Effect if asia's development on urban communities

DECENTRALISATION AND URBAN GOVERNANCE

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INTRODUCTION

Developing Asia has achieved spectacular progress in reducing poverty. Between 1990 and 2010, Asia lifted 786 million people out of poverty, bringing down the headcount ratio to 20. 8 percent from a high of 55. 2 percent. In 2010, Asia's share of the poor in the world's (developing countries) total poor stood at 62. 4 percent, roughly equal to its share in population, an impressive performance since 1990 when Asia accounted for 81 percent of the world's poor.

Despite this spectacular performance, poverty remains a formidable challenge for Asia. According to the World Bank, 758 million people in Asia are still below the US $ 1. 25 poverty line. Indeed, on measures of the numbers of the poor and their share, global poverty is often viewed as a predominantly Asian phenomenon. The World Bank's evidence shows that while 75 percent of the developing world's poor still live in rural areas, the share of the poor living in urban areas is rising, and in a number of countries

rising more rapidly than the population as a whole. Moreover, while poverty incidence has declined across rural and urban areas in Asia, the rates of decline are far slower for urban poverty than for rural poverty. In several Asian countries, the numbers of the urban poor have risen over the years, lending strength to the proposition that as Asian economies become more urbanized, they may face increasing urban poverty with some urban scholars labeling it as " urbanization of poverty". Unlike rural poverty, urban poverty is complex and multi-dimensional, extending beyond the deficiency of income or consumption, where its many dimensions relate to the vulnerability of the poor on account of their inadequate access to land and housing, physical and infrastructure and services, economic and livelihood sources, health and education facilities, social security networks and voice and empowerment. In most of developing Asia, urbanization has been accompanied by slums and shelter deprivation, informality, worsening of the living conditions, and increasing risks due to climate change and exclusionary urban forms. According to the UN-Habitat, Asia has 60 percent of the world's total slum population, and many more live in slum-like conditions in areas that are officially designated as non-slums. Working poverty and informality are high in Asian cities and towns. Urbanization is a positive factor in growth and poverty reduction. Country experiences are generally consistent with the view that a rising share of the population living in urban areas plays a positive role in overall poverty reduction, by providing new opportunities to those migrating out of the rural areas and escaping poverty in the process. At the same time, most Asian economies are struggling with complex urban problems, associated with different forms of poverty, deprivation, vulnerability and risks. [1, 2]

DISCUSSION

In general, the more rapid a country's economic growth, the faster it urbanises – urbanisation both reflects, and contributes to, economic growth and economic development patterns. The increasing numbers and proportions of the population living in urban areas in most Asian countries reflects a growing concentration of people, and their families, seeking to take advantage of the increased demand for labour in the industrial and service sectors. Informal ' slum' settlements, and other forms of ' under-served' settlements, are the most obvious physical manifestation of the contradiction between the demand for labour in Asia's urban areas on one hand, and inadequate provision for affordable housing, land and infrastructure in which they and their families can live safely on the other. Furthermore, slums often demonstrate a concentration of multiple deprivations experienced by the urban poor. At least one in three (33 per cent) of Asia's urban population do not have safe and secure housing and are largely excluded from achieving their political, social and economic rights. The number of people living in slums in Asia is projected to grow fast – reaching 839 million by 2020. As such, slum dwellers constitute a major vote bank within many Asian countries. Access to land highlights the contradictions that can arise from urban growth and economic development in urban areas, and is a major determinant of the quality of shelter available to Asia's urban poor. As more and more financial investment and people flow into Asia's urban areas, demand for land has increased. As a result, land is increasingly viewed as a valuable commodity which can be sold for commercial development or middle-class residential use. Large-scale

infrastructure projects also place demands upon land, often requiring the relocation of informal settlements and the people who live in them. The poor are least able to access or secure land in this context, both for financial reasons and because formal systems do not recognise their often informal contributions to city life. The urban poor are frequently forced to live on marginal/hazardous land and/or in locations which are distant from places of work, services and often poorly served by public transport. The threat of eviction limits people's willingness to further invest in housing and infrastructure, and can lead to psychological pressures from fear and uncertainty. In this situation, it is increasingly difficult for poor people to effectively supply their labour or participate in cities' economic growth and development. Because many of the urban poor are forced to live on marginal land, in unsafe environments and in poor quality housing, they are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. They are also least able to withstand external shocks compared with the rest of the urban population, due to an inadequate asset base and/or social and financial safety nets. This vulnerability applies as much to withstanding and recovering from environmental/physical shocks as it does to dealing with sudden social and economic changes (including forced eviction) [3].

Not all of Asia's urban poor live in slums, and conversely, not all those who live in slums are poor. However, the poor quality of housing and lack of basic services that are common in slums represent a clear dimension of urban poverty. Urban poor settlements come in a variety of sizes and shapes, and are called by a variety of names not only ' slums'. The word slum traditionally describes a neighbourhood of housing that was once in good

condition but has since deteriorated or been subdivided into a state of high crowding and rented out to low-income groups. UN-HABITAT defines a slum household as a group of people living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following conditions: durable housing, sufficient living area, access to clean water, access to proper sanitation and secure tenure. Rising urban inequality in Asia reflects policy focus on economic growth rather than reducing inequality such as through redistribution. Meeting the Millennium slum target in Asia has led the achievement of the 2020 slum target under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers through various policies and programmes. As UN-HABITAT (2010) reported, '' Asia was at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the Millennium slum target between the year 2000 and 2010, with governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum-dwellers; these represent 75% of the total number of urban residents in the world who no longer suffer from inadequate housing. The greatest advances in this region were recorded in Southern and Eastern Asia, where 145 million people moved out of the '' slum-dweller'' category (73 million and 72 million, respectively); this represented a 24% decrease in the total urban population living in slums in the two sub-regions. Countries in South- Eastern Asia have also made significant progress with improved conditions for 33 million slum residents, a 22% decrease.''

Referring to Case Study 1: Danger Zone Surveys in the Philippines, we can see that the urbanization has force the poor communities to live along at river banks, railway tracks, garbage dumps, under road and bridges and etc.

City and national authorities has also failed to identify how so many people could live in such places that are hazardous locations, or how they contribute to the city's economic and social life. These issues have actually encouraged the city authorities to mobilize these particular communities to avoid more contribution towards the status of poor countries. Due to this, municipal and communities are working together to find land and relocating these communities to places which are affordable and also integrating them as part of the city's planning and developing programme which eventually can contribute to the economic growth of Philippines.

Referring to Case Study 2 : The Community Organization Development Institute (CODI) and the Baan Mankong in Thailand, we can see that Thailand Government have taken initiative and supported the community by setting up the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) to provide loans, grants, and technical support to community organizations for upgrading their homes and neighbourhoods, or developing new settlements, and for supporting micro-enterprises. In 2000, UCDO also merged with the Rural Development Fund to form the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), which is now implementing an ambitious national programme supporting community-led upgrading and secure tenure for urban poor households. This sort of programme has created an opportunity for existing slum communities to participate actively in a local development process, whereby their settlements are upgraded and it involves the collaboration of communities, local authorities, development agent and land owner that is both of public and private parties [4].

Referring to another case from in Nepal which is the capital of Kathmandu, the Vishnumati Link Road project involved the construction of a road running along the Vishnumati River, where a number of communities have been living in informal settlements for almost 50 years. Notices were posted warning residents in five affected communities to move, as their houses would be demolished to make way for the new road. After numerous meetings between the residents, a non-governmental organization known as Lumanti, donors and the government, the road construction was postponed. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office formally agreed to provide secure housing for all affected families, as well as rental compensation until new housing was delivered. In 2003, a municipal Urban Community Support Fund was created by the Kathmandu metropolitan authority, *Lumanti* and some donor organizations like the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Slum Dwellers International and Acton Aid Nepal. The Fund grants loans to groupings on affordable terms and the monies are on-lent to urban poor households, enabling them to improve socio-economic conditions, housing and physical facilities. The Fund's first project involved the resettlement to a new site in Kirtipur of the squatter families affected by the Vishnumati Link Road project. Under its ' Housing the Poor in Asian Cities' scheme, the UN

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has helped *Lumanti* develop a low-cost, low-maintenance wastewater treatment system for the resettlement scheme together with the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Slum Dwellers International and Acton Aid Nepal. Similarly, the UN-HABITAT Water for Asian Cities Programme in Nepal had provided support for rainwater harvesting, and the Nepalese Department for Urban Development

and Construction helped with paved open spaces. The location for the new housing project was decided after lengthy discussions with the families regarding their needs and their visions for a new community. Affordability was a major factor, since the families must make monthly repayments to the Support Fund. The housing design was chosen by the community from several alternatives. Through the entire planning process, the low-income households demonstrated their capacity to develop viable solutions and to fight for housing rights and security of tenure; this involved organizing themselves, saving money, designing houses,

developing management skills, and remaining firmly committed to building better lives for themselves and the community [5].

How does the community can benefit through the participation in urban generation and redevelopment? Urban regeneration is a key principle in today's planning practice. Urban regeneration is a way to reduce urban problems in an area by improving the social, economic and environmental conditions. Through the complexity of urban regeneration projects there are many actors involved in the planning of these projects like local government, private developers, public organizations and local community. One way of dealing with urban regeneration projects is to bring the key actors and shareholders in a regeneration area together in urban regeneration partnerships. In today's urban planning practices there is a growing attention for a collaborative way of planning whereby different partners trying to find a win-win situation. Under influence of the British urban policy the role of the local community seems to become more and more important in urban regeneration projects. According to the URCD, there are few benefits that

can be highlighted when community involves in the urban regeneration and redevelopment. Adapting the Northern Ireland framework which sets out the future direction for urban regeneration and community development policy as it is structured around four policy objectives which aim to address the underlying problems of urban areas and maximise the impact of community development and four supporting actions which will help develop a more conducive policy and financial environment to support the policy objectives.

POLICIES OBJECTIVES	SUPPORTING ACTIONS
	• We will maximise the potential of regeneratio n and community developmen t by supporting an evidence- based policy environment
• To tackle area-based deprivation	
• To strengthen	• We will maximise

the resources available to regeneratio n and community developmen t by supporting an innovative financial environment

the competitive ness of our towns and cities

- To improve linkages between areas of need and areas of opportunity

- We will support the developmen t of skilled and knowledgea ble practitioners in regeneratio n and community

	developmen t
• To develop more cohesive and engaged communities	• We will promote an effective and efficient voluntary and community sector

CONCLUSION

The unprecedented pace of economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region has led to rapid urbanization. This has posed serious challenges to local authorities and national governments in the face of ever-increasing demand for secure tenure, proper housing and services in urban areas. There is no doubting that economic growth in Asia and the Pacific has pulled millions out of extreme poverty; still, the numbers of those in moderate poverty remain high. The simple truth is that in Asia, and as UN-HABITAT has been warning for years, rapid urbanization has gone hand in hand with the urbanization of poverty. In this as in other developing regions, UN-HABITAT's major concern is that urban economic growth has not benefited all residents equally, with the poor left to bear most of the drawbacks and shortcomings in terms of tenure, shelter, jobs, health, education and the environment. A prevalent view is that governments lack the resources required to provide proper

housing to all slum-dwellers, and therefore they should play an enabling role, encouraging the private sector to " down-market" housing production and cater to the poor. However, in many poor developing countries, market mechanisms in the housing sector are in no position to solve the problem. More and more poor people dreaming of better living conditions in urban areas become the victims of market forces because of their inability to generate effective demand in housing markets. Market-orientated policies have failed to solve the housing problems for the poor. Instead they have led to a situation where the housing needs of the majority of Asia's urban populations are not catered for either by the market or by government. The lessons from Asian cities suggest that small-scale programmes are more conducive to participation by the poor in design and implementation, thereby increasing ownership and enhancing sustainability. Public housing is the solution tried out by many governments. This is apposite when public authorities have enough resources and political commitment. Since national governments, local authorities, public or private service providers and civil society organizations share responsibility for the delivery of basic urban services to all, they must negotiate and formalize partnerships among them, taking into account their respective responsibilities and interests. Such partnerships should be encouraged and facilitated through appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks, including clear, results-orientated contracts and monitoring mechanisms. This is no easy task for Asian cities as poverty comes on top of new, major challenges like immigration, ageing, climate change, housing and basic services at a time when the worldwide economic crisis is not over. Asian cities are expected to rebound from the 2008 global credit crunch just as they did from the regional 1997-98 financial crisis, again

growing at a much faster pace than those in other regions. The key to revival will be to ensure that this urban economic growth is sustainable, and therefore inclusive. The crisis is an opportunity to correct the structural imbalance in urban economies, and to reduce urban poverty and deprivation.

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