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# Cities Alliance

## Cities Without Slums

The New Urban Agenda:

The role of partnerships between organised civil  
society and governments in fostering a sustainable  
future for all in cities

Technical Background Paper

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## Executive Summary

In preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016, Cities Alliance members established a Joint Work Programme in 2013 to create and deliver a common set of priority messages to inform and influence the Post 2015 Agenda.

A key message of the Joint Work Programme is that building partnerships between national governments, local authorities and civil society will be crucial for implementing the New Urban Agenda that will form the foundation for policies and approaches that address the urban SDG goal 11 to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Within this context, the authors were commissioned to develop a technical background paper on the implications of, and the value added by, partnerships with civil society organisations for implementing the New Urban Agenda at various levels. This paper is based on the authors' previous research and consultancy, a literature review, and a set of cases provided by members of the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme.

It focuses on issues raised in current discourse on the situation and inclusion of the urban poor in the global South. This seems to be justified by the fact that new forms of partnerships have primarily emerged in Asian, African and South American countries, especially in cities where living conditions of slum dwellers are precarious and the conventional urban governance systems can barely cope with situations of economic and social polarisation. It has been recognised that the ambitious goal of transforming fast-growing cities into globally attractive hubs of the world economy cannot be reached without including the urban poor as cooperation partners in housing and urban development processes. This situation, combined with pressure from civil society groups, has created new spaces for interaction between civil society and state organisations.

These new partnerships differ substantially from conventional participation models prescribed by legislation that, in most countries, do not sufficiently include disadvantaged groups in urban development.

A number of new practices – such as participatory budgeting, citizen-based monitoring, self-enumeration and co-planning – have emerged that are rooted in a new form of direct partnership between state organisations and civil society. In this paper we use the term 'new partners' as a synonym for civil society organisations engaging in a temporary or permanent collaborative arrangement that is characterised by a special type of collaboration on an equal footing, often referred to as 'co-production'.

The term 'co-production' is meant to indicate that the setting of goals and priorities, the allocation of resources, and implementation procedures occur in a negotiation-based regime

characterised by mutual recognition of all partners on an equal footing. Typically, these new partnerships transcend conventional, legally-prescribed participation models by accepting civil society organisations as active partners for development, and by sharing responsibilities with those partners rather than involving them as a target group only. The most advanced civil society partners are well organised and supported by professionalised NGOs; they operate on a high professional level and are transnationally networked. Successful cases show that co-production processes are not limited to individual settlements, but rather extend to city-wide and, in some cases, national processes of policy formulation and resource allocation. As such, they form a civil society complement to multi-level strategies frequently adopted in development cooperation.

The core of the new partners is formed by civil society organisations (often CBOs or federations) and a range of ‘allies’ (supporting NGOs, professionals, etc.) forged together as alliances. Such civil society alliances bring in the legitimacy, professionalism and coherence needed for successfully negotiating with government institutions and the private sector. In contrast to other, more rights-based organisations, they follow a pragmatic path of collaboration with governments and other partners wherever there is a likelihood of improving their clientele’s situation.

Local governments have to assume a key role in co-production projects. Without their recognition and willingness to engage in a dialogue or activity beyond tolerance, it is impossible to unleash the dynamism and productive potential of partnerships. Furthermore, when it comes to issues such as land tenure, statutory planning, and infrastructure, the intense involvement of government institutions is essential.

Evidence from the case studies shows that:

- 1) New partnerships in co-production environments can directly and indirectly contribute towards improving living conditions of the urban poor.
- 2) Co-production is both a cause and effect of empowerment.
- 3) The examples presented in this paper show that forging new partnerships yields returns in terms of more inclusive policies, provided that the partners have the adequate knowledge, capacity and power to articulate their needs and make their voices heard.
- 4) In addition, there is also an ‘empowerment’ of government institutions in that they learn to realise, accept, and deal with a much wider range of stakeholders than before.

Although some scholars have raised doubts regarding legitimacy, representation and other aspects, new partnerships between state and civil society organisations at various levels have great potential that should be used for future urban development. Recent experience with new partnerships shows that the transformational power of these approaches is remarkable, because of – rather than despite – their pragmatic approach and ability to

mobilise large numbers of people. The capacities of civil society together with their NGO allies and government institutions at different levels have shown an amazing technical ability to police informal settlements, manage funds, and plan and implement resettlement, sanitation and other projects, in addition to advocacy and networking on national and international levels.

Although it may seem premature to interpret the ongoing experience as a consistent trend towards new forms of urban governance that provide for more inclusion and 'deeper' democracy, there is substantial evidence that new partnerships can contribute to a new agenda. Co-production practices such as those described in this paper can help make cities more inclusive and create the space needed to involve the urban poor. They introduce new ways of negotiation that allow for the development of more realistic, sustainable development goals and projects.

The following recommendations for the New Urban Agenda are derived from the study:

- 1) A **strong component of direct formal and informal collaboration between civil society organisations and governments at various levels** should be introduced in the New Urban Agenda and the work of cooperation agencies.
- 2) Efforts to build and **strengthen the capacities of both local government as well as civil society organisations** need to be intensified in order to realise the potential of collaborative interfaces between civil society organisations and government institutions at various levels.
- 3) **Local governments should be encouraged to cooperate in using the successful tools developed by civil society organisations for generating knowledge and joint learning across ethnic, social, gender and religious differences.** This will substantially contribute to the development of inclusive urban policies. New interfaces should be developed for enhanced dialogue and collaboration in the early stages of strategising and planning.
- 4) Successful partnerships and co-production models need **inter-sectoral and multi-level approaches.** While civil society organisations tend to be broad and focus on more than one aspect of exclusion, local governments and international development cooperation need to overcome fragmentation caused by sectoral institutional boundaries.

# 1. Background and Rationale for New Partnerships in Urban Development

## 1.1 The interface between state and civil society

### Widening gap between government and citizens

In the last decades there has been growing international recognition that urban development can neither be inclusive nor sustainable<sup>1</sup> without the active involvement of civil society. An increasing number of studies highlight the widening gap between government and citizens in both North and South (e.g. Narayan et al. 2000, Commonwealth Foundation 1999, Clark and Stewart 1998, Skocpol 2003). Some observers even diagnose 'a crisis in the relationship between citizens and their state' (Hickey and Mohan 2004, p.26).

While these observations have led to a general call for deepening democracy, the approaches proposed to address this gap vary widely, from strengthening participation to fostering institutional change towards better governance (accountability and responsiveness). It has been noted that both aspects deserve attention, and that new forms of citizen-state engagement require first of all enabling citizens to engage in governance spaces, as well as strengthening responsiveness on the side of the state (Gaventa 2004).

This general trend has been reinforced in urban areas, given the speed and complexity of changes in cities and the increasing pressure on infrastructure, social systems, land and the urban economy.

For over 30 years, the common answer to bridging the gap between citizens and government has been participation by civil society at various levels of government; now there are new approaches emerging that can complement these efforts.

### New approaches to civil society involvement in urban development

Some countries have recognised that the ambitious goal of transforming fast-growing cities into major globally attractive hubs of the world economy cannot be reached without including the urban poor as cooperation partners in housing and urban development processes. This situation, combined with pressure from civil society groups, has opened new space for the encounter between civil society and state organisations.

A number of new practices, such as participatory budgeting, citizen-based monitoring, self-enumeration, co-planning and others have emerged in parallel, partly outside the academic discourse. They are based on the experience that conventional participation models

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1.2 for a definition of these terms.

prescribed by legislation are not sufficient to include disadvantaged groups in urban development. The new initiatives demonstrate that partnerships between the urban poor and other key stakeholders (including local governments) have the capacity to add an inclusive dimension to urban development processes. Typically, these new partnerships transcend common participation procedures by accepting civil society organisations as partners for development, rather than involving them as merely a target group.

The underlying reasons are varied, but they come down to substantial lack of capacity, power, resources and actual legitimacy on the side of the bodies responsible for urban development. In addition, there is an obvious inherent dichotomy in contemporary urbanisation processes, with economic growth going hand-in-hand with the proliferation of slums and informality.

## **1.2 Clarification of terms**

In current development discourse, terms such as ‘inclusion’, ‘participation’, ‘new partnerships’ and ‘co-production’ are often used interchangeably and lack commonly agreed, clear-cut meanings. The following section provides a reference base for this paper.

### **Inclusion**

The United Nations (2010: 49) defines social inclusion as ‘the process by which societies combat poverty and social exclusion’; similarly, the European Union has defined social inclusion as ‘...a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live’ (European Commission, 2005: 10, see Herrle and Novy 2012 for details). In this paper, we use ‘inclusion’ in the latter, broader sense.

### **Participation**

According to Hickey and Mohan (2004), the former division of bottom-up, people-centred approaches and technocratic top-down approaches has become obsolete. Instead, participatory methods have scaled up to NGOs, international aid agencies and governments as well as the state, which has changed in terms of democratisation and decentralisation. Participation processes have become legally institutionalised in many countries, initiating a process towards greater transparency and responsibility by inviting citizens to engage in project planning and implementation.

In the framework of governance, participation is now considered a cornerstone, based on an understanding of the plurality of decision-making and involvement of multiple actors, including an organised civil society. This concept of participation requires accepting

negotiation and readiness to compromise as the basis for interaction (Benz and Papadopoulous, 2006).

When comparing participation with other forms of interaction between civil society and the state, one criterion stands out: participative processes are owned and driven by (local) government institutions as the legitimate representatives of the state in urban development, and participation in such systems is expected to provide an input to formal systems.

Building on this perception, participation is understood here as a set of mechanisms allowing citizens to participate in processes of decision-making, planning and implementation of urban development projects and programs. It is generally assumed that it will lead to greater inclusion of marginalised groups (cf. Herrle and Novy 2014).

### **Box 1: The Development of the Concept of Participation**

In its early days, participation was seen as a way of including various social groups in the planning system, complementing the participatory idea underlying elective democratic systems. It was only later promoted as a means of poverty reduction in international development cooperation. The issue of participation entered mainstream discourse in the mid-1980s (Hickey and Mohan, 2004) and has since the late 1990s become a crucial instrument for achieving good governance (Cornwall and Brock, 2005).

During the process of adaptation by local governance systems, the concept of participation lost its political clout and became incorporated as a standard element of legislation and planning processes in many countries. Despite the recognition, participation did not automatically find its way into the practice of urban development. Scholars such as Fung and Vorsevhalg: Wright (2003) therefore called for more 'empowered participatory governance relying on the commitment and capacities of ordinary people and tie action to discussion' (Fung 2006).

### **'New partnerships' and 'co-production'**

In recent years, new forms of interaction between local governments and civil society have emerged in various countries. These are informal in that they transcend legally prescribed procedures for participation. They not only accept civil society groups (particularly from the urban poor) as new and driving actors in development processes, but also offer a dialogue of equals between disadvantaged groups and local government. In most cases these new forms of engagement are initiated from below, through pressure from civil society groups. The novelty of these forms of cooperation has prompted a number of attempts to capture the new quality of state-civil society relationship, including terms such as 'new partnerships',

involvement of ‘new urban players’ (Herrle et al. 2012) ‘collaborative planning’ (Healey 1997) and ‘co-production’ (Watson 2014).

In this paper, partnership is understood as co-production. Partnership may be manifested in signed MoUs, and thus incorporated into the realm of formal planning and administration, but it mostly has more informal characteristics (Herrle et al. 2015). Partnerships can be initiated by civil society organisations engaging with urban development, as well as by government institutions or institutions serving as catalysts between government and civil society, such as NGOs. Typically, they have also emerged in the space for innovation created by international development cooperation.

Modes of co-production go beyond participation, often working outside the formal governance arena, and help to expand the scope of planning thought (Watson 2014). Watson’s concept of co-production differs substantially from participatory models in the following respects:

- 1) The involvement of all stakeholders throughout the complete process, including planning delivery and management, and transcending planning processes.
- 2) While participation largely ignores the aspect of formalised power relations, co-production sees power relations as a crucial element of the development process – allowing for different modes of governmentality<sup>2</sup> in the relationship between the state and civil society.
- 3) Finally, learning and knowledge production are central to the concept of co-production.

In this paper we use the term ‘new partners’ as a synonym for civil society actors operating in ‘co-production’ environments. The term ‘new partnerships’ stands for temporary or permanent collaborative arrangements following Watson’s definition of ‘co-production’ . They usually comprise local government and civil society actors.

### **‘Collaborative governance’**

Concepts of co-production lead to a local mode of governance labelled as collaborative governance<sup>3</sup>. The term indicates that the setting of goals and priorities, the allocation of resources, and implementation procedures all occur in a negotiation-based regime characterised by collaborative procedural arrangements and mutual recognition of all

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<sup>2</sup> A term coined by philosopher Michel Foucault, governmentality refers to the way in which the state exercises control over, or governs, its population.

<sup>3</sup> In the Habitat III Issue Paper 6 on Urban Governance the term ‘collaborative’ is limited to the relationship between cities, p.9.

partners on an equal footing. Based on a review of 137 cases of collaborative governance, Ansell and Gash (2012, p.546) clarify the distinguishing features:

*'Consultative techniques, such as stakeholder surveys or focus groups, although possibly very useful management tools, are not collaborative in the sense implied here because they do not permit two-way flows of communication or multilateral deliberation. Collaboration also implies that non-state stakeholders will have real responsibility for policy outcomes. Therefore, we impose the condition that stakeholders must be directly engaged in decision making.'* (Ansell and Gash 2012, 546)

### **Multi-level governance**

The term multi-level governance has been developed on the basis of experience of multi-level interdependencies of urban development. Cities and their development parameters cannot be reduced to regional factors, let alone local ones. In recognition of the fact that they are embedded in systems and informational, financial, material and other flows at various levels, effective guidance of urban development processes has to accept and interact with a multitude of players from different levels. Although co-production is usually associated with government-civil society relationship, activities at the local level become more effective if they are reinforced and facilitated by guidelines, enabling frameworks and policy-making at higher levels. This implies the necessity to grant civil society organisations access to those levels, working groups and policy-making circles. Collaboration between various levels of government is essential to the success of co-production processes at the local level.

In this paper, we use the term multi-level governance in the following sense:

*'Decision-making systems to define and implement public policies produced by a collaborative relation either vertical (between different levels of government, including national, federal, regional or local) or horizontal (within the same level, e.g. between ministries or between local governments) or both. It also includes the partnership with actors from civil society and private sector for the achievement of common goals. In order to be effective, multilevel governance should be rooted in the principle of subsidiarity, the respect for local autonomy and establish mechanisms of trust and structured dialogue.'* (Habitat III, Issue Paper 6).

## 2. Stakeholder Involvement – Critical Arguments

### 2.1 General criticism of participation

#### Challenges

Since its emergence in the 1970s, the concept of participation has been accused of being a paper tiger, rarely translated into action and used by stakeholders more as a buzzword to gain access to funding. These buzzwords have been criticised for giving development discourse an optimistic and normative appearance of empowerment, lending legitimacy for actors in development to justify their interventions (Cornwall and Brock 2005).

On a conceptual level Cooke and Kothari (2001) identify three types of what they label 'tyranny of participation': 1) the tyranny of decision-making and control; 2) the tyranny of the group; and 3) tyranny of methods.

Critics mainly argue that the fundamental cause of urban poverty and inequality is not tackled by participation mechanisms. Rather, participation perpetuates injustice, inequality and exclusion from basic rights and services instead of mitigating them. It is argued that there is a lack of evidence that participation leads to more empowerment, and that participatory approaches in development neglect the issue of power politics and tend to depoliticise issues due to their technocratic and locally focused approach to development (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Cooke and Kothari also point to effects of group dynamics that may 'lead to participatory decisions that reinforce the interest of the already powerful'.

Mosse (2001) questions the contribution of local knowledge to changing the relationship between organised civil society and development organisations or the state. He points to the danger of external stakeholders setting the local agenda in a more implicit manner under the label of including local knowledge through participation. Thus, it is argued, at their most extreme, participatory methods might perpetuate inequalities and injustice within a given society.

Another major concern raised by various scholars is the strong dominance of normative definitions and analytical frameworks for the relationship between the state and civil society coming from the global North (e.g. Watson 2009; Roy 2011). Participation is usually associated with the existence of functioning formal planning and decision-making systems in countries with a long tradition of formal democracy. In countries lacking this environment, participation does not work, let alone unfold its potential. Projects of institutionalised participation are questioned as tokenism.

In practice, participation in urban development has been used more often in the later stages of implementation, when key decisions have been taken without much concern for the actual

needs of those affected. Participation in needs assessments, as a common tool in project planning, tends to raise expectations rather than evoke active engagement of the civil society groups.

### **Positive evidence**

It is evident that the context of the critique is related to the functioning of a liberal democracy – a democratic state that, however, seems unable to live up to the ideology it is representing (Watson 2014). Thus, the critique seems justified to the extent that current participation models in urban development are generally not intended to change local power systems and/or tackle the roots of inequality. In addition, various democratic states are either ‘messy democratisers’ (Ford 2013) or ‘hybrid regimes’ (Jayasuriya and Rodan 2007).

Nevertheless, there is positive evidence from cases such as participatory budgeting in Brazil or democratic decentralisation in Kerala and West Bengal (India) where the political backup was essential to challenging structural inequalities and led to a change of investment as well as empowering citizens (Hickey and Mohan, 2004, p.161f). In some cases emerging practices pose serious challenges to malfunctioning governance structures. There is also evidence that over the long term formal participation models can lead to the empowerment of disadvantaged groups. The ‘Participación Popular’ initiated in 1994 in Bolivia is a case in point.

A wide range of methods and approaches has emerged over the past decades showing various degrees of participation. A common way of differentiating levels of participation as a continuum of influence in the decision-making process, from full control by planners or external experts to full control of the planning process by the community, is based on the ‘ladder of participation’ proposed by Arnstein (1969). Hamdi and Goethert (1997) suggest differentiating not only levels, but also stages of participation in the planning and implementation process.

The formats for participation that have been developed vary widely, depending on the political opportunity structure in a particular context, such as the strength and willingness of the local political system to cooperate, as well as on the resources and capacities of civic groups to engage in negotiation processes with professionals and government officials.

## **2.2 Criticism of ‘new partnerships’ and ‘co-production’**

### **Challenges**

A general criticism of consensus-oriented, state-civil society partnerships is that they are not challenging neoliberal tendencies in state practice. Their pragmatic stance towards local and national governments tends to overlook the fundamental imbalance of power systems.

Other critical arguments stem from the fact that many new partners are less formally organised, and their flexible internal arrangements often do not meet the formal requirements of international development organisations. This includes the following aspects (Herrle et al 2015):

- 1) They are criticised for having decision-making systems that are not transparent and non-democratic ways of identifying leaders by acclamation rather than proper democratic election procedures.
- 2) Due to their informal legitimacy base in low-income areas, the common principles of formal democratic representation do not work. Leaders and representatives act through their charisma and on the basis of their support from communities. Some observers see limited space for control from below and large room for manipulation.
- 3) They act in local, national and partly international networks of persons and institutions that change over time and are not transparent to outsiders.

The lack of democratically elected community representation and the fact that grassroots leaders receive salaries in some of these alliances have given rise to the question of whether community leaders are accountable to the NGO rather than to the community they are supposed to represent (Huchzermeyer, 2011).

SDI, one of the most widely publicised civil society organisations, is made up of national slum dweller federations in close to 30 countries. It claims to represent the needs of the urban poor in a global arena (see for instance Robins 2005:122), but this claim to be representative is criticised in some instances as lacking legitimacy (Huchzermeyer 2011:185). Some have argued that SDI federations refrain from confrontation or dispute ('politics of patience', Appadurai 2001) and avoid challenging the underlying structural conditions (Pithouse 2009, Huchzermeyer 2011, McFarlane 2011). These observers contend that through partnership, civil society legitimises governments – even those with rather anti-poor positions<sup>4</sup>. By contrast, other observers and SDI itself claim that federation strategies are a blend of confrontation, e.g. land invasions in South Africa (Baumann, T., Bolnick, J., & Mitlin, D. 2001), and strategies for building state-community partnerships that at their heart seek to address structural dysfunction and exclusion (for example, Pieterse 2010, Bradlow 2015).

Many development organisations hesitate to enter into sustained cooperation beyond individual projects with slum dweller organisations. This is particularly relevant when it comes to financing projects, where the partners' own funds or other resources will typically not be sufficient, or in areas where strong cooperation between various formal partners is needed (e.g. on land issues, resettlement, infrastructure). While the legitimacy and accountability of

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. Huchzermeyer 2011 making reference to the Kwa-Zulu Natal Slum Elimination Act

the leaders is not questioned by their clientele, their compliance with regulations and standards of formal governance systems is sometimes questioned by development organisations and government institutions.

The new partners have to find and constantly readjust the balance between:

- 1) **Local and regional (and international):** They act locally for mobilisation and creating the critical mass (legitimacy) that provides the power base needed for negotiating with governments and other actors, but at the same time they also have to network on other levels for advocating for rights, acquiring resources, and generating or distributing knowledge;
- 2) **Formal and informal:** Formal structures are needed to negotiate with funding institutions, politicians and local governments, while the internal communication and legitimacy structures are largely based on informal arrangements.
- 3) **Members' interests and settlement vs. city-wide representation:** While organised groups have their own particular interests and issues to be pursued vis-à-vis the state, local governments are only willing to interact if they can prove representation beyond self-interest to prevent tendencies to exclude of other urban poor groups (Ley et al. 2015).

### Positive evidence

Local elections are generally considered as a first important step towards democracy and better local governance. However, democratic rules and formalised procedures alone – including participative elements – are obviously not a guarantee for greater legitimacy and more accountable political leaders. Strong participation by civil society can help to fight persistent imbalances and create transparency. According to Hickey and Mohan (2004), there is evidence for expanding the sphere of citizenship through a focus on rights-based approaches or advocacy.

Co-productive approaches take a different approach based on partnerships and co-production. Recent experience with new partnerships shows that the transformational power of these approaches is remarkable because of (rather than despite) their pragmatic approach and their ability to mobilise large numbers of people.

As a transformational approach to development beyond participation, co-production has the potential to reframe participation as a form of citizenship and also to transform power relations. Moreover, instead of a limited focus on local projects, co-production approaches address the institutional and structural scale by combining diverse (often conflicting) positions on different levels in one process.

The civil society actors themselves argue that anti-poor positions in government are the result of technocratic thinking within government that can only be overcome by creating greater awareness of pro-poor approaches, thereby challenging the mainstream development position (Ley, 2015 for South Africa). This can best be achieved by joint action and responsibility.

### 3. Lessons Learned for Forging New Partnerships

This chapter summarises conclusions drawn from the literature, our previous research (e.g. Herrle et al. 2015), and analysis of case studies provided by the Joint Work Programme. It should be noted that examples fully meeting the criteria of collaborative governance or co-production as defined earlier are still rare.

Many have emerged in a situation of political pressure on government-driven development processes, where contributions of civil society groups were initially seen as a substitute for malfunctioning service delivery by government institutions and later developed into real co-production projects in which both sides shared knowledge about new instruments. Four questions seem to be key for developing the interface between government and civil society towards co-production in urban areas:

- 1) Who should do what? (actors and roles);
- 2) What can be reached? (expected impacts);
- 3) What is conducive to success? (success factors); and
- 4) What are the limits? (limitations).

#### 3.1 Multiple actors and diverse arrangements

Civil society organisations active in housing and urban development issues include a variety of organisations such as NGOs, CBOs, other informal groupings and associations. Here we rely on the definition of civil society provided by Mitlin (1999: 5): Civil society is used as an all-embracing term for voluntary associations between the state and individual citizens and their families. As such, the definition includes NGOs, non-profit associations, informal organisations addressing public interest issues, and self-help groups and associations. Since the 1990s, and especially after the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, there has been a significant move by key players toward a stronger role for grassroots organisations that are operating in alliance with others and supported by NGOs (Herrle et al. 2012).

##### **Diverse arrangements**

There is not just one set-up that guarantees a smooth and successful cooperation. The organisational arrangement of civil society formation differs from country to country. In India

the core is represented by NSDF (a slum dwellers federation), Mahila Milan (a women's savings scheme) and the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC, a supporting NGO). In Thailand CODI as a parastatal organisation is the hub for countrywide representation of the urban poor, supported by the National Union of Low Income Community Organisations (NULICO) as well as the Bangkok-based NGO Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, with a regional network of affiliated NGOs and CBOs. In the Philippines, the national federation cooperates with various NGOs, and is aligned with UP ALL, a strong national network of civil society actors in the field of poverty alleviation, housing and urban development.

### **Civil society organisations**

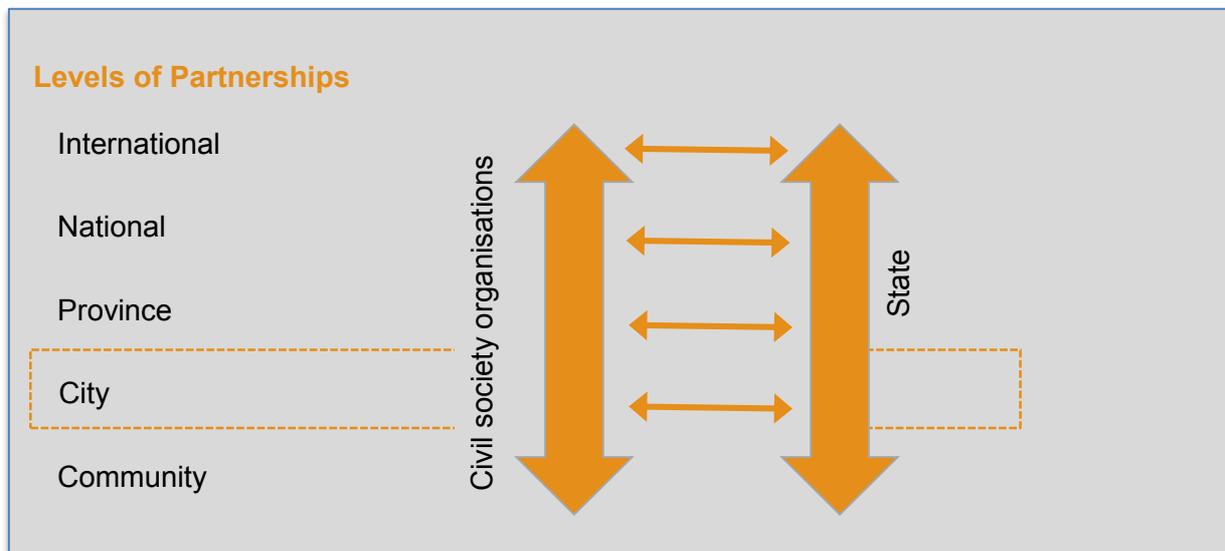
Civil society organisations and their allies push for the interests and the rights of the urban poor, while government has a broader perspective that is driven by economic goals and middle-class values. Often local civil society organisations are backed up by national or international alliances and networks, which increases their power in local negotiations.

Alliances: The core of new partners is formed by civil society organisations (often CBOs or federations) and a range of 'allies' (supporting NGOs, professionals etc.) joining together as alliances. Such civil society alliances bring the legitimacy, professionalism and coherence needed for successfully negotiating with government institutions and the private sector. In contrast to other, more rights-based organisations, they follow a pragmatic path of collaboration with governments and other partners wherever there is a likelihood of improving the situation of their clientele. The more permanent these alliances among the partners from civil society are, the more efficiently they navigate different scales of governance and establish greater networks. The capacity of the alliances has a strong influence on the quality of the interface with local governments and other state organisations. Civil society actors engaging in transnational activities increase their ability to present their solutions for reducing inequality and poverty (Mitlin 2015).

### **Government institutions**

Local governments have to assume a key role in co-production projects. Without their recognition and their willingness (for whatever reason) to engage in a dialogue or a minimum of activity going beyond simple tolerance, it is impossible to unleash the dynamism and productive potential of partnerships. Furthermore, whenever it comes to issues such as land tenure, statutory planning and infrastructure, intense involvement of government institutions is essential. A good example is the instrument of the 'Transfer of Development Rights' introduced by the State of Maharashtra, India in 1971, which provides a mechanism for cross-financing the upgrading of low-income settlements (or their resettlement) in central

areas of Mumbai. It has been extensively used in co-production projects by SPARC and the Slum Dwellers Federation (the Indian Alliance) since the 1990s.



### Other stakeholders involved

In addition to the group of core stakeholders – civil society organisations together with supporting NGOs and government institutions – other stakeholders, such as university departments, professionals, land owners and developers, have to be assigned a role according to the requirements of the individual project or programme. The use of experts (e.g. international development agencies or external consultants) to draft laws and develop solutions is constantly challenged by transnational networks and groups of civil society, who argue for their competences and capacities to be seen and heard in order to create more feasible and inclusive solutions for local problems (Mitlin 2015: 155).

### 3.2 Impacts of engagement in new partnerships

Evidence from the case studies shows that the new partnerships in co-production environments can directly and indirectly contribute towards improving the living conditions of the urban poor. An analysis limited to direct physical improvements may reveal impressive achievements, but potentially neglect the underlying significance of civil society-driven development projects and the long-term benefits of co-productive projects.

#### Better response to the needs of the urban poor

Housing provision for the urban poor is still largely state-driven and oriented towards delivering shelter in numbers. Organised civil society groups fill an important gap, with their local knowledge and capacity to address the real housing needs, including livelihood opportunities and social infrastructure. While physical improvements such as access to safe drinking water and shelter remain an indispensable indicator of a 'better life' in cities, it is

increasingly recognised that other factors – employment opportunities, livelihood, location of housing, participation in decision-making processes and empowerment – also play a key role in the reorientation of urban policies. The relevance of factors beyond physical improvement is evident from the ORANGI project in Pakistan, one of the first prototypes of community-driven upgrading on a large scale. ORANGI started in 1980 as a physical project to provide water and sewerage for 1.2 million people and was then pushed by an NGO in collaboration with government institutions. It later developed components for income generation, finance, health, education, and more (Herrle and Jachnow, 2002).

### **Building awareness**

In spite of the fact that many civil society groups do not directly impact policies, they do create awareness of certain issues. Projects by foundations acting with experimental approaches in the development context also raise awareness in policy circles of certain issues, such as building materials or resilient housing and livelihood strategies, e.g. HILTI/UN-ESCAP/Philippine Alliance. A further case in point is Habitat for Humanity's nationwide Neighbourhood Revitalisation Programme in the United States.

### **Policy impact**

Particularly in countries with strong partnerships, cooperation between civil society and state institutions has influenced housing policies towards enabling civil society actors to play a role in housing processes and urban development (Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 2014; Fokdal et al, 2015). An example of soft impacts and influence on government policies is a Habitat for Humanity International project aligned with local affiliates pushing for a more gender-sensitive land law in Bolivia. Local projects have been used to change national planning standards, such as regulations on setbacks in the Philippines or plot sizes. Backed by their international partners, national alliances of federations and NGOs can gain access to policy-making circles on housing issues and gain influence on national policies relating to housing through non-institutionalised governance spaces. Advocating for policy and legal changes on the national level needs powerful and well organised civil society groups with a broad legitimacy base. All those policy changes rely on certain pressure from organised civil society and close collaboration between civil society groups, as well as local and higher level government.

The important long-term benefit of collaborative governance is at the structural and systemic level. It may lead to changes in local governance systems aimed at greater inclusion of the urban poor. This has been demonstrated in projects that adopt a multi-level approach, such as the Cities Alliance Country Programmes in Burkina Faso and Uganda.

## Empowerment

Co-production is both a cause and effect of empowerment. Some studies (Navarro 1998 for participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre) and Heller (2001 for participatory reforms in Kerala, Porto Alegre and South Africa) indicate evidence for more empowerment through strong state-society relationships. The examples presented in this paper show that forging new partnerships yields returns in terms of more inclusive policies and better living conditions, provided that the partners have adequate knowledge, capacity and power to articulate their needs and make their voices heard. In addition, government institutions are also empowered in that they learn to realise, accept and deal with a much wider range of stakeholders than before.

In spite of the fact that various partnerships have emerged, as documented in this paper, there are still major struggles to make the 'voices of low-income people' heard due to the 'scale of social stratification and associated prejudice' (Mitlin 2015: 146). In many cases the technical bias and/or social background of government employees make it difficult for them to grasp informal structures and problems of low-income settlements.

## City-wide impact

Poor living conditions have long been considered as a marginal problem limited to particular areas. New partnerships that include organisations of the poor can initiate a shift from isolated solutions for pockets within the urban fabric to city-wide approaches and even beyond. This process of strategising the improvement of living conditions on a city-wide scale has been possible through the active interaction between partners not only at the project level, but also on a strategic city-wide level and beyond. It involves data collection, land acquisition, and land use planning as well as urban planning issues. If negotiations about urban development goals are opened up to new actors, including the urban poor, as co-producers of the city, urban planning will become more realistic and development more predictable. Also, the broader consensus will add a new quality to local governance that benefits all citizens.

As summarised by Pieterse (2010):

*Through small incremental gains, they are also able to insinuate themselves into the governance process of the cities where they operate ... [and] over time the remit of their influence and engagement spreads, and soon linkages are drawn between the immediate needs of their members in a particular quarter of the city and the long-term strategy and investment programme for the territory.*

## **Access to finance**

Beyond a certain scale, projects have to rely on more than one source of financing. They usually involve contributions from the community (savings), local government (for infrastructure) and other (national or international) sources. Experience with partnership models has shown that alternative modes of finance have been highly successful, and that the challenge in repayment rates (Nohn 2015) can be reduced by intensive participation of the stakeholder communities. Mitlin (2008) has pointed out that there is a danger in limiting discussion to repayment.

City Development Funds, where financial resources by local government and savings by urban poor are pooled, are a case in point. The ACCA Programme, with its revolving City Development Funds (see Box 3), is a notable successful example. It is based on effectively mobilising and empowering the urban poor, which creates linkages to banking and financing mechanisms.

City-wide and country-wide organisation of civil society groups have added to the financial capacity of poor communities locally. Pools for project funding and transnational funding instruments such as the IUPF in Uganda (Nohn 2015: 184) can play an important role in stimulating local activities and creating a sense of joint responsibility for urban problems among partners.

## **Access to land**

Access to urban land in favourable locations has long been neglected as the most crucial factor limiting possibilities for up-scaling approaches and for constructive partnerships between the state and vulnerable groups in society. Developing new forms of land tenure (Porio and Karaos 2015; UN-Habitat 2011) might be a promising way of improving urban living conditions for urban poor, for example. Reducing the market price can also be considered, such as land taxation and land value sharing in order to pay for land subsidies in good locations for vulnerable groups (Nohn 2015).

## **3.3 Success factors**

### **Conducive political environment**

One of the key success factors is highlighted by Hickey and Mohan (2004, p.159):

*Participatory approaches are most likely to achieve transformations (i) where they are pursued as part of a wider (radical) political project; (ii) where they are aimed specifically at securing citizenship rights and participation for marginal and subordinate groups; and (iii) when they seek to engage with development as an*

*underlying process of social change rather than in the form of discrete technocratic interventions.*

Hickey and Mohan's criteria may seem demanding, but they hit an important point: Even though in practice there may be various degrees of acceptance or willingness to collaborate with civil society organisations, it is essential that both sides have a critical minimum of readiness to engage in a dialogue going beyond consultation.

This in turn points to a political regime that reserves space for mutual learning and joint problem solving. Failure to include civil society actors in the decision-making process creates hurdles during implementation. This was evident in a relocation project funded by CDIA/SECO/NAGA in the Philippines. In spite of an extended study on stakeholders, participation by civil society was limited to consultation, due to a limited willingness of the project partners to engage in dialogue.

The political and cultural environment must provide 'a favourable context for change' (Mitlin 2015: 150). Box 2 provides an example of strong contextual conditions.

The enabling conditions for empowered and pro-poor local governance vary. Heller (2001) highlights a strong state, civil society and organised political force as preconditions whereas Merrifield (2002) argues for less strong contexts, the need for awareness building, building civil society and strengthening institutions.

Another case for conducive political environments on a national and international scale is the French Alliance for Cities and Territorial Development (PFVT). The national platform aims at an intra-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach towards cooperation in the field of urban development in the global South. In spite of the fact that there seem to be little direct interaction with civil society actors, the approach is innovative in restructuring institutional boundaries and questioning sectoral approaches towards development.

## **BOX 2: Building the Capacity for the Urban Poor for Inclusive Urban Development in Ghana**

**Support:** Cities Alliance, GIZ

**Key implementing partner:** GHAFUP (Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor)/People's Dialogue (SDI-Affiliate)

### **Approach**

The project goals include increased public knowledge and information available on the magnitude and characteristics of settlements of the urban poor in Greater Accra; and strengthened capacities of communities and local government institutions to actively engage in constructive, results-oriented community-local government dialogue and to implement

community-led develop projects that increase access to water, sanitation and drainage (45% of funds).

### **How it works**

The programme works with a broad range of actors on different levels. It strengthens capacities on both sides (civil society and local government in Accra). It combines capacity development with tangible improvement projects (water sanitation and drainage). One important component is the sharing of knowledge about informal settlements and the provision of advocacy platforms for NGOs and civil society organisations. It creates leverage through the establishment of countrywide community social investment funds.

The programme also takes advantage of a conducive overall political environment that is further enhanced by a project on decentralisation reforms supported by GIZ.

### **Source**

Cities Alliance, Country Partnership Programs, project description, 2014

### **Functioning local interface**

A well-functioning interface between civil society organisations and government institutions is a prerequisite for project success. Functioning local interfaces between organised civil society and city governments are crucial not only for the success of individual projects, but even more so for partnerships at city level (Nohn 2015; Boonyabancha and Kerr 2015). This interface needs to be initiated and structured, and based on mutual trust as well as knowledge and learning capacities on both sides. Flexible budgets for civil society-driven projects as part of the municipal budget may be an option for building trust and confidence among partners. There are numerous ways to structure this interface, including e-governance tools, forums, town hall meetings, round tables and co-production projects designed jointly and implemented with shared responsibilities. For example, the Cities Alliance Country Programme in Burkina Faso has successfully worked on the interface by building capacity at both the local government and civil society levels.

### **BOX 3: The Country Programme Burkina Faso**

**Funding:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UN-Habitat

#### **Approach**

The programme is a joint initiative of the Government of Burkina Faso and its partners to harmonise urban development efforts at the local, municipal and national level primarily in the two major cities (Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso) and three secondary cities

(Dédougou, Dori and Tenkodogo).

Its objectives include:

- Supporting government efforts to implement the National Policy of Housing and Urban Development and its ten-year action plan;
- Building capacity of local communities to strategically manage urbanisation;
- Strengthening the organisation of civil society to participate actively in local urban development and national public debate;
- Building effective partnerships between national authorities, local authorities, associations and stakeholders with the objective of a more inclusive urban management and greater development impact.

### **How it works**

It builds capacity both within the government at the local level (Cities Alliance) and civil society (SDI and NGO). It has adopted a multi-scale approach working at the national, city and community levels and with a wide range of tools that facilitate communication and participation.

A Task Force Group consisting of all partners at all levels monitors the process. The programme has also established an urban forum at the national level for dialogue.

### **Reference**

<http://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/Burkina%20French.web.pdf>

### **Multi-stakeholder project management**

The way a project is managed and steered is also important for its success. If it is planned and implemented following the basic principles of collaboration, a project cannot be steered by one partner alone. In the Cities Alliance Country Programme in Burkina Faso, a Task Force Group has been established to monitor the process. In such groups it becomes clear that collaborative governance and project steering involve manoeuvring in a strongly contested space where conflicting interests emerge and have to be negotiated. This opens a wide field for capacity building, since many government officials have never been exposed to the challenges of transparent, open negotiations with the urban poor. Techniques for community-based monitoring have been developed and successfully tested in a variety of projects (Herrle et al. 2014).

### **Translocality and multi-level activities**

Translocality: While local activities are indispensable for keeping in touch with communities, partnerships are reinforced by translocal and even transnational practices of local

federations. They can create quality leaps in terms of empowerment and mutual understanding (Fokdal et al. 2013). Translocality also implies multi-level activities and moving beyond individual projects to city-wide programmes and country-wide policies, thereby initiating policy change (such as in the Cities Alliance Country Programme in Burkina Faso and the Land Rights in Bolivia programme supported by UKAid, as seen in Box 5). Alternative development practices can provide tools for learning to negotiate with government actors and to demonstrate their capacities vis-à-vis the state, such as through self-enumeration (Mitlin 1999, McFarlane 2011). As a consequence, practices such as joint enumerations, savings and peer-learning exchanges change the way urban poor communities perceive themselves and are dealt with (see for example SDI activities in Africa and Asia<sup>5</sup>). Transnational activism and networking empower local actors to be more effective in their relationship with the state, and in turn support the state with reforms to become more inclusive (Mitlin 2015).

The international scale is important due to the high recognition of international linkages in most societies (Mitlin 2015:156). A good example of partnership on the global level is the 'Know Your City' campaign by the Cities Alliance (Hohmann & Meinert 2015).

The Asian Coalition for Community Action Programme (ACCA) is an example of transnational networking in countries of East and Southeast Asia (see Box 4).

#### **BOX 4: Asian Coalition for Community Action Programme (ACCA)**

Launched in 2009 by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), with initial support by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

##### **Approach**

Building on the approaches already existing in many communities and practices by various civil society actors across the region in Asia, the coalition supported activities in 215 cities in 19 countries (ACCA 2014).

- City-wide community surveys help identify, prioritise and plan urban upgrading processes that are carried out by communities in partnership with their local government.
- Through the establishment of City Development Funds, the programme encourages partnership between local government and civil society by creating new means for interacting and pooling resources. The ACCA programme has become a new learning platform for officials, private sector and civil society in the region.

<sup>5</sup> <http://sdinet.org/country-updates/>

## How it works

The ACCA committee is responsible for selecting the project ideas developed and sent by the urban poor communities. Once approved for funding, the relatively small funds are released in two or three portions directly to the community, with no mediators, following the principles of maximum flexibility, simple reporting, and a lot of trust. The process is guided and monitored by committees including representatives of the government, universities and research institutions, experts and civil society at various levels: regional, national and city-wide. The committees facilitate a shared learning environment and sharing experience.

## References

Asian Coalition for Community Action Program, ACCA (2014): 215 Cities in Asia. Fifth Year Report of the Asian Coalition for Community Action Programme. ACHR.

The World Bank and Australian Aid (2013): A Review of the Asian Coalition for Community Action Approach to Slum Upgrading. The World Bank.

Multi-level networks: Since 2000 civil society stakeholders have increasingly networked locally, nationally and transnationally – a fundamental change from the 1990s. This development is only partly rooted in modern communication technology. More important is the fact that networks create a critical mass in terms of numbers, people, knowledge and legitimacy for their local clientele. This critical mass often stands behind local actors when it comes to crucial negotiations on land, infrastructure, and other issues. Networks create an organisational pattern parallel to the principle of multi-level project design commonly applied in the development activities of almost all cooperation partners. Civil society-based networks counterbalance formal structures with the informal arrangements of scale.

The project on ‘accessibility to land and women’s land rights’ supported by Habitat for Humanity and UKAid is one example. It has a signed project agreement with the municipality, well-functioning dialogue platforms, and is embedded in national and international networks. This makes it possible to influence policy, especially regarding land rights for women. Local, national and transnational networks are a key success factor for local projects; national and international networking makes urban poor issues visible globally, as well as the failures of governments.

## **BOX 5: Land Rights in Bolivia; Habitat for Humanity International and Habitat for Humanity Bolivia, 2012**

**Support:** UKAid

## **Approach**

Goal: Empower urban poor and marginalised groups and influence policy through advocacy and pressure, national and international.

Local level: In the case of Cochabamba, a MoU was signed between Habitat for Humanity Bolivia and the Planning Department of Cochabamba City, i.e. the Municipality, on joint land mapping, capacity building for community leaders and city officials, among others.

National level: In a second case, Habitat for Humanity Bolivia and HFHI advocated for increased gender equality in the land planning and legal system. They supported women community leaders in increasing their access to land by amending the land law.

## **How it works**

Habitat for Humanity Bolivia established 'School of Women Leaders on Secure Tenure' as a knowledge hub on rights, responsibilities and barriers. A women's network was also established to facilitate dialogues with Pluri-National Legislative Assembly and the Vice-Minister of Housing.

The Bolivian network proposed a general non-discriminatory urban housing law as well as a specific change to the law concerning women's land rights, which was implemented. The local actions were strongly supported by the international Habitat for Humanity branch based in the UK.

## **Reference:**

[www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/](http://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/)

## **Catalysts and mediators**

In practice, most of the civil society groups in successful urban partnerships have had years of intensive capacity building by NGOs and professionals. They have formed what in some cases are called alliances with other civil society actors, for example the Alliance in India. Often, saving groups build the foundation for mobilising communities, such as in the case of the Urban Development Resource Centre in Mongolia. The sustained coherence of an alliance comprising civil society organisations, NGOs and professionals at the local and national level is a prerequisite for empowerment and successfully engaging in partnerships with state organisations. Supporting NGOs are key factors as catalysts and mediators in an internal-external communication process that is not always straightforward. It should be noted, however, that international development agencies look for NGOs which can promise to organise a specific group of civil society actors for the purpose of implementing a specific project defined by externals.

## Knowledge management

One of the success factors of civil society groups in housing and planning processes is their knowledge of the city. In situations where large tracts of the city are not actually known, let alone recognised, by city governments, information about land, people and economic situations is an asset produced and provided almost exclusively by civil society organisations. Over the past few decades they have developed methods of self-enumeration, surveying and mapping that meet professional standards and have been disseminated globally. Roy (2009) considers the technologies used as a ‘vital part of governmentalisation (...) whereby grassroots governmentality recalibrates the strategies for the state itself’. One of the most extensive initiatives in this field is the global ‘Know your City’ campaign launched by SDI.

### **BOX 6: “Know Your City” Campaign / Slum Dweller Profiling (SDI)**

Support: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Cities Alliance, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), Santa Fe Institute

#### **Approach**

A global campaign to collect and consolidate city-wide data on informal/slum settlements as the basis for inclusive development between the urban poor and local governments. It also seeks to refine and standardise data collection processes across the SDI network. Collecting information is seen as an effective tool for mobilising at the community and settlement levels.

It pursues the following goals:

- Collect information of the informal settlements in terms of their locality, size, tenure status, basic amenities, educational, health and social facilities as well as transport and other public services;
- Create a lobby tool to address the inequitable distribution of resources and services in cities; and
- Mobilise and build community capacity and organisational unity through the establishment of federations of the Urban Poor.

#### **How it works**

Based on experience gathered since 1976, SDI affiliates collect three kinds of standardised data:

- Neighbourhood information, including tenure, quality of housing and infrastructure, problems and priorities;

- Household-level enumerations and censuses collecting data on household size, income, assets, tenure security, and access to basic services;
- Mapping: slum dwellers create and collate maps involved in geographic information systems, plots, settlements boundaries, structures, facilities, surface water, etc.

### References

KYCC\_Briefing paper 2014

KYCC\_Annual\_Report\_2014-2015.pdf

<http://www.knowyourcity.info/map.php#/app/ui/about3>

## 3.4 Limitations

Despite the overall positive picture gained from case studies and the literature review, collaborative partnerships between civil society organisations and the state are subject to certain factors that tend to curb the potential of co-production practices as a new collaborative governance model. Some of them are briefly sketched below.

### Collaboration as a change agent

The power of new partnerships in co-producing urban environments should not be overrated. **However, collaboration projects should not be misunderstood as agents for a quick change of a given social structure and political regime.** While they may have an impact on national policies, the general patterns of distribution of wealth and the basic patterns of the political regime remain beyond their reach. Their ability to change local power systems depends on the local political environment and the level of pressure exerted by investors and developers on local politicians.

### Collaboration as a promoter of democracy

There has been a debate about whether or not the emergence of powerful civil society organisations can be seen as a step towards more democracy. While the inclusion of the urban poor in decision making and policy making at various levels can be seen from this perspective, processes of leadership building and decision making within civil society organisations themselves do not necessarily lead to more democratic procedures internally. On the contrary, traditional non-formal power structures may sustain formal democratic structures or continue to exist alongside them. In fact, informal structures turned out to be more flexible and faster for forming political commitment compared to lengthy democratic processes. Terms like ‘deep democracy’ and ‘counter-governmentality’ introduced by Appadurai (2001) when he commented on SDI activities in India during the 1990s indicated

that civil society movements have the potential to create political space for change towards new forms of governance.

However, the ongoing practice of eviction in Asian and African countries shows that this space is contested, and that political and economic pressure can easily jeopardise developments towards more 'deep democracy'. Collaboration projects certainly open the door for politically and economically marginalised groups by offering spaces to counterbalance exclusionary systems – a process that should not be confused with more democracy in the short term.

### **Collaboration as a mechanism for upscaling**

Civil society and its NGO allies have shown an amazing technical ability to survey informal settlements, manage funds, as well as plan and implement resettlement, sanitation and other projects. Their ability to advocate and network on national and international levels also cannot be ignored.

Without country-wide networking and mobilisation of capacities and resources, the scope of activities would have remained limited to certain localities.

Civil society organisations can make a considerable contribution to urban planning and strategic development of cities, and indeed they have done so. They can also contribute substantially and crucially to metropolitan planning by articulating and asserting their needs regarding space, transport, land tenure, land use, and infrastructure in highly complex political processes.

However, as the process is being scaled up beyond the city level, the interface between state organisations, private sector stakeholders and civil society organisations becomes more complex and increasingly driven by powerful national interests. This touches on the very basis of mechanisms of unequal distribution and social imbalances in many societies. Counterbalancing these forces on a sustained basis requires a level of political impact which civil society organisations frequently lack. Furthermore, most of the civil society organisations referred to in this paper do not adopt an approach of revolutionary overthrow of existing political systems.

## **4. Towards the New Urban Agenda**

### **4.1 Need for change**

Numerous projects in different continents show that there is currently a shift in urban governance leading to active involvement of civil society organisations. One of the reasons is that local (and in some countries also national) governments do not have the capacity to

deliver the expected services to their urban citizens. This concerns not only the hardware of housing and infrastructure, but also issues such as security, access to jobs, and participation in formal decision-making processes.

This situation of perforated urban governance has led to the emergence of civil society organisations which, together with their allies, have occupied the emerging space, developing a civic governance system through pragmatic and consensus-based approaches towards inclusive space for low income groups of urban societies.

## **4.2 New spaces for inclusive urban governance**

### **Negotiating about power, resources and legitimacy**

Obviously, the above-mentioned challenges are not limited to particular geographic, cultural or otherwise defined regions or particular political systems. They can be interpreted as an ongoing readjustment of urban governance regimes in areas related to power, resources and legitimacy (see Herrle and Fokdal 2011).

While power remains with the formally legitimate bodies – local governments, regional bodies, etc – these are getting weaker for a number of reasons, including a chronic lack of resources (financial, management, professional) and increasing pressure from private investors. Due to limited social, economic and in some places even geographical capacity, urban governments are increasingly facing a deficit in legitimacy, particularly in poor areas. On the one hand they are forced to modernise their cities and their infrastructure to attract investors, while on the other hand an increasing number of people (and areas) are slipping out of the conventional control systems.

Decisions taken under such conditions reflect the complex context of the situation. A substantial portion of the population living under extremely poor conditions is not served and poorly represented in the decision-making machinery, if at all. One important reason why civil society organisations are emerging as partners of local governments is closely connected with the challenges sketched above.

What can those organisations offer?

- 1) To a varying degree they touch the power base and push government decisions towards more inclusive policies at the national and international levels.
- 2) In many cases they offer substantial resources to solve problems where government institutions fail to deliver. These resources include knowledge (about areas and people excluded from data collecting, technical knowledge), funds (from international partners and savings schemes) and the capacity to mobilise large numbers of people and manage complex upgrading, improvement or resettlement programmes.

- 3) Collaboration with civil society groups can balance the legitimacy deficit of formal institutions by integrating marginalised groups into a common process. It thereby provides legitimacy for the state and other stakeholders (Herrle/Fokdal 2011 and Hohmann/Meinert 2015).

These arguments explain why collaborative governance practices exist, and why they are increasingly recognised by development agencies and local governments as an interesting option for structuring development cooperation in urban environments.

## **4.3 Towards the new urban agenda**

### **Call for co-production with civil society partners**

Although it seems premature to interpret ongoing experience as a consistent trend towards new forms of civic governance providing for more inclusion and deeper democracy, the evidence of their contribution to a new agenda is substantial. Co-production practices as described in this paper can help make cities more inclusive, create the space needed to involve the urban poor, and introduce new ways of negotiation around projects that allow for the development of more realistic and sustainable development goals and projects.

Current experience with co-productive environments supports Watson's statement (2014: 74) about the advantages of social movement-initiated co-production in 1) extending the range of possible state-society interfaces, and 2) enhancing a more regional (multi-level) understanding of planning and development processes without losing the importance of local context.

In addition to Watson's statements about its advantages, new partnerships engaging in co-production practise a continuous and consultative dialogue, are more flexible, and inject innovative methods of knowledge creation and management into local and national governments (some of which have been adopted by international cooperation agencies). They also compensate for the lack of credibility and legitimacy governments suffer, especially among the urban poor. Their potential to form more inclusive urban governance models and, on a wider scale, their contribution towards managing the effects of global change and its effects on urban systems deserve consideration.

### **Options for urban policy and development cooperation**

First, given the growing relevance of co-production mechanisms as part of more inclusive and sustainable urban development, a strong component of collaboration between civil society organisations and governments at various levels should be introduced into the new Urban Agenda and the work of cooperation agencies.

Second, efforts to build and strengthen the capacities of both local government and civil society organisations need to be intensified in order to realise the potential of collaborative interfaces at various levels. This requires the development of mechanisms for joint learning, strategising and planning, rather than further enhancing technical knowledge. Such efforts would complement existing capacity building activities and add a new dimension of common ownership for all stakeholders in the urban development process.

Third, local governments should be encouraged to follow and adopt the successful tools developed by civil society organisations for generating knowledge and joint learning across ethnic, social, gender and religious differences. This will substantially contribute to the development of inclusive and consistent urban policies. Urban decision makers and planners may consider establishing platforms and developing interfaces for enhanced dialogue and collaboration in the early stages of planning and strategising. This will create the space for transparent, inclusive negotiation processes for achieving more sustainable cities.

Fourth, successful partnerships and co-production models need inter-sectoral and multi-level approaches. Civil society organisations tend to be broad and focus on more than one aspect of exclusion, a wider approach that can challenge the fragmentation caused by sectoral institutional boundaries within local governments and international development cooperation.

## 5. Annex

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### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ACCA	Asian Coalition for Community Action
ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDIA	City Development Initiative for Asia (ADB)
CODI	Community Organisations Development Institute (Thailand)
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSDF	National Slum Dwellers' Federation (India)
NULICO	National Union of Low Income Community Organisations
PFVT	French Alliance for Cities and Territorial Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers
UCLGA	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UK Aid	United Kingdom government department responsible for administering overseas aid
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UP-ALL	Urban Poor Alliance (Philippines)
USA	United States of America

## Projects referenced in this paper

### Africa

- Municipal Forums, Uganda (SDI)
- Piloting of the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) to address information requirements of the urban poor, Uganda (SDI)
- Urban Governance and Decentralisation Program, Ethiopia (GIZ)
- Building the capacity of the Urban poor for inclusive urban development, Ghana (SDI)
- Cities Alliance Country Programme, Burkina Faso (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
- Improving local service delivery through institutional strengthening and civic participation (GIZ)

### Asia

- Implementation of Inclusive Cities Partnership Program, India (GIZ)
- The Asian Coalition for Community Action Programme (ACCA), various countries (ACHR)
- Urban Development Resource Center in Mongolia (CDIA/SECO)
- Community Organisation Development Institute (CODI)

### Latin America

- 3,000 households in Cochabamba to secure their land rights, Bolivia (Habitat for Humanity, DFID)
- Building houses, communities and hope, Colombia (Habitat for Humanity)
- Social cohesion and equity – Livable cities, various countries (UN Habitat)

### North America

- Neighbourhood Revitalisation, USA (Habitat for Humanity International)

### North Africa and Middle East

- Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas, Egypt (GIZ, EU)
- Local Governance and Civil Society Development, Palestine (GIZ)
- Strengthening Development and Democracy in the Maghreb Region (CoMun), Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia (GIZ)
- Community-Based Municipal Support Programme, Afghanistan (UN Habitat)

### Europe

- Residential Energy Efficiency for Low-Income Households in Eurasia (Armenia, Bosnia Herzegovina) (Habitat for Humanity)
- French Alliance for Cities and Territorial Development, various countries (PFVT/MFA)

### Global

- City-wide data collection and 'Know Your City Campaign', (SDI/UCLG)

# Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme in support of the preparation process for the Post 2015 Agenda / Sustainable Development Goals towards Habitat III

The Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development.

## A Critical Time for Cities

In October 2016, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) will convene in Quito, where the new urban development agenda will be shaped. Recognising that this is a crucial moment for cities, the Cities Alliance in 2014 established a Joint Work Programme (JWP) focused on advocacy to rally members around cities, formulate common key messages, and determine how best to disseminate them in the run up to Habitat III.

## Key Messages for Habitat III

The JWP has jointly developed advocacy material with key messages for promoting the role of inclusive cities in the 2030 Agenda. The JWP's main common message at policy dialogues towards Habitat III is the key role of partnerships between national governments, local authorities and organised civil society. A joint position paper highlights the value, experience and crucial role of partnerships in achieving poverty reduction in cities and implementing the New Urban Agenda.

## Results

Besides the JWP's focus on Habitat III and its preparatory process, the Cities Alliance partnership increased its participation and engagement at other global negotiations closely linked to Habitat III, such as COP21 and the SDG and Africities Summits. Joint side events opened up space for discussion and the opportunity to promote both the urban agenda and the JWP's key messages.

One take-away of the SDG Summit was that local urban stakeholders will have to be substantially involved in the implementation of the SDGs in order to achieve 65% of the targets. In view of this assessment, it became even more relevant to demonstrate the value of inclusive partnerships for shaping the future of our cities.

The JWP is increasing the Cities Alliance partnership's visibility in support of a common agenda towards Habitat III. It supports close coordination among members and strengthens coherence of effort in their global advocacy activities. Continuous updates allow the flow of information to close knowledge gaps within the JWP and its diverse constituencies.

The JWP also conducts regular analyses of the process and political situation around Habitat III. With the numerous processes and events taking place in the run up to Habitat III, these joint assessments help the JWP members prioritise their efforts and resources. Members have also identified priority topics for the New Urban Agenda and have jointly worked on lessons learned and key messages for these focal areas. This substantive work is a valuable contribution to the JWP members' engagement in the negotiations and consultations towards Habitat III.

## JWP Members

The JWP has been a resounding success, participating in global negotiations as a coherent, dedicated group with a strong voice in support of the important role cities play in sustainable development. Chaired by BMZ, it comprises 12 members and two permanent observers, DFID and SECO.

