The Bellagio Initiative

The Future of Philanthropy and Development in the Pursuit of Human Wellbeing

Global Dialogue Report

Urbanisation: Delhi consultation

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IDS Institute of Development Studies
the resource alliance
THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

IDS is a leading global charity for research, teaching and information on international development. Its vision is a world in which poverty does not exist, social justice prevails and economic growth is focused on improving human wellbeing. IDS believes that research knowledge can drive the change that must happen in order for this vision to be realised.

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The Rockefeller Foundation has a mission to promote the wellbeing of people throughout the world. It has remained un-changed since its founding in 1913. Its vision is that this century will be one in which globalisation's benefits are more widely shared and its challenges are more easily weathered. To realise this vision, the Foundation seeks to achieve two fundamental goals in its work:

1. It seeks to build resilience that enhances individual, community and institutional capacity to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of acute crises and chronic stresses.

2. It seeks to promote growth with equity so that poor and vulnerable people have more access to opportunities that improve their lives.

In order to achieve these goals, the Foundation provides much of its support through time-bound initiatives that have defined objectives and strategies for impact.

Bellagio Initiative

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Urbanisation: Delhi consultation

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Executive summary

Urbanisation is growing at a rapid pace. It is driven by changing agricultural practices, the inability of people to sustain livelihoods in the face of climate change, people fleeing from conflict, etc. It will be but a matter of decades before the majority of the very poor live in cities. However this rapid transformation of the landscape of poverty is neither reflected in the international development agenda, nor in that of philanthropic giving. Thus it represents both a pressing need and a major opportunity.

The urgent issues at a personal level are security and ensuring that social networks are not destroyed through development. The urgent issues at a societal level are failures of governance, planning and taxation, and at the interface between them there are fundamental and unresolved issues about how the infrastructure development which accompanies economic growth displaces poor people and creates further inequality.

The key issues for philanthropists are listed below.

> How can we put urban issues higher up the philanthropic agenda? Rural issues have been articulated in a way that elicits giving, but urban issues much less so.
>
> Is it possible to develop a more strategic and long-term approach to investment – with funding targeted at core issues such as governance failures as well as more 'glamorous' projects?
>
> If governments are driven by short-term results as a result of electoral cycles etc., is there a role for philanthropists to develop innovative pilots and take greater risks?
>
> Can philanthropists develop a greater profile in campaigning and advocacy – well developed in the US but not in Africa and Asia?

Introduction

The Global Dialogue on Urbanisation was held in Delhi in September 2011. It was co-organised by IDS and our partner PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia). The idea was to bring together practitioners and thinkers to explore through dialogue the key issues for a rapidly urbanising South both now and over the next 20 or 30 years. Participants are listed in the following table.

The dialogue ran from 2.00 pm on Monday 26th until 4.00 pm on Tuesday 27th. The meeting was held entirely as a full group session and was both audio- and video-recorded for the whole duration. What follows is a record of the discussion. This report is a record of the main lines of argument, points of divergence and reflections on philanthropy. Not all of the rich conversation is contained in the report. There is no assumption that everyone in the room agreed with all of the points. Quotes are verbatim but have all been anonymised as voices from the group. Despite the diverse backgrounds of participants, this particular group was characterised by a high level of consensus about the issues and priorities.

Participants	Role	Area of expertise
Manoj Rai	Director of ALIP programme, PRIA	Urban programmes India
Rajesh Tandon	President of PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia)	
Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay	National Coordinator on Urban Governance, PRIA	
Gora Mboup	Global Urban Observatory for UN Habitat	Urban planning, East Africa
Gayatri Divecha	DASRA (Strategic Philanthropy Foundation)	Indian philanthropy
Arbind Singh	Coordinator, National Association of Street Vendors, India	Street vendors
Kedar Khadka	Director, Good Governance and Anti Corruption, Kathmandu	Urban governance
Rose Nyawira	Community Cleaning Services, Mathare, Nairobi	Community-led sanitation in Africa; Perspectives of young people
Sundar Burrav	SPARC, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres, India	
Suman Sureshbabu	Rockefeller Foundation, Bangkok	
Aditya Bahadur	Consultant (cities and climate change)	Urban climate change issues
Danny Burns (facilitator)	Team Leader, Participation, Power and Social Change Team, Institute of Development Studies, UK	

Urbanisation and international development

Serious debate on urbanisation and international development was seen to be quite new. Given the scale of urbanisation this needs to be redressed urgently. In India, for example, there is no institutional mechanism for community participation in urban areas as there is in rural areas. Important legislation makes no provision for urban areas.

The Land Acquisition and Resettlement Bill doesn't even talk about urban issues.

Further afield, the Department for International Development in the UK has no urban policy group; there is no Eldis knowledge hub for urban issues; Community-led Total Sanitation is now well established in rural areas in across Africa and southern Asia, but small-scale experiments have only just begun in urban areas. These are just a few examples but are illustrative of the failure of the 'development community' to get to grips with this huge change in society.

Some of the broader challenges of urbanisation follow below.

Inequity is on the rise, and it is particularly visible in Indian cities. There is no indication that this will decrease. This is seen to be exacerbated by privatisation.

The dominant model is privatisation of services, but a wide range of people won't be able to pay – there is an increased underclass.

Economic growth is seen to be paradoxical as it brings in its wake forces which further marginalise poor people.

Urbanisation breaks down community and social networks. Participants saw a strong relationship between urbanisation and individualisation. They asked questions such as 'How do you protect community values, when urbanisation breaks up community?' On the flip side of this, participants felt that it was important to acknowledge that people do not randomly settle in slums. They go to places they know, to live alongside people who share aspects of culture. When things get really bad there is some sort of social network. Money flows through social networks and provides protection for people. But this amplifies the dangers of resettlement in the wake of economic development.

Participants felt that the city did offer the opportunities for enhancing wellbeing, as the anonymity and individuality of the city was associated with a 'secularisation of relationships' which newly connects people through class (i.e. the urban poor) rather than religion and caste. The city is a liberating experience for many, where they, particularly women and girls, can escape taboos.

One of the biggest wellbeing concerns is security – 'to know that you are able to live tomorrow' and 'being able to anticipate the issues that you face' are seen as crucial to wellbeing. Threats to personal security are greater because of the breakdown of community norms, and threats to economic security are higher because rapid change in cities means that people have no certainty about their livelihoods and evictions are common.

The public transport system has not been able to keep pace with the pace of urbanisation, and people who are increasingly forced to live on the margins of the city either have to walk great distances or rely on public transport for their livelihoods. Because 'people have no idea how long it will take to get anywhere' their livelihoods are more insecure.

Land and resettlement

Infrastructure development tends to mean that people are displaced from the neighbourhoods in which they live.

To draw investment cities have to be world class, to be world class they have to huge infrastructure projects. All of these inevitably displace people on a huge scale. This has an impact on livelihoods and transport.

In Delhi, the metro came and people were displaced.

They are also displaced from the work that they do.

During the commonwealth games traders were kicked out.

For many of the urban poor, their lives are like a football. You make plans to resettle the already settled people. They lack the power to match this force. Why does central Delhi not have poor people in it? It's a new form of apartheid. We want them to work [in the centre] in the day. [And then send them back to the outskirts in the night.]

Participants talked about the emergence of a new type of city characterised by Special Economic Zones. Anxiety was expressed about their deeper social and economic impact.

They are owned by corporations. The land is given to them. How will they be governed? What is their relationship to the urban poor?

Land prices are also creating pressures for the resettlement of the urban poor.

Mumbai has a famous slum. It is now very valuable, but it was a swamp outside of the city limits. The poor always occupy the worst locations. But as the city expands what was seen as far away [isn't any more]. Its value rises tremendously. People start saying 'they are occupying valuable land'.

Differences in perspective emerged in this dialogue about how to handle issues of resettlement. Some said that the poor did not want to move, and should not have to.

Unlocking the value of land, means throwing out the poor. We need to guard against putting the value of land above people.

In Kathmandu there are now 52 slum areas – pocket areas. People have been given resettlement packages. Slum people have been asked to give up land, but in the end the people did not want to leave.

Others suggested that as land values increase, potential taxes go up, and this enables the provision of benefits. A critical question for development is how this gets decided? There was agreement, however, that the problem was not land itself.

The political economy of land is a central issue in cities. Very often people don't have any land, but areas are reserved for commercial purposes. In Delhi there are two polo grounds but the poor are sent 50km away on the grounds that there is no land. In Mumbai one Indian family owns 1600 hectares of land.

There are clear implications here. None of the cities, for example, has adequate provision for urban waste, yet the land is there. The promotion of mixed-use areas was seen to be crucial because this means that livelihoods are not separated out from where people live, so even if poor people are located further from the centre they remain connected to both formal and informal work. This also means that people are not reliant on a transport infrastructure that cannot keep pace with growth.

Changes in society offer opportunities to see space differently.

Soon going to [work in] offices will be over. People go to meetings just to exchange. We are going back a time where people worked alone [in families – cottage industries] and came to the market just to exchange.

The population is growing but less space is needed. The family has changed. People needed big houses. Now these are empty houses. Your children are only with you when they fail, but we want them to succeed.

Governance, planning and enforcement

The big issues facing urban areas are governance, planning and enforcement. Effective strategic planning is needed at city and country level.

We are addressing the city itself. Security is not just a problem of the urban poor. Urban planning affects the whole city.

Sanitation is an issue which needs to be focused on sewer plans – new ones today need to think about the growth of the city. There is a need for more dump sites. The place they move it to is already almost full. We always have waste. The municipal corporation does not know where to put its waste.

We need not only to think about planning at a city level. We need to think of the 4–5,000 medium-sized cities. Why is Bombay growing? Because the medium-sized cities are not functioning. Planning needs to go beyond just planning each city.

Yet participants felt that models of planning and governance were not fit for purpose.

> *The urban planning methodology is 150 years old across south Asia.*

Despite legislation it is proving very difficult to get those with power to devolve their powers.

> *[In India] we have had a constitutional amendment for democratic decentralisation since 1993. Many things were done, but state governments have not transferred funds and functions ... If you have power you want to keep it. ... most local governments in India do not have enough even to pay their employees.*

Greater attention also needs to be paid to issues of taxation which needs to be tackled more strategically because of the uneven spatial distribution of wealth.

> *[There are few] resources for taxation. It is a vicious cycle where things are going from bad to worse. There are a few cities where there is a lot of money, but this is not the case for 95 per cent of cities.*

This is also a problem further afield.

> *In the Nairobi settlements where the land price has increased ten times there is no municipal tax.*

Some participants were scathing about the nature of municipal government, seeing it as unsophisticated and unable to meet the challenges of modern urban life.

> *Municipal authorities used to collect stray cattle and keep them in a shed. I don't think that has fundamentally changed.*
>
> *Bureaucrats are not trained in urban organisation. They come with rural backgrounds.*

The mentality and competence of government officials were seen to be a very long way away from what is needed, and as a result the most deep-rooted problem was the problem of implementation.

> *We have sophisticated planning tools. There is not much debate on the implementation part.*
>
> *... actually the real issue is implementation.*

More attention needs to be paid to effective training and development of municipal officials. Given the scale of a country like India, this will be a major undertaking.

Illegality and informality

While better planning and governance are needed, there also needs to be an explicit recognition that most people live and work in the informal spaces. Life needs to be made easier for those that live on the margins, and this means that their lives need to be understood by officials and they should not be over-regulated.

> *I talked to one [official] about street vendors. He said 'oh they must be thrown out'. They are not taking into account what exists in the city. They consult you on the phone because it is mandatory to consult civil society organisation. There is a lack of empathy.*
>
> *People can't say that a house belongs to them. For those people who couldn't buy a house in a certain way. They have no papers. The poor do not enjoy equal citizenship in this city. They have to live illegally for 20–30 years before they get recognised.*
>
> *In most cases the building regulations are such that the best of houses would increase to such a level that it would make housing for the poor impossible. How government defines what wellbeing is has an impact. In South Africa, there is no way that the government can*

provide, but if the community [want to] build their own houses it is not possible because of the specifications.

The majority of the poor who collect garbage in the urban areas. The government wants to privatise this.

The poor are very low in priority for licensing.

Thus poor people are forced to live illegally and trade illegally, making them more vulnerable than they otherwise might be. Many of these themes will be familiar to those engaged with contemporary urban issues, but they have particular implications for philanthropy with regard to their work in cities; their role in advocacy and campaigning; the level of risk they are prepared to take to support innovation; and the extent to which they are able to engage with strategic and structural issues rather than appealing projects.

Key challenges for philanthropists?

Considerable discussion was had about where philanthropists should focus their attention.

Working in cities

A key challenge for philanthropy is to engage with urban issues. All around are stories of rural poverty, hopeful stories of wells and mosquito nets and children adopted, but these do not reach into the harder areas of urban deprivation. Urban success stories are not visible, and we need more.

Rural development has done a good job. Everyone has sympathy for the poor rural farmer. We have not found a way for people to feel good about the urban poor. For most people it is too complicated – too difficult.

Urbanisation involves large-scale infrastructure, politics, complexity, contestation. Where do you start?

How can these complex urban issues move up the agenda of philanthropic giving?

Advocacy and campaigning

A key role for philanthropists could be around advocacy and campaigning. Participants asked whether we need to find a way to speak to the urban middle classes by articulating an overlapping consensus that speaks to both the middle class and the poor, and more generally to make people realise the contribution of the urban poor?

Do people in cities know why slums exist?

Do people know that people depend for goods and services on the urban poor? [a very high proportion] of the Indian labour force is in the informal sector. We only speak of the contributions to cities [from the formal sector]. It [the informal sector] is not well quantified.

Can we play to a middle class elite that has pride in its city and does not want to have huge slum populations?

What might the roles of philanthropy be in reconceptualising the city – like the Bangalore ‘this is your city’ campaign?

The increase in the value of the land is exponential. Municipalities have to take appropriate tax [and if they do so] there will be enough to finance social services. This is an example of where philanthropists can sensitise and advocate.

In the US there are many examples of philanthropists involved in advocacy campaigns. But in India there are very few investments in advocacy (if any) and only one participant knew of an example where philanthropists had invested strategically – a project which invested in improving the quality of schools. In Africa the focus is on 'development projects' to build the infrastructure, not so much on advocacy projects.

Are advocacy and campaigning realistic roles for philanthropists in Southern countries?

Innovation and risk

Philanthropy seems to be changing to mirror the 'impact and results' agenda that is increasingly common in government. Yet traditionally it had a longer-term perspective and built initiatives on core values and experimentation rather than predicable results.

Every university in the US has a management school in the name of a philanthropist. What impact did James McGill see when he created McGill University? What immediate impact? Middle class giving will always go to welfare or charity. But how many Rockefeller universities are there in the world?

There is a need for investment in innovative pilots, and in longer-term developments rooted in social values. Philanthropists should be more able to take risks because they are not bound by the same short-term accountability demands faced by government, and they don't have to defend the use of public money.

Is investing in innovations that carry a greater risk a specific role for philanthropy within the bigger map of international development initiatives?

Strategic rather than project-based investments

We need to talk about 'giving more strategically'.

Few look at urban strategically. It is band aid. This is the challenge.

Philanthropists should support solutions that will bring about long-term systemic change. There is a huge amount of resistance to that more generally. For the most part, philanthropists are interested in how they see a return on their investment. Strategic investments that are needed include the following.

Building the capacity of civil society

There was a feeling that greater investment was needed in civil society.

There is very little civil society in India. Could philanthropy support the development of civil society? How do we strengthen the voice of the poor? Movements of the poor exist and need support.

How to engage civil society organisations to work with urban issues? How to mobilise civil society in 50–200 cities?

However, participants also voiced a strong set of concerns.

There are an estimated 3–4 million NGOs. There are few that have really done a good job. They are often created by retired bureaucrats, siphoning government funds and acting as a contractor. Those images are going to haunt the credibility of this sector.

Different responses to this could be suggested. On the one hand there is a need for greater quality control; one suggestion was the creation of a rating organisation – perhaps like New Philanthropy Capital in the UK. On the other hand, if formal civil society isn't the right vehicle maybe philanthropists have a role in supporting the development of a wider range of grassroots networks.

Investments in good governance and administration

> *Philanthropists [should be encouraged to] invest in planning and governance. We don't have a postgraduate programme in municipal governance in the whole country.*

For example for education we need to think about the curriculum and school administration.

> *If you want to put money into five more schools don't bother. If you want to put money into school administration – that will have more impact.*

There is one example in Bombay where four organisations are impacting on the quality of schools and trying to drive systemic change. Here a philanthropist has invested in an organisation that trains teachers – through working with young women – to teach in schools. The Rockefeller Foundation had an initiative on planning that would (a) support urban planning schools so that they are more aligned to the urban south; (b) link planners with communities through Shack Dwellers International. These sorts of investment are rare.

> *For foundations it is hard to see direct impact quickly with this sort of approach. They think – 'Give to health clinics and schools. Government should take care of municipal administration – there is a lot of money in government'.*

Can philanthropists be encouraged to give more strategically?

The regulation of philanthropy

Philanthropy was not seen as entirely benevolent. It could be a vehicle of legitimation for those that are corrupt or exploitative in other domains.

> *There are lots of corrupt people. Philanthropists invest huge amounts of money, and this can lead the credibility of the projects [that they fund] to go down!*
>
> *Some people are corrupt and want to be associated with campaigns, but we have to be seen to be credible.*

Sometimes projects can undermine local initiatives.

> *A social entrepreneur sets up a new project which takes away from the life of the poor.*

How can the philanthropic movement guard against these?

Some more specific suggestions for philanthropy

A number of more specific ideas were generated about where philanthropists might focus and what they might do.

- Get to know the youth and find out what they want for the future. Participants pointed to young people as offering a way into resolving intractable problems. For example, challenging the Indian caste system should involve the children as they have not grown up with these

ideas embedded and it is their future. Yet the young people often feel alienated from the mainstream.

I work with a lot of young people. They don't feel that they are part of this country or part of this society. Look at a basic identity document. You apply and it takes forever. Young people form their own social networks because nobody cares about us [as a young leader].

The young people can't just wait for the government to come in. We started to do mapping of all of the sewers, and the rainwater facilities and where the toilets are etc. The youth collected stories and created a Mathari family blog. Mathari was built up everywhere, but people moved themselves to create more space. Which are the models that can work? [There is a need to] try these out in 100 informal settlements.

- Create a place where philanthropists and social entrepreneurs can come together.
- A philanthropists' resource centre?
- There is a need for investment in IT.

  The government won't invest in IT because people will start to demand accountability.
- Philanthropists could fund mentoring.
- There is an increasing amount of wealth in the cities and there is a need to look at ways in which the city itself can be philanthropic.
- Support spaces for dialogue, policy and to sensitise.
- Can we use the emerging media, pop culture and community radio? Could philanthropists make investments in things like community radio?

  High infrastructure costs can be scary for philanthropists – the shock of investment costs, but the potential reach can outweigh this.
- Better information should be available to the urban poor. There should be an urban resource centre [this could also be linked to community radio].

  Single windows [one-stop shops] need to be provided for services to the poor which enable people to find what is available to them in one place.
- A livelihoods unit for new migrants into the city.
- There is a need for institutional brokering to stop exploitation by middlemen.

  People come to urban areas because of insecurity of livelihoods, and they are met by a network of middlemen – facilitating between the market and the poor.

How can philanthropists support initiatives like these?