Immersive Capacity Building on Child Participation in Urban Planning

Event Report
11 - 13 December 2014

Organised by Praxis - Institute for Participatory Practices
with support from Bernard van Leer Foundation
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Immersive Capacity Building Process</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know the group</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose Reality Counts?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default Planning: Shifting Emphasis</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satya yeh kadve hein (Bitter truths)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building linkages between participants’ experiences and the immersive capacity building</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building the case for Child Participation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Barriers and Solutions to child participation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Methods and Approaches</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Processes &amp; Sharing Key Learnings</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 and particularly women and children.

Problems faced by Children

Children living in cities are exposed to different spaces in their childhood - home, playground, streets, byelanes, 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 (DPRs) – 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

Our experience with Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BMC) as well as our interactions with children from other locations and the National Consultation on Inclusion of Child-Friendly Components in Urban Renewal Schemes and Policies and Developing Child-Impact Indicators organised in Delhi in June 2014 indicates that child participation in planning processes is not only useful 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 along with being in good condition – clean, well lit and with running water - should also be accessible by disabled and old people. That the toilets should have western commodes and a ramp to access them. Girls mentioned the need for railing 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. This led to health problems not only to the women cooking food but the entire family including children. Children also mentioned that on roads, they preferred over-bridges and perceived them as safer than subways since over bridges are open and children are in the 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.

While all stakeholders in urban planning and development agree on the principle of creation of child-friendly cities and towns, the current urban planning and design does 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 interaction with the Berhampur Municipal Corporation we believe that commitment is present. The Municipal Commissioner of Berhampur stated that the BMC would ensure that child and disabled-friendly aspects of housing and infrastructure are considered in their work henceforth. 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**

Set against this backdrop, Praxis organised a three day process with a mix of representatives who were officials of state governments of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, those belonging to Municipal Corporations of Berhampur, Bhopal, Indore, Mallapuram, Perinthalmanna and Trichy, representatives from allied bodies like All India Institute for Local Self Government, consultants from entities that facilitate CDPs and DPRs and also from Humara Bachpan. The workshop aimed at (a) exploring the significance and feasibility of involving children in urban planning and development; (b) learning child participation methods and approaches; and (c) providing first hand experience of a structured engagement with group of slum children; and (d) discussing on applying learning in the functional context of the respective participants. This would be a forum to also share expertise on and challenges faced in child participation. The learnings from the workshop were to be added to the interactive manual on participatory creation of urban safe spaces for children, which will also be shared with the participants.

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 three days is detailed in the image below:

**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
- Identify ways to feasibly incorporate elements of participatory creation of urban safe spaces for children in on-going work
## Participants

The twenty-one participants of the workshop included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Institution/Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. (Ms.) Alli</td>
<td>Designation: Medical Officer, Trichy Municipal Corporation, Tamil Nadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Arvinder Dhull</td>
<td>Designation: District Town Planner, Panchkula, Haryana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Basant Kumar Rajak</td>
<td>Designation: Expert - Specialist Urban Planner, Bhopal Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Binu Francis</td>
<td>Designation: Municipal Secretary, Mallapuram, Kerala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Gajanand Ram</td>
<td>Designation: Town Planner, Urban Development Department, Government of Jharkhand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Jai Prakash Khasa</td>
<td>Designation: District Town Planner, Panchkula, Haryana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. K. Jayagandhi</td>
<td>Designation: Head of Department, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Manoj Kumar Gupta</td>
<td>Designation: Class A Engineer, Town &amp; Country Planning Department, Baddi, Himachal Pradesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Mukesh Mohapatra</td>
<td>Designation: Urban Planner, OP&amp;HS, Bhubaneswar, Odisha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Prabir Kumar Saha</td>
<td>Designation: Project Manager, National Buildings Construction Company, Odisha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Rajesh Nagal</td>
<td>Designation: Joint Director Town &amp; Country Planning Division, Indore, Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. S. Rajalakshmi</td>
<td>Designation: Planning Officer, Health and Social Welfare, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Shahid Ullah</td>
<td>Designation: Urban Infrastructure Design Engineer, OP&amp;HS, Bhubaneswar, Odisha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Sangram Panda</td>
<td>Designation: Assistant Commissioner, Berhampur Municipal Corporation</td>
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The facilitators were: Anusha Chandrasekharan, Aruna Mohan Raj, Indu Prakash Singh; Pradeep Narayanan and Sowmyaa Bharadwaj

The field processes were supported by: Mary George, Mohan, Ruth Stanley and Stanley Joseph
A session-plan for the three days is as per the table below:

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<tr>
<th>Session Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11 December</strong></td>
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<td>9:30 - 10:00</td>
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<td>15:30 - 15:50</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 on the first day were modified. This report details session-wise processes.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>15:50 - 16:30</td>
<td>Challenges to child sensitivity and child participation in groups led by:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) Ms. S Rajalakshmi, Planning Officer, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Mr. Saifudeen, Municipal Secretary, Perinthalmanna</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Mr. Jai Prakash Khasa, District Town Planning, Panchkula</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4) Mr. Sahid Ullah, Urban Infrastructure Design Engineer, OP&amp;HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:30 - 17:15</td>
<td>ABC of child participation</td>
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<td>17:15 - 17:30</td>
<td>Sharing of field situation</td>
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<td>12 December</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>9:00 - 9:30</td>
<td>Recap of the previous day</td>
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<td>9:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>Thought Shower</td>
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<td>10:00 - 11:00</td>
<td>Participatory Tools</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:20</td>
<td>Tea Break</td>
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<td>11:20 - 12:00</td>
<td>Participatory Tools</td>
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<td>12:00 - 12:10</td>
<td>Sharing experiences of field engagement by Mr. Sangram Panda, Assistant Commissioner, Berhampur Municipal Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:20 - 13:00</td>
<td>ABC of child participation</td>
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<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:00 - 15:30</td>
<td>Group-wise planning for field interaction including an orientation of field locations using maps</td>
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<td>15:30</td>
<td>Leave for the field locations</td>
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<td>20:30</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 December</td>
<td>Discussion on ways forward for participatory creation of urban safe spaces and planning in work settings</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 - 11:00</td>
<td>Sharing back of experiences and findings from the field</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:20</td>
<td>Tea Break</td>
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<td>11:20 - 12:00</td>
<td>Sharing recommendations for inclusion in the manual and module</td>
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<td>12:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>Action plan and commitments</td>
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<td>13:00</td>
<td>Lunch and departure</td>
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The Immersive Capacity Building Process

Getting to know the group

The session began with participants introducing themselves and detailing their profile, along with a little about what drives them. What resonated across the room in various languages was the acknowledgement that child friendly urban infrastructure was far beyond the imagination of most participants. Mr. P. K. Saha said, “I never looked at construction from the point of view of children.” and “Child Participation is a new area for me”, according to Mr. Amrinder Dhull. There was also an overall openness and willingness to learn and unpack the scope for inclusion of children’s voices in design related decision making processes. Some noteworthy thoughts shared include, “I have been involved in CDP, mobility plan, but I have never considered the participation of children in my work. I would like to replicate learnings from this workshop in my work”, Mr. Gajanand Ram; “We will ensure we put in child-friendly components in our work.”, Sangram Panda and “We are worried by the public spaces that are being eaten by development plans” — Rajesh Nagal

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 Governments systems and processes are often so elaborate and rigid that they tend to be come barriers.

Default Planning: Shifting Emphasis

The participants were then 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 poor differently-abled
Satya yeh kadve hein (Bitter truths)

The participants watched a participatory video made by ten children in Delhi - some of whom were homeless. The film prompted several thoughts and discussions - these have been detailed overleaf:

“‘Sunoji’- they want us to listen! Listening to children is important. Also, we need to hear the poor children out. There cannot be ‘our children’ and ‘their children’.” – Mr. Shrinivas Indapurkar

“The context very often differs. The movie shows children complaining about low-hanging wires. In Berhampur the situation is different. Poor people live under high-tension wires! This is so because the only spaces left for them are those that are dangerous and unsafe to live in. Slum dwellers live where “no-one” lives” – Mr. Sangram Panda

“Just like children, Urban Planners also need to raise their voices and only then will they be heard and their ideas related to child-friendly infrastructure be implemented.” – Mr. Basant Kumar Rajak

“We need a future where children don’t ‘need’ to be heard, they ‘have’ to be heard!” - Mr. Sangram Panda

“Unauthorised colonies come up due to gap in government provisions and services.” – Mr. Binu Francis

“Contexts are different- Kerala has different issues.” - Mr. Binu Francis

“In JNNURM, IHSDP, BSUP there is no consideration for child participation.” – Mr. Arvinder Dhull

“In Haryana, parks and play ground both are provided.” – Mr. Arvinder Dhull

“In-situ Kamyaab Hai” – Mr. Sangram Panda

“In the film the parks are more like garbage dumping site!” – Mr. Sangram Panda

In addition to these specific comments about the film, the participants shared that:

- There is a general lack of response on thinking about development programmes and infrastructure affecting the poor. An example shared was that we often want our domestic labour (such as maids and drivers) to be on time but we rarely sit back to think about he difficult circumstances of their lives and lack of access to basic facilities
- There is a need to bring all children together - not just poor children living in slums. Additionally, instead of clubbing “women and children” together in one category, to think of them as separate constituencies.
• In addition to this, there needs to be an awareness building of resettled families (what one participant referred to as “Change Management”)

**Building linkages between participants’ experiences and the immersive capacity building**

This process of linkage building was done through two sessions. Participants from Municipal Corporations and those from Planning backgrounds shared their ideas and notions (and in some cases experiences) about child friendly urban planning components.

**Municipal Corporations**

The presentations by five individuals was summarised on cards and can be seen in the image alongside. The presentations provoked some thinking among participants and discussions followed.

**Berhampur**

• Budgeting for the scope for child participation in planning is required given that when child-friendly components are incorporated in any infrastructure planning, there will be a cost implication. It is important to identify the issues that can be addressed with no cost implications.
• As a first step, one should encourage meetings and gatherings of children with less or no cost – child representation in Basti Sabhas, Children’s Congress. Policy making and scheme implementation needs to universally have norms in them.
• Unless child participation is in the basic tenets of the policy, it will be difficult to incorporate the same since government officials have no driving force and they have to adhere to guidelines. If such a policy did exist, there would be no competition among states to demonstrate which one includes children in planning – it will no more be a prerogative of well meaning officials, but rather something that everyone will be required to do.

**Bhopal**

• Urban renewal schemes should ensure that housing is not only G+3 or G+4 but that there are other common community infrastructure such as halls and parks.
• With children, there are multiple issues at play. With education, there are schemes like School Chalo and Mid-Day Meals. There also needs to be a move towards reducing drop-out rate and a more supportive environment needs to be provided for 14-16 year olds.
• For health, there need to be more regular and rigorous child health check-up camps. Additional schemes like raah giri, should also be encouraged to promote physical exercise.
• For children with disabilities there should be facilities just as there are ramps at polling booths. This should apply in spaces they access if not universally.
• For children who use drugs, needs to changed given that the current rehabilitation process for children with addictions especially those living in platforms instead there is further criminalization of these children.
• Government should provide for child care services for families with working parents especially for those from poor backgrounds. Creches (*palna ghar*) to be better maintained.
• Departmental coordination is needed such as between WCD, UDD and departments dealing with persons with disabilities
• Other programmes in place for children include Beti Bachao – awareness programme to reduce mortality and Childline (1098)
• There should be a single window system and biometric cards for listing migrants so that their children don’t lose out
• Urban planners need to raise their voices for them to be heard and their ideas to be implemented
• And most importantly, there is a need for change in mindset of people who usually believe “Those (poor) children will spoil you”

**Mallapuram**

• In the CDP, Master Plan, CIP and so on, there are no provisions to safeguard interests of children. Given this, the Government officers need some sort of special policy provisions are needed. There is a Child Rights Commission situated at the ULB level and this could be the starting point for such policy.
• There was a recommendation that each ward should have Bal Sabhas and when opinions are regularly raised in ward sabhas, these could be used as forums to voice children’s needs
• In terms of infrastructure, the ICDS Anganwadi centre is the primary starting point to protect children
• In terms of what already exists for children that could be leveraged is the martial arts programme for girls, the ‘Safe Campus programme’ which promotes an alcohol free environment and the fact that 5% of the total annual plan has to be earmarked for the welfare/protection/development of children/aged/handicapped
• Monitoring is necessary to ensure school drop-outs among EWS children is not due to health reasons or child labour

**Trichy**

The discussion centred around what already exists for children
• From 2006 onwards there have been community toilets for children
• Municipalities are building theme parks for children to play in
• Rain water harvesting is taught to children in schools
• Adolescents are made aware of the harmful effects of addictions
• Use of sanitary napkins and their disposal is also discussed
• Child labourers are given informal education
• De-worming is done to reduce anaemia
• CBOs and SHGs are formed to maintain toilets and the Corporation has a phone helpline for sanitation maintenance for all schools
• Sex education is provided to adolescents
• Children are taught how to grow plants
• Amma’s kitchen (a Government subsidised food programme) provides subsidised food and now food diversity in meals (millets) have been introduced in Tamil Nadu

**EQUI-T (All India Institute for Local Self Governance)**

• The first thing that needs to be done is to create a system of interaction between all classes of people – to move away from sympathy to seeing everyone at par. This should reflect in the schooling system. The Municipality school and private schools create a division and we need to question this and see a way of overcoming this
• There should also be alternatives to the 10+2+3 system of education – and all kids of skill based education should be promote
• A proper maintenance of infrastructure is important and in toilets equipment should be provided for cleaning
• There needs to be increased gender sensitivity and one needs to promote safety of girls as it a very challenging area

A noteworthy quote from the discussions is “Child is the father of man – we’ve made them step-parents”
Urban Planners

The presentations by planners was summarised on cards and can be seen in the image alongside.

Haryana
- We don't think of asking children because we were never asked as children and as parents we assume things on their behalf.
- Licensing norms are applied to zones based on their potential for development. So, for housing board norms the key is that cost of land should be low. So as per these norms any low-cost housing built and requires cheap land is automatically far from public infrastructure.
- In building plans for public infrastructure all statutory guidelines are followed as per checklists – ramps, toilets.
- The scope of work covers only sub-regional plans in nine districts. In planning, once zonal demarcation is done even bodies like HUDA rarely show the layout to the public.
- Government office requirements are taken into consideration in the planning – health, transport. Government gives concurrence based on a feedback from different departments and then there are district level feedback and approvals. At this level only Principal Secretaries are invited and the benefits that will be given to certain groups are explained to them. A 30 day deadline is followed for the draft plan to be notified as final and this becomes a 20 year statute. The entire process takes 2-3 years.
- The system requires greater transparency as things are rarely displayed for public to comment upon.
- Public, which includes children, are generally ignored and this is probably the reason why there are so many disputes on parks, roads etc. People file cases in court and development stops.

Jharkhand
- All the data of 65 towns/CDPs in Jharkhand is available online. The CDP is just a vision and supplements the Master Plan.
- Planning Acts/norms do not get revised as per need or development. Building bye-laws are not modifiable and there is sometimes beauty in the rigidity of planning codes so that arbitrary changes are not made. The National Building code was modified after 22 years and often we don’t consult departments that raise difficult questions. But space doesn’t wait for us and we often build several years after planning, making the original plan redundant.
- The issue is different norms apply for the poor – it is assumed that a small space will suffice for them. Malls, airports have equal ratio of toilets and the same should apply to the poor. Women have increased renal failure and this is because provision of toilets is half of what is provided for men – 50% female provision in building bye-laws. Marginalisation of poor takes place by telling them how much space they are eligible for. What we should aim for is Human planning not status-wise planning!
- Municipal acts mandate planning and most spaces are pre-designated – common spaces have been made commercial. Parks as we see are often given to private builder. One never gets to what children need. “As a planner I have filed a counter affidavit against such violations and the case is pending in court.”
- Measures like mid day meal schemes etc are preventive and there is no emphasis on curative measures which is what needs to be changed.
- Convergence between departments is needed.
Madhya Pradesh

• “Experts make plans as sole custodians!” Planners create ‘expert’ plans with low participation.
• No plan to be prepared in isolation – city is for citizens. Citizens as a stakeholder in planning. Ideally, planning will have to be done keeping different segments in mind – Privileged and under privileged; also on the basis of age – 0-5, upto 15, above 15 etc. since different age groups have different needs and requirements
• There should be 50% stake of children in planning. Not just open spaces but also indoor game facilities need to be thought of for children
• Norms and provisions – both are needed for any successful planning and in fact urban planning should be included in the school curriculum

Tamil Nadu

• There are several provisions in place for children - but none specifically to infrastructure related to them. Some of these include:
• In preparation of the 12th FYP for the state, there was a consultation with visually impaired students to factor their needs and requirements into the plan Budgetary allocations for children
• Cell to address child labour
• Promotion of child adoptions
• Cradle baby schemes
• Girl child protection

Building the case for Child Participation

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 below:
Upon sharing the issues from different sections of the manual, some participants has this to say:

“Let us eradicate adult hegemony in planning – Mr. Sangram Panda
“Eradicate all physical and social barriers” – Mr. Binu Francis
“Let us make master plans three-dimensional, using GIS maps, other new tools so that children can use these to contribute their views”, Mr. Nagal

This was followed by an exercise of dividing the participants into four groups. (The participants had to first identify themselves based on their profile whether as those associated with planning or those associated with municipalities. With an almost even split of 10 and 11 individuals, each of these groups was further split into two.) Each group had to respond to one question each and come up with five reasons for the same. The questions and their respective responses are below. While each group came up with its list of five the discussions were opened up and the points below include what the non-group members added on:

1. Why a tribal poor differently abled girl child should be the default beneficiary for planning and design focus?
   • The physically challenged girl child only knows the day-to-day problems faced by her. Planner is a viewer but the physically challenged girl child is the affected and should be included in planning
   • The girls has all difficulty hence when we consider her, we plan for all
   • The girls should not think in any way that she is anyway different from others and convey her need in spatial planning
   • Secure and safe place to live, to overcome the harassments faced by them
   • Provision of disabled toilets in school and public places
   • Provide education with comfortable seating and pathway to reach the class
   • Create a livelihood feasible to them by training them in that particular job and provide facilities
   • Poor disabled girl child covers some of the most marginalised
   • To understand obstacles – physical and social barriers
   • Auditory signals and tactile paths for the disabled

2. Why children should be involved in the planning?
   • They are the future of the city
   • It is important to catch them during the budding stage
   • They constitute 15% of the population
• They know their needs better than any other section and may have novel ideas
• God speaks through children
• Children are relatively unbiased
• By consulting children, we develop their ownership

3. What are the institutional spaces available where child participation can be institutionalised (preparation of DPR, Master Plan, CDP, allocation of houses) etc?
• Policy level – Identification of issues
• Norms and DCRM
• Development Plan level
• Zonal Plan
• Planning level – layout
• DPR – implementing level
• O&M level children should be involved
• Bring master plans into 3 dimensional plans so children are able to understand better and contribute more
• Make children aware of where their contribution is required – sensitise them for focused discussions
• Make children understand where their contribution is needed – break things down for them
• Accountability level – children can prepare report cards
• At the enforcement and compliance level

4. What are the areas/domains (housing, playground, transport, etc.) in which children should be consulted; and are there any area in which children need not be consulted?
• Deciding education school infrastructure
• Safe housing
• Health related issues
• Transport
• Sanitation and Water Supply
• Use of Public spaces – grounds, parks
• Child labour
• Socio-psychological issues
• Child labour needs to be curbed since eradication seems impossible
• Grievance redressal mechanism
• Different infrastructure that children access should include child participation in their building and planning
• Inter-personal relationship, harassment can be tackled if children are consulted
• Different schools have different standards and different cost implications
• Currently education is employment based – curriculum development should include children

The groups then unpacked water, sanitation, housing and open spaces from the point of view of action that could potentially be taken by municipalities and planners. Images of their discussion summaries are below:
Identifying Barriers and Solutions to child participation

The participants were then regrouped differently to discuss the barriers and obstacles within Governments and Municipalities and solutions to overcome some of these barriers.

The barriers and solutions shared by the participants are listed below:

**Barriers**
- No provision in the prevailing Act to consider them as stakeholders
- Planning system till now has no mindset to consult child
- In consultation process children are left out and not considered as potential stakeholders not by any conspiracy but simply by ignorance
- Lack of consultations
- Patronising attitude of society
- Non-availability of norms for making plans child inclusive
- Poor identification of stakeholders
- Lack of good practices in child participation
- Non-utilisation of available planning norms, skills and expertise
- Budgetary constraints
- Non-sensitisation of stakeholders
- Disconnect between planning and implementation
- Exclusion of marginalized groups including children and transgenders
- Lengthy process to prepare plans
- Poor monitoring
- Lack of government will
- Political pressure
- Corruption
- Litigations

**Solutions**
- Children should be made stakeholders in the planning process by mandatory modification in the Act/other document
- Formal guidelines for participation & change in Building Code
- Child-friendly structures
- Good roads & increased transport facilities. Shared autos to keep a check on school drop-outs. Dedicated transport system for children
- Proper slum survey & preparation of plans
- Appropriate process for identifying beneficiaries
- Community participation and validation of data
- Proper coordination between departments
- Model slum development
- Consider livelihood options in case of relocation
- Mechanism for consultation at government level and link this with annual/5-year plans
- Build children’s ownership
- Ways to enforce legal provision compliance
- Redressal mechanisms
- Positive discrimination for vulnerable section
- Convergence between departments
- Allocation of special funds for location-specific problems – fluorosis, coal mining area
- Good health facility closer to home
- Playgrounds for girls
- Schools should be close to home
- Social welfare should be fought at the level at which indoctrination of ideas takes place such as socialisation in family and community
- Social ostracisation of persons discriminating against others
- Counselling of adolescents and juveniles
Participatory Methods and Approaches

Back to back and Front to Front

In order to understand the significance of seating, body language and other non-verbal cues in relation to communicating in groups to facilitate participatory methods, the participants were taken through a quick exercise of attempting to converse sitting back to back and then to face forward and be distracted by inappropriate body language.

Mapping exercises
Participants were split into four groups which went through the detailed instructions in their handbooks on how to facilitate resource maps. Each group had some respondents sharing information on the facilitates and resources in the slum while the rest of the group members mapped the slum on paper.
Pillars of Participation

The participants discussed the three pillars of participation (as seen alongside) - the personal linked with the appropriate attitude and behaviour change needed for facilitating participatory processes; the professional associated with the knowledge of the participatory tools and methods and the institutional which was related largely to the environment in which they work. What was discussed was the need for all three to be in sync for the successes of participation of young children.

Ranking

The participants were then taken through a practical demonstration of ranking, a tool that could potentially use in the field to understand how children ranked their preferences and the rationale that they shared for the same. It helped generate insights into issues that may not arise in regular discussions. The ranking exercise done for demonstration was of seven actors that the group were familiar with and named as their favourite and what evolved was their preferred ranks for them. This was then used to demonstrate how similar exercises with children could help prioritise their issues and the potential for discussing their aspirations and preferences for change. (The images alongside are of the final ranking of actors and the aspiration map drawn by children after sharing issues)

Field Processes & Sharing Key Learnings

The participants were divided into two large groups of ten going to two different field locations. One was to visit children in KK Nagar, a location they had seen in the film about the urban poor that they had watched the previous day and the second group, to a location along the beach near Santhome church. Once they were divided, each location group further split into two smaller groups and were shown resource maps drawn by children in those respective areas. This helped them plan what they wanted to query the children about when they interacted with them.
Some images from the field processes are below:

The following morning, the participants shared the experiences of the field process, their key findings, anything that they had learned and an understanding about group dynamics - what they might do differently if they repeated the exercise.

Some images from this presentation session are below:
Assessment

The participants were taken through a presentation about characteristics of ten different animals to reflect on how some of these characteristics might unconsciously take prominence in our work, and to be aware of the same.

Following up from the sharing of field processes the groups then did a self-assessment of their work in the field as per the criteria below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score 1</th>
<th>Score 2</th>
<th>Score 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asking</td>
<td>Discussion between facilitator and children</td>
<td>Discussion among children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing for children</td>
<td>Drawing with children</td>
<td>Drawing by children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to problems</td>
<td>Analysing problems</td>
<td>Consensus building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator is expert (according to children and facilitator)</td>
<td>Facilitator is expert (according to children but not facilitator)</td>
<td>Children become experts according to children. They feel proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing only visible issues</td>
<td>Listing some hidden issues</td>
<td>Willing to share sensitive and personal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy level low at the end - tired</td>
<td>Same as it started</td>
<td>High energy level at the end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children providing information for us</td>
<td>Children providing information also for themselves</td>
<td>They have a plan to use the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/ Preachers to them</td>
<td>Advisors on how they should live</td>
<td>Listeners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflections

1. Ms. Rajalakshmi
Very new experience for me. It was a healthy environment for learning. I will tell my seniors the significance of child participation in planning. I did not have the opportunity of visiting a slum so far. Yesterday was the first time and I learnt a lot.

Children of prisoners, sex workers and child-headed families need to be involved in planning processes.

2. Mr. Basant Kumar Rajak
This is a new concept for me. The planning perspective needs to be changed to include this new concept. There are many schemes that talk of stakeholder participation but they do not include stakeholder participation, leave alone child participation. Crores of rupees are spent on CDPs but children are not included in them. Having been to the field and experiencing ground realities, I feel the role of planners needs to be modified. There is a lot of scope for work on inclusion of children in urban planning in Bhopal. We would like for Praxis to make a visit to Bhopal and hold similar workshop in Bhopal with other administrators. Policy makers should also be involved in such workshops.

3. Mr. V. P. Kulshrestha
We get many opportunities to attend workshops but we refuse them due to paucity of time. When I heard of the workshop, I was immediately interested in it since it seemed like something new, something I had never thought of. I have experience of working in slums and we do ensure we get the voices of women but we have never thought of children as important stakeholders. I have come to know many things in this workshop. What will be nice is to have few more workshops and field visits organised for administrators. There is a lot more to learn.

4. Ms. Jayagandhi
Many programmes are being implemented in state government but it is not reaching the people. So based on what I saw yesterday, shared with the department about this failure to address the issues in the slum areas.

5. Mr. Gajanand Ram
Thanking Praxis family for calling us. I have been in urban planning for 26 years, but never had this kind of thought about consultation. I will be a Praxis ambassador for my state. This cause is close to my heart and we will try to replicate it. Please come to our place and do the same. Have attended many workshops, but Praxis family has shown respect to each person. Many people gather crowds, you have respected each one of us.

We may or may never meet. We should support each other. End with a quote by Dushyant: “Har hriday mein sarvana samvedna ki daah ho, humko tumhari chaah ho, tumko hamari chaah ho”

6. Mr. Mukesh Mohapatra
I am from Orissa. We work in slums. Initially we didn’t know how to interact. There is a pressure from the top we need this, we need that. Yesterday, we felt the need to listen to the people. HUDCO is a nodal agency, but there is no vision on how to do work despite having funds. There is need to think how it can be done. On the ground, there is a lot of pressure. Socio-economic data creates a lot of problem during surveys. Schemes and programmes keep changing. There needs to be clarity.

7. Mr. Arvinder Dhull
There are no slums in Haryana. There are colonies that are set up. Yesterday problems related to school, water, hospitals, etc. Haryana govt takes care of these issues. In unauthorised colonies, there is services provided, but the problem comes with lack of initiative in addressing these. My learning, there is a lot of poverty. People don’t think for poor. They think for rich – 2,3, bhks. They don’t see need for poverty. Poor
need basic – one small room, small kitchen, small. Don’t give them anything more, just give basic requirements. If they are given anything more, these are taken by people from MIG and LIG groups.

8. Mr. Saifudeen
Thanks for the opportunity. In Kerala, the slums are not in a very bad state. What we need is education for children. I put focus on educate slum people, for future generations. I have been extension faculty in KILA. I have been engaged in teaching, through powerpoints, charts. I have learned how to conduct a workshop by active participation, by listening. Wonderful knowledge from colleagues.

9. Mr. Binu Francis
Workshops I have attended been one-way. There is element of democracy here. This should be implemented in field also. There is need for change through education. It should be from their own. There is a need to educate about rights and responsibilities.

10. Mr. Vikas Parmar
I’m from Baddi, Himachal Pradesh. Largest pharmaceutical industrial area in Asia. We are doing draft development plan. No space for children consultation. I will share with seniors to show them need for involving children. Need to include other depts. Too like road and transport. So we can improve the situation.

11. Mr. Sunil Pradhan
Thanks to Praxis team. Initially thought what was the need for some programme like this. Yet came to see and find out what is new. Here I learnt that there is the need to change our way of thinking. I understood the need to involve children in decision-making. Just as within families, these days we are involving children in decision-making, there is the need for adults in the country to also involve children in planning process. Take-away that disabled girl must be the centre of planning processes.

12. Mr. Sahid Ullah
The workshop was enjoyable. I got to learn a lot. This is the first time that I’m attending a workshop on what development is possible for children’s involvement fieldwork. Interacting with everyone was great.

13. Mr. Shrinivas
I came to the workshop at very short notice. It was a fantastic experience, very well-organised. Even at the age of 50, I got to learn many things such as having a dialogue with the government, their attitude, their vision etc. The government also doesn’t get a chance to work with the community. These kinds of workshops give a platform to interact with each other.

14. Mr. J.P. Khasa
I saw this as a good opportunity to accompany my colleague because it’s an interesting theme.

Commmittments

Mr. Kulshreshht: recommended that they could facilitate children’s involvement in DPRs as Bhopal and Indore reviews are going to begin soon. Praxis team can draft a letter about why participation of children is needed and I would facilitate.

Mr. Dhull: When we prepare a govt plan, there is no space for public interactions. Amend state act, there is scope for displaying a plan to public. Different social groups, income groups, analyse their feedback and incorporate into it and present it to the government.

Mr. Gajanand Ram: Despite no enabling provisions, I will incorporate element of consultation at an informal level in state-level 32-point master plan.
I will request secretaries of different urban local bodies to bring children, even if initially at a notional level, in planning processes so that change is possible.

Mr. Utsav Choudhury: On behalf of Humara Bachpan, commits to acting as a bridge between government and children

Trichy municipal corporation representative Mr. Reguraman commits to inclusion of children’s participation in DPR preparation processes.

Mallapuram municipal secretary Mr. Binu Francis: Being an officer of an Urban Local Body, I have some space & we can implement children’s voices in some small ways

Some lighter moments
Notes
About Praxis

Praxis - Institute for Participatory Practices is a knowledge-based, not-for-profit development support organisation, registered in 1997 under the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860. Since its humble beginnings, Praxis has emerged as an independent one-stop centre for undertaking action research, training and documentation dealing with multiple facets of participatory development. Our work vindicates the growing mandate across geographical boundaries that for development to be sustainable and equitable, there is an urgent need to ensure good governance practices and processes. Our strategic networking capability with like-minded people and organisations helps maximise our outreach and increases manifold the impact of our interventions.

Our vision: A world without poverty in which every person has the right to participate in decision-making processes, and to a life with dignity and choices.

Our Mission: To strive for the democratisation of development processes and institutions to ensure that the voices of poor women, men, transgenders, girls and boys are heard and acted upon.