An Approach To Involving Children in Urban Planning

Report of A Workshop with Urban Planners, Architects and Municipal Officials
3–4 August 2015, Bhopal, India
Participants and the Praxis team at the Immersive Capacity Building organised in Bhopal from August 3-4, 2015
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Background

In light of the global trend of increasing urbanisation, cities need to emerge as spaces that cater to and nurture the varied needs and aspirations of the diverse categories and groups of people living in them – men, women, children, disabled and high and low income groups among others. However, in reality, primary and secondary data reveal that cities lend themselves as spaces of exclusion for the urban poor, particularly women and children. To address this discrepancy, Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices and the Institute of Town Planners, India, (MP Regional Chapter) organised an immersive capacity building workshop on child participation in urban planning for town planners from different cities of Madhya Pradesh.

Problems faced by Children

Praxis, with support from Bernard van Leer Foundation has, over the past year and a half, interacted with children living in urban slums across India. Our findings (http://bit.ly/1ghaxmH) show that children living in cities are exposed to different spaces in their childhood - home, playground, streets, by-lanes, schools, ICDS centres, parks, bus and railway stations, markets, residential homes and many more. The quality and environment of spaces play a crucial role as it determines the level of participation in and interaction with the space. Unique needs of children such as railings for staircases, easy to reach taps and switches, compound walls around the school, toilets that are not in secluded areas and grass in playground become some of the participation and use determinants.

Inclusion of Children in Urban Planning

Processes of developing City Development Plans (CDPs) and Detailed Project Reports (DPbyRs) – documents expected to be evolved for most urban planning and renewal schemes - and their monitoring are important spaces where community participation needs to be institutionalised, especially the participation of children, since urban planning continues to assume that what is good for adult males is good for children, women, elderly and the disabled and that they have similar needs and aspirations. Given this, urban planning and development should adopt the use of participatory processes to include the voices of children in the design and planning of structures in a meaningful way.

Our Experience

In addition to the interactions with children, our past experience has revolved around a national consultation organised on the issue in Delhi in June 2014, a piloting workshop with Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BMC) and immersive capacity building sessions with town planners from across the country. These indicate that child participation in planning processes is not only relevant but also feasible. Also, children are able to articulate their concerns and voice their aspirations for themselves and the wider community and contribute to urban planning and governance in an informed manner. Children are not only likely to make decisions and help with planning but are likely to be more creative than adults and provide unique design and planning solutions.

In a process facilitated with children, they shared that community toilets, besides being in good condition – clean, well lit and with running water – should also be accessible by disabled and old people. They added that the toilets should have western commodes and a ramp to access them. Girls mentioned the need for railings along the staircases which would not only ensure safety of young children but also that of girls and women, who carry water pots on their heads, and pregnant women. Children in most locations echoed the need for good ventilation in houses, which tended to be quite small, causing discomfort from smoke produced due to use of firewood for cooking. This posed health problems not only for the women, but the entire family, especially children. Children also mentioned that on roads, they preferred overbridges as they were safer than subways. They reasoned that since overbridges are open, children are in full view of the public around whereas the subways are closed spaces that are most often poorly lit or dark and there is a higher chance of harassment and abuse in subways.
In immersive capacity building sessions for urban development functionaries organised in Chennai and in Bhubaneswar, there was consensus on the principle of creation of child-friendly cities and towns, while acknowledging that the current urban planning and design did not reflect the same.

The investment towards the process of involving children can be feasible especially because of the manifold returns in terms of richness of data and most importantly, inclusiveness. For such inclusive urban planning and development, time, skills and commitment are essential. Given our interactions with urban development functionaries at Berhampur, Chennai and Bhubaneswar, we believe that the commitment exists. While the Municipal Commissioner of Berhampur stated that the corporation would ensure that child and disabled-friendly aspects of housing and infrastructure are considered in their work henceforth, planners and Urban Local Bodies representatives from different parts of the country pledged to incorporate elements of child participation in their work. Thus, what is required is a set of skills that are not difficult to learn and can be easily integrated to help facilitate interactions with children to elicit nuanced inputs from them.

**Immersive Capacity Building - Round 3**

Set against this backdrop, Praxis, with support from Institute of Town Planners, India, (MP Regional Chapter), organised the third immersive capacity building process with town planners, civil engineers, architects and academicians from Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore, Ujjain and Jabalpur. The workshop aimed at (a) exploring the significance and feasibility of involving children in urban planning and development using participatory tools; (b) sharing child-friendly plans evolved through discussions with urban development functionaries; (c) providing first hand experience of a structured engagement with group of slum children; and (d) discussing ways of applying learning in the functional context of the respective participants. This was a forum to share expertise on and challenges faced in child participation.

The participation of children in decision-making processes makes them partners in the city’s governance system. The immersive capacity building is a step to ensure child participation does not become merely another step in the planning and decision-making process but a practice informing all levels of the process. A broad outline of the two-day workshop is detailed in the image below:

**Day 1:** A broad overview of child participation in developing urban plans, methods of facilitation and practical application in urban slums in order to gain a hands-on experience of the theoretical knowledge built in the classroom

**Day 2:** Evolving child-friendly plans informed by inputs from children interacted with on Day 1 and getting it approved by them; discussions on commitment and way forward

**Aims and objectives** of the immersive capacity building were to:

- Acknowledge the significance of child participation in infrastructure related discussions
- Enable collective learning through experience sharing of urban development functionaries from across the country
- Develop skills on methods and processes that help respectfully engage with children and practically apply these in a field setting
- Share already evolved child-friendly development plans and gather feedback to strengthen it
## Participants

The 31 participants of the workshop included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Arun Kumar Khard</th>
<th>Mr Bharat Batham</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation: Assistant Engineer, Jabalpur Development Authority, Jabalpur</td>
<td>Designation: Assistant Engineer, Bhopal Development Authority, Bhopal</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Binayak Choudhury</th>
<th>Mr D.S. Mishra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation: Professor, School of Planning &amp; Architect</td>
<td>Designation: Executive Engineer, Jabalpur Development Authority Jabalpur</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr D.S. Tomar</th>
<th>Ms Indu Tripathi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation: Assistant Engineer, Gwalior Development Authority, Gwalior</td>
<td>Designation: Assistant Director, Town and Country Planning, Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Kaje Singh Gawali</th>
<th>Mr Mahesh Sirohiya</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation: Assistant Director, Town and Country Planning, Indore</td>
<td>Designation: Assistant Engineer, Municipal Corporation, Bhopal</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Manish Yadav</th>
<th>Ms Meenal Selukar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designation: Project Engineer, Gwalior Municipal Corporation, Gwalior</td>
<td>Designation: Urban Planner, Environmental Planning and Coordination Organisation, Bhopal</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr Meghraj Singh</th>
<th>Mr M.K. Trichal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Designation: Urban Planner, Gwalior Municipal Corporation, Gwalior</td>
<td>Designation: Executive Engineer (Civil), M.P. Housing and Infrastructure Development Board, Bhopal</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mr M.P. Mishra</th>
<th>Mr Nikhil Rajan Mandal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Designation: Sub-Engineer, M.P. Housing and Infrastructure Development Board, Bhopal</td>
<td>Designation: Professor, School of Planning &amp; Architect, Bhopal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. O.P. Chaurasia</td>
<td>Assistant Engineer, Municipal Corporation, Bhopal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. P.C. Choudhary</td>
<td>Executive Engineer, Bhopal Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. P.C. Jain</td>
<td>Assistant Engineer, Indore Development Authority, Indore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Prakrati Shrivastava</td>
<td>Student, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Prakash Sangamnerkar</td>
<td>Assistant Engineer, M.P. Housing and Infrastructure Development Board, Bhopal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. R.K. Singh</td>
<td>Chief City Planner, Indore Development Authority, Indore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. R. K. Singh</td>
<td>Executive Engineer, Bhopal Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sanjay Khare</td>
<td>Assistant Engineer, Jabalpur Development Authority, Jabalpur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sanjeev Kumar</td>
<td>Associate Urban Planner, Society for Integrated Development of Habitat, Bhopal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Prakrati Shrivastava</td>
<td>Student, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Rajiv Nigam</td>
<td>Joint Director, Urban Administration, Jabalpur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. R. K. Singh</td>
<td>Executive Engineer, Bhopal Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. S. K. Mishra</td>
<td>Executive Engineer, Bhopal Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sanjay Kumar Sadh</td>
<td>Sub-Engineer, Ujjain Development Authority, Ujjain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sanjeev Kumar</td>
<td>Associate Urban Planner, Society for Integrated Development of Habitat, Bhopal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Sanjiv Saxena</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Town and Country Planning, M.P.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Shyam Sunder Gupta</td>
<td>Superintending Engineer, Ujjain Development Authority, Ujjain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sumit Gothi</td>
<td>Architect, Sumit Gothi &amp; Associates, Bhopal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sunanda Panchbhai</td>
<td>Additional Commissioner, Jabalpur Municipal Corporation, Jabalpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sunil Kant Gupta</td>
<td>Engineer, Bhopal Development Authority, Bhopal</td>
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Children who supported the discussions
From Balveer Nagar
- Anurag
- Durgesh
- Soniya
- Shushmita
From PC Nagar
- Roshni
- Sahil
- Suraj

Alumni Facilitators
Shubhashish Banerjee, Chief Town Planner, Bhopal Development Authority and Chairman, Institute of Town Planners, India (MP Regional Chapter)
Vishnu Khare, Chief Town Planner, Jabalpur Development Authority

Facilitators from Praxis
Anusha Chandrasekharan
Aruna Mohan Raj
Tom Thomas

The field processes were supported by the Humara Bachpan Campaign.
Schedule

A session-plan for the two days is as per the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Plan</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience sharing to contextualise child-led participatory planning for inclusive cities and practical application in urban slums</td>
<td>August 3</td>
<td>10:00 - 11:00</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:45</td>
<td>Context setting by Praxis</td>
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<td>11:45 - 12:00</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identified scope for child participation in urban planning - Mr. Shubhashish Banerjee, Chairman, ITPI MP Regional Chapter, Bhopal</td>
<td>August 3</td>
<td>12:00 - 12:15</td>
<td>Building the case for child participation in urban planning</td>
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<td>12:15 - 13:15</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>13:15 - 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:00 - 14:20</td>
<td>Sharing of manual on issues and aspirations of children and discussion on spaces that are significant for children</td>
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<td>14:20 - 14:40</td>
<td>ABC of child participation</td>
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<td>14:40 - 15:50</td>
<td>Using participatory tools to gather data related to spaces from the perspectives of children</td>
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<td>15:50 - 16:20</td>
<td>Tea break followed by group-wise planning for field interaction, including orientation to field locations using maps prepared by children</td>
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<td>16:30</td>
<td>Leave for the field locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion on ways forward for planning on participatory creation of urban safe spaces in work settings</td>
<td>August 4</td>
<td>9:00 - 10:00</td>
<td>Sharing back of experiences and findings from the field</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10:00 - 10:30</td>
<td>Presentation on child-friendly Development Plan and City Development Plan by Mr Vishnu Khare, Chief Town Planner, Jabalpur Development Authority, Jabalpur</td>
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<td>10:30 - 11:00</td>
<td>Child-friendly DPRs</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:20</td>
<td>Tea Break</td>
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<td>11:20 - 13:00</td>
<td>Developing child-friendly plans and sharing the same with children from urban slums for their feedback</td>
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<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:00 - 14:30</td>
<td>Sharing recommendations for inclusion in the manual and module</td>
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<td>14:30 - 15:00</td>
<td>Action plan and commitments</td>
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<td>15:00 - 15:30</td>
<td>Key take-aways and departure</td>
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While the facilitators and participants adhered to this plan to a large extent, given the nature of discussions, some sessions were modified. This report details session-wise processes.
The Immersive Capacity Building Process

Getting to know the group and context setting

The two-day process began with participants introducing themselves. They briefly spoke about their profiles and the work they do.

### Levels of Planning
- Regional Plan
- District Plan/Metropolitan Plan
- Development Plan
- Zonal plan
- Area plan
- Projects
- Building plan

### Why Child Participation
- Smarter generation
- Unbiased/uninfluenced opinion
- To understand their needs and aspirations
- To ensure belongingness
- To ignite their mind
- Participation of user group
- Innovative/barrier free ideas
- Preparing them to be responsible citizen

Mr. Banerjee’s presentation was followed by a brief context setting by Tom Thomas, CEO of Praxis, who spoke about the need to make urban planning more inclusive. This was possible, he said by including in planning, poor and homeless children who are often left out. He noted that Praxis works with governments, individuals and institutions to achieve this end. He said that cities need to be futuristic, but not forgetting the past and should be inclusive and sustainable, looking at it from the lens of children.

‘Our Opinions Matter’: Film on Children’s Issues

The participants watched a participatory video - Satya Ye Kadve Hain (Bitter Truths), facilitated by Praxis and made by ten children living in Delhi - some of whom were homeless and others who lived in slums. The film prompted several debates among the participants during the workshop. The topics these revolved around are listed below.

- Why is there a focus only on poor children and the importance of talking to other children, too - Mr Nikhil Ranjan Mandal
- There should be concerted effort to showcase work done by children - Mr Rajiv Nigam
- What I found unique about the suggestions made by the children was the 10 watt hanging bulb in the toilets

Scope For Child Participation in Urban Planning And Implementation

Mr. Shubhashish Banerjee, in his capacity as the chairman of ITPI, inaugurated the workshop with a presentation drawing richly from his experiences at the immersive capacity building he attended in Bhubaneswar. He advocated the need for child participation in urban planning and stressed on the feasibility of the same.

He pointed out at the outset that of India’s 1.21 billion-strong population, 39% were children. He added that India’s child population of 400 million was the largest in any country in the world. He noted that he was initially apprehensive about involving children in planning but had come round to strongly advocating it among the others. He also pledged the support of ITPI to creating child-friendly urban spaces.
Shifting Focus: From Adult Able-Bodied Male to Differently-Abled Girl Living in Slums

The participants were taken through a short presentation, which in many ways summed up the focus of the workshop, which is that the default face of planning should shift from an able bodied man from a middle class family to a young disabled girl from a poor family to ensure better uptake and use of urban infrastructure. There was emphasis on two shifts:

(a) Adult male to Female child; and
(b) Able-bodied middle class person to a Dalit/tribal, poor, differently-abled girl child

In addition, the presentation spoke about the work done this far in terms of interacting with children, experts, planners and other urban development functionaries to evolve child-friendly plans that could be used and implemented in the preparation of plans. Through the two days, the participants were shown different sections of the module developed to facilitate children’s participation in urban planning.

The participants were then urged to discuss the importance and relevance of child participation in different contexts.

This was done through an exercise whereby the participants were divided into four groups. Each group was required to respond to one question each. The participants discussed within their groups and came up with reasons that they put down on cards. The floor was then opened to all groups to add anything they thought had been left out. Below are the four questions and the discussion points made within each group and the wider group of all participants.

**Group A. Why should a tribal/poor/Dalit disabled girl be default beneficiary of planning and design?**

- There is no gender bias in tribal/ dalit-poor hence inclusive planning is easier
- Universalisation of design shall by default include differently- abled girl child.
- Female emancipation shall help the entire society
- The secondary needs fulfillment depends on primary need fulfillment
- The tribal/ dalit poor girl should be schooled in general environment and not in special environment so that there is a sensitisation developed in society towards their abilities
- In the current social structure, a tribal/ dalit poor girl is most deprived. If they are considered as the base of planning, it can be fairly assumed that all classes will be accounted for
- Cultural, social and local aspects should be considered
Group B. Why should children be involved in planning processes?

‘Bacche man ke sacche (Children’s hearts are pure)’

- Because children are 2/5th of the population
- Children are the future users of any infrastructure / plan
- Children these days are a smarter generation
- To develop a sense of responsibility among them
- Participation leads to learning and working together
- To make them better citizens
- Children are less biased
- To develop civic sense / traffic sense among children
- Success of government schemes through sense of ownership, by involving them in plans
- Children are a surer medium of bringing future changes in society, such as cleaner India
- Participatory planning involving children would help their education and logical skills
- Involving children will lead to more innovative ideas in planning
- ‘Jis desh mein bachhe muskarathe hain, vo desh humeshaa muskarata hain (A country in which children smile, smiles forever)’
- There should be a lower age limit for consultation – should be 8 years

Group C. What are the institutional spaces available for child participation?

House planning
  a) selection of plot
  b) planning

Neighbourhood
  a) proximities of open/ recreational spaces
  b) Surveillance
  c) Signages/ way finding / walkability

Infrastructure
  a) Social infrastructure
    - SC educational institutions
    - Health
    - Recreational/ playspaces
    - Security and surveillance
    - Environmental sensitivity
    - Social peer
  b) Physical infrastructure
    - Transport
    - Sanitation
    - Drinking water space
    - Convenient shops

Institutional Spaces available for child participation
  - Bal Parliament
  - Social media groups
  - School debates
  - Keeping plans open for comments from children
  - Budget allocation for children
  - Space for children in area sabhas

Group D. What are the areas/domains in which children should/not be consulted?

Areas where children should be involved

Health
  - Gym, jogging
  - Garbage bin stand
How To Involve Children: Participatory Methods and Approaches

Whose Reality Counts?
The participants watched a seven minute animated film called “Whose Reality Counts?” to understand the basic philosophy of participatory methods and approaches. Some images from the film are below (it can be viewed at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzYv3dInZDI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzYv3dInZDI))

The film helped arrive at the acknowledgement that from the Government’s perspective, while there is a willingness to bring about development and change, participation has several barriers and a concerted effort is required to change that. The Government systems and processes are often so elaborate and rigid that they tend to become barriers.

Some of the points that emerged in the discussion include: People know better what would benefit them – so it is important to ask people about their needs; different people see different uses for the same thing; there is the need for everyone’s participation in planning processes; environment-based planning; the importance of making people take ownership and of working with the community.
ABC of participation

The importance of accommodating multiple viewpoints was communicated by using the adjacent image. Participants were asked to share what they saw in this picture and it was gradually revealed how the image was an optical illusion providing different perceptions.

Some exercises were facilitated to understand the attitude, behaviour change required for participation. The uppers and lowers exercise brought out the nuances around seating at different levels while a process is in progress. While most felt it was easier to communicate when both parties are sitting at the same level, a few felt that more important that seating was being able to maintain eye contact. For some, the standing position brought about a change in their attitude - it was of an officer and subordinate relationship and for some it was reflective of the ‘I know and you don’t know’ attitude. For some others the conversation was so interesting that it did not matter who was standing and who was sitting on the floor.

Child Participation: A Non-Negotiable Aspect of Urban Planning

The participants were then taken through sections of the module designed for their use in understanding the various facets of child participation. Some screenshots from the manual are arranged alongside.

The participants were divided into four groups. The groups had to draw the map of a slum and focus on two spaces they wanted to discuss on. Each group had to have one respondent to sharing information on facilities and resources in the slum while the others mapped it on the chart. The team had to refer to the handbook for instructions on how to facilitate a mapping exercise and on some relevant probes for each of the spaces. Each group had to map issues with regards to each space and come up with solutions to the issues.

The following charts were drawn up by the four groups.
Field Processes

Having evolved a theoretical understanding of the concepts of child participation and what kind of tools to use to facilitate this, a field engagement was organised to help the participants develop a hand-on experience of interacting with children for inputs on infrastructure design.

The participants were divided into two large groups going to two different field locations. One was to visit children in PC Nagar slums and the second in Balveer Nagar slums. Once they were divided, each group further split into two smaller groups. They were shown resource maps drawn by children from the respective areas. This helped them plan what they wanted to discuss with the children when they interacted with them.
Learnings from the field: Sharing Plans With Children

The participants shared their field experiences with each other. These are documented below.

Balveer Nagar

The road that leads into Balveer Nagar and the by-lanes are in poor condition. There are many pot holes that collect water. There is a garbage collection point at the entrance of Balveer Nagar and the garbage is overflowing into the street despite the Municipal Corporation vehicle collecting garbage everyday from the site. This the children said was because the same site was being used by four to five colonies to dispose garbage. There is no government health centre in the area and the community members usually avail of medical facilities at a private hospital close by. There is an anganwadi centre but the building is in a dilapidated state. There is a government school nearby. The school has no drinking water facility. It has a toilet but is used only by the staff. It has a playground where the basti children are not allowed to play after school. Few houses in Balveer Nagar have toilets in the house and most people defecate in the open. Girls and women find it difficult to defecate in the open with men and boys around. The boys and men also misbehave and do not leave the area. They harrass the women. There is an alcohol shop close by, around which drunk men and boys loiter, making it unsafe for women. Most women avoid going to defecate outside after sun down and have to wait until morning. There is one community tap per 10 households. The water does not suffice and there are fights often over water. All homes have a tiny space for bathing. There are no drains and the water from the houses flow into the lanes. This makes it difficult for people to walk and children often slip and fall and hurt themselves. This is commonly experienced in Balveer Nagar. Most houses have electricity supply but get bills for exorbitant amounts, as much as a lakh a month, which they are unable to pay. There is a play ground (China gate) but the children are not allowed to play there. Children from the government colony and their parents do not allow the children from the basti to play in that ground.

The children from Balveer Nagar also presented before the Bhopal Additional Commissioner and CEO of Bhopal City Link Limited Chandramouli Shukla a resource map of their slum made by them during the field visit.

They spoke about the issues related to inflated electricity bills, unsafe environment, overflowing drains, lack of play spaces, shortage of water supply and poor quality water, all of which they faced regularly. They recounted their daily experiences and requested the additional commissioner to take action to solve these problems.

P.C. Nagar and Meera Nagar

The roads in PC Nagar are unpaved and have many potholes. There are 306 houses in PC Nagar, most of which are kacha houses. The houses are equipped with a bathing space. There is only one community toilet in the location, and this is in the 12th lane. This, too, is privately owned and not a government enterprise. Most people defecate in the open. The drains in PC Nagar get clogged easily, leading to dirty water overflowing into the houses on some occasions. The individual houses have no access to electricity. One in 10 houses has a tap and many people are forced to get illegal connections from the pipeline. The water from the community taps enter the houses when they are left open. Disposal of waste near the school has created ‘daldal’ (sludge) there, making it difficult to walk. The situation has worsened because of unpaved roads, leading to accumulation of the sludge. Sludge gets formed because of accumulated garbage as there is no allotted space for garbage. Fights over water break out because there are inadequate number of taps. The people from the municipal corporation hardly ever visit these locations.
There are open, deserted spaces, that have made it unsafe for girls.

The problems they listed out included - lack of toilets, pollution/ squalor, improper drainage facilities, bathing spaces that are not covered, absence of a system for cleaning, and lack of street lights posing a danger, especially for children. They added that the quality of water was not good. It was yellow in colour and contained worms.

They demanded community toilets, mobile toilets, dustbins, covered drains, proper closed drainage channels, regular spraying of insecticides to kill off mosquitoes, water distribution and storage facilities such as water tanks, foot paths and asbestos for the roofing. They noted that the garbage should be thrown into the dump, the roads should be paved and the drains should be covered. They also mentioned that the municipal corporation must maintain the roads, drains and the other infrastructure.

Based on the information received through interactions with children at the two slums they visited, the planners drew maps for redevelopment for the slums. They also presented the plans to children from the respective slums and received their feedback. Based on that, design principles and strategies were evolved.

**Group 1: Balveer Nagar (Water)**

Using the map drawn by children on issues faced by them with regards to water, the planners developed the above plan to lay pipelines across the slum with a tank in the highland area so that the water flow and supply is easier. The plan included provision for a water filter in school so that the children in school are provided with clean drinking water.

**Children’s response:** The children felt the tank was located on the periphery. The planners explained that this was because the tank was located at the higher altitude to enable smooth flow of water.

**Group 2: Balveer Nagar (Slum redevelopment)**

Under JNNURM prepare a redevelopment plan that includes:
- G+3 housing structures
- Primary health centre
- Dispensary
- Community centres
- Overhead tank
- Collection point for garbage
- Separate park and playground space
- Anganwadi
- School
- Shopping centre

**Children’s Response:** An additional
collection point for garbage will be beneficial considering the number of households. Door to door collection of garbage will ensure that people do not dispose garbage outside their house. The garbage collection point should not be adjacent to the houses. While JNNURM housing is suggested, we have visited a few JNNURM housing sites and are aware of the issues with them. While *pucca* houses are provided, the space is very less to accommodate one family and the quality of construction is very poor.

**Group 3: PC Nagar (Sanitation)**

The group evolved a sanitation plan for the slum taking into account the problems the children had recounted in the field the previous day.

Their plan (above) provides 5 toilet blocks for the slum, which has 90-94 households. Each toilet block has 6 toilet seats. In addition, there are two bathing areas.

Some other aspects that were mentioned included -

- Cleaning of garbage bin twice a week
- The garbage bin will be such that the height of the bin is about 3-4 feet high and the rest is in a pit. This will reduce the height of the bin so that children can dispose garbage neatly
- Surface drain with one side open - ‘V’ type
- Community toilets
  - In each toilet, one would be a WC (proportion - 1 for 3 dwelling units)
  - Ond one bath - 1 for 5 dwelling units
- Separate toilets for men, women and disabled
- D. Public tap - 1 for 8 dwelling units
- E. Park/play area - walkable distance
- F. No wine shop in the vicinity
- G. School with separate toilets for boys and girls
- Grocery kiosks in walkable distances

**Children’s response:** The number of toilet seats for the slum is fewer and so is the bathing space. If we look at 90-92 dwelling units with an average of 5-6 members in each dwelling unit, there will be approximately 500 people in the basti. Which means about 16 persons per toilet seat and 25 persons per bathing space. This would mean fights and long queues in the morning to use the toilet and bathing space. The number of toilet complexes will have to be increased.
**Group 4: PC Nagar overall housing development plan**

The plan included:

- Dwelling units each of 35 sqm
- Community hall/space
- Garbage collection points
- *Pakka* roads
- Parks with green buffer around the periphery and in the centre to enable passive surveillance
- Cycle parking space adjacent to the park
- Water tank
- Anganwadi centre
- Health centre
- Ration shop
- Livelihood centre

Each dwelling unit will consist of:

- Two bedrooms
- One Hall
- One kitchen
- One toilet
- One bathing space
- One wash basin outside
- One study room
- A balcony

The house will have electricity and water supply. It will be constructed using good material and have sufficient number of windows for good ventilation.

**Children’s response:** The colony should have a compound wall especially for children’s security. The houses should have a small store room and an extra room.

**Child-Friendly Plans: Making participation possible**

Mr Vishnu Khare, Chief Town Planner, Jabalpur, and a participant at the previous Immersive Capacity Building in Bhubaneswar, presented the child-friendly Development Plan he had shared inputs on. He took the participants through each phase of the planning process and outlined the scope for involving children in it through group discussions, child clubs and other mediums.
Subsequently, the child-friendly detailed project reports as well as child-friendly city development plan were shown to the participants. They reviewed the child-friendly plans and suggested mechanisms for child participation. Some are listed below:

- Essay competitions
- Briefings in schools
- Social media platforms such as Facebook
- Whatsapp groups
- Bal Panchayats/parliament
- Group discussions

**Key Take-Aways**

Bringing the two-day process to an end, the facilitators initiated a feedback session, seeking key takeaways, commitments and comments. These are listed below.

**Mr Sanjeev Kumar:** The two-day workshop was very engaging. Some games were meant to wake us up but no one was sleeping (as the process was quite interesting). It was good talking to children and overall, it has been an enjoyable experience.

**Mr S.S. Gupta:** The workshop was fruitful, also because we were a small group - as it is said, a small family is a happy family. We will try and see how children can be involved in planning.

**Mr Meghraj Singh:** This is a new practice that we have come to learn about. We can start at home - by asking children what can be done in various contexts and seeking their opinions.

**Mr Kaje Singh Gawali:** Participating in the workshop felt good. I have learnt something new after coming here and I will try to incorporate children’s participation wherever possible.

**Mr M.K. Trichal:** We experienced the difference between a seminar and workshop. It felt different working together and so many different ideas came up. My work is provision of estimates. Often children’s play spaces get ignored in layouts. Even places where play spaces are allotted, we usually put some fencing and feel our work is done. We can always spend about five lakhs and provide with swings and play equipments and can also provide a space with sand. The interaction with the children showed us know how important it is for them. There is a need to advocate in the communities about the schemes as this will increase the uptake of various schemes and when there is increased uptake, child participation can be incorporated easily.
Mr. Arun Kumar Khard: I am a Civil Engineer and child participation is not really required in our field of work. But I will try and use elements of child participation wherever possible.

Mr R.K. Singh: A plan to build 3,000 homes in Indore has just been approved. So this a good time for having attended this workshop. We hope to use what we learnt. Also all this while, we have seen that the JNURM projects were not taken up by the community. We always wondered why the urban poor were not living in these houses and that they always wanted more. Now we know their reasons - not enough space is provided under the housing projects and there are not enough rooms. Now we know what their demands are and the children have helped us wake up to reality. Such participation will help us improve the housing projects and make them successful.

Mr Sunil Kant Gupta: Till now, workshops have always had seniors and experts talking on the issues of children. And very often they were very boring sessions and the implementation part was mostly missing. The good part about this workshop was that we learnt from the children themselves, their issues, problems and solutions. We will try and continue this practice of listening to children.

Ms Swarna Dutt: I do not know how to make a change in the governance structure. But I have a personal interest in working with children. During my college days, a few of my friends had the desire to start an NGO for children - an education imparting centre. After yesterday’s session, I spoke to them and we have decided to start an NGO. We hope to inform children from fifth standard itself about how plans are made and how these can have children’s participation. There may not be direct participation but we hope it will bring about some change.

Mr Shubhashish Banerjee: I am attending this workshop for the second time. The first time I attended (the Bhubaneswar workshop), I remember we were very stiff and felt that what was being suggested was not possible. Then something transformed within us in two to three days. This time (at this workshop), we were able to see the transformation in others. There was some stiffness on the first day, second day was much better. What we’ve heard here is something that is now a part of our sub-conscious. You will now evolve the idea in your mind further and see ways of utilising it.

Mr D.S Mishra: I would like to say that interacting with children and different people from different experts’ groups was great. After having heard from the children their problems and what they want, we will try and implement it.

Ms Sunanda Panchbhai: This workshop was quite unique undoubtedly and am sure all of us agree. We can use the learnings from the workshop. Even in the family we usually ask children about decorations at festivals, about clothes. But to consult children for developing government plans was a new and unique idea. We need to incorporate this idea strongly within the planning processes. We should have the opportunity to see their living conditions and ask them about their experiences so as to bring about a change at the personal and the government level.

Mr D.S Tomar: Our engineers make plans and oversee construction. In our plans we always ignored children. Now that will be different. This is the first workshop I’ve been to where children are a part of the workshop. In our experience, people living in slums have many varied demands, that are at times unreasonable. However, here, the demands of children were very simple and basic- a study room, kitchen, clean drains and covers for drains. These can definitely be fulfilled.

Mr Prakash Sangamnerkar: The experience of interacting with children is great. It is a very good topic and if I had not come here, I would have missed understanding such an important issue.

Ms Indu Tripathi: This is my first workshop. I did not understand much in the first few hours but from the second half, it got interesting. My experience in the field was memorable. I will never forget it. By talking to children and looking at their conditions, I realised that they have so many troubles - water shortage, open defecation, low-hanging wires. As a planner, I can ensure that as part of the master plans, the space
allocated for open spaces are developed into parks and play grounds. Whether it is BDA, Housing Board or any private builder, they provide for play spaces for children in their plans and for EWS I can ensure that along with play spaces, spaces are allocated for schools, anganwadi, community toilets and health centres. I really liked the workshop.

Ms Shalini Saxena: I am very impressed by the workshop. I really liked the visit to the slum and it was an eye opener. Taking from the game we played, where we were challenged to move from one position of holding hands to another position of holding hands, without letting each other go, what I have learned is how we can use child participation to ensure that we can make positive changes in the lives of children and bring it back to what is should be.

Mr Manish Yadav: Usually, workshops and seminars are expert oriented, where the involvement of participants is very limited. This was my first workshop where the participants were involved throughout the two days. What I am taking away with me is that the 39 per cent population of children cannot be ignored. Their ideas and concerns need to be taken into consideration. So I will keep in mind some of the issues raised by children and hope to address them in my future projects.

Mr Sumit Gothi: This opportunity for learning and sharing of experiences has led to generation of knowledge in the public domain. Praxis facilitated the discussions in an interesting way.

Mr Sanjay Kumar Sadh: I was very happy with my visit (to the urban slums as part of field work) and to see children’s problems and their confidence. I will work towards child participation in the planning processes within my department.

Ms Meenal Selukar: This was the first such workshop I attended and I am very happy. This is also the first time my ideas have been accepted through this workshop.

Mr P.C. Choudhary: On the first day, I was very stiff. But on the second day, I was so impressed to hear the children speak. I hope to work for children and on affordable housing.

Mr Vishnu Khare: On the first day (of the ICB Bhubaneswar workshop that he had attended earlier), I was completely opposed to children being part of plans but by the second day I was so impressed that I was ready to agree to a regional child participatory planning. That is why I agreed to come to this workshop as a facilitator. We need to accept and be open to new things.

Mr M.P. Mishra: I have seen a change in myself by attending this workshop.
Snapshots from the Immersive Capacity Building