

Slum federations seek to make poverty history



SDIs efforts in Africa and
Asia – Celine d’Cruz



local mission for a global vision

- changing the relationship between poor communities and city authorities and other groups
- from encroachers to becoming citizens
- building a collective strategy- moving from individual solutions to collective solutions



common issues

- to stop demolitions
- access to a secure home
- access to water and sanitation
- access to health care
- access to basic primary education,
- access to local institutions, police stations, banks, hospitals and other decision making spaces in their localities



a strategy to create a voice for the urban poor locally

- women at the center of the leadership
- Household slum enumerations
- savings and loans
- house model exhibitions
- precedent setting



participating in city development

- Mumbai urban transport project 20,000 households
- Kenyan resettlement - 2000 structures
- Pune sanitation project - 115 community toilet blocks
- Malawi construct their first 200 homes
- South Africans have constructed over 35,000 houses
- Zimbabwe turns crisis into an opportunity.
- Sri lankans use tsunami to find strategy for city wide slum development



local solutions with new relationships

- acknowledging local knowledge local solutions to solve their problems
- however, when professionals who listen and support them these solutions get refined
- when other groups in the city support this process, it is possible to find solutions for the local community and the city.



taking the city along

- Moving from demolitions to looking at long term solutions
- No one fix for all. Different solutions for different groups of the urban poor.
- Demonstrable solutions that work.
- Creating new governance structures that are institutionalized locally
- Inclusion of the urban poor voice in influencing city development plans



creative financial strategies

- Creating a savings discipline among the poor.
- Moving from small micro-credit loans to larger housing loans.
- Savings as guarantees towards larger loans.
- Redefining relationships with local banks.



other significant relationships

- With international funders, including bilateral and multilateral development agencies
- Other networks working on similar issues.



Challenges faced locally

- Middle class “morality”
- Aspirations of what the city should look like
- Political obstacles
- Peers working on similar issues with different strategies.
- Trusting the poor



Defining characteristics of SDI

- Only slum dwellers
- Majority women (80%)
- Common issues that bring these communities together: demolitions, lack of a secure home, water and sanitation.



Measuring success

- Design tools to educate, mobilize and consolidate learning
- Internal learning creates foundation for capacity to negotiate externally.
- Robust tools that can be redefined, transferred and scaled up.
- Aspire to participate at city and global level
- Sustain mobilization beyond crisis.
- A growing presence and voice locally and internationally.



Internal organizational characteristics

- Organization of both men and women
- Clear understanding of women's role and contribution
- Women continue to negotiate for personal, social and political space
- Support NGO's bring complimentary skills
- Local federation agendas determine what gets negotiated internally.
- Participation in global processes to strengthen local priorities



organizational challenges

- Scaling up without compromising on quality
- Constantly assessing relationships with support NGO's and other partners.
- Arbitrating the federations' internal priorities with external demands



factors essential to support urban poor federations

- Demand and commitment from the poor to change their life through organizational effort
- Socio Political environment that gives space to the poor to articulate their own institutional mechanism
- Local and international development that have a genuine commitment to listen