



Beyond evictions in a global city: people-managed resettlement in Mumbai

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SUMMARY: *This paper describes a resettlement programme in which 60,000 people moved without coercion to make way for improvements in Mumbai's railway system. It also describes the resettlement sites and the attention given to minimizing the costs for those who were relocated. This resettlement programme was underpinned by strong levels of community organization among the population that was to be relocated; their involvement in the whole process included preparing the baseline survey of households to be moved, designing the accommodation into which they moved and managing the relocation process, including the allocation of units. The paper also outlines the difficulties that the relocation process created and the measures taken to address these. It suggests the factors that must be in place to protect low-income groups from the impoverishment that usually accompanies population displacements caused by infrastructure investments and central city redevelopment.*

I. INTRODUCTION

THIS PAPER DESCRIBES the resettlement of 60,000 low-income people from beside the railway tracks in Mumbai (previously called Bombay) to allow a faster, more regular rail service. This resettlement scheme was unusual on three counts. First, it did not impoverish those who moved (as is generally the case when poor groups are moved to make way for infrastructure development). Second, the actual move was voluntary and needed neither police nor municipal force to enforce it. And third, the resettled people were involved in designing, planning and implementing the resettlement programme and in managing the settlements to which they moved. Although, as this paper describes, there have been difficulties that the resettled population and the groups and agencies working with it have had to address, the resettlement programme avoided the extremely negative consequences that most large-scale resettlement programmes have had for those who are resettled.⁽¹⁾ As such, it has important lessons for governments and international agencies, especially for managing the population displacements that take place in cities undergoing rapid change because of, or in response to, globalization.

It is hard to avoid some population displacement in any city where the government seeks to improve the provision of infrastructure and services for their populations and enterprises. In crowded central city areas, almost any improvement in provision for water, sanitation, drainage, roads, railways, ports, airports and facilities for businesses needs land on which

1. de Wet, Chris (2001), "Economic development and population displacement; can everybody win?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 15, pages 4637-4645.

people currently have their homes. Within an increasingly competitive global economy, a successful city needs to attract new enterprises, and this also requires redevelopment and changes in land use. It is difficult within any successful city to obtain well-located sites for those who are displaced. In Mumbai, land prices are particularly high, reflecting the city's status as India's commercial and financial capital. Combine this with a population of some 10 million in the city or 14 million in the metropolitan area, and there are the obvious market pressures that push up land prices in well-located areas. This obviously threatens, in particular, low-income groups living on sites for which they have no tenure. Half the city's population lives in low-income areas designated by the government as "slums" and informal settlements. The parameters used in the assessment of costs and benefits of resettlement usually do not favour the poor.

Mumbai's location also imposes particular constraints on expanding the city area – and on finding well-located land sites for those who have to be relocated. The central city is on a peninsula (developed out of the joining-up of seven islands) and can only expand to the north and north-east. Its expansion has created a long, linear city made possible by the railway system which allowed the development of new areas well connected to the government offices and businesses concentrated in the central city to the south.

Mumbai has a very large low-income population that needs to remain in the city, close to employment or income sources – yet there is also a need to improve conditions as most of this low-income population lives in overcrowded, poorly served settlements, including more than 20,000 households in small shacks built on the city's pavements; a million or so people in Dharavi, crowded onto a 175-hectare site;⁽²⁾ and tens of thousands of households settled illegally on each side of the railways tracks.⁽³⁾

This paper describes the resettlement and rehabilitation programme for the households that had illegally occupied land immediately adjacent to the railway tracks and built their homes there. Low-income households were attracted to these sites because they were cheap and very well located in relation to sources of income. The disadvantages were also obvious – the danger from trains, the insecure tenure, the very small plots, the poor-quality houses, and the lack of infrastructure and services – as described in more detail below. This paper pays particular attention to the surveys and group organizations that took place prior to the resettlement, because of their importance in the success of the programme.

II. THE RAILWAY SETTLEMENTS

MUMBAI RELIES PRIMARILY on its extensive suburban railway system to get its workforce in and out of the central city. On average, over seven million passenger trips are made each day on the five railway corridors that originate in the south of the city and branch out to the north and north-east. The city faces serious congestion problems on its roads and the obvious response is to increase the capacity of its train system. Yet trains are already overcrowded; during peak hours, it is common to find 4,500 passengers travelling in a nine-car train whose maximum capacity is meant to be 1,700 persons. The railway's capacity is also kept down by the illegal railway settlements that crowd each side of the tracks; by 1999, there were over 20,000 households living in shacks within 25 metres of the tracks.

Most of these households have been living there for more than two

2. Sharma, Kalpana (2000), *Rediscovering Dharavi*, Penguin Books, New Delhi.

3. There are three suburban rail lines in Mumbai – Central, Western and Harbour – that link the central business districts of Bombay Island with the so-called "suburban" areas in the north of the city. The 1989 enumeration established that there were 18,000 households living along the railway track; by 1999, this had grown to around 26,000: some 8,000 on the Central line from Victoria Terminus (VT) to Thane; some 3,000 on the Western line from Churchgate to Dahisar; and some 13,000 on the Harbour line from Victoria Terminus to Mankhurd.

decades and many huts are built less than a metre from the passing trains. Accidents are common, especially for young children crossing or playing on the tracks. But for the families living there, it is not only the constant risk of injury or death that confronts them but also the insecurity, the high noise levels, the overcrowding, the poor quality shelters and the absence of provision for water, sanitation and electricity. Indian Railways, which owns the land, has never allowed the municipal corporation to provide basic amenities to these settlements for fear that this would legitimate their land occupation and encourage them to consolidate the dwellings. The inhabitants (generally the women) spend long hours fetching water. The absence of facilities for sanitation mean that most people must defecate on the tracks, and so family members face the repeated indignity of having to relieve themselves in public, in full view of commuters in passing trains. Yet the inhabitants of the railway settlements have no other affordable option, as they need the central location to be able to get to and from their sources of income.⁽⁴⁾ Discussions within the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (to which most households living along the tracks belong) made it clear that the majority wanted to move, on condition that they were guaranteed secure tenure and an appropriate location

These illegal settlements, squeezed each side of the tracks, also restricted the speed of the trains. The commissioner of railway safety stipulated that trains must reduce their speed to no more than 15 kilometres per hour when travelling through these densely-inhabited sections of track – from their normal speed which would be more than 40 kilometres per hour. This greatly cut the frequency of trains and the number of passengers who could be transported. When commuters did not reach their places of work on time, the productivity of all those establishments was affected, as was the economy of the city as a whole. A report prepared by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority estimated that the reduction in the speed of trains through the slum areas caused a 40 per cent reduction in the number of daily trips.

III. THE MUMBAI URBAN TRANSPORT PROJECT (MUTP)

THE MUMBAI URBAN Transport Project (MUTP) was designed to improve the city's traffic and transportation system. It involves many agencies, including the government of Maharashtra and the Indian Railways (a national government agency) who share the cost between them, the municipal corporation of Greater Mumbai and the Brihan Mumbai Electric Supply Undertaking. The project cost is over Rs 7,000 crores (around US\$ 175 million) and includes funding from a World Bank loan of Rs 2,300 crores (around US\$ 57.5 million).

The project is underway and includes the laying of new railway lines, the extension of station platforms (to allow longer trains), the removal of road crossings, station improvements and the resettlement of households living within 10 metres (30 feet) of the tracks. This should allow an increase in rail capacity of up to 35 per cent (through higher train frequency during peak hours), a reduction in journey times and improvements in the flow of passengers and vehicles in and around selected stations. These measures are also far cheaper than laying new tracks. However, to achieve this, some 15,000 households living along the tracks and some 4,000 living around the stations have to be moved.

4. This is also true for the pavement dwellers – see <http://www.sparcindia.org>

a. The task force and administrative arrangements

The resettlement and rehabilitation policy was formulated by a task force appointed by the state government, which recommended that each "project-affected family" should get a 225-square foot (20.8 square metre) flat/apartment free of cost. Later, when unplanned demolitions were undertaken by the railways, temporary (or transit) accommodation measuring 120 square foot and with basic amenities was provided for these families and for those who were to be moved before the permanent accommodation was ready for them. The resettlement was also to be implemented with the active involvement of NGOs and the full participation of affected communities, and coordinated by the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA). A joint-sector company, the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation, was set up by the state government and the Indian Railways to implement the rail projects, while the state government's Public Works Department and the municipal corporation of Greater Mumbai would implement non-rail projects. This represents an important change in attitude since the Indian Railways have long argued that they have no responsibility in shifting the "encroachers" on their land. Ironically, they expected the state government to clear these people, but refused to allow the state government to implement its policy of providing basic infrastructure and services there.

b. Civil society representation

The World Bank has clear guidelines developed over the last 20 years for the resettlement of those who are displaced by the projects it helps fund. They are intended to protect those who are to be resettled – although the Bank itself admits that governments who implement its projects rarely follow them.⁵ The guidelines required that civil society be represented on the task force that formulated the rehabilitation and resettlement policy, and the state government appointed the director of SPARC (the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres), a registered NGO, as a member, and invited the president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) to be a member of its land sub-committee (see Box 1 for more details of these organizations). The National Slum Dwellers Federation had been set up in the 1970s to work towards preventing demolitions in slums and securing basic amenities, and one of its members was the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation, formed by families living along the railway tracks. The Railway Slum Dwellers Federation had been set up some years earlier to negotiate with the Indian Railways on whose land their homes were located.⁶ SPARC and the National Slum Dwellers Federation had already worked extensively in the "railway slums", undertaking a census there with the Collector of Encroachments in 1988, because the process of enumeration helps encourage these communities to create their own federation. Around 80 per cent of those who live beside the railway track are members of the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation. They started savings schemes and organized themselves into housing cooperatives through which to negotiate with the Indian Railways and the state government for access to land and infrastructure. In these negotiations, they accepted that they would have responsibility for building their own houses, and they planned to fund this through a mixture of loans and their savings.

5. See reference 1.

6. One of the organizing principles for slum dweller federations is that they develop on the basis of who owns the land they occupy. There are separate slum dweller federations for those who live on the pavements (which are owned by the municipal corporation) and those who live on land belonging to the airport authority.

BOX 1: The civil society actors

The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) is an NGO founded in 1984 by a group of professionals who had previously worked with conventional welfare-oriented NGOs in the neighbourhood of Byculla in central Mumbai. SPARC was established at a time when the homes of pavement families were being regularly demolished by Mumbai's municipal corporation. These women faced repeated demolitions and loss of their belongings, and observing the failure of welfare-oriented NGOs to deal with the demolitions, SPARC began to work with them to understand better the effects of the demolitions and how they could be countered. Training programmes were set up through which the women could learn to survey their own settlements and to use the data generated to campaign for secure title to land. From this work, the community-based organization Mahila Milan was formed and its work with SPARC was expanded through the formation of an Alliance with the National Slum Dwellers Federation (see below).

The National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) is a community-based organization formed by slum dwellers' associations. Established in 1974, it has a history of organizing the poor to fight demolitions and to secure basic amenities. While the Federation was initially a male slum dwellers' organization, in 1987 it began working in partnership with Mahila Milan and SPARC, and since then the number of women members has grown, with around half of the Federation's community leaders now being women. Within the Alliance with SPARC and Mahila Milan, NSDF is mainly responsible for the organization and mobilization of slum dwellers and homeless families. The NSDF has constituent federations such as the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation, the Airport Authority Slum Dwellers Federation, the Pavement Dwellers Federation and so on.

Mahila Milan (Women Together), the third partner of the Alliance, is made up of collectives of women pavement and slum dwellers whose central activity is the operation of savings and credit activities. Set up in 1986, as a result of SPARC's work with the Muslim pavement-dwelling women of the Byculla area of Mumbai, the rationale behind the formation of Mahila Milan lay in the recognition of the central role of women in the family as well as the enormous potential that women's groups have had in transforming relations within society and in improving the lives of poor families. Mahila Milan now conducts informal training and support activities as well as supporting savings and credit groups, and aims to empower women to play a greater role in community management and to work with NSDF on broader policy issues at state and city levels. Mahila Milan thus represents both an opportunity to meet the credit needs of poor women and a strategy to mobilize them towards taking a more proactive role in relation to addressing poverty. Together with NSDF, Mahila Milan now has over 300,000 households as members across the country.

The Alliance of SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan is working in more than 40 towns and cities in 5 states of India, and is also part of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), an international network of people's organizations operating through national federations in 11 countries of Asia and Africa. The basic goal of the Alliance and SDI is the provision of housing and infrastructure for the urban poor through building the capacity of people's organizations to negotiate their entitlements with governmental, municipal and other public institutions.

For more details of the work of the Alliance, see their web-site at: <http://www.sparcindia.org>; also Appadurai, Arjun (2001), "Deep democracy: urban governmentality and the horizon of politics", *Environment&Urbanization* Vol 13 No 2, pages 23-43; and Patel, Sheela and Diana Mitlin (2001), *The Work of SPARC and its Partners Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India*, IIED Working Paper 5 on Urban Poverty Reduction, IIED, London (available electronically at no charge from http://www.iied.org/rural_urban/downloads.html). The October 2001 issue of *Environment&Urbanization* included papers on the work of many of the urban poor federations that make up Slum/Shack Dwellers International.

IV. PRE-CURSORS TO THE RESETTLEMENT; COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND PRECEDENT- SETTING

LONG BEFORE THIS project to improve the railways and resettle people from along the tracks was developed, the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation had collected data about the settlements along the tracks, mapped them, set up women's savings and credit groups and supported the formation of housing cooperative societies. This was not just to collect data but also as a means of community mobilization. The Federation had also

encouraged its members to think about the kind of housing they wanted. For instance, in 1987, it had organized a house model exhibition where women and men developed life-size models of houses they would like to live in, reflecting both their aspirations and what they could afford. Thus, prior to the resettlement, a systematic housing-savings movement had been in place for over a decade.

The Alliance of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan had already been involved in resettlement programmes – which had given them experience in supporting a community-driven process and also demonstrated their capacity to official agencies. The first time had been with Jan Kalyan in 1989. The construction of a rail link between Mumbai and New Mumbai was being held up because of a “slum” in the way of the tracks at Mankhurd. New Mumbai, conceived as an alternative magnet to draw pressure off Mumbai, urgently needed this rail link since expensive infrastructure remained unused there because of the inadequate links with Mumbai. The state government’s Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority proposed resettling the slum dwellers in government-built walk-up apartments that would cost each household Rs 58,000. Of the 900 or so households affected, 150 did not accept the offer because they could not afford it. The community identified vacant land adjacent to the government housing and proposed that this be allocated to the 150 households to allow them to build their own houses by taking out loans from a housing finance company. This alternative was accepted and the Jan Kalyan Housing Cooperative Society was developed. The design they developed was for an 180 square foot (16.7 square metre) apartment with a loft providing an additional 100 square feet (9.3 square metres) and which cost Rs 16,000 at the time – much less than the government-built flats. It showed that a people-controlled, women-centred, self-help housing approach was possible – but, at the time, this did not lead to any policy change, despite being a demonstrably viable option.⁷

The Alliance also managed the resettling of some 900 families in 1999 when the Indian Railways wanted a piece of land cleared urgently. The families were resettled to Kanjur Marg in temporary one-room (120 square foot/11.1 square metre) dwellings with electricity and communal provision for water and sanitation, while permanent apartments measuring 225 square feet (20.9 square metres) in multi-storey buildings were to be constructed. Again, the resettlement was greatly facilitated by the fact that those who were moved already had strong well-established community organizations. This resettlement was unusual on many counts. The population to be moved were involved in identifying the relocation site, one to two kilometres away from the site from which they were evicted. Also, the slum dwellers were involved in the actual move. Before the move, the 900 households had formed 27 housing cooperatives. Eighty per cent of the leadership of the cooperative societies consisted of women who had been saving towards their future permanent and secure housing for several years. By the time they moved, each family had saved Rs 3,500-5,000, which allowed a down-payment for a housing loan of Rs 20,000 from the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO). The families also visited the new site, selected the date for the move (31 July, 1998) and planned how they would organize the move.

On July 30, the first group of 70 families visited the site and packed their belongings. On July 31, the first families moved, putting their belongings into small scooter-taxis (*tempo*s) and handing the keys to their homes on

7. See Patel, Sheela and Kalpana Sharma (1998), “One David and three Goliaths: avoiding anti-poor solutions to Mumbai’s transport problems”, *Environment & Urbanization* Vol 10, No 2, pages 149-159.

8. The Alliance is also using cross-subsidies in apartment blocks in a housing development in Dharavi. Dharavi has such a high population concentration that any improvement in housing conditions there that does not involve population displacement needs to build in multi-storey dwellings. A seven-storey dwelling is close to completion with apartments for all those who had to move from the site, but provided at a cost they can afford because other apartments will be sold at market prices. Also, on the ground floor of the building is an office of the bank that helped finance the scheme, and the rent the bank will pay will help cover maintenance costs. See <http://www.sparcindia.org>

the tracks over to the Alliance. On arrival at the resettlement site (Kanjur Marg), they were given the allotment slips and keys to their new homes. By August 7, 914 families had moved and their previous homes had been handed over to the Indian Railways. In the resettlement site, residents' committees were set up for maintenance, finance, dealing with grievances and liaison with the police.

Another notable feature of this resettlement has been the involvement of those to be resettled in the design of the permanent housing and of the infrastructure, lay-out, provision of community facilities, road networks, open spaces and building design. In all, 1,600 apartments are to be built.⁽⁸⁾

V. THE FEBRUARY/MARCH 2001 EVICTIONS

IN FEBRUARY/MARCH 2001, the Alliance had to cope with an unexpected eviction: the Indian Railways demolished over 2,000 huts along the Harbour railway line – which was against state government policy and against the stipulations of the Mumbai Urban Transport Project. The Federation responded by mobilizing thousands of its members to shut down the city's railway system. The Railways claimed that they were clearing illegal structures that had been built after January 1, 1995 – as a state law decrees that no slum dwelling constructed before this date may be demolished without alternative land being provided. It took five days before the demolitions could be halted. Staff from the National Slum Dwellers Federation and SPARC had tried to stop the demolitions by being present on site, but the Indian Railways simply concentrated on demolitions wherever and whenever Federation leaders or government officials were absent. The next day, at an emergency meeting convened by the state chief secretary, the state government decreed that all demolitions must stop. Land sites were identified to accommodate the evicted households and the National Slum Dwellers Federation was given the responsibility for managing the resettlement and overseeing the construction of formal housing.

There was the immediate need to find accommodation for the 2,000 evicted families. But World Bank procedures are not well suited to rapid action, as they involve a long process of calling for tenders for the selection of contractors for each project component. The Alliance offered to build the houses at two-thirds the cost estimated by the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, making the offer attractive both to the Bank and to MMRDA. The balance would be covered by people's savings and by loans. After protracted discussions with the World Bank, both in New Delhi and in Washington DC, an agreement was reached which allowed the Alliance to build transit accommodation – and 2,500 transit tenements were built and occupied within a few months. This was possible in part because of the Alliance's track record and its long and sustained presence in the railway slums, in part because Bank staff members supported a community-based, women-centred, participatory approach to resettlement.

Although this capacity to halt the evictions was an important victory for the railway settlements, largely made possible by the strong federation of which it was part, the danger of large scale forced evictions was not removed. The English-language media in Mumbai had for years been demanding the removal of slums in general and railway slums in particular. It had long painted a picture of the urban poor as being "free riders" as compared to "we, the citizens who pay taxes". Never mind that the poor

spend more on basic amenities both in absolute terms and as a proportion of their incomes than the middle-classes; never mind that the Constitution of India does not make citizenship conditional upon payment of direct taxes, nor that the economy of Mumbai depends on its low-income population. This media campaign put pressure on the Indian Railways to act but, in addition, an ostensibly "public interest" litigation had been filed in the High Court by a local NGO which called itself the Citizens for a Just Society. Its aim was to force the Indian Railways and the state government to evict all the slum dwellers along the railway tracks without any provision for resettlement. The High Court appeared to favour the petitioners' argument. However, the state government assured the Court that a time-bound programme of resettlement and rehabilitation would be implemented and the Court consented. Thus, there was strong pressure to make sure that the railway slum dwellers were moved quickly. Yet it was a complicated and time-consuming process to arrange the movement of so many people in ways that minimized the disruption to their lives and livelihoods.

VI. THE RESETTLEMENT

AROUND 60,000 PEOPLE were resettled in just over a year without any municipal or police force, although the need for rapid implementation meant that it was not possible to have permanent accommodation ready for all those who moved. As in the 1999 resettlements, sites were developed which had permanent buildings (small apartments of around 225 square feet in four- to seven-storey buildings) and "transit accommodation" (one-storey, one-room dwellings of 120 square feet). Some apartment blocks were already constructed and 17 seven-storey apartment blocks within a housing estate that had 21 such blocks were purchased from the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority.

Large sections of railway track that used to be congested with settlements on either side now have a cleared safety zone of 30 foot each side. The 60,000 people who moved now live in secure, better-quality accommodation with provision for piped water, sanitation and electricity. As a consequence of the resettlement, more trains are running on the same tracks and at greater speeds. Travelling times have been reduced and the rail system's performance improved.

One of the most important factors in this achievement was the extent to which households were organized prior to the move, and this process is described below. The first step was baseline surveys for the population that had to move; these have particular importance in any resettlement programme since they define who is and is not to be included in the resettlement (and receive compensation) and they provide the information base for the allocation of accommodation on the resettlement sites. The way that baseline surveys are done also has significant implications for whether the communities support or oppose the resettlement.

To undertake the baseline surveys, the Alliance of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan used the community mobilization strategies that had long been at the centre of their work. These involved hut-counting, rough mapping, numbering, plot (cadastral) surveys, household surveys, settlement profiles and the forming and reforming of groups.

a. Hut-counting

When the community is visited for the first time, a large number of men and women from the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan hold meetings with the residents and talk about themselves, their work and what they have come for. In most cases, the communities know of or have heard of the Federation's work, and credibility is generally easily established. To trigger the participation process, the Federation leader and community residents take pieces of chalk and begin to mark each area and house door. As inhabitants start asking why this is being done, details of the project are explained to them. Several of the male leaders in the community generally volunteer to take part in this exercise in order to make sure that no one is left out. Very quickly, the community becomes involved and suggests that criteria should be established to number the houses. In the very crowded railway settlements, this is often complicated because all the structures have developed incrementally and there is often no clear-cut demarcation as to where one house ends and the next begins. Often, what might be two houses can be marked as one and what are two sections of the same dwelling can be marked as two. By supporting a dialogue with the inhabitants about the numbering, the foundation is laid for communities to participate in addressing any future grievances or disputes concerning property rights and entitlements.

b. Rough mapping

Hut-counting is followed by the preparation of rough maps, again working with residents. This is both to help the surveyors later and to help communities understand what surveys represent. This mapping also allows the completion of a community and slum profile, with details of toilets, water taps, balwadis, services and amenities, along with details of how people get their goods and services, where they shop, and so on. This creates a direct link between the investigators and the active members of the community, and helps lay the ground for the formation of a nucleus of women's collectives, which later can be strengthened as part of the ongoing process of community-strengthening.

c. Numbering

The maps allow each house to be identified and the earlier chalk numbers on each dwelling are re-done in permanent paint. Communities are informed that government and city officials will be checking on this process; ensuring accuracy is essential to establishing good faith and the credibility of the communities and those involved in undertaking the surveys.

d. Cadastral survey

With house numbers in place, the surveyors can mark and measure the sites. In most settlements, community leaders, especially those individuals who feel threatened by this process or who wish to obstruct it for political or other reasons, step forward. Normally, surveyors leave if obstructed and do not attempt to tackle the situation or defuse it. Hence, NSDF/SPARC workers from the area normally accompany the surveyors.

e. The household survey and settlement profile

The survey begins, using the painted house numbers as interview schedule numbers. From this stage onwards these numbers are useful for household identification. The information is fed into computers, and draft registers are returned to communities to check again and fill in missing data. Based on the more accurate information emerging from the survey of houses, the settlement information is refined and updated.

f. Group formation

Using the registers, wherever the communities are willing, households are grouped into units of 50 and another round of data-checking is undertaken. From this stage, the group work begins in earnest and much of the qualitative information collection and capacity-building is done in these groups. Many female leaders take part in the household and community surveys.

During this whole process, the repeated interaction between Alliance staff and local people allows a rapport to develop and the inhabitants of the settlement become more knowledgeable about the issues of community control and management and how to work with government agencies. The household group size of 50 has been found to be optimal for the sharing and validation of the information collected during surveys and to facilitate easy communication in general. During the meetings, charts and registers displaying comprehensive information about the settlement as a whole, and about the particular group, are prepared and given to the group for study and validation.

g. Regrouping

This grouping of households has great importance for the relocation since the groups have a critical role in organizing the move and the resettlement together. Although initially, households are grouped by numbers and numbers are given consecutively to households next to each other, each resident has the freedom to move from one group to another. Ultimately, these groups will be sub-units which, when they are relocated, will live next to each other, and their natural gravitation towards each other will be strengthened by the things they are assisted to do together.

h. Women's participation

The development of women's groups is encouraged. While men are not excluded, information sharing is encouraged between women and communities are generally encouraged by the Alliance to allow women to take the lead. Later, these groups will begin savings and credit groups, start developing skills to access municipal and state government services, get involved in house and settlement design and hopefully supervise and manage the transition phase of resettlement.

i. Family photographs

Once the rechecking is completed and registers are finalized, the communities are encouraged to take family photos, creating identity cards for themselves; and, along with the registers of the households, they are encouraged to keep this record for themselves while the NGOs and relevant official agencies keep copies for their records.

VII. ADDRESSING PROBLEMS

NO PROCESS INVOLVING so many people moving so quickly is problem-free. Discussions in January and February 2002 with different groups that had been resettled in both the transit accommodation and in the permanent accommodation highlighted the support that the inhabitants gave to the resettlement and their pleasure in having secure, safe housing with basic amenities. Many talked about how dispirited they had been when they were in the railway slums, under constant threat of demolition. Many emphasized the importance of the move being organized in groups so that they had their friends and chosen neighbours close by in the new site. However, all the households had to adapt to the new home and neighbourhood. Most of the resettled population are in Mankhurd, which is four railway stations away from where they previously lived. This means extra costs in time and railway fares for those who commute daily to work in locations that are close to their former homes. There are fewer work opportunities in the resettlement sites for many of the women – for instance, many used to work as maids in their old location, walking to nearby middle-class areas. Many of those who previously sold goods on the street or in stalls find that there is less demand for these in the resettlement site. Schools in the new location were unable to expand to cope with the much increased population of children of school age, so many children in the resettlement sites are still going to their previous schools (again with a cost in both time and fares). There were also difficulties in gaining access to hospitals and postal services in the resettlement sites, and in obtaining telephones and getting regular garbage collection services from the municipal authorities.

Many households also face difficulties getting access to ration shops. This is particularly important for low-income households, since basic food staples and kerosene are available there at subsidized prices. It was difficult to get ration-card stores rapidly established in the resettlement sites. The transit tenements also have a particular problem with the electricity company, which is charging them a very high rate – claiming that they have to pay the highest rate because the electricity supply is through a communal meter.

But the interviews and group discussions also highlighted strong approval for the relocation and for the many initiatives underway to address the difficulties outlined above. There are Rs 50 lakhs-worth of loans for income generation in circulation through Mahila Milan to address the loss of employment opportunities as a result of the move. Ration shops are being set up, as are community cooperatives to lower prices. Names on electoral rolls have to be transferred and addresses on ration cards have to be changed. A bus has been organized for the children who still go to schools close to their previous homes. In all these settlements, committees have been set up – with a majority of women – to look after water, sanitation and garbage, to deal with the municipality, the police and so on. Each building or group of tenements has a committee and there is a central committee for each settlement. This participatory, decentralized and bottom-up approach amounts to a high degree of self-governance, which minimizes dependence upon the state or municipal government and provides the organizational basis for addressing immediate problems.

Some external agencies were concerned that the transit accommodation in this and in the earlier experience with Kanjur Marg are too small – but for most of those who moved, even this temporary accommodation was

larger and of better quality than their previous home – and they had secure tenure as well as good provision for water, sanitation and electricity. In addition, with limited land availability, a more generous space allocation would have made it difficult if not impossible to get everyone onto the available land. Some external agencies have criticized the use of seven-storey apartment blocks, citing the difficulties of ensuring maintenance. They may not be ideal but they were the best available option at the time, and the strong level of organization within the apartment buildings means that provision is already being made to ensure good maintenance and to ensure that households can afford it.

Another potentially divisive problem was how to choose which households would go into the transit accommodation and which into the permanent buildings. Politicians exerted pressure to try to get extra people included. However, it was the community process that developed the criteria for allocating units – based on the size of the family, the number of older persons in it, sickness and vulnerability and length of involvement in savings. Those families who scored high on these criteria were offered the permanent tenements – although many households preferred to go to the transit accommodation because it was cheaper. The whole process was also kept transparent – which is essential in trying to avoid the usual accusations that one group is being favoured over others (i.e. you are favouring the South Indian or the Catholics...). In discussions with the inhabitants in the resettlement sites, the comment was often made that government agencies are incapable of managing resettlement and that politicians would have interfered to influence the allocation procedures.

VIII. CONCLUSION

PERHAPS THE key lesson emerging from this experience of resettlement is *the importance for low-income households and their communities of being organized and, if they have to be resettled, of being able to engage in the development of their resettlement and relocation plans (including its location) and to have a major role in determining the actual logistics of the move.* Low-income settlements need strong, representative community organizations that can negotiate resettlement programmes that are acceptable to their members; that can make sure that provision is made for everyone affected by the resettlement; and that can oversee the move and be there to cope with difficulties in the site to which they move. The crisis caused by the Indian Railways suddenly starting to evict the railway settlers without compensation actually catalysed the government into making available the 2,000 apartments in Mankhurd and the land available for the transit settlements. But this solution was only possible because the railway settlers were organized and able to stop the evictions.

Another important factor was *the flexibility of key institutions and individuals.* Both the World Bank and the MMRDA were prepared to adapt their guidelines and procedures. For instance, they gave the Alliance of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan a sole-source contract to prepare the baseline socioeconomic surveys, to draw up resettlement action plans and to implement them. Normally, all three would have been put out to tender, which also means that the different tasks could have been awarded to different contractors, leading to little coordination between these three essentially connected tasks. In addition, as noted earlier, a contract was given to the Alliance to construct transit

accommodation to house 2,500 households. To allow the Alliance to build the transit accommodation, the Bank had to waive its rule not to provide more than US\$ 30,000 to an NGO.

The MMRDA, under the leadership of the project director (MUTP), was also willing to cede to community organizations some of the powers that are traditionally enjoyed by government agencies in resettlement schemes, including two areas which often prove particularly controversial and conflictive – the power to determine the eligibility of families or households and the allocation of housing units in the resettlement area. A strong partnership developed between MMRDA and the communities of the urban poor, represented by the National Slum Dwellers Federation.

A third key factor was *the World Bank's clear policy on resettlement and rehabilitation*, which compelled the railway authorities to abide by these guidelines as a condition for obtaining the loan they needed to modernize and upgrade their system. However, many governments have not adhered to these conditions⁹⁾ so it was a combination of the Bank's policy, sympathetic government agencies and pressure from organized slum dwellers that made the resettlement effective.

Among the other lessons are:

The importance of women-centred community participation. The central role of women is justified not only on the grounds of gender equity but also on the demonstration of their skills as household and community managers. With their experience of running households on inadequate budgets, poor women take easily to managing projects when given exposure, training and opportunity.

The importance of a two-phase resettlement strategy. The first advantage of a two-phase resettlement strategy, using transit accommodation, is that project authorities get quick access to the land that they need cleared, thereby avoiding delays and their associated (often very extensive) cost over-runs. The second advantage is that when people move to the new settlement, albeit only temporarily but with the assurance of obtaining houses with secure tenure, they identify with the resettlement process and willingly become full participants in the next phase of resettlement, when permanent buildings are constructed.

The importance of a realignment of roles between state agencies and NGOs/CBOs. There are many models of relationships between state agencies, NGOs and CBOs. Most frequently, public sector agencies see NGOs and CBOs either as opponents or as no more than deliverers of services. The Kanjur Marg case demonstrated another model of critical engagement, where there was always a spirit of cooperation between the stakeholders. To a large extent, this spirit was built upon mutual respect borne out of the recognition of interdependency, in which the Alliance played a pivotal role as intermediary. The experiences with resettlement described above also give examples of partnerships in which the role of the state is that of "facilitator" – a role to which much lip service has been paid but with few such instructive examples in practice.

One way of looking at the events in this case study is to see them as steps on the journey towards citizenship for the urban poor, where rights are translated into reality because of the favourable confluence of a supportive policy environment and grassroots democracy in action. The hope is that the precedents set and the lessons learnt will be applied to other populations that are displaced by new developments – including the tens of thousands of people living on land belonging to the airport authorities who are threatened with evictions, and also the pavement dwellers.

9. See reference 1

RESETTLEMENT IN MUMBAI

There is a need to reconceptualize resettlement as part of development rather than as the underfunded, top-down, poorly organized management of the "cost" of development. This means a commitment by government and international agencies to minimizing the need for resettling populations. It also means fully involving those who have to be moved in designing, implementing and managing the resettlement so that their interests are served, as well as the "public good" on which the resettlement was justified.