

Searchlight

CONVENING

THE FUTURE OF THE URBAN POOR

REPORT AND PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

APRIL 2011, MUMBAI



Co-hosted by Intellecip and
the Rockefeller Foundation

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THE FUTURE OF THE URBAN POOR

REPORT AND PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

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Introduction

CLAUDIA JUECH AND EVAN MICHELSON
THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

The effects of events such as the protests and demonstrations that have combined to create the promise of the Arab Spring, the American subprime mortgage crisis leading to a widespread and deep economic recession, or the Japanese tsunami disrupting global supply chains, tell us that it is becoming more and more difficult to forecast what the future may look like in 10 or 15 years. In our increasingly complex and interdependent world, the high pace of change, trends and discontinuities in demography, lifestyles, technology and economy can rapidly create new opportunities as well as threats.

Corporations and governments have been using forward-looking approaches for decades to inform their strategic decision-making. Given the high stakes and importance of considering the future of issues related to poverty and development, it is necessary to adopt those approaches - that illuminate alternative futures, identify potential solutions and take advantage of new opportunities - for improving people's lives. Developing such a long-term perspective requires the utilization of a wide range of future-oriented tools, techniques and methodologies

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INTRODUCTION continued

– such as scenario-planning exercises, simulations and roadmaps – that can expand the mindset of key stakeholders, examine different strategies in a “safe space,” and discover unexpected pathways upfront.

New and more participatory approaches are also needed that involve the explicit engagement of poor and marginalized populations in considering how their future might evolve. The Rockefeller Foundation has supported the operationalization of this concept, termed “pro-poor foresight,” in practice through the creation of a pioneering network of organizations. Collectively known as the Searchlight function, this diverse group of institutions, based in countries such as India, Tanzania, Thailand and Peru, provides an on-the-ground, regionally focused view of the world, with a particular emphasis on monitoring the economic, societal and political trends and scanning the horizon for both challenges and innovations that might come to impact the lives of the poor on a daily basis.

SEARCHLIGHT FUNCTION

New and more participatory approaches are needed that engage poor and marginalized populations in considering their future.

The Searchlight function is an innovative application of the horizon scanning method in the development sector. Begun in 2009, the Searchlight function consists of a group of 11 forward looking, regionally focused horizon scanning and trend monitoring grantees who produce monthly trend-monitoring newsletters by conducting an ongoing exploration for novel ideas, intervention opportunities, and “clues” to where and how the world is evolving. In doing so, the Searchlight function aims to achieve four complementary and inter-related goals:

- Illuminate the current contextual environment in which philanthropies and global development organizations operate;
- Identify signals that could have longer-term implications;
- Showcase a diversity of opinions, methodological approaches, and points of view;
- Highlight potential solutions or intervention opportunities to critical problems

By providing a regular stream of future-oriented intelligence, the Searchlight function offers a deeper understanding of the changing global ecosystem in which global institutions operate and looking to assess the present to illuminate multiple potential pathways ahead.



Workshop Overview

An important component of the development of the Searchlight function has been an annual, in-person workshop of all the participating organizations to explore the trends that are emerging from various regions. The second such convening, organized by Intellectap with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, took place in April 2011 in the global city of Mumbai, India. Workshop attendees included representatives from the 11 Searchlight scanning organizations as well as representatives from four organizations—Institute for the Future, Boston University Pardee Center, Manchester Institute for Innovation Research, and the National Horizon Scanning Center in Singapore—that are responsible for conducting a broad synthesis and visual analysis of the more than 150 monthly Searchlight newsletters that have been produced to date. Finally, representatives from the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation’s partner in disseminating information from the Searchlight function, were also present to discuss the development of a new web-based platform aimed at disseminating information about the longer-term future, FutureChallenges.org.

The workshop aimed to achieve a number of primary goals. The first was to showcase and reflect on the the first drafts of the synthesis and thematic visualization of the overarching trends that are emerging from the Searchlight function. The second was to articulate and discuss the importance and value of identifying novel solutions or intervention opportunities to critical problems identified in the newsletters. The final goal was to learn from the dynamic and cutting-edge activities being undertaken throughout Mumbai by way of a series of field visits that illuminated some of the forward-looking, pro-poor development and policy initiatives in India that could have relevance to other regions related to the urban poor. In addition to the field visits to key social entrepreneurship organizations, a learning journey to Dharavi was organized by an innovative civil society organization SPARC, that is working with the residents to deliver and secure affordable and high-quality housing, services, and employment opportunities.



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

continued

In particular, the learning journey field visits included trips to:

UNLTD UnLtd India is a seed fund and incubator for social entrepreneurs. It discovers, funds, and supports exceptional individuals whose ideas, passion and entrepreneurial skills can bring about long-term solutions to India's social problems. They work with early-stage social entrepreneurs to help them accelerate their progress, develop as leaders and prepare their high-impact organizations for scaling and further investment.

TEACH FOR INDIA Teach for India is a nationwide movement of outstanding international college graduates and young professionals who will commit two years to teach full time in under-resourced schools. In 2006, a group of young leaders working to reform education in India came together to seek an innovative solution to end educational inequity in the country.

URBZ URBZ operates in Dharavi and facilitates the production and exchange of information, knowledge, ideas and practices towards better cities for all. They organize participatory workshops, design adaptable structures and develop web tools for urban communities and practitioners with goal of creating what the organization terms "user-generated cities."

1298 AMBULANCE 1298 is the first private ambulance company in India that provides service for all, regardless of income, and is one of just three organized operators in the country. In 2007, the company had 10 ambulances in Mumbai. Now it has more than 280 ambulances across Mumbai, Kerala, Bihar and Rajasthan, and its call centers have answered more than 100,000 emergency calls.

The workshop was characterized as a collaborative and cooperative process of discussion, reflection, and strategic planning. Throughout the workshop, participants engaged in conversations and interactions with a group of leading experts, thinkers, and practitioners from all sectors in Mumbai, including the activist and philanthropist Rohini Nilekani, President of National Slum Dwellers Federation of India and President of Slum/Shack Dwellers International Jockin Arputham, and Editor-in-Chief of *Time Out Mumbai* Naresh Fernandes. A complete list of the external experts that were involved in the meeting is provided at the end of this report.

To provide a more nuanced and granular sense of the workshop experience, the following sections present the personal and professional reflections from a small selection of the Searchlight function representatives who attended the meeting. The first set of reflections offers thoughts from participants on their site visits to pro-poor social entrepreneurship initiatives being undertaken throughout Mumbai. The second set of reflections focus on presenting participant perspectives on the field visit to Dharavi, particularly in comparing their experience in Asia's largest slum in relation to the lives of poor communities from their home countries and regions. The report concludes with a short section highlighting points of intersection and relevant next steps.



Comparative Perspectives on Mumbai Field Visits

Searchlight participants who attended “The Future of the Urban Poor” convening in Mumbai in April 2011 offer thoughts on their site visits to pro-poor initiatives in Mumbai. Attendees discuss the need and role of these social enterprises in their current context as well as in the writer’s home region.

UNLtd

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A seed fund and incubator for social entrepreneurs.

AIDAN EYAKUZE

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TANZANIA

Two social enterprises that were talked about during our visit to UNLtd caught my attention. The first was the story of “Nikita and the Night Schools.” Nikita was perhaps UNLtd’s first client. Her passion was to improve the quality of the night schools attended by so many of Mumbai’s young adults in a bid to further their education and give themselves an advantage in the competitive job market. Nikita had engaged with 10 schools and 650 students to improve infrastructure, find ways of incentivizing the teachers, and was working on persuading the local and state governments to take over the schools to ensure minimum quality standards.

Second, I was most impressed by Raj Janagam’s Cycle Chalao idea of a bicycle sharing business. He is trying to solve the “last mile” problem of connecting Mum-

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES
continued

bai's 7.6 million rail commuters from the main train stations, with their final destination – home or office or school – that cannot be easily reached on foot. There are an estimated 300,000 auto rickshaws and just 100,000 taxis to do the job. Starting with 30 bicycles and using a local university, Raj is testing the business and operational model of cycle-sharing. I chuckled at the brilliance of the 1½ foot advertising mud-guard and the three clients Raj was able to secure for a few months.

These two social enterprise ideas resonated with me as being potentially applicable in Tanzania's urban areas to some degree. While we don't have too many night schools, there is a large population of young adults who are upgrading their learning and skills – sometimes at "schools" whose quality is very suspect indeed. A way to provide some kind of certification and minimum quality standards would be of significant value. The cycle sharing idea could also meet a growing need, especially in increasingly congested Dar es Salaam, but I fear it would have to compete with the auto rickshaws and motorbikes that are taking market share from taxis for the "last mile." I am not sure, however, that they would be accessible to the poorest of urban residents, who are not attending the private training schools and are mostly walking the final distance to their destinations.

Teach for India

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A nationwide movement of international college graduates and young professionals who will commit two years to teach full time in under-resourced schools.

ARTHUR MULIRO
SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ITALY

Teach for India (TFI) is a unique experiment that uses volunteer graduates working alongside regular teaching staff to try to cover some of the vacancies that are created by the inability of the state education system to meet the required staff numbers. Visiting the Worli Sea Face School, I observed – if only for a short while – the contribution that TFI is able to make to the quality of instruction of children.

They had none of the gadgets and technology often brandished as a solution to improving learning and meeting the pupil-teacher ratio.

What I found unique about this model was the very fact that it relies on highly educated volunteers who have suspended their professional careers for a period of at least two years in order to make a contribution in a sector and space that needs them. Their workplace is simple and unpretentious. The success of their mission is dependent on their commitment, skill and ability to motivate their charges to learn. There was a low-tech workplace that had none of the gadgets and technology that are often brandished as a solution to improving learning and meeting the pupil-teacher ratio in my region. Rather, it was the ingenuity and humility of the volunteers that made all the difference.

Technologies such as the Internet and computer-based learning can narrow the gap in helping meet education needs in many developing regions and underserved inner-city environments elsewhere, but the fundamental "must-have," I believe, is the commitment and motivation of the individuals that have daily face-to-face interactions with the pupils. Nurturing an enthusiasm for learning is something that can only be inspired by contact with other human beings.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES continued

While innovation is necessary in order to deliver quality education, there are the necessary time lags between the conception of solutions and their eventual delivery. Yet it might also be that the solution that delivers the greatest mileage in the shortest time period might be that of convincing young volunteers to chip in and support the current set up by providing the commodity that is most available to them – time – while helping build their civic spirit and commitment rather than depending on expensive externally-sourced solutions.

URBZ

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An organization operating in Dharavi that facilitates the production and exchange of information, knowledge, ideas and practices towards better cities for all.

MARIO BAZAN

FORO NACIONAL/INTERNACIONAL
PERU

The visit to URBZ in Mumbai was more than interesting. I come from Lima, Peru's largest city, and the size and number of people living in Mumbai impressed me. In particular, Dharavi showed a permanent landscape of contrasts, between poverty and entrepreneurship, overcrowding and coexistence, and exclusion and innovation, which clearly present challenges and the potential for improving the lives of people that live there.

Home improvements in Dharavi, India, and Cusco, Peru highlight the importance of sharing experiences among developing countries.

URBZ, a project that supports continuous improvement in the homes of the people of Dharavi, is a mechanism that respects the dynamics of people's lives, encourages innovation, and has a direct impact on improving the quality of life. This impact also makes residents feel better as a result of their own efforts, and with the support of URBZ, manages to achieve their aspirations and get the social recognition for that effort.

Something similar happened in Peru in recent years. The "contest of peasants," in Cusco, Peru, has been an experience that has encouraged families to improve their homes through constant innovation and social recognition. The best innovation is rewarded financially to make further home improvements but also to demonstrate social recognition of their achievements. Whoever wins the contest becomes a master, and has the mission to go and teach other farmers of these innovations. Through the years, this leads to having a set of improvements in the quality of houses in an entire village, as well as new leaders who emerge in communities. In addition, there is an impact in terms of real and sustainable development in one of the most vulnerable and excluded groups of people from Peru.

These similarities between the experiences of home improvements in Dharavi, India, and Cusco, Peru highlight the importance of sharing experiences among developing countries and bringing new knowledge from social innovations on one side of the planet to the other side — but adapted to each context and culture. The systematization of experiences, including methodologies, best and worst practices, and lessons learned are mechanisms to create this exchange of experiences. Thus, even more so, social scientists have a pending task to monitor and increase the exchange of information and knowledge across geographical boundaries.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

continued



1298 Ambulance

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A low-cost pay-per-use ambulance service, the first of its kind in India.

SHEILA OCHUGBOJU

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION (ACET)
KENYA

Our field visit to the Dial 1298 Ambulance in Mumbai revealed the concept of “Mission Command” first explained by Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, the great military strategist, Chief of Staff for the Prussian Army in the late 19th Century. Simply put, it illustrates the art of defining and refining good adaptable plans, a process whereby the company goals and objectives are allowed to filter way-down the lines of authority, allowing the deepest level of delegation to create an empowered workforce, able to deliver critical results in very difficult circumstances.

In Accra, Ghana, where I live, the provision of emergency services for the urban poor is still at an abysmal state.

The original vision of the 1298 Ambulance founders is reflected in the organization’s commitment to meeting international quality standards in emergency medical services and extending the availability of emergency transportation and care to lower-income populations. And during its short time of operation (4 years), it has very quickly changed its plans repeatedly as it met new challenges, adapting to the vagaries of an arbitrary, inefficient patchwork of healthcare delivery across Mumbai and the Kerala State, evolving structures and procedures which have helped to save over 70,000 lives.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES continued

In Accra, Ghana, where I live, the provision of emergency services for the urban poor is still at an abysmal state. This is a city with a population of just 3 million as compared to the 12.5 million inhabitants of Mumbai, with a small but growing middle class, so the opportunities for private sector involvement in emergency services delivery are not as economically feasible as they are in Mumbai. The burden of care, therefore, lies squarely in the hands of the public sector for now. In April 2009, after yet another disaster, the Minister for Health in Ghana was reported as saying, “The recent gas tanker explosion on the Winneba road, confirmed our unpreparedness to handle emergencies.” He then outlined plans for a National Ambulance Service Bill. These plans include a financing agreement for the construction of 12 district hospitals and technical training institutions. The agreement is also for the supply of two air ambulances, 50 mobile clinics, 10 educative mobile units and 200 ambulance cars.

The plans are still waiting to be promulgated into law in 2011 and ultimately to be tested in the field of emergency care. The most obvious casualties from such a poor ambulance service in West Africa come from road accidents and maternal deaths due to hemorrhages during crude transportation such as donkey carts and bicycles.

In Ghana, where Christian culture has a huge reverence for the dead, the “living in emergency situations” get scant attention while refrigerated ambulances are mostly hired to carry corpses, and large amounts of money are spent to preserve bodies for funerals that take place months after death.

The trickle-down effect of economic growth in the region may not directly benefit the urban poor in the short term.

A major private sector initiative comparable to the Dial 1298 model in [West Africa](#) is the [West Africa Rescue Association](#) (WARA). They provide a very effective service to corporations, businesses and rich individuals. This trend is likely to grow as more specialized operators such as the [Global Air Ambulance](#) service are starting up to provide coverage for companies entering the region to exploit the new discoveries of oil and gas. The high concentration of international organizations and NGOs in cities such as Accra skews the picture even more, as they are serving a very small elite. The trickle-down effect of economic growth in the region may not directly benefit the urban poor in the short term, because even if Africa continues to grow at the most optimistic rates quoted by the World Bank, by 2030, the total number of people defined as middle class would only be 43 million, (4% of the population), compared to 267 million people expected to reach that category in India by 2015. Therefore, any private sector initiatives to safeguard basic human rights like healthcare would have to be heavily subsidized by the state as the markets alone could not sustain large-scale pay-per-use ambulance models such as Dial 1298 for Ambulance in Mumbai.

Without determined efforts to develop public-private partnerships that can subsidize the cost of provision to poor people, whatever plans the governments of West Africa have to reduce mortalities due to poor emergency services will not survive first contact with that old enemy called poverty still claiming lives in West African cities.



Reflections on Dharavi

Searchlight participants who attended “The Future of the Urban Poor” convening in Mumbai in April 2011 offer thoughts on their experience in Asia’s biggest slum in comparison to poor communities in their home regions.

JULIUS GATUNE

AFRICA CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
GHANA

Dharavi is the reality that will face the many of the rapidly urbanizing populations around the world. However, the future of the urban poor need not be as bleak as Dharavi shows. We saw examples of programs to improve the living conditions in slums, along with actively supporting the growth of slum-based industries.

Dharavi is the way cities of the future should expect to grow. Rather than try to preempt slums we should let the slums be and work on how to improve them in an organic way. The resources to plan cities can be numerous, so it will require that cities need to find ways to create their path out of poverty through homegrown solutions founded on entrepreneurial zeal. This is what I observed in Dharavi.

The future of the urban poor can, therefore, be good if the right program and the right attitudes are in place. Slums should be seen as places that can grow and upgrade, and also as places that can be engines of growth themselves rather than pools of cheap labor. As we observed in Dharavi, slums can create industries that can even be competitive enough to export.

So, future efforts should be designed to facilitate this organic growth rather than grand plans from the city halls and other government agencies. Policy makers need to observe what is happening and listen to slum dwellers and only intervene to help an organic growth that slums are capable of incubating.

Dharavi’s future is different from the slums in Ghana, because Dharavi has the

REFLECTIONS ON DHARAVI continued

ability to grow organically through entrepreneurial spirit that is being nurtured there. The slums in my region have been seen as pools of cheap labor. Few jobs are available in the slums, mostly by design. Workers, therefore, stay at the slums and have to travel elsewhere to work, as need be. This strains the already meager resources that the slum dwellers earn, and to save on transport, slum dwellers have to walk long distances to work—on average between 1 and 2 hours walk.

The future of Dharavi would seem a little bit better, as the people are likely to experience growth with the slum. As it was evident, there were efforts to improve the neighborhoods through upgrade of slums, and as the homegrown industries grow, they are also likely to expand job opportunities and bring more resources to the slum. Thus the potential for organic growth is real.

Dharavi's future is different from that of the slums in Ghana, because Dharavi has the ability to grow organically through its entrepreneurial spirit.

On the other hand, since in my region slums are not really recognized and are seen as illegal settlements, the possibility of this kind of upgrading is low unless we see a change of policy on settlements. This is particularly important as land values raise the possibility of slums getting demolished to pave way for up-market developments is real.

Efforts to protect slums, (especially as they land they sit on appreciates and becomes attractive to real estate developers), need to be increased. We saw that continued existence is also due to efforts of groups of stakeholders and other activists fighting to keep the slums for the poor. It is only through guarantees of future existence that the poor can invest in their slums and upgrade themselves to a better livelihood as we saw in Dharavi.

PUN-ARJ CHAIRATANA

NOVISCAPE CONSULTING GROUP & CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY
THAILAND

“Dharavi,” the name associates with a stream, reflects a symbiotic relation between people and water. Dharavi signifies about three aspects of the future of the urban poor:

- A systematic self-organizing community: Democratization and community cooperation within various domestic migrant groups are stronger and more advanced than the dweller groups in Southeast Asia. The future of such learning and interacting domain will be a very crucial factor for the slum to shape and shift from the current situation.
- A combination of conservative and progressive forces of community development: India has a very long and rich cultural civilization, in which the systematization of slum dwellers is still being evolved. The old and new regime and mindset will be aligned, crashed, and adjusted into a new stage, but it will take a long time to achieve.
- A politics of land used in Mega-cities: The on-going fight between the rights of a minority of people to survive in a big city and the new cosmopolitan development project is not new to society. This political juggling will be more and more crucial for the existence of “Dharavi,” while it will be very good showcase for many Mega-cities on how minority people and the elite compromise on precious land uses.

REFLECTIONS ON DHARAVI continued

This particular futuristic image of the Dharavi community differs from the underserved areas in Thailand as urbanization, establishment of new growth poles, and labor shortage represent a likely-to-be future scenario in many Southeast Asia Mega-cities. The first two aspects above will be very good lessons for the slum dwellers from Bangkok to Manila.

DINH THE PHONG

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND STRATEGY STUDIES (NISTPASS)
VIETNAM

The problem of the urban poor is a permanent one of all developing countries and an inherent characteristic of these countries. Thomas Friedman's 2005 book, *The World Is Flat*, focused on the idea that countries in the world are getting more equal chances to compete on an increasingly level playing field. However, looking at this issue from another angle might reveal a quite spiky world. The problem is predicting whether the world will be flatter or spikier. If we compare the worst condition of the present urban poor to those of the past, then we see an improving world. If we, however, look at the gap between the condition of the poorest and the richest in the world, then we might see a decreasing trend. So, it depends more or less on how we want to see and perceive the world.

To move poor people away from where they currently live requires many synchronizing measures and policies.

There are also many conclusions we can draw from this problem. First, the governmental development strategy of developing countries may be quite different than, even sometimes opposite to, the concerns of the poor. Governments want to use the land for a new city, industrial zone, or business center. But, the people living on that spot want to keep living there and maintain their livelihood. In other words, they can't easily get out of the place, learn a new occupation, or get a new job to start a new sustainable life. In fast growing developing countries like China, India, and Brazil, this definitely is a big problem, since these governments have ambitious and long term plans which require re-designing their country's landscape and industrial sectors at a large scope. Why such a large scope? Because these governments are thinking big about doing business, supplying services not only within India or China but also to the entire world. The catch-up attitudes of these governments make these changes all the more drastic, and the poor in these countries are having more difficulty in adapting to these new changes.

Other focus points for policymakers of these developing countries are the need to synchronize policies of different sectors. To move poor people away from where they currently live requires many synchronizing measures and policies, like training for new jobs which are quite different than their traditional livelihoods. Real experience shows that poor people that receive what is for them a large sum of compensation money for being moved away from their living space will face risks of losing their livelihood. In this way, economic growth is not necessarily identical to sustainable development.

Vietnam is facing the same urban poverty problems as India, since both countries have almost the same growth ambition. India's ambition might be larger than that of Vietnam since it has a larger population and India might want to supply more goods and services to the world. Still, India's poor have more chances to get new jobs with higher value-added since they already have English skills and knowledge about doing business that is more easily adaptable to the demand of the developing world.

REFLECTIONS ON DHARAVI
 continued
SOWMYA SURYANARAYANANSTRATEGIC FORESIGHT GROUP
INDIA

In the first instance, Dharavi comes across as a typical slum with shacks of varied sizes and shapes piled on top of one another. However, what is remarkable about Dharavi is how this large group of migrant population has managed to create employment opportunities that support them and their families with minimal aid from the government. In addition, they have created markets for their products both within and outside the slum area, which has made the community self sustaining.

Thus far, slum redevelopment projects in Dharavi have met with limited success as the community was not involved in the decision making process. As a result, the living conditions in Dharavi continue to remain extremely poor. What this signifies, while ecosystems like Dharavi are capable of surviving, and even thriving in certain cases, in order to improve the overall conditions of the urban poor it is vital that government actions are made in consultation with the community.

FERNANDO PRADAFORO NACIONAL / INTERNACIONAL
PERU

Visiting Dharavi has made me reexamine some ideas about social networks, leadership, and sense of community. First, that social networks tend to be strong where conditions are adverse is a common idea but very hard to appreciate in the field, let alone to measure. For every case study supporting this hypothesis, there is another cross-country study showing that poverty conditions erode social networks. Second, that leadership can make the difference does not say anything about how leadership surges and how communities can survive their leaders. Third, that the sense of community can make people work together for their common good regardless of their differences sometimes sound like wishful thinking and an impractical idea to implement in the field. In the three cases, visiting Dharavi has provided clear evidence that social networks become stronger when a group of people face a common problem; that leadership guiding efforts toward a common goal can make the difference and promote the surge of new leaders in the process; and that the sense of community can make communities work more efficiently.

Visiting Dharavi has provided clear evidence that social networks become stronger when a group of people face a common problem.

Villa el Salvador (VES) is a former slum in Lima formed in the 1950s and now a vibrant district whose progress may shed light on what could be the future of Dharavi. VES was formed by migrants from the Andes who took possession of a land in a deserted area south of Lima. Over the decades, community organizations pressed for social services like sanitation, education, and health, and property rights; and in parallel, the community, through voluntary work, implemented their own social programs such as community soup kitchen, day care centers and primary care clinics. This sense of community under the leadership of a former major has made VES a well-known case study on how solidarity can contribute to improve the livelihoods of poor people. Nowadays, most VES families have improved their situation and VES has developed an industrial complex providing jobs to hundreds of families.

REFLECTIONS ON DHARAVI
 continued


Coincidences also happen. FORO is in the process of signing an MoU with the VES government to implement a building capacity program for managers. I am sure that the example of Dharavi —which I’ll be glad to transmit— will make our VES counterparts reflect on the origin of their community and appreciate what they have already achieved and understand their potential.

TANJA HICHERT

HICHERT & ASSOCIATES; SA NODE OF THE MILLENNIUM PROJECT
 SOUTH AFRICA

Where to even begin in trying to answer the question of what Dharavi signifies about the future of the urban poor? I came away from visiting Dharavi – a most overwhelming experience – with many more questions than answers, and a sense that the complexity governing it cannot be understood, albeit not easily. So suffice to say, I am still thinking and mulling and questioning, and will probably carry on doing so for the time being.

Some thoughts, in the form of statements, are percolating; however, I want to share them for what they are worth:

- I am not a cultural determinist, but I suspect the Indians in general, and perhaps the Dharavi inhabitants in particular, are very industrious. This is a unique competitive advantage that the urban poor in other places do not necessarily possess. How would one go about ‘cultivating’ industriousness, entrepreneurship, and an enterprising spirit?
- I do not have much faith in governance, in the traditional sense, that is. I cannot see elected officials, administrators, planners, or policy-makers making the right decisions, and tough trade-offs, in order to do what needs to be done to improve poor peoples’ lives. If there is a gap in traditional governance, what sort of governance might work, or make a difference for the better?
- There may not have been blatant crime and violence in Dharavi (like the sort of crime and violence we have in Kibera or Khayalitsha), but I suspect some residents are better off than others because of exploitative, unlawful, and illicit activities. Crime in whatever form should not be justified or condoned, but taking the “moral high ground” may be intolerably difficult.

REFLECTIONS ON DHARAVI
continued**JIBRIN IBRAHIM**CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT
NIGERIA

The majority of people in the contemporary world, including in Africa, have moved from the rural to the urban areas. These people live precarious lives trying to make a living from the informal economy. The proletariat Karl Marx assured us would make the revolution are nowhere to be found. What we have in the rapidly expanding mega cities are the precariat whose livelihood and indeed lives are at risk from irregular and insufficient income. Their lives are traumatic as they suffer from the toxicity of the water, air and soil around them.

Of course, for a conference in Mumbai on the urban poor, the center of activity and analysis could only be Dharavi, the biggest slum in Asia made famous by the film “Slumdog Millionaire.” Yes, indeed, the people of Dharavi live under terrible conditions, in tiny shacks, defecating in and wading through the toxic mud around them. The 600,000 inhabitants of the area are yet to act in their own glamorous film. They toil and sweat as they pursue their precarious profession of processing and living on the income they make from recycling the enormous waste produced by the 25 million people that live in central Mumbai.

What is impressive about India is the power of its civil society. They have used the power of popular mobilization to stop the takeover bid.

In a sense, they are a five-star ghetto because they are able to participate in the economy of the city as subalterns but nonetheless as active economic agents. As Jockin Arputham, the leader of the Dharavi Slum Dweller’s Federation told us, they contribute \$1 billion to the national economy each year. Their future is however uncertain today.

Their 525 hectares of land is the only undeveloped land left in central Mumbai. The value of their land is today \$1,200 a square foot and the state and developers are determined to throw them out and take over the land. What is impressive about India, however, is the power of its civil society. The Slum Dwellers Federation and the NGOs that support them have stopped the government from chasing out the people and taking over the place. They have used the power of popular mobilization to stop the takeover bid. The precariat is defined by its precariat.



Conclusion

Through the lively discussions held throughout the workshop, it quickly became apparent that the future will be characterized by the intersection of trends across time periods, geographies, and disciplines. For instance, matters related to urban relocation policy or infrastructure development will not succeed if decision-makers do not take into account long-term transportation needs, the existing close connection between work and home life, and changing social dynamics that constitute the cultural fabric of the city. Similarly, a first step to building the resiliency of the urban poor is envisioning the potential implications of shocks and developing contingency plans to withstand such events.

As substantive next steps, the ongoing efforts to synthesize and visualize information emerging from the Searchlight newsletters will continue to progress by taking into account the comments and experiences that emerged at the workshop. The materials will be available over the coming months and will be distributed and disseminated widely to key interested stakeholders. Secondly, the Searchlight organizations will continue to infuse the forward-looking perspectives and dispositions that were at the center of the workshop throughout the outputs produced as part of the Searchlight function. Finally, the novel collaborations that were fostered and began to emerge at the workshop among the participating Searchlight organizations are expected to continue to evolve and strengthen over the coming year.

In conclusion, the workshop reaffirmed the necessity of building capacity to think ahead and plan for the future as a way for both organizations and individuals to achieve real social change over the coming decades of the 21st Century.

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