suspicion and hold them responsible for 'encouraging dissent'. In such a case, national and local regulations that allow foreign remittances have tightened review systems and have led to cancelling the registration of several agencies.

In the context of the Indian Alliance the resources for building these core competencies of federations have come from grant makers, both international and Indian while the projects that we undertake come from blending community resources and state funds. International donors have never been plentiful for supporting urban work, and most have withdrawn from India as its own emerging wealth and philanthropy is expected to take over from global grant makers. Both, Indian grant makers and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are not yet comfortable with supporting the work of the Alliance.



Championing central participation of poor communities

Delivery of basic services is constitutionally a function of the states and the cities. These are public goods that are to be delivered to each citizen. Delivery to informal settlements requires large scale participation of organized communities without which projects in such areas either do not happen at scale or fail to be sustainable. Participation of organized communities must occur right from issue identification and root cause analysis, to resolution and solution implementation.

Slums are an unavoidable phenomenon of urbanization where competition for space increases the cost of living and cities will have no option but to accept their existence. If the intervention is properly planned, it can improve the conditions of informal settlements, thereby improving the living conditions in the city. This cannot be carried out unless the citizens themselves participate in the process from start to end.

Community participation has different definitions based on the process at stake. In all subsidy delivery projects, as well as in projects implemented by traditional grant makers, poor communities are considered as beneficiaries of development and therefore, their 'assumed acceptance' is considered participation. Real community participation happens when processes that relate to the poor see their democratic representation in them.

How can this be institutionalized?



Within neighborhoods

The federations participate in the city's sanitation program by identifying sanitation needs, organizing communities to undertake construction of the sanitation blocks as well as post construction maintenance.

Within city development plans

Most city development plans, are made without adequate inquiry about the conditions of informal settlements in the city. The recent program JNNURM has shown just this. The resultant development is haphazard and leaves out informal settlements. Inclusion of organized communities in taking up studies of their neighborhood is important for city planning.

In its quest to address participation of the organized communities in the process of data inquiry, NSDF and Mahila Milan are taking up the activity of slum profiling the entire city of Mumbai which will be used for working on development plans at the ward levels.

National level - with state and central government & internationally

At the international level as well, processes of community mobilization and their long term effects are not perceived as important investments. Through the SDI and its affiliates, SPARC continues to advocate long term benefits of investing into community processes, which could be painfully slow, but bear fruit in the long term. The railway resettlement in Nairobi bearing a resemblance to and learning from the railway resettlement in Mumbai is one such example.



Designing scalable projects that leverage solutions for the poor

How can project design and development be built to ensure community participation at all levels?

1. It does not matter whose idea it is, community networks should be involved in creating the starting point for intervention.
2. Although it's often difficult, formal institutions need to take on board issues, pointers and possibilities raised by communities and the same should be done by community federations.
3. In order to reach outputs and outcomes agreed upon, both should share their aspirations and images of what they want to achieve and agree to a collective vision, with clear roles and responsibilities.
4. Often such protocols and sops don't exist and have to be developed and defined in the project. By and large both formal and informal capacity does not exist for working together and be accountable to each other before the initial project, but its costs and process have to be a starting point.
5. Creating a range of possibilities rather than one size fits all must be agreed upon right from the beginning. It often requires procedures and standards that need to be tweaked, reinterpreted or changed to make this happen.
6. There are always risks and possibility of failure initially, these must be anticipated, and learnt from. Modification for scale emerges from these challenges.
7. Financial and technical personnel in official institutions, especially, often produce regulations and barriers for participation; their principles can often be adhered to while procedures can change.
8. Senior leadership championing these projects is vital to produce serious commitment from all organizations and for building trust and partnerships down the line.
9. Creating Alliances of CSOs, community leadership, state agencies and professionals who initially drive these processes. They will have to reproduce these partnerships in each city to sustain new and emerging protocols for facilitating community participation.
10. Unless these projects continue and the experiences emerging from them are mainstreamed, cities and communities will keep making initial mistakes and reinventing the wheel.

What the Alliance brings to the process:

Create Data to prove visibility: The communities produce documentation that helps make crucial choices of projects and delivery mechanisms.

Make assessments of what needs to be done: The agreement based on the data produces important consensus within the communities of what needs to be done.

Create identity: The process of engagement produces an identity which then helps the communities to form associations which can be the potential managers of the assets of process created by the investments.

Ensures accurate basis for entitlements: The biggest challenge after creating absorption of resources is to ensure that the right group and people have been given the entitled assets or services. For too long resources created for one set of the vulnerable have been leaking to others.

The big challenges in development we foresee as ongoing:

The Alliance has created some strategies that have shown their potential for scale in some states and cities. Yet, if the state policy does not recognize their potential, the Alliance has to work at each city level to instead of working at a state strategy level of capacity building to explore this possibility.

Inability of the legal process to defend the right of the poor: Informality of habitat and work increase every day, yet the legal system cannot accommodate this within the legal framework. The inability to create legitimacy for the solutions developed by the poor means that those locked in informality cannot benefit from services that do not acknowledge them.

Representing the voices: the urban poor voice in various locations remains weak and absent: Governance requires institutional mechanisms to listen to voices seeking recognition. Often these voices first emerge from making demands and voicing dissent against being excluded. Without systems in place to utilize this to produce development investments these voices are ignored. When attempts to produce voice and representation are ignored and not included in city development systems, the voice of the most vulnerable remains mute.

The complete lack of appetite to develop protocols for creating long lasting and scalable change: All this means is that the systems or protocols to ensure that the much needed resource reaches the most vulnerable just don't fall into place unless very strong groups make demands, which can never happen uniformly across the urban space.

NGOs are increasingly pushed to become sub-contractors of state and grant makers' visions for change: The impatience for improved development has pushed grant makers to become the change makers themselves, directing development interventions. This restricts the resources available to local and national civil society for their missions and turns them into subcontractors for the fulfillment of other stakeholders' visions.

Exploring a city wide strategy to get land tenure

Our views on how the poor get tenure and habitat security: In India, urban areas do not plan for first reserving land use for the poor, and if at all they do so, invariably it is used for other purposes. As a result settlements housing the urban poor come up as illegal squatter settlements. Most of them face several evictions yet hardly any households relocate to rural areas except for temporary purposes. At some point these informal settlements become vote banks for politicians who also see value in 'defending them' when facing evictions, and over time some basic amenities begin to be provided in the form of water taps, toilets etc. However the quality of investment is minimum, and the outreach very little and not universal. It is as though only after the slum dwellers survive many evictions they somehow get legalized over time, and their sheer volume produces laws that 'legalize' their habitat through cut off dates. This means if you have proof of residing in the city before a certain date you are 'permitted to stay'. In most instances this security is more 'de facto' than legal. Interestingly, the law, human rights activism, public interest litigations and legal outreach has rarely provided substantial tenure security. Based on what they seek as subsidy, cities increase or decrease the numbers of slum dwellers. If they don't want to provide services the poor become invisible.

Our position about the role of the state and market: In India all urban issues of land and finance to cities are state subjects. The state governments (provinces) are the policy makers for urban areas in India, accountable to provide fiscal support to cities and to develop an inclusive development in the form of policies for tenure security and basic amenities. However, this is a goal yet to be achieved by any of the states. The back log of habitat and basic amenities that were not provided by the state are more and more being assigned to the private sector that gets incentives to reach out to the poor. The Alliance believes that the private sector cannot find much profitability in reaching out to the bottom 40% in cities. Scalable solutions for this group need to be developed and policies to facilitate these have to be put in place.

Our plans for 2015-18 on this issue. We have member federations in 9 states, and we now plan a strategy to work with states on a range of issues. In all instances we will start with slum surveys through the mechanisms described in earlier sections, organize and federate communities and demonstrate what communities bring to the process while seeking state and city investments. The outcomes that these activities and processes will yield in the form of projects will hopefully become part of city, state and national policy. Community organizations at city levels and resources of the state have the potential to make this transformation happen.

The federation strategy: The Alliance believes that unless large numbers of informal communities align their aspirations for secure tenure and basic services it will not be achieved. To create this organization and to demonstrate to the urban poor and the city the value of self-created knowledge, we do 'enumerations' - through which data about the urban poor is collected by the urban poor themselves.

Slum profiles are digitally mapped locations that collect base information at the city level that have been standardized by SDI. This data provides important basic information about the community and also creates a network through the collation of the data. It is then discussed within communities to ascertain land tenure challenges, the absence or availability of basic amenities, their connectivity to services provided by the city etc.. It is a benchmark of the status of that area at the time of the survey and local youth are trained to do this task.

SPARC NSDF and Mahila Milan then undertake their specific roles. SPARC analyzes the data and produces reports. It also examines whether the location is "tenable" meaning whether upgrading can happen in-situ or do they need to move because of vulnerability of location or because of city projects. NSDF discusses the formation of a federation at city level and introduces communities to a range of issues they have to address and plans a meeting with the city. Mahila Mila initiates women's savings groups in the neighborhoods and begins to explore how to link women across neighborhoods, as in the end it is the women who carry the habitat agenda over the long periods of dialogue and negotiations.

The dialogue with the city begins by seeking to enter all informal settlements in a "city register" as most often the city has names of only half the settlements and no linkages with them. The discussion begins with the provision/lack of basic amenities and demonstrations of how communities can work in partnership with the city.

Once the city agrees to explore, the negotiations move towards creating a demonstration project in which the procurement policy for tendering is changed to allow communities of the poor to apply for their own projects, the design strategy is also demonstrated to look at the norms of design and materials used, and to develop initial scalability and show how communities can take on construction. Construction is undertaken through a construction company jointly owned by SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan called SPARC Samudaya Nirman Sahayak (SSNS) encouraging other NGOs and even private companies to explore this model.

SPARC is working with the government (HUPA and Prof. Kundu committee on this subject) to develop a transparent tenability index that the states can adopt based on slum profiles.

The dream of local to global outreach

In 1996, after 5 years of international exchanges which began in 1991-92 with South Africa, *Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI)* was created by 8 slum country federations. Today, two decades later, 33 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have national federations of slum dwellers and their leadership as national affiliates of this organization. A unique and special element of this organization is its aspiration to develop a transnational institutional framework which empowers the local leadership of informal inhabitants to represent themselves at development discourses which can provide voice and representation not just at local and national level but also at global levels. The Alliance mirrors this at the national level working to build confidence, capacity and choice for the urban poor to project themselves as critical actors in the local and global transformation where all citizens and their needs matter.

SDI presently has HUBs or groupings of country affiliates based of geographical location of country affiliates. South Asia, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and Latin America are the five Hubs, and within each HUB there is a learning center, a national affiliate, who supports and assists the other affiliates. In Asia, the Alliance forms the learning center in India.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Goal 11 is specifically oriented towards cities:

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, but Human Cities Initiative (HCI) also contributes to the city-based achievement of other SDGs, namely:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
3. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
4. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
5. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
6. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
7. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
8. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
9. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
10. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
11. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



What Slum Dwellers International (SDI) means to the Indian Alliance

Womens' savings groups: Since 1988, first groups linked to Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) and later to Slum Dwellers International (SDI) have come to India and taken away the strategy of women's savings groups. These create a separate identity for these savings processes from the conventional micro-credit process developed by Grameen bank and others.

Enumerations: Starting with 'WE THE INVISIBLE' a census of pavement dwellers, surveys by communities to count themselves is a feature of many organizations all around the world and is used extensively not only within Slum Dwellers International (SDI) but is now being adopted by other organizations as well.

Making Laadis: When Mahila Milan travelled around India to look at housing projects they saw the funicular roofing material developed in Kerala in the early 1980s. Women pavement dwellers from Mahila Milan called these LAADIS and began to manufacture them. When Slum Dwellers International (SDI) began exchanges these women travelled to Kenya and South Africa and taught women there to make them. Recently these Laadis were produced in Malawi by women who called them Laadees but did not know what the word meant or where they came from, only that they had learnt to make them from the Kenyans.

House model exhibitions: Since 1986 when women on the pavements of Mumbai set up a house model exhibition, almost every country in Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) and Slum Dwellers International (SDI) have taken on these house model exhibitions to demonstrate their house designs to their communities and to the city. It's a simple but powerful exercise which helps demonstrate what works for the poor and make it the basis of discussion with the city.

Community Toilet blocks: The concept of the community toilet block is over two decades old in India, and many countries within Slum Dwellers International (SDI) are now exploring possibilities to utilize it in dense locations where individual toilets don't work. Many city officials and state government politicians and administrators now accompany their community leaders to see the sanitation blocks in Mumbai, and to understand how a city wide partnership can emerge from such projects.

Railway relocation: The most exciting use of knowledge and strategies created in one city that is demonstrating its potential for others to use and to facilitate slum dwellers to participate in project design and execution at a huge scale is the work that occurred when Mumbai was undertaking the improvement and upgrading of its public transport. It's a project we refer in many of our documents as MUTP II.

SDI is based on the belief that leaders of the urban poor, men and women, have to develop confidence and capacity to demonstrate the contribution they can make to change their own lives and that of their cities. They learn best from exploring possibilities to change themselves and their relationship with the city, and when their peers see what someone 'like them' them has done, they not only become role models, they become mentors who can walk them through the process and become the 'evidence' needed to convince other cities and countries to make change.

The Alliance is a learning center for all affiliates in general but also for the Asian region. Both, members of SDI and other community networks come to seek, explore and take advice from the NSDF and Mahila Milan leadership. For the center, which is managed by NSDF and Mahila Milan in Mumbai, it is a weekly affair to expect visitors who come to look at what they do and sometimes travel to other cities in Asia and Africa to support explorations in processes like savings, surveys, setting precedents or negotiating with their city.

However increasingly other federation affiliates of SDI come to India with their officials and professionals to look at partnership strategies through which NSDF and Mahila Milan have taken initial precedents in housing, sanitation and relocation and operate at scale and across cities.

Types of international horizontal exchanges:

1. Exposure visits - look, see and reflect.
2. Learn the details of what needs to be explored and transferred.
3. Assist other affiliates to take transferred skills and strategies to another city.
4. Collective reflection on actions taken and skills transferred.
5. Support advocacy, exploration, federation building in a new country.



03 Reflections of the Alliance as an institutional entity

Exploring collaborations and partnerships locally and globally

Creating frameworks for co-production

Creating strategies and solutions that ensure that the needs of the informal and urban poor are met are at the heart of what the Alliance of SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan has sought to develop. However their scalability, their sustainability and their potential to be refined and adapted require a buy in by the state institutions and that of other players in development that include private sector and other civil society organizations. Such processes need to be developed in a relationship that is equal with different stakeholders bringing in unique and distinct resources and knowledge. The Alliance is struggling to produce such a framework for coproduction that respects what the urban poor bring to such partnerships.

Assessing the levels at which federations have links with others

The transition from creating a strategy and building its robustness to ensure that it protects the interests of the poor on the one hand while giving them opportunities to build its scalable potential with other stakeholders is a major challenge. That is because it is not business as usual and an unfamiliar process. This is as difficult with peer NGOs as with the state, the private sector and with international agencies.

The goal is to get top down processes to reach the bottom up processes half way

In an ideal world all stakeholders would be linked in a horizontal or circular way, but if not that option, the next best one is for the top down to meet the bottom up half way. At present most project designs, strategy and allocations are done prior to engaging with communities, or if the organized communities go with a proposition, it somehow does not get support as it was never within the plans accepted, approved and financed by the state. In some initial instances, long standing exposure to the federation process has helped the state draw in communities or vice versa for the federations to draw in the state and produce scalable precedents that have led to many of the projects presented in our reports. Most of these are presently in the local and national context. But both state market and community resources are needed to produce sustainable local development

Through Slum Dwellers International (SDI), strategies developed in one country now become shared knowledge and insights with strategy and action linked knowledge are shared through exchanges not only with Slum Dwellers International (SDI) affiliated communities but increasingly with their government agencies.

Ongoing program of interns and linkages with academic institutions

This has been an old and ongoing activity which helps create exposure for the Alliance and those who come as volunteers, interns or as part of their academic courses, to build protocols for engagement which help both communities of the poor in formal engagements and for the professionals to learn to deal with informality.

Currently, we have long term agreements with the University of Catalonia (Spain), KRVIA, Mumbai and CEPT, India, where students from these universities work with us. While they offer their technical expertise and supplement the work in our current projects, they also take advice from us on their master thesis. This year, students from the CEPT University worked on producing geo-spatial analysis of slum profile data of Mumbai.

Most volunteers and internship applications are in the field of Architecture and Urban Planning, but in the past two years, we have seen an increasing number of students from different streams wishing to spend their time with us as volunteers including a set of students from Law College who worked on organizing our project legal documents.



Railway relocations as an example of cross border learning via exchanges

The railway relocation saga across SDI:

- The informal settlements around railway tracts in India have been organized as Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (RSDF) and while they undertook their household and settlement surveys in 1986-87, sought numerous occasions to seek negotiations with the Indian Railways to be moved back away from the railway track but not evicted, it was only in 1995-6 that upgrading infrastructure in Mumbai led to a policy on relocation rather than eviction by the Maharashtra Government and 18000+ households along the railway track were relocated from 2000 onwards. What is unique is that the RSDF designed and executed the relocation. (See IIED working paper)
- In Philippines and Kenya similar investments in railways were producing evictions, and sharing the Mumbai story led to community involvement and to exchanges with their counterparts in India that in turn helped them develop and negotiate their own local version of the relocation rather than eviction.
- This year the Ghana federation is being drawn into a railway infrastructure project because of investments and they have begun to visit Kenya and will probably be invited to India to look at projects at different stages.
- SDI and SPARC have extensive documentation both written and audio visual that indicates at great length how slum dwellers played a major role in this major infrastructure project. Yet it is both telling and indicative of how mainstream organizations prefer to forget these roles and functions that Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and SPARC often have to challenge organizations such as the World Bank and national governments to recall interesting projects they have undertaken like MUTP II in Mumbai, where the slum dwellers produced solutions to their secure tenure that also led to large infrastructure projects of public transport improvements to occur in parallel. Infrastructure projects remain the main cause of evictions in the last five decades and creating robust relocation which works for the poor is a major challenge.
- If the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) process for horizontal exchanges had not been in place, the potential for exploring expanding options against evictions of slum dwellers along infrastructure projects would not have been possible.

Extracting land value to finance urban infrastructure is a hot subject in the challenge to address financing urban development. By and large, land value capture is used mainly to see improved land values that state and market can exploit to finance infrastructure as well as private enterprise development. Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and the Indian Alliance have begun to explore the potential to develop strategies where community organizations federated by NSDF and Mahila Milan develop strategies where their potential to develop workable and viable solutions serves the purpose of providing secure tenure and basic services to the poor, who would otherwise face evictions, to ensure efficient and timely delivery of project execution reducing costs over runs and the costs for rehabilitating informal settlements within projects is covered.

A win-win for all.



Reflections of creating SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak

The logic for its formation:

The strategy of seeking visibility and demanding land security and services began to lead to results as slum dwellers participating in NSDF and Mahila Milan began to see results as their new found Alliance produced impact and outcomes. As was the case in the past, SPARC became the logical legal institutional arrangement and the vehicle from which project financing and execution was initiated. However, three issues arose which required the Alliance to explore whether SPARC was the right vehicle. Firstly, there was the sheer volume of costs per project. Each project was several times the budget of the Alliance grants which SPARC managed. Secondly, the skill sets needed to design, manage and execute projects were different and both these challenges had the potential to change the nature of the culture of SPARC which was at risk. But what really made the shift to explore a new identity was the fact that a Trust (SPARC is a charitable trust) needed to seek permission to take loans, to own or transfer property. That made the decision for the Alliance.

Institution jointly owned by the Alliance

Some time was spent in working out how to create the institutional structure whose processes were accountable to the principles of the Alliance. Determining how to define and explore elements that would create the institutional architecture of the new organization that would always make it accountable and work for the demands and expectations of the membership of NSDF and Mahila Milan. The bare outlines we agreed upon were as the name suggests 'SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak' (NIRMAN) which means **SPARC's support to collective community led construction**.

- It would be sponsored by SPARC to be a not for profit company jointly owned by SPARC, Mahila Milan and NSDF with invited independent Directors. The three directors from SPARC would be nominated by the SPARC board to sit on SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN), NSDF and Mahila Milan would nominate their three members and together they would invite independent directors.
- It would take on projects that are recommended by the Alliance and as far as possible are executed under the direction of the federations members.
- That surpluses created by projects were to be accumulated and spent in SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) to take on more projects and to build capacity and advocacy for more community driven projects that served the urban poor.

- It was a demonstration of the potential for community led construction that needed technical and financial assistance and could be replicated by others.
- Finally, its role was as much to build bottom up capacity as well as to work with state policy, city procurements and financial agencies to create inclusive policies so that the urban poor could take on construction.

Its evolution since its inception in 1998

Many systems and mechanism developed within the Alliance in the relationship between SPARC, Mahila Milan and NSDF were also part of SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN). Community federations initiated explorations, the Alliance worked to challenge exclusive procurement practices and gradually developed an impressive portfolio (see Nirman reports). More and more projects that are now outside of Mumbai have been taken up, leading to the development of the capacity of local federations to create project management units that work with engineers architects and city officials.

SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) has been provided with revolving funds created from projects within SPARC which lend to various projects and are managed jointly by NSDF and Mahila Milan. Despite many external pressures, the separation and arms length governance was not accepted by the Alliance as clearly SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) is an extension of the Alliance where NSDF and Mahila Milan have equal say in the management and execution of projects.



SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) and SDI

Much before SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) was created, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) affiliated People's Dialogue for land and shelter and the South African Homeless People's Federation which is modeled on the Indian Alliance, (now CORC, FEDUP and ISN) set up the **Utshani Fund** where the Alliance in South Africa got a 10 million Rand fund from the government to bridge finance housing that the federation leaders would build.

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) now has many affiliates with financing and construction businesses

Over the years, many other Slum Dwellers International (SDI) affiliates have also set up separate entities to manage construction. Some were set up to manage construction, others to manage financing, but in whichever format they existed, they were created to develop institutions to help the urban poor to take on construction.

Our collective governance challenges Slum Dwellers International (SDI) affiliates like us face many governance challenges.

- Externally, even grant makers worry that slum dwellers may not take good decisions, may not be efficient managers, and there could be a conflict of interest in undertaking both advocacy and projects. However, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and we in India see this as a process that transforms community leadership from being consumers of development to trustees and managers of their own development, to nurture, protect and expand what the poor can do.
- In most countries the formal financial system treats all lending to the poor (without any assets to mortgage) as nonperforming assets and never lend to the poor. Even if the projects are well developed with no startup capital, lack of external confidence to help blend finances makes them a non-starter.
- Most procurement practices are extremely exclusive and the poor can never bid for contracts of projects regardless of who is seeking to execute the project and seek contractors. The remit of these organizations therefore is not limited to taking on projects but it also seeks changes in procurements to make them inclusive.
- Internally, federation leaders need time, space and support to participate in both governance and execution of the organizational process as well as at project levels. In many instances the CSO leadership is almost always in a similar position and externally brought in experts if not tempered with CSO and federations leaders inputs can lead the organization to quickly becomes a formal institution that excludes 'risky projects'.
- All new ventures have failures and often the initial failures of such organizations are used as the basis of excluding the urban poor from being decision makers.

The strategy to blend money and seek startup capital

The most important element of creating this institutional identity has been that international grant makers as well as domestic financial institutions acknowledge the vacuum in this sector. Yet, community agencies too need startup capital. It is paradoxical that the small capital it needs is often harder to get than large amounts.

Grant makers and bilateral agencies have created the Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI) directly through Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and REALL (earlier Homeless International) manages Community Led Infrastructure Financing Facility (CLIFF) which provides technical assistance and start up bridging capital guarantees to these organizations.

What we know collectively Ten years down the line these groups of organizations have different outcomes, and a wide range of emerging governance structures. Some remain committed to their original mission to ensure that federations are included in their governance structures and are accountable to their federations, others have moved away but all face initial challenges of negotiating with cities and state institutions for design, planning, financial and other legal framework that is exclusionary.

The development of a Slum Dwellers International (SDI) financing mechanism

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) knows that all affiliates are still at the initial phase of our learning cycle, and the need to support institutional development of these new institutional arrangements has to be accompanied by collective learning to explore new ways to serve the construction assistance that the poor need. SDI and its affiliates have the potential to support communities, build better habitat and provide better amenities but creating a body of experiences and developing a bigger financial access is the present challenge. Clearly pooling what works and what does not work is the order of the day.

What the Indian Alliance contributes We believe that the Indian Alliance and SPARC Samudhaya Nirman Sahayak (NIRMAN) has just begun to complete its first phase and while the period of 2015-17 is critical in its consolidations there is a deep commitment from NSDF and Mahila Milan to explore ways to work with other similar organizations to develop these arrangements in the same manner that exchanges, savings and enumeration have made possible.

Who we are and what we do

30 years since SPARC was set up

Some years produce milestones which require organizations to reflect on their past, examine the present carefully and start envisioning the future. These last two years have placed SPARC in this space. Most of the long term board members and staff who are still associated with the Alliance know that we have far exceeded our own vision, and that NSDF and Mahila Milan have evolved into strong organizations with their own character, voice and space in development. Their role as anchors in Slum Dwellers International (SDI) have further consolidated their dreams of development of strong local roots to demand accountability, increasingly from global discourses. Yet, there is a long journey ahead because the focus on urban development, inequality and poverty are just beginning to take shape even if the rhetoric was in place many years ago. So we ask ourselves - where do we go from here?

Should it be more of the same but expanded processes?

Clearly most of the roles that SPARC played a decade ago have increasingly been taken over by the community leadership. SPARC retains the legal and financial responsibilities as well managing the data for the Alliance. That is clearly not enough to be satisfied with. There can be no clear or definitive answers to our questions, and while NSDF, Mahila Milan and SPARC are presently tied up symbiotically to each other, more and more roles and functions are being taken over by NSDF and Mahila Milan who demand that SPARC find new and different roles and contributions so as to retain and add value to the conceptual and innovative elements of the relationship. This exploration has begun but it is unclear where it will take these relationships. However, that does not alarm any of the partners since explorations without knowing definitive answers have been our starting point in every challenge we have faced. But the need for transition has to be acknowledged first and exploring new possibilities is clearly on the horizon.

Articulating how you defend rights of the poor from below

While these discussions about future roles continue, one thing is clear, there is a different way in which the poor defend their rights to the city. Their trajectory for that development is very different from the more mainstream way in which the legal activism is engaged, via courts, to produce those rights. This has produced many debates and discussions and this distinction is still not acknowledged by the human rights community. NSDF and Mahila Milan and many organizations of the poor believe that the Courts often represent mainstream views that the poor are in the city illegally; the law interprets the development regulations which are clearly exclusionary and more and more judgments

have gone against the poor. In some instances, where the law has provided relief to the poor, it rarely accomplishes real relief to the poor since that process rarely gets acted upon by the state. In effect, the demands and expectations of large numbers of poor people demanding that the state and city change its policies and practices and allow communities of the poor to coproduce solutions has proved to be slow but effective.

Our sanitation work and Swatch Bharat Campaign

Sanitation, for which we have worked over several decades is a major action point in the 'Swatch Bharat Abhiyan'. This coming year will begin to indicate to what extent our strategy is adopted by the various programs and states. We are developing strategies to produce advisories, exchanges and support to cities where we work and in other states to develop a city wide approach for universal sanitation and building community networks that will take charge of their own neighborhoods. In India many things go into 'mission mode' but few strategies actually scale up to produce the impact levels that a mission merits. Habitat for all and AMRUT is very close to our primary work and we aim to embed our strategy in this process to the extent possible. **It may be recalled that a decade ago the Alliance was a primary initiator of the 'campaign for universal sanitation for all' in the city which was picked up by the MOUD and created a policy that is presently seeking to produce universal sanitation.**

Our government's smart city movement

While the rhetoric of how cities produce GDP for the nation is now in full gear, it has led the Prime Minister to announce a campaign for the creation of 100 smart cities and several organizations and countries are pledging sponsorship of these smart cities. The Alliance believes that the definition of smart cities has to be widened to create inclusive cities that fundamentally work for all, produce safe environments for work and neighborhoods where people live and work. In the public domain however this concept is all about technology and how it will solve all urban challenges. We will have to engage with these processes and locate the urban poor squarely in that equation.

Habitat for all Policy of the NDA

While these discussions are on and the HFA policy is being announced, the Alliance has championed community participation as vital for the bottom 40% of housing solutions yet the land tenure, housing finance and building norms remain by and large exclusionary and continue to challenge the vision of the Alliance to give the communities of the poor a bigger role in changing their habitat. The challenge of exploring new interventions in new policies continues.

The processes we committed to 30 years ago

Our focus on the bottom 30%

It has been many years since we all agreed that nothing trickles down, and solutions produced for the better off don't work for the poor. So devising solutions for the poor at the absolute bottom, and learning from them, scaling them while demonstrating how communities work at driving them remain at the center of everything we do. It takes time, it often does not occur initially in a short term project, but it's evidence over the years is very clear.

Women's central participation in our work

The habitat agenda is a women's agenda. So giving them the central role to drive the process is critical. The challenge is not just to use women to drive the process because of their commitment but to actually give them leadership roles and recognition as decision makers. Supporting them to renegotiate roles and relationship in their homes, their neighborhoods and within the federation process is crucial for transformative roles for women in development. The work begins with savings groups and their humble beginnings in neighborhoods anchored by women that lead to women's roles and leadership within federations.

Enumeration and its outreach

The self collected data which can be aggregated and disaggregated, which challenges data that the state and professionals collect is crucial and non negotiable in both creating federations as well as for developing federation criterion and benchmarking data for seeking monitoring and evaluations. It does not seek to replace or disregard what others produce, but to build its own credibility, inviting others to test its validity and ultimately get accepted and included as a vital aspect of development interventions.

Building horizontal learning and knowledge for poor communities

The most critical ingredient in building federations and mass organizations and sustaining this mobilized state is the transformation in their sense of identity and their belief that they can create knowledge and share it. They have evidence to show that their knowledge is useful to them and to the city and it forms the basis of their newly found identity. Creating strategies, creating learning systems by which communities can produce knowledge and seek to interact on the basis of that knowledge internally as well as externally, makes this an ongoing and continues pursuit of the federations and of the Alliance.

On working with the state on issues of poverty

Worldwide discussion and debates on poverty have excluded the poor, their views and their roles and

potential contribution. More and more data indicates that resources are not adequately allocated, their design and delivery distorts the process and diverts the sources to others and the state is always made to seem inadequate. This makes it easier to assume that others, especially the private sector, can play this role of alleviating poverty. The Alliance believes that the state cannot abdicate from its central role and responsibility in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, it has to produce strategies and deliver them to address the needs of the poor, and the poor can and must transform their own institutional arrangements to expand their role in holding the state to account and also play new roles themselves to deliver these resources and manage them.



Events

April:

- WUF 7,
- World Bank land and poverty meeting,
- Scholl award

June:

- SDI Kenya sanitation exchange,
- IDS workshop in Bombay

July:

- DPU 60th anniversary :
- Incremental Development SDI meeting in Mumbai

August :

- SDI secretariat meeting in Cape Town,
- Conference on co production London
- NGO expo in Mumbai

Sept::

- Meeting on gender in Brussels;
- Meeting between SDI and WEIGO;
- Voice and matter, Copenhagen and Sweden
- SDI Asia Hub meeting in Mumbai;
- SP speaks in New school;
- Video participation on sanitation in Sao Paulo

Oct:

- NIUA meeting on Urban policy and development
- Women and leadership event of Columbia in Mumbai
- Reuters visits SPARC to discuss energy

Nov:

- GLTN in Addis Ababa
- Miserioir workshops on food security energy
- Santa Fe institute in Mumbai
- SDI Asia meeting in Nepal

Dec:

- Maharashtra cites meet
- SDI core group meeting
- Rotary award for Jockin
- CA meeting in Brussels

Jan:

- SDI review of the Alliance

Feb :

- New school event cities on trial
- Lecture on spaces in Columbia

March :

- Harvard students event
- Working on safe open spaces for children;
- FF invites for urban discourse;
- IDS event on poverty, Delhi

Clearly, throughout the year, the focus of the Alliance's intervention was the championing of voice and aspirations of the urban poor to build the urban agenda for action.

Events as illustrations about the types of engagements

As SPARC moves more in-depth to understand poverty from the urban poor's perspective, it is also exploring wellbeing indicators for the informal workers living in informal settlements in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). A workshop was organized in June this year, with participants from IDS, Action Aid, Bangladesh, BRAC and MaRS with the objective of agreeing on principles for research collaboration, community and policymakers engagement, to familiarize partners with the wellbeing approach, reviewing research instruments and to pilot them in the field.

Sheela Patel was invited to speak at the Development Planning Unit's (DPU) 60th anniversary conference, from 2-4 July 2014 in London. She spoke about how voice and aspirations of slum dwellers can change the development agenda.

UD and HUPA - Brainstorming Session on Feedback on the New Scheme under formulation and Home Finance on 12th July, 2014, Delhi - Presented the work of SPARC and SSNS with the federations and the challenges of getting access to money for the urban poor at a meeting held to review potential changes needed to make micro finance loans for slum dwellers available.

Voice & Matter: Global Conference on Communication for Development, Malmö University, Roskilde University, Copenhagen, Denmark– this was an event which was in two cities in Sweden and Denmark where the discussion was about communication and potential for voice of the poor in development activities. All presenters developed a chapter for a book on their subject

Civil society workshop on Sustainable Development and Future Climate Politics in India, October 2014 - The goal of the workshop was to discuss the development of climate and sustainable development policies in India and internationally with a particular focus on the role of sustainable development in a future international climate treaty, the new concept of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and the role of civil society therein.

Sheela Patel was invited as the keynote speaker at the World Habitat Day Oct 14 celebration which was the first formal event of the new ministry. She spoke of how the voice of the poor needs to be developed, the time and space it needs, and its value to the state in creating ownership of assets if people have a say in what they do.

Research, Studies and Documentation

NAME	YEAR	TYPE	SUBJECT	COLLABORATOR
Integrating Land Governance into the post 2015 Agenda	2014	Report	Prepared for presentation at the “2014 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty” to describe how community managed data collection can produce secure tenure for slum dwellers while ensuring effective resettlement of households to make way for the implementation of large scale redevelopment programs.	SPARC
Inclusive Cities	2013-On-going	Paper	Understanding reasons to account for the specific nature and impacts of state interventions to reduce urban poverty in India and the influence of civil society on such interventions, through a study of government programmes including the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission in five cities.	SPARC-IIED
Study on Wellbeing	On-going	Report/Paper	The study was carried out in three cities - Mega, Secondary and Emergent city to explore the determinants of wellbeing for informal workers in informal settlements.	SPARC , IDS
Affordable public spaces in Informal settlements	2014	Paper	This paper makes the assumption that urban poor communities like everyone else have a right to aspire and bring value-added to their living spaces both private and public	SPARC-SDI
Voices from Slums: To speak and be heard	2014	Article	This article seeks to reflect on the voices of the poor from the angle of the organized and federated communities of slum dwellers associated with the Alliance of SPARC, Mahila Milan (MM) and NSDF.	SPARC
The Experience of Poverty in a Global City	2014	Article	A think piece written by Sheela Patel, this Chapter in the second State of Asia-Pacific Cities Report highlights the critical issues of poverty and inequality with a focus on gender.	SPARC/ESCAP
Lessons learnt from JNNURM	2014	Article	Sundar Burra writes on the lessons learnt from The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) that signaled the beginning of a focus upon the urban poor.	SPARC/ESID
Toilets as a Governance Indicator	2014	Publication	The document traces the history of the work on sanitation taken up by SPARC-NSDF-Mahila Milan to ensure that issues of sanitation are taken up by the government and investments are made.	SPARC-SDI
Sanitation as a Governance Indicator	2014	Article	This article talks about the twenty year experience and partnership of the Alliance on sanitation in Mumbai.	SPARC /IIED
Incremental Housing	2014	Article	The study looks at how houses were built and how the poor upgrade their homes and neighborhoods while exploring how their advocacy can include creating legitimacy, finance and regulation to strengthen incremental housing options	SPARC
Voice and Aspirations	2014-16	Chapter in a book		
Affordable Public Spaces in Informal Settlements	2014	SDI	This paper makes the assumption that urban poor communities like everyone else have a right to aspire and bring value-added to their living spaces both private and public. Often times the very marginalised groups do not have a voice and identity. This has implications for the quality of their life and livelihoods and also for the city at large.	SPARC-SDI

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