

Urban

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ORIGINS

YUVA's work in cities dates back to its activities with youth in the suburb of Jogeshwari, Mumbai in 1984 and subsequent engagement with women and children on areas of education, housing and public participation. By 1995, our work had expanded to city, state and national interventions on housing, livelihood and rights of children, women and youth through action organisation, capacity building, research and advocacy.

Currently YUVA Urban has direct operations in Mumbai, Nagpur, Nallasopara and Sangli – all cities of the western Indian State of Maharashtra, and engages in state, national and global action through its training, advocacy, research and networking activities.

MISSION

We strive to create cities that are just, equitable and sustainable.

We work to make cities a better place to live for the poor by enabling their access to human rights.

OBJECTIVES

YUVA's urban programs focus on addressing human rights violations in cities and enabling vulnerable groups in the city to access these rights. We work to build linkages between the direct experiences of communities and the larger contexts of the cities, states and countries.

We strengthen the capacities of communities to understand and respond effectively to the local development issues, and encouraging new formations - such as community action groups, groups of women, youth and children - to engage in development. Our endeavor to engage holistically on social issues accounts for the broad range of our activities that span from action organisation in communities to international solidarity action.

KEY OUTCOMES

Housing and Basic Services

The work on housing and basic services was centered around responding to two crises – the massive slum demolition drive kick-started in December 2004 and the floods of July 2005.

The brutal evictions unleashed by the State Government of Maharashtra rendered 92,000 families from 47 communities homeless. Multi-pronged strategies of a rapid assessment and impact survey, mass protests, demand for rehabilitation, negotiation with concerned authorities, lobbying and networking and a long struggle at Azad Maidan resulted in the intervention of the President of Indian National Congress, Ms. Sonia Gandhi directing the Chief Minister to legalize the slums till year 2000 as promised in the election manifesto of the party. This was a clear victory for the peoples' struggle and the organization they have built. The efforts saw not just stoppage of evictions but enabled people residing before 2000 to have a legal identity. About 15,000 people also got temporarily rehabilitated in Mandala and Ambuja wadi.

Flood relief and rehabilitation

The Maharashtra Floods of July 2005 affected several parts of the State, including Mumbai city taking away about 1000 lives. YUVA began rescue and relief work from the day following the deluge and reached out to 71 communities across 14 Municipal Administrative Wards in Mumbai City, as well as 8 communities in Navi Mumbai and 3 communities in Nallasopara. All these efforts were carried out in close collaboration with local CBOs and NGOs.

Relief, rescue and rehabilitation efforts included cleaning drives, distribution of foodgrains and clothes, health camps, awareness campaigns on basic health and sanitation to avoid break-out of post-disaster diseases etc. All these efforts also involved intensive lobbying and networking with the government on distribution of ration through the Public Distribution system, health camps, filing of missing, death and damage cases for compensation etc.

Special focus was made on the evicted communities, as no government relief reached them. Temporary shelter was provided to approximately 800 evicted families, in collaboration with the National Alliance of People's Movements.



Distribution of wheat contributed by Pillsbury



A Demonstration of pavement and slum dwellers

Evictions Stop !

In Sewadal Nagar, Sakkardara (Nagpur), eviction of 245 families by the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC), which was scheduled for 24th February 2006, was temporarily stalled following a deputation by Shahar Vikas Manch and children of Bal Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan to the Municipal Corporation and Zone office. Their demands were:

- As per Court orders, if the Corporation evicts slum dwellers, it has to take the responsibility to rehabilitate them with all the basic amenities. However, in this case while NMC was evicting 245 houses, only 138 houses are available for rehabilitation. 'Where will the other 107 families go?' asked the people.
- The demolitions were being carried out during the time of examinations. Missing exams meant that children would lose a year. "There is a massive literacy drive to educate the children in India on one hand and then you have this eviction at the time of exams!" cried the children.

The question of legality and non-legality of slums has resulted in denial of basic services by the State to these populations. Several efforts were made to mobilise the people around the issue of water, demanding that the facility be extended to these communities as well. A public hearing on the right to food of the displaced communities was also held with the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) where Mr. Harsh Mandar, Special Rapporteur to the Supreme Court on right to food, Mr. Shiva Kumar, Member of the National Advisory Council and Ms Kavita Srivastava of PUCL, Rajasthan participated.

Our experience from the Mumbai struggle also enabled us to extend our support to many other struggles such as the demolition of the Chuim village where help was extended to set up a community centre.

Apart from the struggle, we also worked to increase the capacity of the affected populations in understanding the micro and macro context along with negotiation techniques and mass mobilization strategies. Two workshops on 'The direction of Mumbai's Development' and 'Alternatives of Sanghaisation' were held, one each for the evicted communities along the western and eastern suburbs of the city.

A National Consultation was also organized along with the NAPM and other organizations at YUVA Centre in Kharghar in October 2005, in which about 300 activists from 18 states participated. The Consultation resulted in the constitution of an Urban Struggle Committee at the National level. There is an increased networking and sharing of information after this Consultation with urban groups from different states.

This year has also witnessed the rise of Shahar Vikas Manch as an organization of the people from the demolished slums. A new leadership has emerged which include a number of women leaders who have till now been confined to their homes.

Social Security and Livelihood

This year, our work with the unorganised sector laid emphasis on creating alternatives to promote and protect the rights of workers from the unorganised sectors. This involved the preparation of an Alternative Development Plan to integrate street vendors into the development plan for Nallasopara region. We were also able to provide some key inputs on Natural Markets and Planning before a Taskforce set up by the Central Government to study the issue of Street Vendors in Urban Planning.

Apart from this, we have also been carrying out awareness campaigns on Janashree Vima Yojna in Maharashtra, through Assangatit Shramik Panchayat (ASP), a union of unorganised sector workers. Janashree Vima Yojna is a scheme which provides life insurance protection to the rural and urban poor who are living below poverty line or marginally above the poverty line. ASP has recently been selected as one of the nodal agencies for implementing the scheme in Maharashtra.

As part of our efforts to create viable alternatives for unorganized labour, this year we were able to build capacities in registering two co-operatives – Chaitanya Bamboo Workers Service Co-operative (Parel) and Akanksha Women's Credit Co-operative (Dharavi). The brand-building process for the bamboo co-operative has included the formation of business plans, logos, brochures, business cards and a website.

Apart from this, Matritva Woman's Catering Co-operative which is now working independently, has registered a profit of Rs. 40,000 this year, while, Sanskriti, the handmade paper conversion unit registered a profit of Rs. 21, 386. Unnati, a co-operative of Ragpickers has also initiated their business in this period.

In Nagpur, Shantinagar Credit Co-operative has registered a profit of Rs. 35,000, while the Credit Co-operative at Sewadal Nagar is in the process of getting itself registered.

Co-operative Animators Training Programme

The first Co-operative Animators Training Programme, which spanned over a period of 6 months, ended in May 2005. Thirty-five men and women from Matritva Catering Co-op, Unnati Ragpickers Co-op, Chaitanya Bamboo Co-op and Nirmiti Construction Workers Co-op participated in this training programme.



On the whole, all the co-operatives were able to achieve growth in membership and are arriving at varying levels of independence.

The Co-operative Development Forum organised its first 2-day Consultative workshop in which 30 Governing Board Members (4 to 5 from each Co-operative) came up with a lot of issues and concerns regarding Co-operative Governance and Professional Management. It has been decided that they meet in this manner once in three months. All the Co-operatives are ready with their 3-month action plans.



Asst. Municipal Commissioner, Shri. Kunal Kumar presenting the Balance Sheet of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation

PROOF (Public Records on Operations and Finance) process was launched by Nagpur Municipal Corporation during the Urban Renewal seminar in Nagpur. This would make Nagpur the second city in India, after Bangalore to undertake such an exercise that allows citizens and other stakeholders to understand, raise questions and offer feedback and suggestions on the financial and operational performance of the city.

People's Participation in Governance

This year has given us the opportunity to engage with a range of actors in the urban governance spectrum on a variety of issues, ranging from urban renewal and development to municipal reforms. In this period, we were able to bring out a Compendium on Urban Performance Indicators. This publication was widely disseminated to municipal officers, elected representatives, civil society organizations, academicians and corporate professionals through a seminar on 'Directions for Urban Development and Renewal', which was organized in Nagpur on 8th and 9th November 2005.

This year also gave us the opportunity to work with diverse actors to analyze and monitor developments in the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) through movements and networks like NAPM on one hand and critical players like CRISIL Infrastructure Advisory on the other. In Nagpur, through the urban poor network Shehar Vikas Manch, we actively participated in the stakeholder consultations held for the preparation of its City Development for submission to the JNNURM committee.

Engagement with diverse actors also took place around the debate for reforms in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation Act, initiated by Loksatta under the Vote Mumbai Campaign.

Initiation of the Maharashtra Social Watch process as part of the larger agenda of the National Social Watch Coalition to monitor governance on its professed goals of social development, particularly with respect to the marginalized sections of our country, is an important development of the governance initiative. This has also given us the opportunity to closely engage with the process of monitoring the level of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals at the State and National levels. We have also had the opportunity to work closely with the National Social Watch Coalition in initiating the Maharashtra Social Watch process, as well as writing the chapter on Urban Local Governance for the 2006 report.

In Mumbai, we have been able to actively participate in discussions and initiate a response group around the proposed pilot project for privatizing the management and maintenance of water in K East ward.

We have also been able to initiate the implementation of the People's Ward Planning process in Electoral Ward 196 (of administrative ward N), wherein dialogue has been initiated between the people, society promoters, builders and local elected representatives around the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) scheme. The objective is to come out with a proposal that ensures that basic physical and social services are planned and upscaled to meet the needs of the increased population that SRA would bring into the ward.

Understanding Development Planning

'Natural disasters' such as the recent floods in Maharashtra, and manmade disasters such as the mass evictions across the city of Mumbai, on one hand and the 'Mumbai Makeover' and launch of National schemes like JNNURM on the other, brought to us the urgency of understanding micro-level Ward Action Planning efforts within the macro context of the Development Plans of Mumbai and the Metropolitan Region. In this context a 4-day capacity building workshop on understanding Development Planning, with specific focus on the Mumbai and Metropolitan Region plans was organized for activists and peoples organizations. The largely technical orientation gained through this workshop has sharpened our arguments for inclusive, participatory planning, with special provisions for the urban poor, based on principles of equitability and sustainability.

Transformation and Empowerment of Special Groups

The Special Groups program began the year with the members of Bal Adhikaar Sangharsh Sanghatan (BASS) protesting against ruthless demolition by the government authorities and for demanding rights of children in evicted communities. Children faced lathi charge by the police in this rally. The slum and street youth also actively participated in this rally.

During the floods, along with the distribution of donations raised from different resources, for the first time we were able to procure ration through PDS system for 180 street youth, children and girls. The single women with whom we are working have also shown their leadership skills in procuring and distribution of resources. They participated in the data collection phase. As a result of this disaster, the Child Animators Training Programme (CATP) incorporated a session on manmade

disasters such as floods and how all laws related to the environment are being flouted in the city these days.

The month of December witnessed three major events. The first was a State-level Game4change event organized in Nagpur to use sports and games as a medium of bringing social change. 120 youth of Apna Anubhav (street and slum youth) participated in different sports.

In December 2005, we organized the Winter Session of Bal Adhikaar Sangharsh Sanghatan in which 110 children from Mumbai, Nallasopara and Nagpur participated in creating the plan of action for Children's Municipal Corporation in their own cities. This winter session has also kickstarted the process of Bal Doctor and Bal Shikshak training programmes in Nallasopara and Nagpur.

Stree Shakti



December also witnessed the initiation and launching of 'We Can End All Violence Against Women' at Maharashtra state, for which YUVA Urban has taken up the role of regional secretariat at Mumbai level. Following up with this, we had consultation meetings with Mumbai network partners, and discussed the implementation of the campaign in the city of Mumbai.

Organising a Mahila Melawa in Mumbai on the occasion of International Women's Day constituted the first step of the campaign. On 11th March 2006, 1300 men, women and youth from Mumbai slums representing different NGOs and CBOs attended this Melawa. They raised their voices against the issue of state violence in the current eviction scenario, denying them their right to housing, life with dignity and self esteem. The community cultural troupe called Samrat Sanskritik Manch presented the street play 'Aamhi Saare Purush' (We all are men) depicting the need for change in the gender-biased attitude of our society.

The state level Youth Animator Training Programme spanning over 5 days was also held in this month, in which 32 youth across Maharashtra state participated, debated and sharpened their understanding on different issues related to caste, gender, sexuality and self identity.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The possibility of expanding the reach of our work from the city and state levels to the national context was proposed and discussions across levels of the organization was initiated in this period. The balance between external credibility and internal confidence in the organization served as the basis for such a proposed shift in the institutional focus and scope of operations.

The objectives and implications of this proposal were assessed by the Governing Board who, along with key partners and networks, expressed their confidence in the plan, and their solidarity with our purpose. In keeping with this aspiration, the focus within the organization has been on strengthening collective leadership across levels of the organization and initiating a detailed process of review, ideation and planning towards the National Program Plan for the period 2006-2011.

IMPACT

YUVA's work in the context of rapid urbanisation in the past year has attempted to bring about the following impacts:

Affordable Housing for All

Highlighting the inter-linkages between housing and land-use planning, instigated several groups to file Public Interest Litigations on land scams, implementation of the Urban Land Ceiling Act and the proposed cut-off date for slum protection. Based on our arguments, the court for the first time stated that the issue is not one of "till when can people come into the city", but is one of planning for affordable land and housing for anyone who comes into the city. Based on this, the court ordered the government to prepare a scheme for affordable land and housing, following which, a committee has been instituted by the State Government.

Building a Human Rights Perspective on planning amongst various stakeholders

In the past year we have attempted to highlight the strong inter-linkages between the housing issue and land-use planning and sustainable planning and disaster mitigation (following the mass evictions and Mumbai floods), as well as present alternative models of integrative, participatory planning, such as the Nallasopara plan for integration of street vendors. This has influenced stakeholders in the government and civil society (ranging from grassroots activists to middle-class civil society groups and media) to see planning from a rights based, inclusive perspective.

Spaces for people's participation

While on the one hand our involvement in JNNURM in the form of a campaign against the undemocratic means of preparing the City Development Plan (CDP), has pressurized the Municipal and State Governments to be more accountable towards its people, in promoting and creating spaces for effective people's participation in planning and governance decision making, on the other, we have been able to mediate the partnership between civil society and the Municipal Corporation for budget and performance accountability, through the initiation of the Public Record of Operations and Finance (PROOF) model in Nagpur.

Networking and solidarity

The struggle in Mumbai against forced evictions and unsustainable and unequal planning, strengthened similar struggles in other parts of the country. This culminated into the National Consultation on Spaces for the Urban poor where 300 groups from 19 States came together to share solidarity and build collective strategies. The National Urban Development Struggle Committee was also initiated.

Economic Empowerment

In the context of our work on leadership building in the unorganised sector through the livelihood, micro-finance and Co-operative Animator Training programme, 25 leaders have been trained. They have taken the leadership role in 7 co-operatives (credit, service and labour co-operatives). 2 co-operatives have been registered in the past year and marketing and business plans have been prepared by them, under YUVA's facilitation. Matrutva Catering Co-operative is now running as a self sustained institution.

Transformation and Empowerment

The housing struggle has led to the building up of a new cadre of 30 women leaders from the community. Children through their collective forum – Bal Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghatan – have, at the city level been able to strongly highlight the interlinkages between their loss of shelter and its impact on their education and health, along with other issues of sanitation and hygiene at the community level.

Apart from this, persistent awareness efforts with the allied systems such as the police on the issues of the street children, has led to some very positive steps being taken by the systems, such as the appointment of one child protection officer in every police station in Mumbai.

The vocal politicization of the youth over issues of employment, education, communalism etc., at the city, state, national and international level through dharnas and campaigns, has made them more confident of taking the lead at the community level, as well as in other foras. A number of the youth leaders are now being approached to participate and present their views in various government consultations such as the consultation on the employment issues of people with disabilities.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND OUTREACH

I Mumbai	70,000 families through response to evictions Over 31,500 families through flood relief 1000 unorganised sector workers enrolled as members of Assangatith Shramik Panchayat (hawkers, rag pickers, bamboo artisans, domestic workers) 2537 children, youth and women 82 community based organizations
II Nagpur	5700 families across 3 slum communities 4250 women members of the livelihood program 2 New Community Based Organizations (total CBOs in contact - 164) 327 new members in ASP, Nagpur. Established contact with unorganised sector workers in 12 communities (apart from street vendors and construction workers, 2 new groups that have joined ASP are cycle rickshaw pullers and home-based workers)
III Nalla Sopara	600 unorganized sector workers enrolled in ASP(hawkers, rag pickers, construction workers)
IV Navi Mumbai	250 unorganized sector workers enrolled in ASP (hawkers, construction workers, ragpickers). Totally 5000 unorganised workers reached out to
V Sangli	3000 unorganized sector workers (hawkers)
VI State and National	5 Municipal Corporations and 26 government organisations, non-government organisations and academic institutions through the governance programme 80,000 unorganized workers through Maharashtra Hawkers Forum 150 organizations through Social Security Forum