Participation and Place-making:

Empowering communities to transform their living environments

A case study

Mumbai

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of MA Development and Emergency Practice, Oxford Brookes University.
Statement of Originality

This thesis is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

Signed, (candidate) Date 30/08/11

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Statement of Ethics Review Approval

This dissertation involved human participants. A Form E1BE for each group of participants, showing ethics review approval, has been attached to this dissertation as an appendix.
I would like to thank Nabeel Hamdi for his inspiration, for the immense motivation he evokes and for all the knowledge and wise teaching he shares with all his students. I would also like to thank my supervisor, Professor David Sanderson, for all his support, his tremendous encouragement and generous time without which this piece of work wouldn’t have been completed. I am also very grateful to Mr Richard Paice, who supported this research since the very early stages of the proposal and granted me the ISA Travel Award to fund my travels to India. Most importantly, I am extremely grateful to all those academics, thinkers, professionals, architects, development practitioners, community members, youth, artists, volunteers, residents and children in India, who so generously gave me so much of their time to be interviewed, who so openly shared their lives and stories with me, who worked alongside me on the project in Mumbai and most importantly for all the invaluable things they taught me along the way.

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Any omissions or failures of understanding are entirely mine.
The topic of urbanisation is at the fore of most development discussions that have taken place recently. Despite this not being a recent phenomenon, the speed and repercussions of urban transformation in recent years has had a significant impact in the world. According to the UN, since 2008 there are more people living in cities than in rural areas and this increase in population is largely occurring in the developing cities of the South, mostly in Africa, but a significant number of Asian cities have also seen much expansion and growth in recent years. Rapid urbanisation has meant that there has also been a massive proliferation of what is widely described as ‘slums’ or informal settlements where those that flee from economic poverty and deprivation in rural areas come to live in makeshift self-built settlements in the city that usually lack the necessary infrastructure and sanitary facilities.

Many governments in the South have undertaken a number of measures and enacted legislations in order to tackle the issue of slums. Sometimes there have been large-scale slum clearances to ‘beautify’ these areas that are seen as eyesores and replace these with large scale developments. Policies have ranged from outright eviction from the land communities have lived on and developed for years, sometimes accompanied by a compensation payment, to other instances where governments have built social housing and there has been a relocation of communities. In other occasions, the government and other stakeholders have been involved in upgrading work in communities, making or facilitating improvements to housing and infrastructure in-situ.

India is one such example, where the government of India has since the 1960’s implemented a number of policies to tackle with the issue of growing ‘slums’ in its large metropolises, whilst aiming to become a major player in the modernized world. It has aimed to create ‘world class cities’ in its quest of fitting into this idealised future. From the 1980’s and the liberalisation of the economy, India began to follow a market-driven approach to resolve its ‘slums’ issue with the development of various policies that have been amended throughout the years in an attempt to become more effective.

At the same time, the approach of ‘community participation’ and user involvement in processes has also gained growing importance in development debates and practice. Increasingly, this notion has also become important with regards to the issue of housing and the built environment, where many experts have advocated for the need to use this approach in order to achieve significant positive change.

This dissertation looks at the issue of community participation and the built environment. Focusing primarily on Mumbai and the State of Maharashtra, the research looks at a number of housing programs that have been carried out in recent years and investigates whether or not these have integrated any elements of participation within them. It then looks at the benefits, if any, of using such an approach in these projects. The research was carried out during a five month period in Mumbai. During this time, whilst several housing projects and informal communities were visited and key stakeholders interviewed, a small project in the informal neighbourhood of Dharavi was also initiated. As the project grew and developed, it began to provide an important opportunity to learn about participatory practice from direct implementation and action. The research, consequently became much more project-based, learning by doing and reflecting on the results.

This study recounts much of the knowledge, ideas and opportunities that this field work highlighted and investigates the benefits or need for community participation in projects in urban informal neighbourhoods. In effect it asks the question: What do we learn from practices that work with people?
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<td>Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation</td>
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<td>BSUP</td>
<td>Basic Services to the Urban Poor</td>
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<td>BUILD</td>
<td>Bombay Urban Industrial League for Development</td>
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<td>CIDCO</td>
<td>The City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based-Organisations</td>
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<td>CDSA</td>
<td>Centre for Development Studies and Activities</td>
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<td>CRH</td>
<td>Centre for Housing Rights</td>
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<td>DRP</td>
<td>Dharavi Rehabilitation Project</td>
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<td>GOI</td>
<td>Government of India</td>
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<td>JNNURM</td>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission</td>
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<td>KVRIA</td>
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<td>MHADA</td>
<td>Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority</td>
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<td>MMRDA</td>
<td>Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>Pune Municipal Corporation</td>
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<td>Prime Minister’s Grant Project</td>
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<td>SIP</td>
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<td>SPARC</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres</td>
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<td>UDFPI</td>
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<td>UN</td>
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<td>UN-HABITAT</td>
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<td>VAMBAY</td>
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1 **Background**

1.1 **Introduction**

Millennium Development Goals:

“By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers as proposed in the ‘Cities Without Slums’ initiative.”


Having been educated as an architect, the question of creating and designing spaces that meet the needs of society has always been a natural concern. Questions such as 'why architects only engage in building one percent of the houses that are built worldwide?', 'can built environment professionals engage with communities to build environments suited to their needs, in particular disadvantaged communities?' and 'what are the hindrances to creating appropriate living environments for communities?' have often been in my mind as well as formed part of debates and discussions I have been involved in.

This led me to investigate the redevelopment of Dharavi in Mumbai, often erroneously known as the largest slum in Asia, which has for the last few years been in the process of redevelopment by architects and national authorities in order to create 'a better living environment for those in dire living conditions'. A new master plan had been designed by an Indian architect and my idea was to go to Dharavi to investigate what the communities' thoughts were about the plan and whether they had participated in any way in the design of the plan. I spent two months in Dharavi and used participatory engagement tools to understand the community. I also used semi-structured interviews to better understand their needs and priorities, and views and opinions about the process of redevelopment. I then returned to the UK to complete a final year graphic project for my Diploma in Architecture that narrated the lessons that I had learnt from that experience.

I however, was left with a curiosity to understand more about the nature of slum-rehabilitation projects that are carried out in Mumbai, Maharashtra. In Mumbai, urbanisation has slowed down in recent years (Das, 2010), but 60 percent of its population live in slums without adequate access to water and sanitation. A number of slum-upgrading and redevelopment projects have been carried out since the 1960’s and there were a variety of projects that I wanted to visit and analyse to see if there were any lessons and practices that could be useful to learn from in order to find a better solution for the redevelopment of Dharavi.

What I was most interested in was understanding the processes through which these projects took place, who were the stakeholders and how were decisions made? Most importantly, underlying this investigation, was the aim of understanding in fact what was understood as participation and the level of participation in each of the projects. What was the benefit if any, if urban projects incorporated participation as a core focus in their development?

1.2 **Methodology**

The research for this piece of work was carried out in Mumbai between November 2009 and March 2010. In order to carry out the study, the methodology that was initially followed was based on conducting a qualitative analysis of a variety of different case studies of specific projects in Mumbai. A literature review was initially carried out to understand the theory of participation as well as gain a comprehensive understanding of slum policies carried out in the State of Maharashtra. This also included reviewing information on specific rehabilitation projects that had been carried out to date.

Instead of relying solely on written publications for the selection of the projects that I would review as case studies, I organised meetings with key informants such as leading academics and professionals that were involved, through their work or writing, on 'slum' rehabilitation projects in the city. I wanted to gain through informal discussions of their work and knowledge of the city throughout years, suggestions on specific projects they thought were key to review when looking at slum-rehabilitation and participation.
During the initial stages of the research a lot of time was spent on conducting these semi-structured interviews. Despite busy schedules many of the key informants spent lengthy hours in conversations about specific issues regarding 'slums' in Mumbai, the ensuing problems, policies, different approaches and specific projects. These key informants were also greatly helpful with organising visits to specific projects, inviting me to relevant conferences and putting me in touch with the wider circle of researchers or professionals engaged in this type of work. The list of persons that I met with is given below:

Reverend George Daniel BUILD
Anthony Das BUILD
Siddarth Benninger CDSA
Shweta CRH
Naser Barucha Indian Express Newspaper
Ensley Lewis KVRIA
Sandeep Pandse KVRIA
Annirudh Paul KVRIA
Sharad Mahajan MASHAL
Bhau Korde Muhalla Mula Peace Building CBO
Sampat Mahagaonkar NIVARA HAKK
PK Das PK Das Associates
Sundar Burra SPARC
Jon Rainbow SPARC
Mr. S.S Zhende SRA
Amita Bide Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Matias Echanove URBZ
Geeta Mehta URBZ (Professor at Columbia University)
Rahul Srivastava URBZ

This was followed by the collection of primary data during field visits to the different projects. Further conversations with field staff, personal accounts of dwellers, visual surveys and observations all formed part of the study. I did not want to, at this initial stage limit the number of projects and sites I visited, but instead gain a more comprehensive picture of the different housing solutions the city offered. A number of organisations were also contacted during this time and a number of more targeted interviews were carried out with lead experts and practitioners including specific local NGO staff, DRP members, professors and SRA staff. The idea was that after reviewing this broad spectrum of housing situations I would select the projects that were most relevant and interesting and conduct the necessary further research into them. The field visits I carried out included newly-built slum rehabilitation projects conducted by the State or NGOs, slum-upgrading projects and self-build projects of evicted communities. I also visited a variety of different 'slum' communities including those still living in informal settlements in the city and others that were waiting to be relocated or living in temporary accommodation before being shifted to their more permanent housing solution. Details of these are listed in the Annex.
Whilst research on the different housing solutions was being carried out, I was also given the opportunity to start a small community project in the informal settlement of Dharavi which began to be carried out in parallel and began informing much of the content of this study. During the early stages when I was consulting lead experts, I had an opportunity to meet with Ms. Geeta Mehta, Professor at Columbia University, and co-founder of an organisation called URBZ. On asking her about the possibility to volunteer on any of their projects, I was invited to work on a participatory project that was just commencing in Dharavi.

From then on, I got more and more involved in working with the community of Transit Camp in Dharavi which led to a change in research strategy as the focus of the investigation became a lot more practice based. Critical analysis of specific housing projects was still conducted as was initially planned, but the idea was to expand the understanding and analysis of participation and place-making by critically analysing the project I personally got involved in.

Specific participatory activities were conducted with children of the neighbourhood who actively engaged in the project. The piece of work thus evolved to answer the same question I had set out to investigate, but it became a study that revealed much of the reflections and lessons learnt from working with the community in Dharavi.

1.3 Relevance

The proposed research topic is relevant to current discussions about urbanisation as the city of Mumbai is seeing a rapid and radical urban transformation. Previous to this year I had visited the city nearly four years back and I was extremely astounded to see the changes that are currently taking place. In its drive to become ‘a world class city’ it seems that Mumbai is headed to a similar cosmetic makeover as has occurred in Delhi, where slums have been removed to the periphery of the city and communities put in high-rise buildings, with no consultation or participation of the residents and the consequent repercussions.

Rapid urbanisation is a current phenomenon of cities in the global South which naturally means that the problem of ‘slums’ is growing. Therefore, as the scale and significance of the urban challenge is increasingly pressing, it is vital to find appropriate and sustainable solutions that work for the government, civil society and the slum dwellers themselves. In this sense and in the context of Mumbai and Maharashtra it was important for me to investigate ‘slum’ housing projects together with an understanding of community participation and user involvement in this process to see what effect this ultimately has on the results. In addition, the concept of the ‘right to the city’ is extremely important when cities are going through these urban transformations and it is important to investigate and work towards developing housing solutions in urban informal neighbourhoods that do not promote social and spatial exclusion and what Richard Sennett describes as urban inequality.

By investigating participatory slum-upgrading and resettlement solutions and reflecting upon participatory practice I wanted to find ways in which architecture and democracy can bring about the desired social and physical transformation in a city that is still trying to work out sustainable solutions for its housing problem.

1.7 Limitations of the Research

This research discusses a topic that is very relevant to the current times of rapid urbanisation but is limited to reviewing the practice and policies in one specific state of India. Given the limited time and resources, certain projects were selected to be analysed in greater detail and written about but there were numerous other projects that were visited that could have been selected for the discussion and analysis giving a greater scope of understanding. This has not been possible due to the limitations of time and the requirements of this study. In particular, in the city of Pune, a successful model for in-situ house by house upgrading was visited and studied, but this project has not been incorporated in the final written study in order to stay within the word limit and maintain coherence. As the number of projects that were visited was so broad, this selection and narrowing down of which projects to analyse in greater detail has been difficult.

Furthermore, with regards to the project initiated in Dharavi, the reflections and lessons learnt from this participatory project are limited to working there for only a few months. The project continued to grow after my absence, and many more activities followed but these have not been included in the study. Also despite this period of time being very positive
and a successful catalyst project to learn from, it is unknown whether the positive results will certainly continue in the future, despite the high expectation and hope.

1.5 Report Structure

The report is divided into five main chapters. Chapter 1 sets the scene and introduces the study. Chapter 2 begins looking at the theory of participation and its practice, with a particular focus on participation and the built environment. Chapter 3 then looks at the issue of slum rehabilitation and participation in specific projects in Maharashtra. The chapter begins with a historical background and context to slum policies advocated by the State, and then goes into greater detail and description of three specific projects that were selected for the discussion. The catalyst project worked on in Dharavi is explained in Chapter 4. This chapter is divided into 4 sections, first describing the context of Dharavi, followed by an introduction of my involvement in the project, a photo-journal of activities to narrate the story of the development of the Dharavi Shelter, and lastly an analysis of what the project revealed in terms of participatory practice. Chapter 5 then discusses the analysis and reflections of both components of the research - the specific slum projects and the project-based case study in Dharavi, outlining the main lessons learnt through the project.
This chapter discusses the theory of participation. It begins with a historical narrative of how the approach began and then goes into greater detail about the difficulties of working with this approach. Lastly, it discusses participation in relation to the built environment.

2.1 Theory of Practice

‘(Empowerment is) a process through which individuals, as well as local groups and communities, identify and shape their lives and the kind of society in which they live ... Empowerment means that people are able to organize and influence change on the basis of their access to knowledge, to political processes and to financial, social, and natural resources’

(Slocum et al., 1995)

Community Participation as we know it today has been debated and theorized since the last fifty years and in recent years there has been a growth in the number of publications and books about community participation. These discuss the concept of participation and its multiple dimensions, the methods and tools for engaging in this type of work and participatory practice in general with focus of specific projects. Some of the most notable theoretical literature includes; Methods for Community Participation: A Complete Guide for Practitioners by Robert Chambers and Somesh Kumar; Power, Process and Participation: Tools for Change by Rachel Slocum et al. and Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice by Nici Nelson and Susan Wright.

Although citizen participation in community decision-making can be traced as far back as Plato's Republic, participation as we think of it today has evolved from the early ideas introduced by the Brazilian educationalist Paolo Freire in the 1960s. Freire was concerned with those who do not have a voice and who are oppressed, and developed a number of strands of innovative thinking about educational practice and liberation. He felt that poor people were poor because they were powerless and this occurred because they had been controlled and dominated by others who kept them in this place. He worked with farmers in Brazil and focused on changing their knowledge base, introducing literacy programmes as a means of enabling poor people to discuss and analyse the conditions in which they lived their lives and the underlying causes of those conditions. This concept was known as the 'conscientisation' approach - developing consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality (Smith 1997, 2002). This would be the only way for the poor to voice their opinions and thus participate in affairs that affect them leading to liberation. Freire's central work is contained in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972) and Pedagogy of Hope. Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1995) which explains his reflections on the previous text as well as the development of policy and practice that followed subsequently.

Also widely known for her early contribution to the analysis of participation is Sherry Arnstein who developed the concept of the ladder of citizen participation and 'non-participation'. This theory emerged from her early work in urban planning in the USA in the 1960s. Arnstein set out to distinguish different levels of participation in relation to levels of, or access to power. She viewed 'citizen participation as a categorical term for citizen power' and described this as 'the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.' (Arnstein 1969). Arnstein discussed the misconception of the term participation and categorized the different concepts that are often termed as participation into eight separate levels of involvement. She illustrated this with a simplified 8 rung ladder with each rung corresponding to the level of citizens' power in determining the end product. The graded movement upwards through 8 steps moved from manipulation of citizens (1) through consultation (4) to citizen control (8). From the bottom-up, she described manipulation (1) and therapy (2) as 'non-participation' and instead as mere attempts by those who have power to persuade those that don't about this end-product. Informing (3), Consultation (4) and Placation (5) are the next up the ladder and these are described as mere attempts of tokenism whereby the community does have the ability to be heard but there is no guarantee that the institutions in power will in
fact take heed of this as they are the ones who will ultimately have the right to decide. Lastly, Partnership (6), Citizen Power (7) and Citizen Control (8) are explained as real and meaningful participation where the community actually has a much greater opportunity to make decisions concerning their future. The ladder basically demonstrated that there exists a variety of concepts that are termed as citizen participation but that are in fact far from it, claiming instead that what this is, is essentially a power struggle between citizens trying to move up the ladder and controlling organisations and institutions (intentionally or otherwise) limiting their ascent to the top.

The work of Arnstein was later re-worked by Choguil to be adapted to the development context. Choguil believed these ideas were adequate for use in developed countries but ‘provide misleading results in a development context’ (Choguil, 1996). The eight levels of community involvement she proposed were: empowerment, partnership, conciliation, dissimulation, diplomacy, informing, conspiracy and self-management.

For Choguil empowerment represents ‘the highest level of participation’ in which community members demonstrate actual control of the project and influence the process and outcomes of development (Lizzaralde, 2008). She claimed that if one were to view participation in its broadest sense as empowerment then this not only meant that the community would be involved in making decisions about making improvements in their community but it was also about claiming their rights in the political arena which would lead to essential and more permanent changes to the status quo. However what is interesting from Choguil’s work is her analysis of community ‘self-management’ and ‘empowerment’ that are at either extreme of her ladder and the role of the government and the community. She questions: ‘Are there actually two distinct aims within the development context, one concerned with development of community awareness through participation, that is empowerment, while the second is oriented toward self-building community facilities, that is self-management? Are these compatible or in conflict?’ (Choguil, 1996). Ultimately though, Choguil’s work also claims that meaningful participation can only occur in relation to the decisions, activities and power of state organisations or similar authorities.
It was during this time in the 1970s, that the ideas about participation in relation to development started to develop even further and began to be put into practice in other parts of the world, particularly in rural parts of Asia. During this period Robert Chambers became known as a firm and important advocate for the poor, claiming the importance of putting the poor, destitute and marginalised at the centre of the processes of development policy. In 1983, Robert Chambers published *Rural Development - Putting The Last First*. This together with many of his published works describe the participatory methods used and developed in rural areas of Asia that involved rural people in examining their own problems, setting their own goals, and monitoring their own achievements. It was during this period that there had grown a large disenchantment with social anthropology and large questionnaire surveys because of the costs and time taken to organise such research, particularly among development professionals in the non-governmental sector. This led to the development of techniques such as semi-structured interviews, transect walks with observations, mapping and diagramming which came to be known as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). Later these methods were adapted and came to be known as participatory-rural appraisal (PRA) and more recently as participatory learning and action (PLA). PRA developed from RRA when it was felt that local people should be the main actors conducting the appraisal, and in 1988, the term PLA was conceived at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), as it became key to emphasise the action rather than simply the appraisal approach to participation.

From this period there has been an increased understanding within the development sector, that those in power need to take more heed of communities’ views and opinions as people living within these communities are extremely capable of critical reflection and analysis of their own lives and problems. Chambers advocated that ‘people-centred development starts not only with analysis by the powerful and dominant outsiders - the ’North’, uppers and professionals, but with enabling local people, especially the poor to conduct theirs’ (Chambers, 1995). The argument that follows from the theory is that community participation is not only relevant but necessary for success in these types of projects and the approach that Chambers advocated was based on being genuinely humble; about listening to the communities and learning from them to facilitate change and development that is truly driven by them. In that sense the approach is slightly different to Freire’s as it is less overtly political but more about working with humility and mutual respect.

The United Nations also recognised this importance in 1955 with their definition of community development as ‘a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation’. (Garau et al, 2005). This understanding of social and economic progress was then furthered with the argument of people’s rights to participate. Twigg stated that ‘community participation in planning and implementing projects accords with people’s right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. It is therefore an important part of democratisation in society, and is increasingly demanded by the public.’ (Twigg, 2001)

In essence participation is associated with ‘grass roots’ development and is based on the argument that this approach will not only yield powerful results in developmental programmes but it is also about respecting the community with which one works. Participation also has been promoted as an approach achieving a number of other beneficial results such as helping build self-reliance in the affected communities, reinforcing local organisations, building up skills and knowledge, awareness and appraisal and the capacity to co-operate and critically reflect. In this sense participation increases people’s potential for reducing their vulnerability and is about empowerment as described earlier by Choghi and reverts back to the earlier principles of power and control, giving those that are usually excluded from decision-making, their right to having their voices heard to collaboratively work towards creating positive change.
Participatory approaches have continued to evolve throughout the years and have been used in new ways to address a broad range of issues. There has also been increased reflection on the value of participatory approaches for community development as many major international organisations and institutions have been stressing the importance of participation in their policies since the 1970s as described above. This has occurred as it has widely been understood that previous development projects failed because organisations imposed solutions on communities which they had failed to understand and were therefore inappropriate to the local context. In the section above, the positive aspects of engaging in participatory work and the effects this has on the local communities one works with has been described.

However there has also been a lot of criticism and concern of the use and abuse of the concept of community participation in development with many believing that it is fraught with conceptual and practical difficulties and that the term has become a buzzword that has lost its meaning.

Davidson et al., in a paper published in 2007, highlight that community participation has become extremely fashionable but ‘has been so widely expressed that it does not seem to mean anything clear anymore’. They also mention that ‘despite often-good intentions, this level of participation is rarely obtained and the capabilities of the users are often significantly wasted.’ (Davidson et al., 2007). The authors state that the difficulty in applying the concept of community participation occurs mainly because it has not been defined in the context of a project and that this leads to organisations wanting to accomplish this goal of community participation, but not knowing how to do this within ‘the strictures of project-by-project interventions.’ (Davidson et al., 2007).

Further criticism on participation include frustrations when participation becomes an end in itself and where community may engage in participation and share time and knowledge but they themselves do not experience any immediate outcomes or changes as a result of their participation. Lizarralde explains many of the common constraints to the community-based approach which include ‘(i) difficulties to integrate the community in the design and management of the project; (ii) difficulties in building up mutual trust between agencies and communities; (iii) reluctance on the part of the governments to give substantial power to low-income groups and (iv) the reduction of participation to sweating equity instead of active participation in decision making’ (Lizarralde, 2008).

In a paper in the journal Environment and Urbanisation, Jo Abbott reviews the developments in participatory learning and action that have been published in various articles of the informal publication of Participatory Learning and Action Notes, IIED. In one of the articles - Critical Reflections from Practice - published in 1995 (PLA Notes 24) Abbot states when describing participatory approaches that ‘for some, they have become a ‘flagship of necessity’ with which to seek funding, devoid of any real commitment to community empowerment. For others, they represent a superficial pseudo-science, a poor replacement for the real thing.’ (Abbott, 2001)

One of the most critical pieces on community participation is the book Participation: The New Tyranny? published by Bill Cook and Uma Kothari in 2001 where a variety of authors claim that participation remains an externally driven top-down process by looking at a variety of project-based illustrations, personal experiences and theoretical analysis. One of the most important criticisms made by the authors of the book is that ‘the proponents of participatory development have generally been naive about the complexities of power and power relations’; that ‘a misunderstanding of power underpins much of the participatory discourse’; and that ‘where power is expressed within participation compels us to reconsider the notion of empowerment, and the claims to empowerment made by many participatory practitioners.’ (Cook & Kothari, 2001). The authors also claim that they had carefully considered the title of their book when labelling participation as tyranny, stating that tyranny is precisely about the illegitimate and/or unjust uses of power and that that is how participation had been taking place. Many of the criticisms in the book also talk about this manipulation of power and the group processes that often lead to ‘malign changes in ideological beliefs, or consciousness (coercive persuasion)’ and that ‘local knowledge, far from determining planning processes and outcomes, is often structured by them.’ (Cook & Kothari, 2001). In this sense, these arguments revert back to Arnstein’s fundamental point about participation and the redistribution of power which can remain an ‘empty and frustrating process for the powerless’ (Arnstein, 1969) and the feeling that information-giving and consultation are often wrongly presented as participation.
2.3 Participation and The Built Environment

As described above, community participation in the context of development gained momentum and significance during the 1970s and began to be widely accepted by policy-makers and commentators, funding bodies and NGOs. This approach also became an important consideration with regards to low-cost housing and the built environment. In the UK and the United States movements such as the 'Community Architecture Movement' and the 'Social Architecture and 'Advocacy Planning Movement' began making a significant impact on policy makers to re-think they way the built environment was being planned, particularly in low income areas. These movements began as a reaction to urban renewal measures that were taking place in both countries which basically meant the wiping out of entire neighbourhoods in city centres that were deteriorating and their replacement with high-rise modern buildings. This redevelopment was associated with the relocation of people living in these central neighbourhoods to the periphery of the cities. In the UK the movement gained support by the Prince of Wales and architect Rod Hackney who later took Presidency of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Rod Hackney pioneered the movement in the late 70’s when he mobilized a street of residents in his residential neighbourhood of Macclesfield, Liverpool, to resist the demolition of their decaying neighbourhood. He organized and worked with the neighbourhood residents and led a successful campaign, not only to save and restore the buildings which were later refurbished, but also to show the importance of respecting the individual needs of people living in these areas. Involving people in the housing process began to be understood as a necessary precondition for a sustainable housing process with a democratic system of decision-making that advocates inclusion of community members to be involved in issues concerning their living conditions. Both these movements also began to show how in many cases involving people in their own projects could yield several social and economic benefits that were not really possible in the previous top-down conventional approaches.

At the same time J.F.C Turner, a visionary and 'father' in the development of the movement of community participation and housing, also began developing a new perspective on the theme of participation and housing with the notion of 'Dweller Control' (Broome, 2005). He spent time studying and working with low-income communities in Peru and absorbed from this experience many lessons offered by the illegal squatter settlements he worked with. He advocated for a new or renewed paradigm shift in the field of home and neighbourhood building which moved away from 'replicable programmes and toward a focus on transferable tools for building community, together with the processes in which actions are embedded.' (Turner, 1996). He had seen how programmes of standardised projects were anti-social, uneconomic and environmentally damaging and began to point at new ways in which the approach to housing could and should transition from a top-down to a bottom-up approach. In his paramount publication Freedom to Build, the first of what has become known as the three Turner laws of housing is explained. Turner’s First Law states that ‘When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to the design, construction or management of their housing, both the process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over, nor responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the other hand, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden on the economy.’ (Turner, 1976).

The other two of Turner’s Laws distilled by Colin Ward and described in the introduction of Turners key book Housing by People, explain the other main concepts that Turner had developed in his writing over the years. Turner’s Second Law, describes the importance of not only being a participant as a resident but the importance of being in control of major decisions. ‘The important thing is not what a house IS, but what it DOES in people’s lives, in other words that dweller satisfaction is not necessarily related to the imposition of standards’. The notion of housing as a verb began to be conceptualised through his work. Lastly, Ward also distilled a Third Turner Law which claims that ‘Deficiencies and imperfections in YOUR housing are definitely more tolerable if they are your responsibility, than if they are SOMEBODY ELSE’S’. (Turner, 1997)

In his work Tuner viewed participation as an economic necessity and Colin Ward, added in the 1980s that it is a political one and argued that the opportunity to participate is a necessary part of a proper democratic way of life. (Broome, 2005)

In the 1990s participation became an element in government policy on social inclusion in the UK, the US and consequently in the EU at large. In this sense, participation became more institutionalised as part of any public works building or project from this period.
This chapter focuses on ‘slum’ housing practice in Maharashtra, particularly in Mumbai. It begins by setting the scene on slum policies that have been adapted and changed throughout the years in the State. It then focuses on 3 specific projects that were studied in greater detail during the research, looking at their success and the level of participation within each of them.

3.1 Housing Policies and Transitions in Maharashtra

The government of India has been struggling with the issue of housing for the inhabitants of its cities for a long period of time. The rate of urbanisation has increased dramatically over the past 20 years, and the governments’ capacity to support this urban growth has, in many cases, failed to keep up with this trend. With a burgeoning economy and large in-city migration of its rural population, these cities have seen an unprecedented sprawl. To address this the Government has introduced a number of national and state policies in order to cope with the housing situation and the proliferation of informal settlements. These have ranged from slum-clearance and the construction of high-rise apartment blocks to a range of self-help strategies, to a current privatised market led scheme. It is important to note that ‘India’s Constitution is federal in so far as certain subjects fall within the legislative domain of the Centre of Government of India...others fall within the legislative competence of states (such as, for example housing and urban development) (Burra, 2003)’ This is important to understand because it means that due to this constitutional scheme, the Government of India can only influence the States on the subject of ‘slum’ rehabilitation in limited ways and thus any research into slum policies needs further investigation of State policies for a more comprehensive understanding. For the purposes of this paper, this section’s focus remains on policies implemented in the State of Maharashtra rather than other national government policies.

In 1998 Hare and Abbott published a paper describing the failure of the city authorities to cope with the urban poor by reviewing the main housing policies implemented throughout the city of Mumbai. They describe government policy changes as being ‘informed by development theory in relation to the housing of the urban poor in the developed world’ (Hare et al, 1998). They describe the transition from Western models to the introduction of self-improvement in the so called squatter areas.

The Government of Maharashtra and the Municipal Corporation of greater Mumbai, up until the 1970s, sought to demolish slums and clear the land of encroachments (Burra, 2003) This was soon followed by slum improvement and upgrading after the 1970s, when the government realised that slum eradication was not by any means going to resolve the housing crisis. In 1971, the Slum Improvement program replaced clearance with improvement projects focused on the provision of basic amenities and infrastructure. The SIP sought to augment the provision of water, drainage and latrines, pavements, lighting and electricity for slum pockets. Then by the 1980s, there began a shift in policies and the State government, with support from the World Bank, introduced two important initiatives; a sites and services program and a Slum Upgrading Program (SUP) in 1984 based on a policy of in-situ upgrading through tenure legalisation. The scheme, ‘which depends on community consent and participation, encompasses the lease of existing slum land at favourable rates to community groups of slum dwellers, and loans for environmental and house improvement.’ (Hare et al., 1998).

For a number of reasons these policies collapsed in the face of local complexities and obstacles. One of the major problems with the SUP was the issue of procuring sufficient land to implement the scheme successfully and the complicated procedures required to be followed with the different categories of land ownership. With regards to the sites and services program, Hare also describes the scheme as being ‘unsatisfactory both in quantitative and qualitative terms’, again relaying the difficulties with acquisition of land in appropriate parcels and locations. In addition, in as much as these policies were improvements over the earlier, traditional policies of public housing provided by governments, they too were criticized for requiring heavy subsidies and relying too much of government efforts to influence housing markets (Mukhija, 2001).
During the same time, in 1985 a policy known as the Prime Minister’s Grant Project was introduced in Mumbai, which granted a onetime contribution of ‘1 billion rupees’ (22.5 million US dollars) to the Maharashtra state government to ‘improve housing conditions in Mumbai’. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi provided the grant and focused his efforts on the informal settlement of Dharavi. During the following years, 5000 partially subsidized units were built for rehabilitation of houses in Dharavi. (Hare, 2008) Nevertheless, many of these apartments proved to be too expensive for slum-dwellers to run and the project wound down in 1993. The reasons behind this have been attributed to ‘inaccurate cost estimates, inflating costs, the inability of beneficiaries to keep up with the required payments, and the complexities involved in implementing a redevelopment strategy.’ (Mukhija, 2001)

Then in 1991, with the liberalisation of the market and the failure of public investment in augmenting and maintaining the housing stock of the city, the Slum Rehabilitation Development Scheme came into existence, introducing the concept of ‘free housing for all’ in new apartments in the original sites of the slum areas. The idea was that the rehabilitation dwellings would be funded by ‘cross-subsidisation’ through a market mechanism driven by speculators and developers themselves. To incentivise them, the government provided land free of cost, and eased floor space ratios on slum plots to allow construction to go higher than what was normally permitted. This meant that intensity and density would both be increased in the plots. Builders would then also be able to build more homes for the open market to finance the construction of rehabilitation tenements from the extra profits. (Contractor & Rao, 2011). Plans were announced to rehouse 4 million of the city’s slum dwellers (including scheduled and tribal castes) in new high-rise apartment blocks. Basically the premise relied on builders being the developers of low-income housing for the slum dwellers, who would be attracted to the scheme because they would not be paying the city’s grossly inflated land prices. These private developers would be able to build both houses free of charge for the slum dwellers as well as houses sold at a profit to higher income groups which would earn high profits. The idea was that ‘slum-dwellers’ would contribute to the schemes with ‘slum’ households obliged to make a token contribution of Rs. 15,000 (210 US dollars), approximately 23% of the estimated cost per home.

However one of the restrictions that came with this new policy was that the profits that the developer could earn from the free sale component was capped at 25%. Not surprisingly, developers did not take well to this cap, which ignored all the realities of finance mechanisms, such as interim interest payments. ‘These conditions, along with administrative quagmires and conflicts amongst stakeholders—developers, residents and the government—caused unnecessary delays in implementation, that the scheme rather fell flat’(Contractor & Rao, 2011),

In 1995 a new autonomous government body, the Slum Rehabilitation Authority, was created to oversee and monitor the scheme’s progress. With a new government in power in the same year, one of its principal election promises was to provide 800,000 free houses for the slum dwellers of the city of Mumbai (Burra, 2003). The philosophy of cross-subsidisation was kept intact but the cap on profits and the token charge to slum households were done away with as these seemed to have not worked with the previous SRD schemes. Two other important reforms were also brought in; only families who had been residing on slum land in the year 2000 were eligible to become owners of a 25m² home absolutely free of cost; and of course in terms of participation, to ensure that slum dwellers were fully involved in the entire process, it was mandated that a minimum of 70% of residents must consent to a redevelopment scheme, without which the project would not be sanctioned. Community participation in this case is only limited to consent, which in theoretical terms of Choguill’s analysis limits itself to manipulation or informing, as real decision-making was not in any way part of the program.

Ultimately, the SRA schemes, despite being run as a separate body within the MHADA complex, and fully financed through market forces, has not had much success in resolving the housing situation for the urban poor in Maharashtra. Sundar Burra, in his report submitted to Cities Alliance/UN-Habitat states how ‘the Slum Redevelopment Authority’s policy of granting free housing for the city’s poor has been extremely problematic, and largely unsuccessful ’ (Burra, 2003). In addition key architects and activists in Mumbai, such as PK Das, have even stated that in many SRA projects ‘there is no gap between the buildings, no social infrastructure, nor services or cross ventilation’ claiming that ‘the permanent SRA model, with its permanent structures, which cannot be redone for years, is only slumming the city further.’ (Thirani, 2010). Another critic and local architect Rohit Shinkre, claims that the ‘much advertised SRA scheme is at best a crisis response and not a sustainable housing policy’(Shrinkre, 2005).

In terms of participation, these State policies have taken very little consideration for ‘slum-dwellers’ thoughts. As much as one can argue that financial contributions were to be made in some cases by slum dwellers, or agreements were made over slum land or a 70% consent was required, this is far from any sort or community participation or user involvement.
Unfortunately, even in terms of active agreement of ‘slum dwellers’ in many of these cases, there is ample evidence, based on written articles as well as personal experience that suggest that the 70% consent required to execute these programs have in many cases been bought or manipulated, or slum populations coerced into agreements with powerful builders.

In response to this lack of citizen participation, a number of civil society movements, supported by local NGOs and concerned architects have also grown in Maharashtra. The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) is one of the largest Indian NGOs working on these issues and supports grassroots movements such as the National Slum Dwellers Federation and a women’s savings group called Mahila Milan. Their idea has been to support the urban poor to come together, articulate their concerns and collectively produce solutions to the problems they face. Nivara Hakk is another such movement that grew in 1981 as a result of large scale evictions that led to the relocation of a large number of ‘slum-dwellers’ from the city centre. These organisations have been throughout the years forming stronger networks and finding clever financing in order to get more involved in slum-rehabilitation projects throughout the city.

3.2 Slum Rehabilitation in Maharashtra - a study of 3 projects

As described previously, the research began with field visits to a variety of different projects to gain a broad perspective of the different housing solutions offered by the city. The range and variety of projects and processes were many but this section focuses on only 3 of the projects that were visited. They have been selected as most significant for discussion as they illustrate very different housing situations that the city has provided for urban poor and thus gives the reader a more informative picture of the range of solutions that exist in the city.

By studying these projects to greater depth, the idea was to focus on communities’ satisfaction with their living conditions; the history and development of these housing solutions; and more importantly, the quality and impact of community participation on these projects.
The Mankurd rehabilitation site is part of an SRA scheme which has been supported by a local NGO. It is a residential locale in the north-eastern part of Mumbai located about 30 km from downtown and was completed in recent years. Lallubhai Compound is one of the resettlement schemes at the Mankurd site and under the SRA policy, was designed for a variety of slum-dwellers who qualified for the government scheme, PAPs (project affected people) that have been evicted by major infrastructure projects, as well as pavement dwellers from the city centre, much to the activism and efforts of the Indian NGO SPARC.

The rehabilitation projects in Mankurd have been widely criticized amongst circles in India as a complete failure in ‘slum’ housing. Little further is required as an explanation to this than viewing photographs of the housing projects and simply seeing the current lack of maintenance and decay. The construction is of a large number of 8 storey monotonous blocks just 3 metres apart, with limited considerations of light, ventilation and privacy and little to show for sanitation, infrastructure or waste management. Architect PK Das, one of the most vocal activists regarding the housing in Mankurd wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi in 2005 where he described the lack of comprehensive planning in the project and stated ‘the inadequacy and complete disregard of the Urban Development and Planning Guidelines (UDFPI)’, developed by the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment with regard to the scheme. PK Das describes the density as four times that specified by the UDFPI standards. He also described how the project of 6,000 that is to house nearly 30,000 people had ‘no provision for social amenities and infrastructure like schools, medical centres, markets, various services. Needless to say the development does not have any community open-spaces and playgrounds’ (Das, 2005).

In addition water is another considerable problem for the residents of these houses. In the e-magazine article, *eye on: slum rehabilitation*, Christie Thomas describes the situation as follows: ‘In the Lallubhai compound, there are two available wells that serve the 11,000 living in 40 apartment blocks. With no elevators in the 8-story buildings, women collect water in the morning and carry it up the stairs to use for the rest of the day. These wells are poorly constructed, and many have taken to digging their own illegal wells between buildings. As a result, the community faces outbreaks of polio and other water-borne diseases.’ (Thomson, 2008)
PK Das’ criticism of the scheme is summarized in the following statement which is addressed in the same letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Such short-sighted and oppressive housing model as developed by the MMRDA at Mankhurd and other parts (including by part developers) contributes to the underdevelopment of our people and the city!’ (PK Das, 2005)

With regards to community participation, the scheme represents a completely top-down social housing solution. ‘MMRDA has unilaterally designed and built this cluster of buildings without any discussion with the affected slum-dwellers who will occupy these buildings’ (Das, 2005) Given the offer of rehabilitation, many slum-dwellers have either accepted the offer and then sold their houses and returned to living in their previous self-built accommodation, or built new homes elsewhere closer to the city if those had been demolished. Others that have stayed in this type of accommodation, sometimes due to a lack of any alternative option, are living in conditions that seem far removed from any improvements from their earlier accommodation. The lack of ownership is visible as communities are not working together to clean and maintain the communal spaces. All waste is discarded out of the window leaving passageways filled with rubbish. In many cases, residents are in fact also worse off financially, far away from their livelihoods, having to endure additional costs of living, sometimes indebted because of maintenance costs required for living in a building they cannot afford. The other negative factor is the disruption to the social fabric of their community, which is another reason for the project being very far from enabling these families to reduce their vulnerabilities and live better quality lives.

A conversation with the housing manager of one of the building societies at Mankhurd...

We had no interest in coming here...of course not...
but we were given only one months notice and then had to shift..
There is no value to these buildings...there are leakages, no proper piping and drainage...gutters ...there are many diseases people are getting here...
AND...look at this ma’am..
What’s this?
It’s a list of all the residents in the building that have not managed to pay for the maintenance costs......most families don’t even have the 200 Rs to pay to the BMC and maintenance...money comes after a whole year!
Plus the funniest thing is that we can’t really say anything to anyone...
At first the NGO said they will help to pay for maintenance but this never happened... they said they would pay for sweeping the outside areas and for a school bus for one year but this also only lasted one month!
Now when they come, its only with the World Bank people...and we have to say that everything is working fine...families are happy here as they have a home...but that’s not true...how can we be ? ...so far away from schools and work....no station nearby...water lasting only 15 minutes....what are we supposed to do when there is a medical emergency...no no...it wasn’t like this before....
The second study in this chapter describes a relocation project in Pune that was managed and led by a local NGO. The ‘slum’ community of Kamgar Putla was one of the largest and oldest ‘slum’ communities of Pune with nearly half of the residents having lived there for nearly thirty years already. The ‘slum’ had been severely affected by flooding in 1997, during one of the worst floods that had hit the city of Pune since 1962. The community was located at the confluence of the Mula and the Mutha rivers and after the heavy downpour, approximately 379 houses houses were submerged in the water for over 15 days. (Shelter Associates, 2004) This was the context in which the housing project at Hadapsar began for the ‘slum’ communities. However, in addition to the disaster caused by yearly flooding, slum rehabilitation and relocation was already a likely alternative for the community as a bridge widening project and a proposal for a submersible road in the location were being planned by the authorities. Out of the 948 houses in Kamgar Putla, 515 were below the floodline and 190 faced eviction due to a road widening project (Pandit, 2003)

In order to give more voice to the community and involve them in the process of relocation and rehabilitation, the local NGO formed a federation of women called Bhandhani that would lead the housing project. The organisation had carried out detailed GIS mapping and surveys and collected a lot of data from the existing communities. After this, for a period of five difficult years the local organisation worked together with the federation of women in order to push forward the scheme. Approximately 160 families became associated with the Bhandani federation, with the idea that it would be these women, empowered through the process of being involved in the decision-making of every step of the project, who would mobilise the communities, represent them and work alongside the organisation to carry out the project.

One of the early key struggles of the project was gaining the political support that was required and the land necessary for relocation. During this time micro-credit and crisis savings were started and the families of Kamla Putla began saving for an initial down payment in order to pay for their houses and every family deposited Rs 5000 (approximately £100) in a common account opened for housing. At this time there existed a strong link between Bhandhani and the local NGO who had worked closely with the federation in order to mobilise them and push forward this idea of group savings in order to access more finance for the project.

However due to changes of political hands, different desires of local politicians and difficulties in accessing finance, the project prolonged for a long period of time, with the federation growing more and more concerned and fragmented. After several rounds of meetings it was decided that four societies would be registered with 40-45 members in each, as it would be an easier number to monitor later when there would be bank loans and repayments to contend with.

The local NGO selected the site the communities would move to and soon after the introduction of new national policies, local government support was gained. This was a positive move for the NGO that pushed further for relocation. MHADA had already drawn up a design for the relocation of 800 families and were inviting quotations from interested
contractors/NGO’s to implement the design. After a period of negotiations and revisions over designs, land allocation and infrastructure with the MHADA and PMC, the NGO won the bid to continue with the project.

In terms of the design the local NGO worked with the community to understand their needs and priorities. The design allowed for more sunlight and ventilation, and was designed to create more spaces for privacy as well as community interaction around central courtyards. ‘Various designs were studied. The community had their own needs….no high-rise, and separate toilets for men and women. So instead of 4 families sharing one toilet, it would be the women of 8 families sharing one toilet and the men of the 8 families sharing another.’ (Shelter Associates, 2004). In effect this meant that the design of the buildings was much more appropriate than other rehabilitation schemes. The focus remained on low-rise, high density structures that were organised in small manageable clusters with four families.

Project financing, however, then became one of the most difficult issues to proceed with the project. The cost of each unit worked out to approximately Rs 80 000. A subsidy of Rs 50 000 was provided by the VAMBAY committee (a state partnership scheme to provide homes and improve the living conditions of the slum households), and the families had already saved up to Rs.5000 each, but an additional amount of Rs 25 000 was still needed to be raised as additional loans for the construction. After searching for funding from several private banks, who were unwilling to lend due to concerns on beneficiaries defaulting on payments, the local NGO finally managed to secure an agreement from the Bank of Maharashtra.

In September 2003 work on the houses finally commenced, with families allocated their units before the start of the work so they could be present to supervise it, and once the basic shell was finished many families that could afford it, could begin to mobilise resources to carry out the finishing work.
On paper the scheme looks very successful in terms of community participation, particularly as it seemed that there was a real partnership between the Bhandani federation and the local NGO that involved them in many aspects of the project including government lobbying and advocacy. In this sense their capacity and confidence as well as their ability to self-organise and self-manage was significantly strengthened. However, it has been difficult, through the literature review and the field visit and interviews conducted to ascertain a comprehensive picture of the actual outcomes of the project. On paper, the rehabilitation of the community is described as a success in participatory slum housing, a success in the struggle for a community to attain appropriate housing, with the assistance from the local NGO. In an NGO report it states that 'Success comes not from throwing money at the problem or just building structures, but from slum-dwellers having a sense of ownership over their own housing through involvement in every step of the process. This includes choosing a location, planning the homes, building, financing, and whatever else is involved.' (Shelter Associates, 2003). Perspectives on the ground however, depict another very different story. Construction remains unfinished for some of the houses, there is much dissatisfaction within the community on the type of housing and the relocation site that is far from their livelihood activities. In addition, financial difficulties and stories of families returning back to the original sites are common amongst community residents. One of the representatives from the Bhandani federation discussed the lack of any real participation in the project and the feeling of manipulation into the current situation of debt. In order to triangulate this information, contact with the project co-ordinator of the local NGO was attempted during the 5 month period but this was not possible. The reason seemed lack of interest and time for an interview. In addition, no contacts in the field were given or information on the project location. In essence I felt slightly discouraged to make a field visit myself and talk to the communities on my own.
3.2.3 Jaffar Baba Colony, Mumbai

One of the housing projects that is described as a truly participatory example of self-help housing, led and managed by the community itself is the Jaffar Baba Colony at Mount Mary, Mumbai. (Das, Paul, George Daniel, 2010) The scheme commenced in November 1976 in a contradictory setting to the policies that had been implemented at that time by the State Government. The Maharashtra Vacant Lands Act had only been put forward in 1975 which prohibited unauthorised occupation of vacant lands in urban areas and allowed the State to evict persons occupying these sites.

In 1975 a team of community mobilisers from a Catholic organisation called BUILD, began working with the communities and together with the elites of the small community began talking about improvements to their neighbourhood. This led to the formation of the Jaffar Baba Association, and was followed by eight months of pressurising the Maharashtra Slum Improvement Board for the communities to remain on their plots of land and receive some infrastructure. After this joint struggle, the residents of Jaffar Baba achieved success: the Board declared the area for Improvement works and provided a sanction of Rs 6,000,000 (approximately £80,000) for basic amenities. With this assurance of provision of basic amenities such as water, sanitation, washing places, asphalted pathways and electricity, and encouraged by the achievement of this success, the people of the communities began thinking about making improvement to their houses as well. The NGO and the Jaffar Baba Association worked in partnership, the role of the NGO was to strengthen, advise and collectively plan the project in order to push forward and gain more government support. Six months of regular meeting and discussions followed until an agreement for project planning was agreed upon.

One of the important problems the community had to overcome was that land holdings presented a disparity within the community - some families occupied 300sq ft whilst others lived in just 64sq ft. Ultimately the community reached a consensus that under the housing project the land would be equitably distributed and also in cases of large families concessions would be made (BUILD, 1975-76). The community got involved in all aspects of decision-making for the project and further pressure was put on the Slum Improvement Board during the following months until the Board agreed to demolish the houses and granted legal permission to build the new ones. The plan was to build 176 houses by December 1977.

BUILD, the local NGO together with help of the Lutheran World Relief (USA) and professional architects who got involved in the project, collaborated with the communities to develop an extensive project proposal that included the use of indigenous materials and integrated technology. The topography of the area was a little complex as the community was situated on the edge of Mount Mary Hill and a cliff divided the land into upper and lower portions. In spite of this the

I was part of the Bhandhani federation....

and we were told we had to move here....but most people have moved back to their houses by the river....they keep the houses locked and go live there as it's more convenient....many others have just rented it out....they need the money
You know we were told by that lady to take out a loan to build these houses and now we are stuck in this mess...
Plus there are so many things here that don't work....the flooring was never put, there was no electricity...we have been here for 7 years but there was even no water at all for 2 years..
Also when some of the houses were torn down these houses hadn’t been finished...now there are still some that are left like that...I don't really know what happened....
architects drew up a novel layout plan and house design, taking into consideration the feelings of the community regarding their future habitat (BUILD, 1977). Apart from the extensive community mobilisation undertaken by the organisation, and the provision of services of technically qualified people including architects and accountants, BUILD also provided some financial help with the project. The idea was that the community would be constructing their own houses and managing all aspects of the execution of the construction, from making their own investments through bank loans, to purchasing the materials, to maintaining all the accounts. However, BUILD did grant some financial assistance in terms of a seed deposit for a bank loan, as well as providing some direct help to some deserving families that didn’t have sufficient financial means available to contribute to the project.

In the end the project went ahead despite several hurdles with the Slum Improvement Board and bank authorities. It was the communities perseverance and organisation that kept the project afloat and succeeded in developing an improved neighbourhood. The programme became to be known as a unique experiment in urban low-cost housing in Mumbai. Jockin Arthpuram described Jaffar Baba as ‘an innovative colony where housing was developed for only 7,000 rupees per unit’ (Arputham, 2008). In terms of participation, the communities were empowered through the involvement in this project. Their involvement was not only limited to planning, execution and management but also included physical participation. Sectors of 12 families were formed and worked on the construction on a voluntary basis, collectively helping their entire community, leading to a greater sense of solidarity and cohesiveness. In this sense many of the benefits described from working in meaningful participatory work were achieved, power relations were kept equal, and the real drive for change grew from within the community. The role of the NGO was to simply facilitate this process.

Unfortunately though, in spite of the fact that the community had embarked on a successful project with the construction of the new houses, there had been little success in achieving the necessary developments with issues regarding land tenure. ‘Social relations in terms of land continue to be the same where private buyers in the city are given land on lease at very nominal rates; this means that residents of Jaffar Baba Colony and other ‘slum’ communities where housing conditions are improved, still continue to be squatters - illegal occupants or encroachers on Government/Municipal Land’ (BUILD, 1978). In as much as this has not been a problem for the last 30 years, with the private-sector development of ‘slums’ and the major urban transformations that are being brought about due to high land prices, there is a limited chance that the future of Jaffar Baba Colony remains the same.

During the site visit at Jaffar Baba Colony, I happened to meet a few residents in the community that were living in their improved neighbourhood, sitting on the verandas of their houses overlooking the hill and beyond towards Bandra.

I was kindly invited to the house of an old man...he went inside, got a few chairs out and we sat with his son on the porch of his 1-storey extended house. He began telling me stories of how long he has been around in the neighbourhood and how he in fact owned his house and few others in the vicinity. Being a key community leader and land owner of the neighbourhood he told me how he had been approached by the SRA. ‘They want to build tall buildings here for us on this land..’ ‘So are you happy?’ ‘Yes of course, if we agree with the builders we can negotiate...we can get one house for each of my sons...maybe one whole floor...the rest will be for the other families...we will also get quite a bit of money for agreeing!’
4 catalyst project in a neighbourhood of Dharavi

This chapter describes the participatory project worked on in Dharavi. It begins by setting the context of Dharavi, with an explanation of the proposed redevelopment plan and the lack of participation with the present project proposal. This is followed by an introduction to the specific project and a photo-journal of the activities and events that took place after the project had started. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the benefits from working through a participatory approach.

4.1 Context of Dharavi and Plans For Redevelopment

Dharavi, in Mumbai, is commonly, and erroneously, described as the largest slum in Asia. Its redevelopment has for the last decade or so been a subject of intense debate. Often regarded as an eyesore by city dwellers and city authorities, there have emerged many discussions and initiatives to remove the 'slums' from this prime location in the city and design an alternative housing solution for its inhabitants.

Dharavi lies between Bandra, the city's most up and coming suburb, home to the Bollywood elite and the Bandra-Kurla Complex which is the new financial district of the city. It covers an area of 2.4 square kilometres and is a home to a population of approximately 1 million people (Sharma 2004) who live in 85 nagars (neighbourhoods) that have evolved and grown over years. The first settlement to grow in the swampy creek of the Mithi River was created by the Kolis, fishermen, that came in from the Arabian Sea nearly 400 years ago. These kolis were the original inhabitants of the area and slowly other migrants from different places moved in, leading to an increased growth and the creation of many diverse communities and neighbourhoods in this one location.

Since many years the city authorities have discussed the redevelopment of this informal settlement, but in 2004 the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan (DRP), devised by the architect Mukesh Mehta was accepted by the government authorities. The idea in Mehta’s plan is to divide the area into 5 sectors that would be developed by national and international firms after a competitive bidding process. Dubbed as the “Opportunity of the Millennium”, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) envisaged companies taking advantage of Dharavi’s high land values by constructing high-end commercial space for sale on the open market in exchange for providing eligible slum dwellers with free flats and small commercial spaces in multi-storey buildings, and constructing needed infrastructure at no cost to the government (Patel et al 2009). This would be conducted under the SRA model for redevelopment described Chapter 3.

From the very beginning the DRP has been riddled with speculation, criticism and conflict, not only by residents of the slum but by community based-organisations, NGOs, activists and civil society at large who are concerned about the practicalities of redevelopment at such a scale and feel that several key issues have not even been carefully considered. There are numerous deficiencies that have been identified in the redevelopment plan and these include; secrecy, exclusion of a large number of the population, lack of consultation or consent from the slum-dwellers, insufficient detailed planning in terms of density and space, lack of a proper baseline socio-economic survey including the exact population of the area at the start of the project, to name only a few. In addition, a panel of experts, including professors, activists, NGO workers and government officials have formed an expert panel and have been pushing for a more human solution to the redevelopment plan, pointing out certain deficiencies and putting forward specific and important guidelines considering the design bid. They have provided advice and research on issues such as spacing between buildings, height restrictions, mixed-use spaces, and zoning. The DRP panel has also been put in charge of reviewing the designs that have been put forward from all across the globe including architects such as Norman Foster based in the UK. This has been an important step, yet minimal by all means, by the government, to take heed of civil society’s concerns, suggestions and knowledge.

Recently, difficulties have arisen with the redevelopment project due to the financial crises resulting in a reduction of the number of developers to 7 from an initial 19 that had been selected after their Expression of Interest submission (Paul, 2009). The project seemed to be moving swiftly at the beginning of last year and the developers were to have been announced at the end of June. Nonetheless, on the 19th of July 2009, the Times of India announced a halt to the project. The reason for the halt, according to the government was a mere technicality in terms of the square feet that would be allocated to the slum dwellers which required an amendment according to the Development Control Rule (Sharma 2009).
However many believe that strong opposition from the residents, objections from civil society as well as the impending elections were the true determining motives. The grinding halt to the project means that there is more time for the investigation of alternative solutions for Dharavi instead of the tabula rasa approach that has been formulated. At present, if the project is to proceed in the manner that is currently devised, the right to appropriate housing will be denied to many as “only 35% of the slum-dwellers seem to be eligible for the project and the government has not considered the 35,000 families living on lofts and first floors” (TOI, 2009).

If alternatives are going to be given the time to be considered, community participation would be an important approach to begin with, particularly as many residents have not even been properly informed of the decisions that are taking place and are totally aware of the scheme. Professor Paul Annirudh, member of the DRP panel of experts, has developed a design cell at KVRIA focused on an alternative vision for redevelopment, based on a more participatory approach. Paul describes his work as a more ‘humanised’ way of working that is about ‘disaster mitigation’ given the current situation. The idea is to assist as much as possible given the limitations and progress that has already taken place. Young students and professionals from KVRIA have carried out important research and analysis on the socio-economic data in the communities, the uses of space and house designs generated by the communities and the difference in cultures and peoples within the different locations of this vast neighbourhood. Paul and his team have then focused on one sector of the current plan, Section 4 and looked at an alternative view of redevelopment in this particular section whereby: the community is a part of the process; there are no evictions and; the sector division is redrawn so that the division lines are not arbitrary but based on existing culturally and socially-driven spatial divisions and boundaries. They have began by re-mapping Sector 4, including many important details such as existing open spaces, garbage collection points, road traffic, pathways, amenities, institutions etc. The work is currently still in progress and is being carried out in order to really understand from the existing communities. However, this is only the start of a very important alternative approach that looks at preserving existing structures and systems, and how to strengthen them; and also finding improved alternatives that use local knowledge and community participation to create a solution for Dharavi which is sustainable.

4.2 The Story of How it Began: Dharavi Shelter

Dharavi Shelter is the name of what began as a small decaying plot within Dharavi that ended up becoming an increasingly important community space for the residents in the locality. The story of how the project began requires a brief introduction and context description.

When I first arrived in Mumbai I participated in a workshop called Mumbai Mashup which was organised by URBZ, an innovative collective of professionals who conduct research and run workshops on cities and development, and work on participative grass roots projects around the world. I got in touch with Ms. Geeta Mehta, the chair of the organisation, to see if there were any interesting projects they were currently working on in Mumbai, that I could get involved in whilst I was conducting my field research. Ms Mehta mentioned an opening to design a small building in Dharavi and suggested that this could be an interesting project I could get involved in as I had a background in architecture.

A few days later I went on a site visit to the project location in the New Transit Camp in Dharavi. I had been given a brief introduction to the project and a vague brief, and there was a lot of investigation to do in order to learn more about the project. What I had learnt when I arrived on site was that the initiative had grown from the community, from a local resident and community leader of the area, Paul. Paul owned the plot and had ideas about what he wanted there but had asked URBZ to help with the design of this community space, as they had been working in the communities of Dharavi for some time now.

During the first visit the members from URBZ had had asked me to conduct a field visit and come up with a suitable design for the building that would be used as a community space. At that time, some discussions had been held about the use of the space as a place for elders to come together and have tea in the evenings, or for children to get involved in activities. However what was really needed in the community was still a bit unclear. My main concern at the beginning of the project was designing something without a full understanding of the context and the questions in my mind included:

Who was the community I was designing for?

What did the community want and need in their neighbourhood in terms of a social space?
Did any other community spaces exist in the neighbourhood?

Who in the community would really be using the space and what activities would be carried out there?

What would it contain? Would it be flexible?

Who would take care of it?

How would it run?

If the purpose was for the elderly and children how did they envision in the space and its purpose?

And if there already existed an intention that was much needed, where did those activities get carried out at present if at all?

Having studied participation and community development, and worked on several projects in the past, the issue of involving the community to define this space was already ingrained in my desired approach to the project, and my belief that this was the only way that the project would reach some success. Community participation therefore became key for the design of the space, and this was the approach I set out to work with.

During the first weeks in Dharavi, I carried out initial participatory appraisal techniques in the community, including transect walks, street observations of the community cultures, patterns and existing space use, as well as semi-structured interviews with people from the neighbourhood. I was put in touch with a local artist who was also keen on becoming involved in the project and working on starting some creative activities with the neighbourhood children who would begin to use the community space. One of the key things that was important to Paul and his community was creating a space in order to engage children in a variety of worthy activities and get them off the street, where they would be negatively influenced and spoilt by other street youth.

The design project thus developed into a participatory project which developed incrementally through time, whilst the children began to engage in the space and make it their own. Activities were begun in the community space, the first of which was the simple art of drawing and painting. The children began drawing their families and homes, they took walks around the neighbourhood and drew what they saw, what they liked and what they enjoyed. These kinds of activities began to reveal a lot about the neighbourhood and the existing challenges and opportunities. The children were also asked what they wanted to learn and what they wanted the place to look like, and through these types of engaging activities, the project evolved over the months.

4.3 Photo-journal of activities

The following pages illustrate a photo-journal describing the journey in the creation of the Dharavi Shelter. It follows the journey of events and specific activities that took place and describes how the space grew organically and how the children began to engage and use the space.
How it all began...

Bhau Korde, peace activist and community leader of Transit Camp got involved with the inspiring the children and sharing his ideas of what the Shelter should be about...

Look look...look at mine...can I stick it up on the wall?
Let's take a Walk....

On the second Sunday, the drawings that had been produced were pinned up on the walls of the shelter and the children returned and proudly showed their creations to their other friends that had missed out the first day. The second activity that we carried out also involved drawing, but this time we wanted the children to share with us what Dharavi means for them; what surrounds them, what they like, what the story about the place in which they live is. We therefore, decided to organise the children into groups and take them for a little walk around the block. The children were asked to observe their surroundings carefully and draw what they saw. The children loved this activity and were excited about what they would draw when they returned after their walk. They pranced around saying “I will draw the bicycle! I will draw the basket weaver! I will draw the sweets maker! I will draw the tempo! I will draw toilets! I will draw the rubbish! I will draw the shops! I will draw the temple!”...
Our neighbourhood through our eyes...

pots with plants...

children's photographs and artwork

black chimney from the roofs...

neighbours...

lots of bicycles...

this is a drawing of the lady making popadoms on the street...

ladders, chicken, people and houses ....
What do we Want in this Space?

- I want a library
- I want dance classes
- I want a place to play
- I want computer classes
- I want painting classes
- I want to learn English
can you tell me about your drawing?

I want it to have a big garden.

this is the door of the shelter.
this is the floor and this the walls.

this is the outside garden
with a pond, a slide, a bench and the shade...

I want it to look like tall buildings.

and what is this in the middle?

oh that is the dustbin so we can put all the rubbish so that it remains clean.
site developments were organised by Paul, the owner of the site and one of the key actors of his community. Local masons were brought in to build brick walls and put a door on the site... 

then we began with giving the place a name... 

and painting the walls with colours we liked......
the children painted their names on the walls...all of them who were part of the shelter wanted their name to be there...

pots were painted so that they could be hung in the courtyard and we could put in some plants...
and decorated the interior with second-hand sarees sold in the neighbourhood.

......We have been engaged in activities ranging from drawing and painting, animation screening, dance, visits to the city, as well as improving the current space we inhabit. What has been very special from the start of this small initiative, is that we have closely worked with the residents of the community, always seeking elders advice and understanding the communities' aspirations and hopes for the shelter, and we have been working hard to try and achieve them......
The social club at Dharavi is gaining greater momentum with its various creative activities and more and more new children flocking into the shelter to see what is going on and requesting drawing classes. The energy and enthusiasm is incredible making our work seem even more worthwhile and significant.

We have now already painted the new entrance to the shelter, which was a creative and collaborative mural painting produced by many of the children of Dharavi. Now in the weeks to come we are hoping to keep on developing and improving the entire site so that the shelter grows and becomes a dynamic and multi-use space that is used by not only the children, but also the elders, youth and women. We want to see the space grow in a participatory manner, with people contributing by painting its walls, planting flowers and shrubs, building a fun play area with re-used materials and thus making the space entirely their own....
The Place is Ours...

---------Already we have seen how the children have self-organised themselves, taking charge of clearing out the space, organising the room, taking a register of all new children coming in before we arrive and ensuring the doors are all locked when they leave.

everyone helped with sorting out the entire site...

Paul, the community leader also donated some chairs for us to sit on....
The children organised their own dance competition! Dance in Bollywood Mumbai is as much of a part of everyone’s life as coffee is in Italy! The children from the Shelter informed us that when the shelter was locked they used to climb inside and practice different dance songs for the competition they wanted to hold. On the day of the competition, chairs were arranged, a music system was organised, a large sheet of paper with strings outlining the stage area was organised, the painted pots were placed around the stage for decoration, we were the appointed jury for the winners, everything was organised in a space that was theirs!
Of Magnets and Development

All of us—kids, mothers, teenagers, strangers, and volunteers—huddled in a circle looking down into the sewer drain just outside the door to the shelter. “Paul is going to kill us,” Dipti said. The gravity of tiredness pulled on my face as I looked through the metal grate into the stagnant sewer. I thought about what might be in there to give the liquid a greenish, purple and black grey goo consistency: shit, paint, spit, pan, dirt, the piss of everyman in Mumbai, motor oil, rusted scrap metal, water, diphtheria, typhoid, polio, cholera, and more piss. A Dharavi sewer drain was as far away from the chilled bottled of water and masala dosa I wanted than July is from Christmas. The wheels in my head quickly turned toward a destructive and money driven solution… breaking the lock and just buying a new one. Simple.

Out of the corner of my left eye I saw a kid from the shelter running towards us. He perched, knees bent, but hovering above the ground, his arms out stretched over the drain. One of shelter participants pulled and held the gate open, the boy on the ground dropped a magnet on a string in, and another guided it around the drain by pulling the string in different directions. A minute later my jaw dropped.

“Those keys need to be washed. They are very dirty” a little girl said.

The moral of the story? The kid’s local solution was more efficient than mine. We didn’t have to break the lock. We didn’t have to spend money on a new lock. We didn’t have to wait in line at shop to purchase a new lock. We didn’t have to feel Paul wave his finger and shake his head at us. And I probably got my lunch quicker this way than through my solution.

This event is the antithesis of how development occurs and how land-use decisions are made in Mumbai. The government and market solution to the locked door with a lost key down the drain would have been to demolish the building for a use that would squeeze the most profit from the property, like finding the right size hand to squeeze all the water out of a sponge. In the process they definitely would not have listened to anyone in Dharavi, especially youth.

Yet this event is exactly how decisions about development, land-use, and community problems can be made in Dharavi, with youth and residents generating and implementing solutions to problems and a vision for the future they see with some guidance and resources from ngos, government, labor, and business. Whatever it is that Dharavi needs or wants, and how those needs/want can be met, and what it’s future can and should be, and how they can be solved, should be decided by and led by its residents, yet within at least one limit. That limit is of allowing no one, not the government, ngos, businesses, land owners, a resident, or community to have a monopoly on the truth, morality, and what is right and wrong, because we can all be right and wrong.

On the one hand ngos believe the community and its residents have knowledge that is superior to their own and that of the government, to create an argument that the community deserves a seat at the table when decisions are made or least have those making decisions listen to their voices. While community residents often know things about their neighborhoods better than someone who doesn’t live there, they can be wrong. I’ll mention now that some of the kids from the shelter wanted fish the keys out of the sewer with their hands. Yet it is hard for ngos and activists to accept the fallibility of the community’s knowledge when the government and businesses are so much more powerful than they are, through their monopoly of the truth, law, and implementation of the law. Yet without recognizing their fallibility and that government, business, and other stakeholders besides community residents can be right, the community will be unable to form alliances with stakeholders besides ngos to get the resources and policies they need and want to create the changes they want and expect.…

What I believe Dharavi needs to create a healthy and sustainable future are methods of participatory development and land-use decisions that involve a variety of stakeholders, a commitment from NGOS to secure resources to implement the ideas that come out of those processes, and residents who are trained to organize and advocate for resources and policies to implement their shared vision and solutions to problems. I guess that’s why Dipti is there for a minute.
A game of marbles is at the end of Dharavi’s 36th Road. A net is strung to cut through its breezeway turned away. A camera, however, manages to watch the game on hold. The LOC’s strategicising, at gathering a pubescent standing on a balcony, was not a half-collapse gesture transcribed. “They call the players gurus, holding a marbles clear to the lens. Children slide in and through these to get picked, others watching from outside angles from behind. Spectators are Dharavi.”

The (Dharavi) Shelter won’t be any different; right from its entrance painted by neighborhood kids to the backyard, the space is not to be decided by the residents. The shelter, three months into use, is the new neighborhood space for “learning, sharing, art, knowledge, participation and development.”

By Dharavi standards, the space, once housing a half-ruin construction, is huge. And to think that it was to disperse for 20 years, locked away by junks. Paul Digbh, however, had only plans for his 200 sq m establishment at the corner of the new Dharavi Camp. What he needed were ideas. “We need to respond to know just the right people.”

The Desert Ganes, a house, white room with a verandah and bookshelf raised, Paul turned his residence URBi, a collective of urban thinkers and designers, URBi with the history of engagement with residents of an unused space. Write architects, art will come with background work, residents will engage with them to create a place for rest or a streetscape.

2 days to ramp up
To raise funds for the Dharavi Shelter project and get the word out to potential volunteers, the team has planned Dharavi’s 48, a two-day art event next weekend, when the shelter will formally be opened. For the two days, the shelter camp will buzz from 10 am to 8 pm with art projects, traditional dances and music, craft workshops, exhibitions, and discussions. Organization meetings running up to the event will remain open to volunteers.

The 24-hour non-stop concept was employed by URBi co-founders Rahul Bhatwadekar and Girish Bhatwadekar in 2011 in the city of Mumbai. It was about creating a buzz around a neighbourhood, Kalyana, with its inhabitants.

Sachin coaches kids for charity

It was a day that will remain forever in the memory of several underprivileged children from the city who got an opportunity to meet their hero – Sachin Tendulkar on Tuesday. The kids were given special coaching by the master batsman who explained to them the nuances of the game.

The coach, known for his ability to create an atmosphere of fun and games on the field, has been the mentor for several underprivileged children from different non-profit organizations (NGOs). Sachin was at the forefront to create an opportunity for the kids to experience the game they love.

He also took the players through the various aspects of the game, from batting to bowling, and encouraged them to dream big.

“Being a part of this event was an incredible experience. It was a day filled with joy and excitement,” one of the children said.

The event was organized by the NGO, Aarohan, which works towards providing education and sports facilities to underprivileged children.

Tendulkar said, “It was a privilege to spend some time with these talented kids. I hope this event will inspire them to dream big and pursue their dreams.”

The event was also attended by several other celebrities who also contributed their share to the cause.
The Shelter at Dharavi...

more ideas....

capoeira....

photography....

new activities...

and it keeps on growing...
Children’s activities and the Urbanism of New Transit Camp

There are many games and activities that the kids could do that could be used to produce an alternative reading of the neighbourhood (which could become the basis of an actual plan...)

The photography workshop is already certainly one of them. Kids are going in the street and documenting what they see and the way they see it. A writing and story telling workshop with the neighbourhood as a backdrop would also be great (a DNA journalist who has already donated 2 digital cameras LOOK FOR EMAIL ... The idea is to:

CONDUCT: creative mapping exercises, where we rediscover the neighbourhood and redraw the maps which express needs and aspirations through them.
DEVELOP: games and activities with the children to produce an alternative reading of the neighbourhood
USE: performances and theater to provide an opportunity to interact with the street and engage other residents
Using the arts to change Dharavi’s image

A two-day arts workshop has given children in the slum a platform to express creativity

Mumbai: Pooja Bhandare, a 15-year-old student of Sadhna Vidyalaya, Sion, whistled softly, trying to emulate the tune her friend, Ali, was whistling as they painted a giant mural on the wall of the Dharavi shelter on Saturday.

Bhandare and Ali were among 100 children who participated in the two-day arts workshop, ‘Dharavi 48’, the trust organised with URBZ, a non-governmental organisation working to promote participative planning at the grassroots.

The first day featured music recitals, DJ sessions, photography exhibitions and film screenings.

Paul Rafael (38), president of the Dharavi Shelter Trust, said the idea was to expose the children of the slum — he does not like calling it that — to art. “Studding the children of Dharavi from unhealthy elements and giving them a place to express their creative talent will go a long way towards improving the reputation of this misunderstood place,” said Rafael.

The trust believes there are many success stories hidden in the sunshine-starved alleys of Dharavi. “There was a child here who liked dancing and music. Today he’s a DJ,” said Ayub Sheikh, secretary of the trust. “There’s a story like that for every child here, but they don’t have the resources to pursue their dreams.”

Fifteen-year-old Rakesh Kunchikarve is one such child. The aspiring tattoo artist spent the day drawing intricate designs on the arms of anyone who let him do so. Rafael hopes projects like these will help change the way the city looks at Dharavi. “The rest of Mumbai thinks that Dharavi is a bad place, but nobody has done anything to change that,” said Rafael. “The land mafia has left children with no place to play. In such a situation, they are bound to be distracted by unhealthy activities.”

Dipali Hingorani (30), a research student at Oxford, Brooks, who got in touch with the shelter through URBZ, said it is not necessary for people to donate. “Even if they spend some time here and share knowledge of any skills they’ll be doing these people a huge favour,” she said.

Mattias Echauwe (32), co-founder of URBZ, said there is a lot the world can learn from Dharavi. “Look at how quickly and efficiently this whole area was constructed. It is an architecture miracle,” said Echauwe.

Himanshu S (29), an arts teacher who conducts classes at the centre, appealed to people to visit the workshop on Sundays “If the talent here is nurtured, it will give birth to some of India’s most prominent personalities,” he said.

(For more information on the shelter, visit http://urbz.net/shelter)
4.4 Participation as Empowerment: Diagram of Observations

The development of Dharavi Shelter demonstrated first-hand a number of benefits about participative collaboration. From the project’s beginning, the aim was to work towards social sustainability and the creation of a sense of ownership by the residents and users of the space. As the project developed and grew, the children continued to participate in the process of creating, designing and managing the community space. From this they derived aspiration and social benefit, opening new ideas and opportunities by being involved and by learning. The diagram below distils from the photo-journal some of the key observations regarding the effects of using this community engagement approach in developing the project.

By involving the children with decision-making since the very beginning of the project, a very different dynamic was created to what they had been used to. Shelter Dharavi thus took a different dimension where the children were part of the process and they decided what they wanted to learn and what they wanted the space to look like. Through various examples, illustrated in the photo-journal, it was possible to see how the children began taking ownership of the project, how they took on initiative to organise themselves as well as organise community activities in the space and how they built their capacities through knowledge transfer and exchange. The group of children naturally self-organised, with some children taking over more responsibility and sense of leadership, often ensuring cohesiveness and inclusion within a segregated community that was composed of different castes, ages and religions.

Moreover, all the children were aware that they were part of something special where they were being given the opportunity to engage in activities that were fun. For us this was key, it was our objective to keep the children out of the street as Paul had requested and motivate them to use the community space. Through the creative work they engaged in, the children showed pride and confidence. More importantly, however, the children revealed what Transit Camp in Dharavi meant for them, how the urban space was viewed in their eyes and what their needs, priorities and challenges were. The project thus became much more than only designing and creating Dharavi Shelter.
Through this type of participatory engagement, we as outsiders learnt as much as the community did. Most importantly, one of the key lessons that was learnt was that the community not only usually knows best what their needs are, but in fact use the most creative and innovative ways to solve their problems when given the support they require. This became increasingly clear with small incidents that continually made us reflect and prove this fact.
5 analysis and reflections

This chapter expands on the analysis and reflections from both the housing projects studied in Chapter 3 and the participatory project described in Chapter 4. It finishes with additional reflections and thoughts on the issue of participation, ‘slum’ housing and the importance of engaging users in the process of place-making.

5.1 Reflections from Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai

During this study a variety of slum rehabilitation projects were visited. However, the particular ones described in Section 3 were selected due to their relevance to the term ‘participation’ and what this term has come to mean in certain contexts when we are talking about housing in Maharashtra. They also depict a range of different solutions offered to ‘slum’ dwellers. Throughout the years, in the State of Maharashtra there have been a number of progressive moves by the government to recognise the poor’s legitimate right to housing. The latest SRA policies call for in-situ re-housing of citizens in the same land where their ‘slums’ were originally, enabling families to remain close to their schools. In addition, families receive a physical and economic asset of a house completely free of cost. However, most importantly, under the scheme, the receivers of the rehabilitation homes are guaranteed security of tenure, removing one of their biggest concerns of eviction and insecurity.

The Mankurdh project described in Chapter 3, however, is far from a successful rehabilitation scheme. The beneficiaries of the large project, previous ‘slum-dwellers’ of the city, are a combination of a variety of different vulnerable communities that have been relocated to the same place for a variety of different reasons. These include people affected by large-scale infrastructure projects, to evicted communities and pavement dwellers. The residents in some of the buildings complain about having to live with these other communities amongst many of the other problems described in the chapter, including isolation and affordability, and the low quality of the building itself. In addition, below the continuous rows of tall narrow buildings of Mankurdh, the evicted communities live in ‘transit camps’ that are temporary accommodation provided to the ‘slum-dwellers’ whilst they wait to be accommodated into the buildings and the paperwork is filled out. At the same time, many of the buildings in Mankurdh also remain vacant. The project reveals no ownership as it is currently filled by a fragmented community from different places, none of which participated in the process in any way.

The second project described in the chapter, is an important one, led by a local organisation that wanted to give more voice to the community, facilitate them to organise themselves and to relocate due to the hazardous ‘slum’ location. However, difficulties with local government, and tensions amongst the different stakeholders and people within the community, made the project change direction, stretch for a long period of time and to not be entirely community-driven.

Lastly, the project at Jaffar Baba Colony is renowned for being truly participatory, guided by a local organisation, but managed and implemented by the community. It is a story of successful political advocacy, leading to political support and a collaborative community effort in upgrading their neighbourhood to provide the basic amenities and the quality of housing that was appropriate, efficient and sustainable. The community was empowered through the process of place-making, they were the drivers and they achieved, through unification and struggle an improved neighbourhood with safer, better housing and infrastructure. However, the project did not succeed in enabling the community to gain the security of tenure that is so vital in such projects, which means that the low-density, village-like neighbourhood are still being considered as a ‘slum’ worthy of an SRA led slum rehabilitation project.

When it comes to SRA schemes, community participation does not form part of the process at any stage. There is a need for procuring a necessary approval of 70% of the residents of the community, but this approval or consent is not participation and if considered within Choguillo’s analysis of participation, it may fall in the category of manipulation. Unfortunately, it is also common knowledge in India, that this approval that is mandatory to carry out such projects, can too often be connived, the consent manufactured and the documents forged. Slum rehabilitation is market-driven and the inflated prices of land in the country make an ideal profit-making venture for every 100 square meters of rehabilitated land, the developer is given an equivalent amount to sell for personal profit. As described by the Chief Executive of the
SRA recently, ‘After nearly two years of economic lull, slum schemes, considered the most profitable in the real estate business, have made a comeback with nearly 80 new projects sanctioned in Mumbai this year’.

None of the positive outcomes of participation described previously, result from these housing policies and actions, instead, to the contrary, dwellers are selling their rehabilitation houses revealing the disruptive effects of these kinds of projects and how the user’s needs have not even been understood at all, let alone them having participated at some level in driving the projects. Naser Barucha, a journalist and critic of slum rehabilitation projects in the city, goes so far as to describe all these developments as perverted, claiming that ‘civil society has lost its voice, it’s no longer about developing the city, its only about greed.’ (Barucha, 2010)

In the cases, where the families do remain in the rehabilitated houses, PK Das points out that the problem is always about ‘how the communities organise their lives in these new environments; how do they collectively engage in the space to solve any problems? and who is in charge of maintenance? who sweeps the place or who switches on the water pump?’ (Das, 2010). The projects rarely reveal any sense of ownership and these issues always become an important failure.

It is therefore key for stakeholders involved in slum rehabilitation projects, be it the state, local authorities, NGO’s or developers to be aware of the ‘ladder of participation’ and the importance of not limiting housing projects to consultation; and recognising that the rehabilitation of housing projects without any ownership will not yield the results that are intended and become a solution to the problem of slums. The problem remains that too often the needs or priorities of organisations overshadow the needs of the communities. It is also key to move beyond the narrow lens of perceiving slum-dwellers as helpless victims or illegal encroachers creating a problem that needs to be resolved, and start thinking of them as active citizens that have made the legitimate choice to move to the city for a better life. A World Bank report in November last year observed that ‘contrary to the conventional view, the existence of slums is not necessarily a sign that markets cannot provide housing to low-income households. The existence of slums demonstrates that the private informal sector is able to devise housing solutions for even the lowest income groups.” (WB, 2010). Slum residents need to be seen not merely as economic assets to the city but as common citizens as capable of self-management and as deserving of appropriate assistance as any other segment of society. Furthermore, slum rehabilitation is not about beautifying Mumbai or ‘remaking’ it into a ‘world class city’. It is about fulfilling these people’s right to choose decent and affordable housing of their liking, and ensuring that they don’t face the constant risk of eviction or demolition. In this sense, with improved governance and acknowledgement, where real recognition is made to protect the notion of all citizens’ rights to the city, the under-privileged group of society, which is in dire need of professional assistance to advocate their rights and protect their interests, can truly participate in a process of improving their living environments.

5.2 Reflections From Dharavi: Small Change

The catalyst project in Dharavi was conducted in a participatory manner in order to create, in collaboration with the neighbourhood of Transit Camp, a community space to be used by its residents and mainly children in the neighbourhood at the request of one of its community leaders. As described though in the previous chapter, through working in a meaningful participatory way, there were many observations that revealed the importance and benefits that were derived from using this approach.

Communities were given an opportunity to play an active role in how the place would develop, this included using common participatory visual tools to identify common goals and wishes, agreeing on a consensus, working out possibilities that were feasible and physically participating in creating the community space. Ultimately, the idea was that participation was more important than ‘implementation’ in a sense, becoming an end in itself that enabled the children to learn, organise, decide, plan and start taking action in creating an appropriate environment of their liking. As outsiders, we simply facilitated this process. In a sense, in this project we worked hard to not fall into the challenges of Chamber’s inside - outsider notion, ensuring that we tried to be responsive to the drive that was being generated within the community. It was not about us, as outsiders planting something onto a community and determining the level of participation. Participation was in this manner understood as a progressive and evolving process that was constructing itself inferentially, by both integrating and adjusting our activities according to the newly created situations.

Ultimately, what was extremely important in the project was recognising that the process, with the total participation of the community, was in fact as important as the outcome itself. It didn’t matter that much whether the Shelter used the space efficiently or how it looked like, but what it meant and what it became, because that was what the children wanted,
and they were in control, and the benefits they derived in the process were many and important. Participation became an end in itself, an ongoing objective, stimulating empowerment and self-reliance with the feeling of confidence gained by the children, who understood that their opinions were listened to and that they were involved in actually making the change. Any building could serve the community in terms of function to provide a community space, yet we realised that this in fact could be modest in comparison to the increased capacity within the community by working in a participatory approach.

5.3 Further Discussion and Reflections

Dharavi:

The small project with the children in Dharavi’s Transit Camp exemplified how professionals, involved in the built environment and development practitioners, can learn from small interventions that are participatory in nature. In this sense it brings to light the concept of ‘user-generation’ advocated by the local organisation URBZ base in Mumbai that promotes users’ involvement in urban development through the production of information and the expression of users’ aspirations.

In Dharavi, a new urbanism based on learning from the communities seems to be a necessary starting point for any redevelopment plan or for that matter an upgrading solution which may be more appropriate. Already from working with children, a new reading of the neighbourhood was expressed and understood through using participatory tools for engagement with the communities. Working in this manner there existed a greater sense of legitimacy in the project and a crucial development of capacity and knowledge, based on mutual respect that led to a more meaningful intervention as well as a more empowered community, that was confident and supported in taking actions towards resolving their problems and needs in their dense urban ‘slum’. It furthered the argument for the need to understand the wisdom on the street, the ‘ingenuity of the improvisers’ (Hamdi, 2004) and the long-term, large-scale effectiveness that are possible through small-scale actions.

In addition, already the redevelopment plan for Dharavi as it stands, has been greatly criticized by many academics and professionals and the space for considering alternatives based on community solutions and knowledge, is imperative.

Beginning with the basic provision of land tenure, of a piece of land that used to be a marshy swamp and was entirely developed by the residents now over forty years ago, would be a good starting point for this process. Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto visited the slum in February and identified the need for Dharavi and its residents to be acknowledged by the government by being given property rights. “Formal property title for the poor or land for enterprises such as those in Dharavi should not be seen as a real estate creation but more as an emancipation movement. This gives them a sense of being participative; from being in a system outside the law to being well within the framework of law,” De Soto remarked.

The term ‘slums’:

One of the major problems with these kind of settlements, deemed illegal and in need of redevelopment, in fact goes back to what we, as the outside world, understand by the term ‘slum’. Kalpana Sharma, author of the book ‘Rediscovering Dharavi’ firmly advocates this view and claims that ‘truly a city without slums is not what I see...people really don’t understand these places and the term slum is a misnomer’. When describing the issues of ‘slums’ in Mumbai Kalpana states that ‘the value of people takes a second place to the value of profits and real-estate...where are we going in terms of Mumbai if there is no respect for those 50% in ‘slums’? We will have skewedness in every respect!’ (Sharma, 2009) If we define all informal settlements as ‘slums’ as if they were homogenous places that are the same and need the same solution and don’t approach them as places viewed by the residents living in them, it will be extremely difficult to develop meaningful strategies for improvement in living conditions in these places that benefit the residents living there. Kibera, Dharavi, Cite Soleil, the favelas of Brazil are all termed ‘slums’ but these places are vastly different with very unique problems as well as a different culture and history of place, this means a unique identity - which is too often forgotten.
'Slum' Rehabilitation:

‘Building lots of houses for people in places one does not know, where money is scarce, and statistical information is unreliable is neither an efficient or equitable way of solving housing problems, nor is it good design practice.’

(Hamdi, 2004)

In Mumbai, slum rehabilitation has taken a market-driven approach, with results as described above that are questionable. From a focus towards upgrading and user participation that gained popularity in the late 70′s, the move has been to build new rehabilitation buildings by developers to house the urban poor. However this strategy does not recognize that 'slums' have an important economic value and 'slum'-dwellers have a right to live with dignity. According to David Satterthwaite ‘In places where there has been a reduction in slums, it has never been developer-driven rehabilitation...speculative real-estate markets only provide goods that people can’t afford...it has been through governments working with communities in slum-upgrading’. (Satterthwaite, 2009). If we are to seriously consider living conditions in Mumbai for the urban poor, this is a key consideration to be taken into account.

Participation & Place-Making:

When we are talking about participation, we have to be aware as, John Twigg states that ‘The influence of participatory ideas and approaches should not be exaggerated. They have extended their influence rapidly since the early 1980s, but the prevailing approach to development and disaster management remains a top-down one. People in positions of power, be it political, institutional or professional, are reluctant to hand over authority to the grass roots. Many organisations have called their work participatory but have not changed the substance of their approach’ (Twigg, 2001).

This is true for participation and low-income housing too and takes us back to what John Turner advocated more that forty years ago that ‘Housing is a process’ and is about collective action towards empowerment. When we are talking about 'slum' upgrading or improvement, or the idea of place-making with a community, we are not only taking about water or drainage or housing, we are talking about putting in motion the economic, social, institutional and community activities that are needed to turn an area around. This means transforming urban space to include important public and social spaces for the community and maintaining or promoting more livelihoods opportunities driven by community need, in addition to housing and infrastructure needs. In essence this is achieved first and foremost through acknowledgement of the notion of 'the right to housing' and humility and perseverance of working through meaningful participation with communities that are vulnerable.


Thirani, Neha, 2010, 'The SRA is further slumming the city' Sunday Times of India, Times Features, Mumbai, December 12, 2010


**Online Resources:**

www.dharavi.org

www.urbz.net

www.urbanoveau.com

www.urban-age.net/03_conferences/programmeMumbai.html
Organisations and Individuals met with

Amita Bide, Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Siddarth Benninger, CDSA
Sundar Burra, SPARC
Jon Rainbow, SPARC
PK Das, PK Das Associates
Reverend George Daniel, BUILD
Anthony Das, BUILD
Ensley Lewis, KVRIA
Anirudh Paul, KVRIA
Sandeep Pandse, KVRIA
Matias Echanove, URBZ
Rahul Srivastava, URBZ
Bhau Korde, Muhalla Mula Peace Building CBO
Sharad Mahajan, MASHAL
Sampat Mahagaonkar, NIVARA HAKK
Mr. S.S Zhende, SRA
Shweta, CRH
Naser Barucha, Indian Express Newspaper

Site Visits & Semi-informal Interviews with Community Members

1. Jaffar Baba Colony - participatory in-situ self-built housing project from the 1960s
2. Cheetah Camp - relocation project: self-built housing built by evicted community
3. Behram Pada - large informal settlement recently underwent large scale fires that caused significant damage
4. Sanjay Gandhi National Park - vulnerable community of people living on the periphery of the park waiting to be relocated in Goregaon housing project
5. Goregaon Slum Housing Project - PK Das
6. Sangarsh Nagar, Chandivali Slum Rehabilitation Scheme
7. Lallubhai Compound - Manakhurd SRA Housing Scheme
8. Neetaji Nagar, Pune - JNUURM & SPARC Housing
9. Yerwada Housing - MASHAL in-situ slum housing project on an individual family basis
10. Kamgar Putala Rehabilitation Project in Pune
11. CRH Indira Nagar Pipeline, Bandra - community being evicted by police with no prior notice
12. CIDCO Housing Project, Navi Mumbai
13. Sri Gogadev Housing Society, Milindnagar, Pimpri, Pune
List of Conferences and Symposiums attended

1. Informal Cities Seminar II: Focus on Redevelopment in Dharavi and Internationally. 7th November 2009. Mumbai. Presentations by David Satterthwaite, Kalpana Sharma, Annirudh Paul Gautam Chatterjee and discussion moderated by Sheela Patel


4. A Paradigm of Inclusive Growth. 12th February. Trident, Nariman Point, Mumbai. FICCI Federation of Indian chambers of commerce and industry Mumbai. Presentation by Hernando de Soto
**FORM E1BE RESEARCH ETHICS FOR STUDENTS ON TAUGHT COURSES**

*Please read the Guidance overleaf*

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**Section A - You and your research project**

What is your name?

Dipti Hingor

What is your student number?

09128638

What is your email address?

diptihingorani@yahoo.co.uk

What is your supervisor’s name?

David Sanderson

What is your supervisor’s email address?

d.sanderson@brookes.ac.uk

In which Department are you studying?

- Architecture
- Planning
- REC

What course are you taking?

- M.A Development

What is the topic area of your research?

- Participation housing

On what kinds of topics will you be collecting data from the participants in the research?

- Housing
- Relocation
- Living conditions

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**Section B - Your participants**

What kind of participants will be involved in your research?

- Professional/management group
- Members of the general public
- Vulnerable individuals

Briefly describe these participants

Residents of slum communities

How many participants will be involved?

25

How will the participants be selected?

Random selection from specific project

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**Section C - Your data collection methods**

How will you be collecting data from the participants?

- By in-depth interviews
- By face-to-face surveys
- By telephone
- By email
- By post
- Other, please specify

What kind of data will you be collecting?

- Quantitative/statistical/numerical
- Qualitative/written/text
- Images/drawings/maps

Will it be possible to avoid asking for personal data from the participants?

- Yes
- No

Will it be possible to ensure the participants are not being deceived in any way?

- Yes
- No

Will it be possible to ensure the participants remain completely anonymous?

- Yes
- No

Will it be possible to ensure the participants do not suffer any negative consequences?

- Yes
- No

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**Section D – Declaration**

I declare that I will

- give all participants an information sheet conforming to university guidelines
- not contact any participant until my supervisor has approved my information sheet, research questions and methodology
- be sufficiently well-trained in necessary methods of data collection and analysis

Student signature

[Signature]

Date

30/05/11

Supervisor’s signature

[Signature]

Date

Research Ethics Officer signature

[Signature]

Date

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Fieldwork may commence when the form has been approved, signed and returned via the Supervisor. If a Form E2 is required, the student and the supervisor will be notified by email.

Lynne Mitchell, School Research Ethics Officer, 01865 484296, l.mitchell@brookes.ac.uk