

№ 10  
बँगलोरु BANGALORE

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WELTSTADT

THE PROJECT WELTSTADT - WHO CREATES  
THE CITY? IS A JOINT INITIATIVE OF THE  
GOETHE-INSTITUT AND THE GERMAN  
FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,  
NATURE CONSERVATION, BUILDING AND  
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Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Building and Nuclear Safety

NEXT BANGALORE

# CROWD SOURCING THE CITY



WER MACHT DIE STADT? WHO CREATES THE CITY? KUY DÉFAR DÉKK BI? QUI CRÉE LA VILLE? 누가 도시를 만드는가 CHI CREA LA CITTA? QUIEN HACE LA CIUDAD? ສະກັບຜົນໄດ້ ຍ້າວຸ ຜົມຈຳລັງທີ່ ສູນເຄີຍທີ່ ສູນເຄີຍທີ່

# MAKING THE CITY OBSERVABLE!

## "WHAT TO DO... IT'S HOW IT IS."

"What to do... it's how it is." An often-heard phrase in Bangalore, sometimes meant as a statement, sometimes as a question, and often said with a wink. Bangalore is not a static city; it is changing rapidly and the people are not prepared to quietly accept what is happening. It seems that most stories and ideas are just waiting to be shared, to start a discussion, to make a change. The contradiction between modernity and acceptance, between their own culture and global urban planning is the motor to most inputs. "That's Bangalore" – one of the fastest growing cities in the world with the apparent contradiction between local codices and global market conditions.

## THE INDIAN DISCOURSE

The reception of India or Indian cities is essentially defined by very potent partial realities, whereby three distorted images repeatedly appear: a) the romantic idea of India as a "peaceful, religious and exotic" society, b) a "misery discourse" that is effectively limited to slums and the (perceived) inequality of Indian society, and c) India's economic boom, seen as an important sales and a cheap labor market. Within the discourse, the apparent double contradiction of India as the world's biggest democracy, which is revealed in an enormous dichotomy between rural and urban spaces as well as between the huge economic dynamic and the immanent, abstruse cultural codes, is reduced to two poles: the acceptance of the "superior" culture of the former British colonial power (which is being continued in post-colonial approaches) and the economic growth of India.

## THE IMAGE OF AN INDIAN CITY

The image of India appears as a connection of apparently dissimilar but related factors composed of diverse languages and notions, which are the simultaneous expression of local moments and interwoven global elements. At the same time this appearance is characterized by an enormous dynamic that encompasses all aspects of Indian life. Images that seem accessible from a European perspective and on first glance appear 'typically Indian', turn out to be something else on closer inspection. They are mixtures of traditional and popular cultural topoi and visualizations, held together by the language chimera of Hindi-English. Researchers encounter a visual world whose origin can only be separated into original and copy with great difficulty, and explain it all too easily as "increasing complexity" – with enormous consequences for urban research in the Indian context. Quite the contrary: instead of leading a demystifying discourse that fundamentally confronts politics, economics, culture and post-colonial implications – voluminous generic questions, beyond any local relevance, are dragged through India's cities like 'research airbags'. This reduced approach of a simple 'optimization' leads to solutions that only confront the technical and regulative modernization of the system.

## THE OTHER CITY?

Today, the city is still discussed and negotiated from the perspective of the "experts". Participation often only happens as a confirmation of already established facts; participation in the decision making process is only rarely possible. What is the city beyond the experts, the city of inhabitants, the city of urban amateurs? An interesting question – especially for Indian urban research. Nextbangalore proposes the thesis that it is those urban

protagonists who could provide knowledge and alternative strategies – a knowledge of collaboration – that could create a radical, alternative future of the city. Nextbangalore is thus a research experiment in the creation of an alternative reference system of the Indian city. To reach that goal it is necessary to expose the specific influences on Indian urban development, to "demystify" materials, plans, designs and strategies and to make the "other" Indian city observable through new lines of development. This entails prioritizing the neighborhood scale – an "inbetween" scale – in planning.

## CROWDSOURCING

At the beginning of 2013, the collaborative crowdsourcing platform Nextbangalore was launched with the aim of providing a space for Bangalore's inhabitants' knowledge, ideas and visions of the city. Imagine you have the power to change one place in Bangalore. What place would you choose? was the question, challenge and starting shot for a map of alternative tasks for Bangalore. [www.nextbangalore.com](http://www.nextbangalore.com) As digital media are only accessible to a limited group of people, Nextbangalore was located on the interfaces between "digital" and "analog", "online" and "offline". The diverse methodological approaches and the accompanying events such as workshops, readings and urban games, made it possible for people to participate at different times and in different ways. The open policy of the project ensures that the knowledge belongs and is available to everyone.

## LAUNCH

The platform was launched in early 2013 at the Goethe Institute/Max Mueller Bhavan in Bangalore. The focus of the kick-off event was on User-Generated Cities, on which theme Julian Petrin (Nexthamburg), Rahul Srivastava & Matias Echanove (URBZ Mumbai), Tile von Damm (MOD Institute Bangalore) and Ashwin Mahesh (Map Unity Bangalore) presented their work and discussed it with the visitors. As well as questions about participative processes and tools, the communication and accessibility of different media also played an important role. Prof. Joachim Schultz Granberg (University of Münster), Rupali Gupte & Rohan Shivkumar (CRIT Mumbai) and Anne-Katrin Fenk (MOD Institute Bangalore) therefore concentrated on the concept of the 'Urban Amateur' and the implications of translation and visualisation, especially in culturally different spaces.

## NEXTBANGALORE: SPACE

In September 2013, as part of the Weltstadt project, the first Nextbangalore:Space opened. Centrally located in Shanti Nagar, a typical office space was converted into a temporary creative space, including an open meeting place, and a convention and exhibition space. For almost three weeks the doors were wide open for everyone in Bangalore – and with curiosity and interest a huge number of visitors visited the urban laboratory. That proves the locals' high level of interest in and concern for their city as well as for future urban planning, starting a dialog and establishing an alternative collection of ideas and visions.

TILE VON DAMM is curating the urban participation project Nextbangalore. He is political scientist and co-founder of MOD Institute Bangalore – Berlin ([www.mod.org.in](http://www.mod.org.in)).

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Tile von Damm and Anne-Katrin Fenk



Nextbangalore Flyer © MOD Institute

**"That's Bangalore" – one of the fastest growing cities in the world with the apparent contradiction between local codices and global market conditions.**

# DIMENSIONS OF A CITY

Text von Damm and Anne-Katrin Fenk



**Bangalore Boomtown:** the Indian metropolis has established itself as an international brand. Special economic zones like Electronics City or the International Tech Park bring together numerous industrial complexes, retail services and shopping malls on the outskirts of town. This artificial picture of the Indian technology park represents a frequently copied model for urban development in modern-day India. The economic upturn put Bangalore firmly on the global map. Bangalore's status as a successful model how to become a global player was heavily publicized by the media, particularly because the city took radical measures to liberalize its economy, a process begun in 1992. The fact that this recent history has taken place independently of the urban space as a whole, however, is hardly on the agenda of the city planners. The immense changes that go along with the economic boom were devised by a city of different speeds and idiosyncrasies, reinforcing the polarization and fragmentation of urban society. Electronics City has come to represent an isolated building block within the city and, thus, is not a city as was originally conceived.

Bangalore is one of the most unusual Indian cities. Situated on the Deccan Plateau, it is one of the few cities in the world that have no dominant geographical boundaries; it was built at a distance of more than a hundred kilometres from a river. Over the centuries, its fresh water has been supplied by an ingenious network of hundreds of manmade tanks. However, the enormous urban development of Bangalore – the population has doubled in the past decade and now officially stands at approximately 9.5 million inhabitants – has robbed the city of its intelligent infrastructure.

Power outages and interruptions in water supply are part of the everyday life of the modern city of Bangalore, whose intra-Indian immigration rate is in the double digits. The processes of transformation set in motion by migration are huge and create a new picture of Bangalore – a city that only a few years ago was everyone's romantic idea of a garden city. In the meantime, it has developed into a mega-city in which social as well as geographical boundaries are reasserting themselves rather than disappearing.

Still, this restructuring phase of the city is not its first. Indeed, the 1950s were marked by Nehru's dream of industrialization: a large number of new neighborhoods and suburbs (such as Malleswaram, Indiranagar, Jayanagar) grew beyond the boundaries of the city. However, their architectural idiom followed the tradition of low-bungalow settlements and never equalled the density found in the Art Deco urban-planning complexes of Mumbai. To this day, compared to other metropolitan areas of India, Bangalore's inner city is less densely built-up than the concentration of people in the streets would seem to suggest – a factor that will change irreversibly in the years to come, or may already have changed. In particular, the current massive spatial expansion of clusters of buildings, and the enormous speed at which change is taking place, raise questions of a different scale for the urban and adjacent rural space. Increasingly careful use of resources and a focus on the world market are the driving force behind the real estate boom, whose almost identical buildings are a dominant feature of the new Bangalore. This establishing of 'stock' images – images that have their source in a global architectural idiom – is completely decoupled from the urban landscape underlying Bangalore. And it has far-reaching consequences for the city, since the new images are simply superimposed on the old ones. This is reflected in the spatial image of the donut, which – coming from Anglo-American urban discourse – has a paradoxical equivalent in India. The donut – a metaphor for the emptied-out centers of American cities – is used in India as the ideal metaphor for a horizontal inner city that is surrounded by high-density vertical clusters and apartment towers. It is already becoming apparent that the dictate of this spatial image is a model of social exclusion. The arrival of the new satellites transforms local settlements, which have grown organically, into urban slums, no longer part of the infrastructure and of a formal framework. As a result their status becomes informal.

Bangalore therefore seems to be developing into a 'typically Indian city', embedded in a milieu of urban-planning formalism, a post-modern 'chaotic jumble of ideas', economically functional buildings and informal settlements. The urban-planning instruments of a master plan that contains



- A Village maps superimposed to 1870
- B Skyline and the city
- C Hanuman and the city
- D The flyovers and the city
- E The metro and the city
- F An old Bangalore House
- G Cinema City

All pictures © by MOD Institute

# THE RISE OF THE URBAN STUDIO

Text von Damm, Markus Ewald and Anne-Katrin Fenk



A



B



C



E

**WHY SHOULD I BE PART OF IT?**

**ISN'T URBAN PLANNING TOO COMPLEX?**

**IS THERE A CHANCE THAT MY IDEA WILL BECOME REALITY?**

**IS MY IDEA IMPORTANT ENOUGH?**

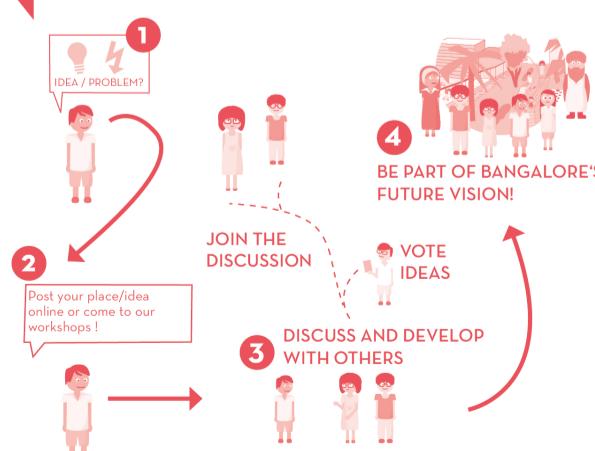
Because it's you who is living and working in Bangalore, and because a city should be designed for the people. Nextbangalore aims to create a future citizens' vision for Bangalore and stimulate current urban development.

On basis of the future vision a growing number of projects will emerge. In the long term Nextbangalore helps the community to promote projects and to make them politically and technically feasible.

Nextbangalore is a place for all ideas, wishes and visions for the future of the city. We believe that every idea is valuable. What seems impossible today can be a success tomorrow.

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## HOW DOES NEXTBANGALORE WORK?



A The City Game Bangalore with Fields of View

B Outside view of the Nextbangalore Space

C Designing the Space

D Making of the Flyover

E Nextbangalore Pictogram

F Nextbangalore Pictogram

**How to generate an urban space in Bangalore?** A studio that works as a meeting room, that welcomes everyone, provides room and triggers an urban discussion? By choosing an office building in Shantinagar an important decision was made. The Nextbangalore:Space in central Bangalore would be located in a quarter where there are old neighborhoods, areas undergoing transformation and working spaces that people commute to on a daily basis from outside the city. The room itself had to breathe a certain kind of urban vision and function as a creative meeting place, where people would enjoy spending time and sharing their visions and ideas for the future of Bangalore. Therefore the purpose of the Nextbangalore:Space was to create a real platform to encourage exchanges of opinions on Bangalore and on Indian cities. A place where people can meet, discuss, complain, propose, dream and develop a common urban vision.

The first impression was of a space that looked very much like a former call center. Cream coloured panels partitioned the room into different areas, which were packed with office furniture. But the 200 square meters had the potential for an urban studio, including different areas for different programs and a main meeting place. The Nextbangalore:Space needed to be urban and intimate at the same time, as it is the place where urban issues are discussed from a personal point of view and where stories from Bangalore's past and future were collected.

Through the installation of a real-scale photo of a major public space in Bangalore, the room took on an urban scale. Integrated urban comic strips playfully explained the basic ideas and encouraged everyone to participate. Besides the discussions, interactions and meetings, a simple letterbox collected the ideas and wishes simultaneously to the posts on the website. The online and offline aspects of the project were highly connected by an ongoing exchange between both worlds.

Nextbangalore:Space is both a method and a meeting room. For nearly all visitors it is the first time of experiencing an urban studio that provides the possibility to share their ideas and visions for a future Bangalore.

In the space, all visitors had the chance to record their ideas for the city on a speech bubble, and to be photographed with it in front of the "Flyover-Wall". The Indian urban atmosphere created by this action was captured in a series of photographs that were posted on the Nextbangalore blog and website.

**Essential elements of the Nextbangalore:Space** were the events, which tackled the challenges of urban development in Bangalore with different perspectives and formats. The Bangalore-based NGO Fields of View, who are specialised in the playful communication of urban knowledge, played a development game with the visitors. Within a few hours, an imaginary Indian city was created according to the ideas of the individuals and in dialogue with the others. When it was completed, the results were discussed by the group.

The Nextbangalore:Space instigated different mapping and visualization ideas that addressed the questions "What is City?" and "What is the Indian City?" in very different ways. In various workshops, which were opened to the public at the final event, strategies for sustainable urban planning were discussed and some of the results are presented in the first Bangalore Change Map.

A further highlight was the visit from a group of graduate students from the Hindustan-University in Chennai. As part of a one-day seminar, the students were informed about the ideas, methods and challenges of the project. In the context of field research, small groups of students developed their own ideas on the basis of the interviews they conducted in different neighborhoods of the city.

The space itself changed throughout the duration of the project into a growing exhibition of the urban situation in Bangalore by way of two distinct visual elements: the image material that was collected and produced during the numerous excursions, and the ideas, visions and questions of the visitors and bloggers. A further element of the Space were the urban excursions and field trips - most of which focussed on the outskirts of the city. In order to fulfil one of the main aims of the Nextbangalore, namely the involvement of the people, these excursions were crucial. They made discussions with Bangalore's residents possible, often through personal encounters at their homes or workplaces. In the Indian context, it is often difficult to find urban history in books or other documents. In addition, recording the city often follows academic values and rules, leaving many stories ignored or untold. Therefore, within Nextbangalore, urban writing is an important point to record the "other" stories of the city. The online presence, the facebook community and the blog provide accessible platforms on which this can be done.

# FIELD TRIPS



E

A Handcrafted Bricks  
B Anthill-turned-temple  
C The Notaries  
D HRS layout  
E Paper recycling

All pictures © Nextbangalore

"Who creates the city?" This leading question guided the Nextbangalore team to various spaces and buildings in Bangalore to explore the urban patterns in the city. The short stories are representative for the diverse picture of the city and its urban future. The field trips were part of two tutorials "Nextbangalore – media of cooperative urban development" conducted by MOD Institute and the student exchange program between the Chair of Urban Design and Architecture at the Technical University Berlin and MOD Institute. The short stories are written by Maria Agudelo Ganem, Olivia Grandi, Malte Heinze, Anja Jertz, Hanka Krismanski, Carolin Kuhn, Stefan Liczkowski, Alisa Neumann, and Lena Wellmann.

## UNCLAIMED SPACES IN THE CITY OF BANGALORE

What happens to spaces in the city where the ownership and intended function is unclear?

An interesting phenomenon can be witnessed in Bangalore where people reclaim such spaces through a gradual process of informal encroachment with a religious basis. Between Langford Road and the Hockey Stadium of Shantinagar, one such encroachment is currently underway. In this case it started with an artificial anthill, which, according to Hindu belief, is the home of snakes. In Hindu mythology snakes are revered as entities of strength and renewal that represent rebirth, death and mortality. Thus the anthill is a holy place. After the anthill has been established, a small flag is placed nearby as a symbol of worship. After a while the anthill is upgraded by the addition of a little roof. A religious picture or symbol then appears. Step by step the anthill is transformed into a shrine. Inspired by this first religious encroachment – and maybe in fear of being excluded – other religions come and join in the process of spatial appropriation.

In this area of Shantinagar, this process of surreptitious appropriation has been going on at different sites for many years. An informal agglomeration of religious shrines and symbols of different religions are now dotted around a busy junction. During the day, you might miss this little spot, distracted by the traffic, the noise or the signs along the road, but at night time the shrines are illuminated, lighting up formerly unused spaces in Bangalore. Charming as they may seem, these incremental encroachments are contested and are causes of annoyance for others, perhaps more spatially empowered people in the city who would like to see them destroyed.

## BRICK PRODUCTION

A bumpy artificial red landscape reshapes the flat natural green one of Bangalore's master planned metropolitan expansion zones. The zone is located between the city limits, which are continuously expanding outwards, and speculative housing developments on the peripheral urban edge.

Driving through the outskirts of Bangalore we accidentally bumped into a small artisanal brick production shed. In the shed several thousand bricks are neatly stacked in piles. On one side a group of people are working in a small production chain.

A man moves the mud in the ground with a shovel, another worker collects it with his hands, shapes it into balls, which he puts onto a table. Here the next worker places it into a form and, with one fast movement, gets rid of the excess material. As he removes the form from the fresh brick a woman appears, who balances it on a board on her head and piles it neatly to dry. The bricks are dried close together creating a regular landscape. As they dry they are ready to be stacked and taken away. The process is extremely artisanal, each brick is individually made and passes through several hands before it's ready to be used as a construction material. As we are currently concerned with the question "who creates the city" we can't help but think about this group of workers who, piece by piece, are producing the small construction units that the city is made of.

## HSR LAYOUT

For the past 15 years a new area has been growing at the edge of south-eastern Bangalore: HSR Layout. Several storm water tanks, which have the appearance of lakes, hold the rainwater in the area during heavy rains. Drains connect the lakes with each other. HSR Layout is a typical city extension with a grid layout; streets have names such as 27th Main Road or 7th Cross Road. It is a mixed lower and upper middle class residential area. The local planning department, the Bangalore Development Authority, bought the land from farmers about 17 years ago and developed it. It was sold to investors and private persons. One can distinguish an older and a newer part of the settlement. A resident who lives in the older part of HSR Layout had to move from Mahatma Gandhi Road (MG Road) to this district because the construction of the new metro line in Bangalore cost him his home.

## PAPER RECYCLING STORE

As the street name suggests, an urban water channel runs next to this street. However a brick wall, built high enough to prevent any view of the water, separates the channel from the street. When there is a breeze, the smell reveals some of the reason for this wall.

Parallel to the channel, on the other side of the road, a colourful mixture of little stores and enterprises have popped up and line the street. Each of them is in their own way interlaced with the public and everyday life activities in the streets.

In some way a store that is packed with piles of paper illustrates a particularity here. While all the other tiny stores serve the daily needs of the neighbourhood's consumers on an individual scale, the store that collects and recycles paper is a business on the other end of the consumption cycle. This integration makes the flip side of consumption and comfort visible and shows the value of our resources at the same time.

The recycling process begins with 3 bikes with big bags attached to collect paper in the extended surrounding areas. The selection and sorting process happens in the store, as does the packing and storing of the paper. Once a week, when enough material has been gathered, there is a sale and the recycling process is brought to the next level.

## THE NOTARIES

Right next to one of the busiest main roads in Bangalore, the elongation of Mahatma Gandhi Road, a sudden moment of poetic calm and concentration emerges. A little square, which is framed by a monumental brick garage for mobile temples, the noisy arterial road and the proud concrete metro high line, provides spaces to a group of notaries. Throughout the changes and developments of the last years these notaries have established their well known 'offices' on the small terraces and under the canopies of the more formal stores. Some years ago they also lived near their workplace, but they have now moved with their families to more quiet areas, keeping the famous location as their workspace. The notaries' clients stem from all over the city – far beyond the confines of the square and the surrounding neighborhood. They offer their clients services for certification, translating and approving contracts, and bureaucratic issues. Most of the notaries

here work with handwritten documents and typewriters. Only one offers his services on a computer. Because of this, he is not such an integral part of the community of the unplugged street notaries.

Everything in this place, the collision of traditional spatial patterns with some very modern influences, creates a very unique, urban situation and an affordable, individually adapted working environment.

## COMMUNITY SPORTS FIELD

In the quite densely built settlement of Halasuru, Jogupalya Road, one of the small but busy main roads in this neighborhood is lined with a lot of different shops. However it also has a quieter section. On one side, this quiet passage is dominated by the old concrete stands of a clay sports field, while on the opposite side three newly erected 7 story housing complexes define the boundary.

These two sides of Jogupalya Road structurally segregate the street in similar ways, but with completely different meanings and options.

The new housing projects represent the standards of a gated community within a neighborhood that is actually shaped by a lived harmony and the stability of social layers, their traditions and also different economic potentials and interests. In front of a small guard house this reality ends for most of the people and the promised worlds of 'Blissed Blossom' or 'La Palma' offer a secure and comfortable life and an interface into the global modern community.

The huge void of the old clay court is also quite modern with its hybrid and public uses for the local people of Halasuru. Hidden behind the concrete stands, this field of course provides a space for various sport activities for people of different ages and abilities, but it also gives young people the opportunity to learn to drive a motorbike away from the rushing traffic. In addition some of the big, old trees with their wide canopies provide shade to the senior generation that enjoys watching these various activities.

# SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## NEW FRONTIERS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

— Tile von Damm and Anne-Katrin Fenk

It is a fact that Bangalore, like most growing cities in India, significantly lacks affordable housing, especially for the Economic Weaker Section (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG) households. The increased demand for affordable housing has various causes. One crucial driver of the housing shortage has been the growth of Bangalore's population. Another reason is that the city's economic success is trickling down to the EWS and LIG and therefore a broad lower Middle Income Group (MIG) is demanding adequate housing facilities. Nevertheless the willingness of both the private and the public sectors to serve the demand for affordable housing remains low. Former successful programs e.g. run by HUDCO (Housing and Urban Development Cooperation Limited) have been discontinued. The main reason for the lack of initiatives, especially in Bangalore, to create affordable housing is the fact that land within the municipality limits is extremely valuable. Land prices in Bangalore can differ widely, even from street to street. Furthermore current land-values are still based on historical developments and decisions; e.g. Austin Town today is and was, regarding land-values, a depressed area because it was developed and labelled as a poor EWS district and associated with other caste-related stigma. Because of their relatively under-developed infrastructure, until today, the areas between the BDA layouts, next to military districts, and the so-called "Nalas" are traditionally low-value-areas – a repeating history. Hence the "only efficient policy tool", which is understood even by the common man, is to push for a higher floor space index (FSI), which often results in a dramatic increase of land value. In the end the prices of land are too expensive for the majority of the population (only 11% the people in Bangalore have access to home loans and mortgages).

So it is no surprise that the 'new frontiers' in the affordable housing market are private developers. Due to the fact that the real estate world has changed significantly, affordable housing is now viewed as a possible key growth driver in the real estate sector.<sup>1</sup> Ironically the global financial meltdown put the case of 'affordability' back on the agenda.

Cities such as Ahmedabad<sup>2</sup>, Chennai and Mumbai, where developers have consistently provided Low Income Housing (LIH), have seen the number of developers more than double in the last few years. In addition, in tier 2 cities developers have sprung up where there had once been none.<sup>3</sup> Affordability in India is viewed as an expanding market. Hence most of the projects are located on the outskirts of the city (where land is accessible) and are often disconnected from the main infrastructure grid and lacking substantial services, such as schools etc.

The main task for the future of a city like Bangalore will be surveying the "landscape of affordability" for housing projects, and effective land-usage strategies including urban designs solutions for creating affordable community housing. Furthermore the integration of affordable living spaces in the existing urban grid will be an additional challenge for future urban development in Bangalore.

- 1 Affordable Housing – A key growth driver in the real estate sector?, KPMG case study, 2010 <http://www.kpmg.com/in/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/pages/affordablehousing-akeygrowthdriverintherealestatesector.aspx>
- 2 One of the most famous example is the SHUBH GRIHA Program – "A blend of modernism and the true essence of Gujarat" by TATA.
- 3 New Frontiers in Affordable Urban housing, 2012, ISB <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/9fb2ee08-e7aa-11e1-8686-00144feab49a.html#axzz2xdVp2Pie>



"The main task for the future of a city like Bangalore will be surveying the *landscape of affordability* for housing projects, and effective land-usage strategies including urban designs solutions for creating affordable community housing."

— Tile von Damm/Anne-Katrin Fenk

## JANAADHAR SHUBHA\*

NextBangalore Team:  
Maria F. Agudelo Ganem,  
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Leaving central Bangalore on the road to Mysore: one billboard after another advertises a desirable style of housing. A life in Spanish villas or in a Mediterranean atmosphere, or even New York loft living are all for sale. Construction sites shape the skyline. Shortly before the urban edge, 38 km from the city centre and after a ride of almost 2 hours, the Affordable Housing Project Janaadhar Shubha appears. It is a displaced piece of urban fabric in the middle of a rural area. The site is on the main road to Bangalore. Its neighbors are two small villages, surrounded by grape fields.

Social housing and real estate interests often do not match. The maximum occupation to loss of spatial qualities is frequently part of the strategy. Contrary to the expectations, the scale of the neighborhood-like scale and the spatial configuration of the complex are, even build with minimum resources, attentively designed. Yet the contrast with the surroundings is undeniable: the urban-like free standing white buildings stick out in the rural landscape. How long will it take for the city to expand and to absorb it into the city texture?

Sami and Shahia moved to Janaadhar Shubha one year ago. They bought their 400ft<sup>2</sup> one bedroom, hall, kitchen (1BHK) flat for 5 Lakhs. Nowadays the sale price is 7.5 Lakhs (about 6000 EUR). Phase I is sold out. The construction of Phase II has just begun and 80 of the new 648 units (2BHK) have already been sold. The prices are increasing. The actual prices range upwards to 18 Lakhs. The market is now open to everyone! Sami and Shahia are retired and enjoy living outside the city. But the reason they moved there in the first place was because this was all they could afford. They moved in with the intention of making a life there, but in many parts of the complex 'to let' signs hang in the windows. Many people saw an investment opportunity. The small flats can be rented for 2500 Rs/month (about 30 EUR). The project should be finished in three years. Is the couple going to be able to stay? Or is the pressure of speculation going to force them to move back into the city center, making them reboot their lives once again?

\* Shubha (Hindi): a Hindi word that means auspicious.



Janaadhar Shubha © Nextbangalore



Janaadhar Shubha © Clara Berger, MOD Institute

## AFFORDABLE NEIGHBORHOOD BANGALORE: JANAADHAR SHUBA

Clara Berger

The brand new affordable housing project Janaadhar Shubha is located approximately 40 km south of Bangalore's city center. The drive to the site is following the road to Hosur – a 100 thousand something bustling town already belonging to the federal district of Tamil Nadu – and through the Bangalore rural districts, which are already clearly influenced by the booming mega-city Bangalore. The area is scattered by building projects mainly for housing purpose. Everywhere you see buildings under construction very few are already completed. The building variety is high. You can see a colony of single-family villas all in the same style only the color of the facade differ, row house typologies and multi-story apartment buildings up to 4 but even 8 levels. All of these projects have in common that they are somehow gated and scattered located in the former farmlands. In between are the left over pieces of farmland but there are also great pieces that seem empty and not in any use right now. So the buildings are elements out of urban context but the location is still rural. Therefore any surrounding facilities like schools, hospitals and shops for daily needs are mostly in not walkable distances. These gated communities are like urban mini islands, which lack any connection to each other besides the road.

The affordable housing project of Janaadhar Shubha is even here located at the very end. The ambitious housing project was planned and built by the Janaadhar India Pvt. Ltd. – an non-profit-company with the aim of implementing affordable housing projects. Janaadhar Shubha is their first housing project claiming to be the first Indian true affordable housing projects under construction. In the first selling phase the one-bedroom apartments with 400 square feet could be purchased for only 5 Lakhs. Today the price already went up to 9 Lakhs.

On a total land area of 11.5 acres 1 128 apartments (480 1 BHK and 648 2 BHK) are going to be built also included in the site are primary school, a primary health center and a shopping complex. Up to now phase I is completely erected and approximately 60 families already moved into their new apartments. Currently the construction for phase II with the buildings with two bedroom apartments started. These pioneers are living now on half way finished construction site without any facilities like shops, schools, medical services etc. and even without electricity at daytime. Families without vehicle are forced to use public transportation to provide themselves with goods and to use social services. Busses to the next villages are passing by irregularly and are like that only partly reliable. In an interview with Padma – who is living there with her husband, two small kids, her parents and sister in law in a tiny apartment without a private vehicle – it got pretty clear that the biggest difficulties she needs to deal with is the isolated location. She is scared that her parents in law have a medical emergency and that they need to find a neighbor with a car who can bring them to the 15 km far away hospital. Also her only 4 year daughter needs to stay the whole day in preschool until her husband can pick her up after work because there is no other way to bring the child home earlier.

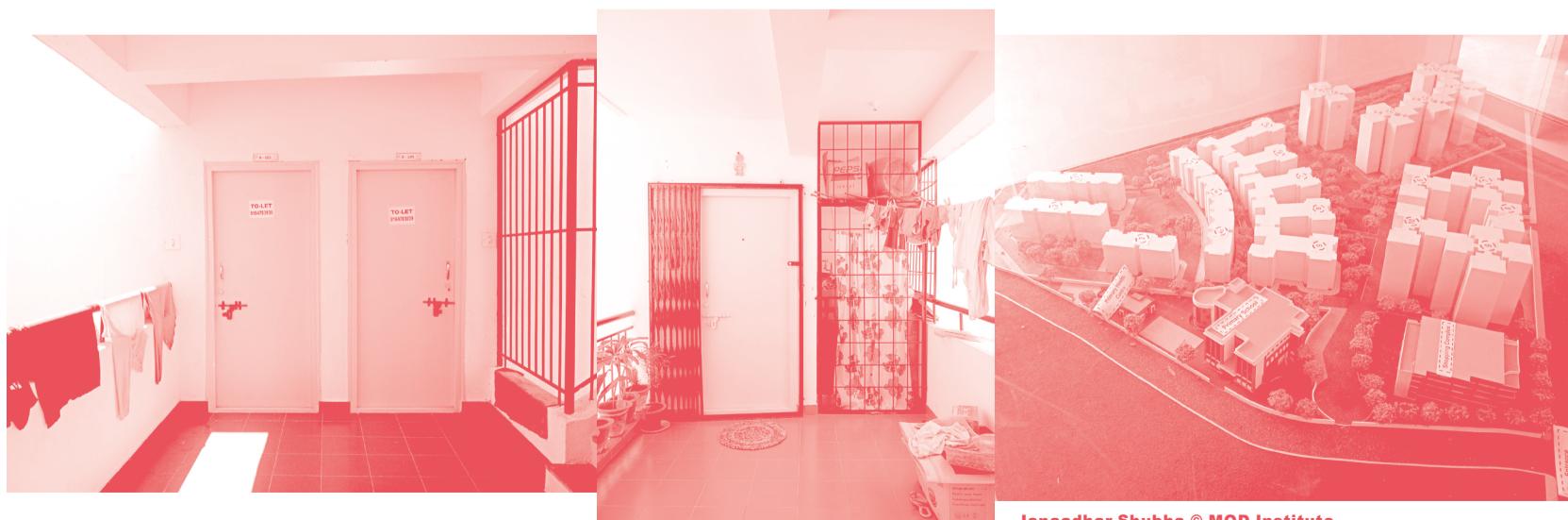
Her family is willing to pay a high price for living in a home they own and this is pretty exemplary for her income group. The possibility to own a home beats usually the contra argument of long distances to the job, schools and a general bad connectivity.

The location of this affordable housing project far away from the city Bangalore but also in certain distance from the local villages is based on the extremely expensive land costs. Affordable housing

projects in the inner city district or in the outskirts where land prices raise even more rapidly would lead to fail in the affordability aspect when the government or any other third party is not heavily supporting financing the whole project. Janaadhar developed a normal housing financing model without external funding therefore they needed to place the project outside already developed areas. A great struggle here was as well to buy that piece of land because over 30 different parties owned it. Even though the location is pretty isolated up to date the purchasing of apartment for speculation reason couldn't be banned. While walking through the staircases many apartments where empty and marked as "for rent". Very roughly estimated already 10 to 20 percent of the apartments where only bought for investment reasons and like this a certain sum of affordable living space will not be owned by the proposed target group.

There is no question that these scattered developed areas will grow together in a bit of time especially because the vast growth of Bangalore is not likely to stop in the near future. Clearly lacking here are planning tools that can be implemented very quick that this somehow chaotic growth is set into a proper frame. The planning tool of a masterplan can hardly handle this, because when these guidelines are ready to be implemented it's already to late and the information is outdated.

**CLARA BERGER** is urban designer and landscape architect/environmental planner. From 2010 to 2012 she worked as expert on affordable housing at MOD-Institute. Currently she is working for an urban planning office in Munich on large scale urban development projects in cities and communities with broad public participation processes.



Janaadhar Shubha © MOD Institute

# (NO-) DATA AS AN ACTOR

As an essentially oral culture, one of the biggest questions in India is not just what actors are building the city of today and tomorrow, but what knowledge is necessary and accessible. As a project on the interface between analog and digital media, a major aim is to make the knowledge of the city

accessible and to "demystify" the dominant images of the Indian urban society. Media play an enormous role in India in decoding and archiving – and in establishing networks. The urban is portrayed in diverse ways in different media. We find the Indian city in current fiction – and facebook offers us forms



A Austin Town – remaining original one story housing typology surrounded by buildings which are completely transformed already

B Austin Town – transformed bungalow

C The only remaining street in Krishna Murty Nagar

D Jeevan Bhima Nagar – row-housing typology in original shape (on the left) and slightly transformed ones (on the right)

all images by Clara Berger/Aline Löw, MOD Institute

## A HUNT FOR DATA !

Clara Berger und Aline Löw

We spent two months in Bangalore exploring and mapping planned lower income group housing settlements. Our aim was to use the results to contribute to the ongoing debate about mass housing for the rapidly growing urban population in India. Our search for planned settlements began immediately after arriving in Bangalore; however, the first information we received was that there were no settlements of the type we had in mind. We had expected to find housing schemes that had been developed by the government under the term 'social housing', as is the case in Europe and America. But we soon learned that 'company housing', which means affordable homes built by state-owned enterprises for their workers, was the most likely equivalent to 'social housing' in Bangalore.

The first neighborhood we visited was Austin Town, a settlement built by the British at the beginning of the 20th Century to house their administration workers. It consisted of bungalow and row house typologies organized around big, rectangular communal spaces. Today it is a district located in the center of Bangalore and clearly recognizable through the surviving urban typology and the fact that an estimated 30 percent of the original homes are still standing.

Another neighborhood we were told of was Krishna Murty Nagar, which was supposed to be located in the northeast of Bangalore and built for workers of the Aeronautics Company in the 1940s. The city map only showed one Krishna Nagar so we took the next rickshaw and told the driver the direction. He nodded and a little odyssey began. We were often asked about landmarks, but we did not know any – we only had the name. In the end, and thanks to the rickshaw driver, we finally found the planned neighborhood, in which only approximately 20 single or two-storey terraced houses remained.

As most of the planned neighborhoods of for lower income groups were built in the first half of the 20th century, an intense transformation process, which is often still ongoing, had taken place within them. In some cases the original urban layout was no longer visible. Even more difficult than finding neighborhoods is the search for the

basic data such as ground maps, building period, purpose of building and architects. This was and still is, literally, like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The visit to the University of Bangalore Library gave us the memorable experience of being surrounded by thousands of randomly cataloged, very dusty and predominately old books, which apparently contained no useful information. We are sure that there is some information, but it is well hidden, partly forgotten and very hard to find. Some is probably stored in archives in Britain, some is buried in the dark basements of government owned companies who built most of the affordable housing in Bangalore, and some is probably packed away in private collections outside of the public domain.

Until now, we have managed to establish the name of only one architect who contributed to one of the neighborhoods (Jeevan Bhima Nagar), and that is probably just because he is Charles Correa. The only maps we have been able to find are from 1992. They were drawn with rapidograph pens at the scale of 1:2500 and show plots and streets. But as the survey was done 21 years ago, the information is already out-dated. Any assumptions based on these maps will always remain estimations.

Doing urban research in Bangalore feels like playing with a puzzle, bringing fragmented pieces of information together while being very aware that important pieces remain hidden. This means that urban researchers, architects, planners or whoever is interested should be aware of the possible lack of information. Which also brings him in the position to carefully observe and research any task he is asked for.

CLARA BERGER is urban designer and landscape architect/environmental planner. From 2010 to 2012 she worked as expert on affordable housing at MOD-Institute. Currently she is working for an urban planning office in Munich on large scale urban development projects in cities and communities with broad public participation processes.

ALINE LÖW is a researcher and editor in the fields of urbanism and architecture. She lives in Berlin but is always interested in traveling to Bangalore to go for a walk through the city's vanishing old neighborhoods and enjoy a Masala Dosa. From 2010 to 2012 she worked as expert on affordable housing at MOD-Institute.

of alternative urban archiving. However, every story begins with a reference that we can fall back on. So what happens if the archives are empty or barely accessible – who or what writes the city?

# HAVING A BLAST WITH THE PAST: BYGONE BANGALORE AND BIRYANIS

Rachel Lee

The facebook group Bygone Bangalore is quite a phenomenon. With over 7000 members, and a very active core group, Bygone Bangalore is a place where a diverse collection of locals, immigrants, émigrés, NRIs, expats, and foreigners come to share memories and discover information about the city and its history. Old photographs, newspaper cuttings and maps are posted on what seems like an almost hourly basis, while the comments made about them provide insights into the people and places that contributed to building Bangalore's urban history.

About two years ago I joined the group with the hope that the members might be able to help me track down some of the elusive buildings that the architect and planner Otto Koenigsberger had built in Bangalore in the 1940s. I was not disappointed! The group were very interested in my research and my posts generated enthusiastic discussions about subjects such as tuberculosis sanatoria, bungalows, colonial town planning and concrete balustrades. As well as the discussions, group members also posted visual material that helped me better understand Koenigsberger's work.

Bygone Bangalore is a rich source of visual and textual material relating to Bangalore's past that every urban researcher studying the city should be aware of. Unfortunately the facebook format does not allow the information to be catalogued in an easily searchable way, and it is likely to remain a treasure trove rather than become an efficiently organized database. However, the vivid and spontaneous conversations that the material instigates, and the access to oral history sources more than make up for any lack of academic rigor.

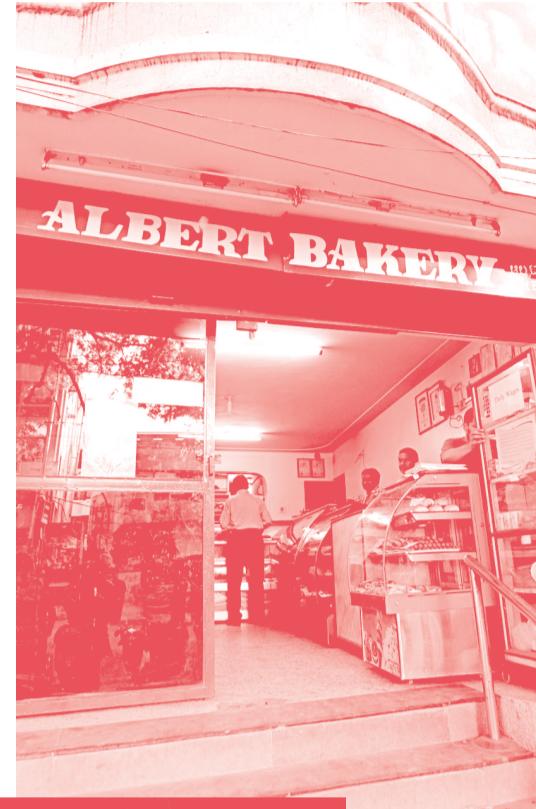
Outside of the digital realm, the group's ambitions are also growing: in November 2013 they presented some of their collected images at the "Bangalore - Picturesque" exhibition curated by Surekha at the Rangoli-Metro Art Center in Bangalore, and recent comments on the facebook page suggest there is growing enthusiasm for creating a permanent three-dimensional home for the material somewhere in the city. In addition, some of the urban enthusiasts have started giving specialist tours of neighborhoods in Bangalore.

On Saturday evening I took part in the 'Bangalore Biryani Trail' through Fraser Town, organized by Poornima Dashsarathi of 'unhurried' and led by Mansoor Ali, a key Bygone Bangalore member with whom I had shared many facebook chats and was excited to finally meet in person. After sampling gooey koya naan and savory goat brain puffs at Albert Bakery, Mansoor expertly led us through the streets around Mosque Road, sharing his knowledge about such things as the development of Fraser Town, the import of horses from Persia, and the philanthropy of Ismail Sait, while shepherding us from one biryani restaurant to the next.

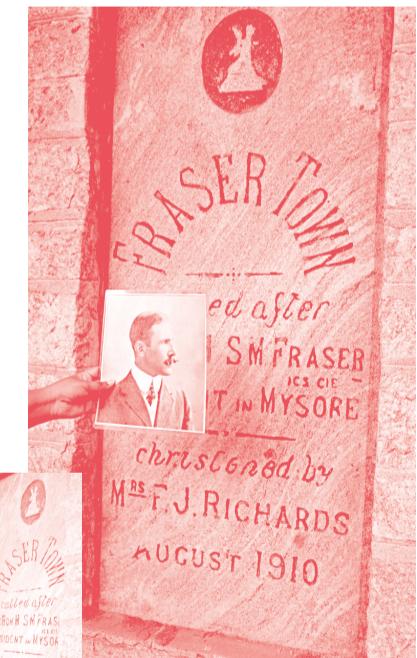
While tasting several variations of the popular dish, Mansoor encouraged the restaurant owners to explain their recipes to us, thereby introducing us, for example, to the culture of a community of Yemeni immigrants who cook a particularly delicious biryani made with coconut and onion and served with vermicelli rather than rice. Thanks to Mansoor's engagement and input, the group, which included two Hyderabidis, two Bangaloreans and a visiting artist from New Zealand, parted ways with satisfied stomachs and a much expanded understanding and appreciation of the city, its cuisines and its cultures.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bygonebangalore>  
<http://www.unhurried.in/>  
<http://rangoli.bmrc.co.in/>

RACHEL LEE is architect and urban researcher at the Technical University Berlin. She wrote her Phd thesis on "Otto Koenigsberger: Bringing Modernism to India" and is part of MOD Institute's research unit on urban history.



Bygone Bangalore  
© Rachel Lee, MOD Institute



# INTERVIEW WITH CRIT\* MUMBAI

Interview with Rupali Gupte and Prasad Shetty (CRIT Mumbai) by Tile von Damm (MOD Institute & Nextbangalore)

TILE VON DAMM: ALMOST A YEAR AGO YOU WERE PART OF THE AUDI URBAN FUTURE INITIATIVE WITH YOUR IDEAS FOR A FUTURE OF MUMBAI. WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THEN? AND ARE YOU FEELING A PUSH BY YOUR NOMINATION?

Gupte/Shetty: Mumbai seems to be changing as predicted by us – already one is seeing the fall of commercial real-estate prices. We grew with the project and we believe in the relevance of the analysis and ideas developed by us for the Audi Urban Future Initiative and we have promoted them in all forums that we have participated since.

YOUR PROPOSAL CONTAINS A FANTASTIC ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN MUMBAI. ONE MAIN ARGUMENT WAS, THAT CONCEPTS MUST SIGNIFICANTLY INCLUDE AN IMPROVEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC SITUATIONS. FACING TODAY'S ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN IN INDIA, HOW DOES IT AFFECT THE MICRO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN MUMBAI?

The current economic situation in India appears gloomy, but we think it is a momentary phenomenon of adjustment. Several new policies that are driven towards equity are being put in place. Hence in the longer run, this slow down is quite useful. Moreover, a slow-down always gives you a chance to think and reinvent.

Our analysis of the economic slowdown is that – it is rather an economic restructuring, where all enterprises have to reorient themselves. The interesting thing about micro-economic conditions is that they adapt fairly easily to the contexts and generally reconfigure themselves to change. In Mumbai, the space provided for micro-enterprises by the restructuring of the industries in the 1980s and the 1990s is being slowly reshaped by the ingress of Chinese products and services from other places. Production seems to be moving out of the city and being replaced by intense trade and post-production activities. We have predicted that the culture industry seems to be the only saving grace for Mumbai and needs urgent promotion.

THE EXCHANGE RATE BETWEEN THE RUPEE AND THE EURO IS TODAY AROUND 80:1 – A YEAR AGO IT WAS 60:1, WHICH SHOWS THE DECLINE OF THE INDIAN MARKET – AND IT'S VULNERABILITY FROM THE WORLD MARKET. WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS IN MUMBAI?

The vulnerability of markets, Indian or otherwise is not unexpected particularly when transactions have become global. We would rather use the term 'accessibility' instead of 'vulnerability' – it makes it sound hopeful! As discussed earlier, Mumbai is getting affected quite substantially. The direct straight-forward effect is the rise in oil prices and that consequently affects everything else. However, it seems like the increasing oil prices do not affect the car owners of Mumbai!

TAKING THE COMPLEX SITUATION OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN (LOCAL) HISTORY, GLOBAL MARKET INTERESTS AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES IN ACCOUNT, CAN A CITY LIKE MUMBAI EXPLORE AND IMPLEMENT INDEPENDENT CONCEPTS?

It is not whether Mumbai can explore and implement independent concepts – the question is how such concepts get worked-out in the city. There are many independent ideas that are being implemented. Moreover, our view of the world is also about being connected – the local historical aspects, the global market interests and the national level strategies and many more things together produce the city – the city is not independent of these. Historically Mumbai has been a classic example of connectedness – The cotton textile production and trade of Mumbai came into existence because of the American Civil War, about 40% of the national income receipts are from Mumbai, small producers of Mumbai have become active traders and are engaged in very extensive trade with China, the coalitions between hard-line local ethnic group based right wing parties and international corporate is very clear especially in the real-estate sector, etc. All of these simultaneously have produced the city. Ideas may come from anywhere, what is important is how they get worked-out.

ANOTHER ELEMENT YOU STRONGLY PROPOSE ARE PARTICIPATORY AND NEIGHBORHOOD-ORIENTED SOLUTIONS. ARE THERE ANY RECENT EXAMPLES IN MUMBAI?

Mumbai has been extremely active with regards to participatory ways of doing things – from mobilizing people for heritage to garbage, there are many examples. Just yesterday, we went for an inauguration of a UN-Habitat funded garden development project at one of the very poor neighborhoods of Mumbai – being done with public participation. The development plan of Mumbai has a very active discussion on its making. However, we have been careful with the idea of participation – especially in cities like Mumbai, where claims are very complicated – generally one does not know who should participate and who should not. The terms of participation is not clear in such contexts.

IT SEEMS THAT THE EUROPEAN DISCUSSION ON PARTICIPATION IS IN SOME POINTS ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL THAN IN INDIA. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR INDIA AND – IF – WHERE ARE THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES HELPFUL?

Again, in the Indian context, the terms of participation and the claim landscape is quite different from Europe. For example if one wants to get a plan prepared through public participation for a slum, it will be difficult as there will be so called owners and tenants in the slum houses and all their kind; there will be owners of the land and the government planner with ideas of 'proper' and 'improper' planning; there will be NGOs and CBOs trying to represent people along with political leaders; there will be people from Bangladesh and from Nepal; and there will be many more other kinds of claimants. It's not simple diversity of cultures, but it is about the different overlapping ways in which property is claimed. This is not usual for Europe. European experiences are however

\* Collective Research Initiatives Trust (CRIT).

CRIT is a group of individuals interested in developing critical understandings of and responses to the rapidly changing urban realm, which the group perceives as having no boundaries and requiring fundamentally different – and multifaceted – methods of interrogation. CRIT's methods are multidisciplinary in approach, tactical in orientation, and steeped in a rigorous engagement with the everyday.

In a recent study from CRIT you did a very exciting research on the question of housing in Mumbai. Can you give us a short summary of the results?

The study sought to rethink the 'Housing Shortage' question and formulate clear strategies to engage with the current housing issue. The conceptions regarding less land, high density, dilapidation, poor habitability, affordability, developer control, etc. were interrogated. In our engagements, it was clear that the land question was already resolved by prohibition of eviction by law. Also, we found that poor people spend a lot of money in housing – either building or renting, but this is spent over a long period of time. Moreover, an analysis of policy indicated that though there have been many policies, programs and projects since the past 40 years on improving the housing condition, the number of people living in slums have remained around 50%. In fact, though around 50% of the people live in houses built by themselves or by small contractors (under their supervision) and about 20% people live in buildings that are old and dilapidated; there are no active and aggressive policies for repair and retrofitting. Nor are there guides to help people design good houses for themselves. As a conclusion of this study, we advocated promotion of repair, retrofitting and programs for helping people design good houses for themselves. We also strongly advocated against the populist policy of providing free houses to the poor thorough market control.

Quoting official numbers, more than 24 million housing units are missing in India for the low income group (LIG) and the economic weaker section (EWS). Despite an enormous building boom, especially in the fast growing urban areas, which has to include a percentage of affordable housing units by law, the proportion of affordable housing to other Housing units is shrinking. And even if affordable housing is built, concepts of a livable surrounding seems mostly to fail. What is the situation in Mumbai and can this circle be divided?

As discussed earlier, Mumbai has about 50% of people living in houses built by themselves or by small contractors and about 20% of people living in old and dilapidated buildings. The recent census of household (2011) showed that there is less than 2% shortage of houses, which can easily be taken care of. But our proposal is that, for the rest of the housing stock, it is simply a matter of improving its quality.

RUPALI GUPTA and PRASAD SHETTY are both founding members of Mumbai-based Collective Research Initiatives Trust (CRIT).



Mohammad Ali Road in Mumbai © CRIT

**"Ideas may come from anywhere, what is important is how they get worked-out."**

—Rupali Gupte / Prasad Shetty

# RESEARCHING INDIAN URBANITY

Fritzi-Marie Titzmann



© MOD Institute

Indian urbanity has only recently started to attract attention from social science study. The research focus lies primarily on Kolkata (Calcutta) as the colonial capital, Delhi as the present center of power and Mumbai as the symbol of a capitalist "globalizing city". Thus, while talking about Indian urbanity, we merely discuss India's prominent

megacities in their contradictoriness between globalization and the realities of the urban poor. Urban transformations in Delhi such as planning and building of the new metro system, the growing phenomenon of gated communities, informal labour and settlement or the impact of the Commonwealth Games 2010 on the city's

restructuring were among recent focus topics. We don't discuss everyday life of average citizens; we don't discuss so called "provincial urbanism" that refers to India's myriad small towns or even its "new" metropolises like Hyderabad or Bangalore. Well, Hyderabad and Bangalore, carrying the intriguing nicknames "Cyberabad" and "Silicon Valley of India", attract attention on account of their booming IT and call center industries. But is Bangalore simply the city of call centers and software parks? What has been widely neglected is the question how citizens make sense of their city, where they place themselves and their city within local and global networks. The limitation on differences between the new urban middle classes and the slum dwellers as the ultimate antipode obstructs the view on subcultural developments beyond exoticification, on cultural peculiarity of neighborhoods and the very character of Indian cities with all their ambivalences. If we may take the example of Mumbai as a "globalizing city", urban restructuring and infrastructure have been key issues of academic interest.<sup>1</sup> But the city's "soul" or identity has not been a prominent research objective since Sujata Patel has (co-)edited three volumes on the city's image of modernity and its transition within the context of its renaming into Mumbai in 1995.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, non-academic writers have produced significant contributions towards an understanding of the city's "soul". Examples are Suketu Mehta's "Maximum City" (2004) or the anthology "Bombay, Meri Jaan"<sup>3</sup>, edited by Jerry Pinto and Naresh Fernandes (2003). While indigenous academic contribution towards urban future is already scarce and research is informed all too often by euro-american frameworks, the discussion of negotiations of modernity, belonging, and urbanization from a young Indian

perspective is even more under-represented. But India is a young country and hence young visions of present and future urban life deserve our utmost attention. Young visions of urban India also serve as key issues in recent popular culture, exemplified by best-selling author and youth icon Chetan Bhagat's novels as well as popular Indian cinema. If we aim at understanding Indian cities in their distinctiveness and dynamism from a social science perspective, we have to ultimately free ourselves from persisting stereotypical images and approaches and address those who live within these cities, who are these cities and who will shape their future.

1 Chattaraj, Shahana; Kohli, Atul; Massey, Douglas; Sassen, Saskia (2012): Shanghai dreams: Urban restructuring in globalizing Mumbai. Thesis (Ph.D.)-Princeton University; Nissel, Heinz (2006): Bombay/Mumbai: Stadterweiterung und Stadtumbau einer "Globalizing City". In: Ahuja, Ravi; Brosius, Christiane (Eds.): Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata. Annäherungen an die Megastädte Indiens. Heidelberg: Draupadi; Segbers, Klaus (Eds.) (2007): The making of global city regions : Johannesburg, Mumbai-Bombay, São Paulo, and Shanghai. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins Univ. Press

2 Patel, Sujata; Masselos, Jim (Eds.) (2003): Bombay and Mumbai. The city in Transition. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; Patel, Sujata; Thorner, Alice (Eds.) (1995): Bombay. Metaphor for Modern India. Bombay: Oxford University Press; Patel, Sujata; Thorner, Alice (Eds.) (1996): Bombay. Mosaic of Modern Culture. Bombay: Oxford University Press.

3 The anthology includes famous literates like Salman Rushdie, Dilip Chitre, Saadat Hasan Manto or Khushwant Singh. Contributions comprise of poems and prose, cartoons, photographs, a song and a recipe.

FRITZI-MARIE TITZMANN has lived and worked time and again in the Indian megacity Mumbai. Her research focuses on media, gender, and globalization in contemporary India. She teaches at the University of Leipzig (Germany) at the Department of Indology and Central Asian Studies.

## WHO CREATES THE INDIAN CITY?

V. 'Naresh' Narasimhan,  
Nidhi Bhatnagar & Sudipta Iyer

Over the last few decades, India has embarked on a period of rapid urbanization. In the coming decades, it is estimated that the country will see a further exodus of over 700 million Indians from the rural to the urban areas.<sup>1</sup> While this may bring to focus the country's struggle to ensure a minimum quality of life to the gargantuan influx of population, the potential opportunities to preemptively prepare for the same, characterize the flip side of the epoch. A majority of the Indian cities have their roots in pre-Independence India and rely on hand-me-down infrastructure from the country's colonial legacy. With almost no large-scale overhaul to the various aspects of infrastructure post independence, the condition of urban amenities in cities has remained in a state of stagnant neglect, while the cumulative numbers they serve have increased sharply.

The complex, hierarchical structure of urban governance in the country creates an apparition of a responsive, self-governing structure at the local level. While the genesis of local self-governance was to empower people, most of the financial powers and authority is left to the 'discretion' of the state. In reality, resolutions pertaining to the cities too are subservient to the state government and the central government. Decisions related to major developments in the city are heavily reliant on state government approvals, and the central government (in some cases) for funding and implementation. The hierarchy in governance has slowly conditioned the responsibility of city development to be seen as the liability of the centre and state, and not the city.

To understand this hierarchy, it is important to look into the history of how the Municipal

Governance came about in the country. Originally, the country followed a two-tier system of governance, instituted in 1882 in the Resolution of Local Self-Governance. This resolution created the outline and structure of municipal governance, aimed at increasing efficiency in governance through de-centralization. Before 1992, local governments had a statutory status and not a constitutional status, under state law. Hence governance of urban areas was directly under the control of the state government. This changed with the 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992 with the introduction of a third tier of governance in the form of Urban Local Bodies (ULB's). These were further broken down according to population:

NAGAR PANCHAYATS: FOR 'RURBAN' AREAS  
MUNICIPAL COUNCILS: FOR SMALLER URBAN AREAS  
MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS: FOR METROPOLITAN AREAS

However, the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act did not specify any specific organizational structure for municipal administration in India, resulting in each state adopting a structure of their own, further perplexing the situation. Today, there are around 3,700 ULBs with 100 municipal corporations, 1,500 municipal councils and 2,100 Nagar Panchayats, besides 56 cantonment boards.<sup>2</sup> Urban governance is a confusing mix of multiple agencies, and overlapping jurisdictions.

Comprehensive long term plans formulated to govern urban growth have proved inadequate to guide development of their rapidly evolving environments. The static nature of the master-plans are proving insufficient, and often fail to address the conflict of interest of the number of

authorities involved in urban governance, spanning all scales. It may be easier to identify simple design standards at smaller scales through strategic local interventions. These interventions are characterized by their community-focus and realistic goals that have immediate impact.<sup>3</sup> Large scale interventions often have little to no impact for long periods, by which time the problem to be addressed exacerbates manifold.

This being said, there have always been some rather informal ways to try and appropriate cities, giving rise to the 'Homegrown Neighborhoods'- the idea of personalizing; by gradual, strategic, modes of appropriation. This form of customization has always been existent in Indian cities. The main reason for this is lapse in the larger system, which results in a lot of spaces being underused.

Allowing more random in formalization techniques undertaken by specific communities, which eventually grow to redefine, recreate the neighborhood. (One such example is further elaborated in Who creates the city part 2: From "Tactile Urbanism" to "Home grown Neighborhoods")

New cities being planned to preemptively ready the country against the challenges of urbanization are being designed to be 'smart'. Extensive technology and expertise is being applied to create cities that are innovative and sustainable, and more importantly, can attract investments, industry and jobs. So who creates the city in reality? Central and State Governments, Real Estate, Industry and Infrastructure? Inhabitants making up the city, by using innovative techniques of 'localized interventions,' have been appropriating cities with little to no involvement from the government, formally as well as informally. Does this indicate something lacking in the current city planning policies that are unable to holistically address the 'people's paradigms' within the city design realm? If this is despite the general perception that cities are created for people, by people; perhaps the more pertinent question to be asked is - Who are cities being created for?

1 Amitabh Kant, CEO, DMICDC; In India, Leaders are building smarter cities from the Ground Up, Sep 19 2013; [www.asmasterplanet.com](http://www.asmasterplanet.com)

2 The Alternative Urban Futures Report, WWF

3 Tactical Urbanism, [www.bettercities.net](http://www.bettercities.net)

NARESH NARASIMHAM is an architect and urbanist who has been leading Venkataraman Associates, an architectural firm based in Bangalore, for over 27 years. His interests range from socio-economic modeling, knowledge-sharing and communication strategies to cinema, art appreciation and popular culture.

NIDHI BHATNAGAR is an architect and urban designer and works for MOD Institute and Metaform in Bangalore. She studied at Columbia University and the School of Architecture, C.E.P.T., Ahmedabad.

SUDIPTA IYER currently works as an architect and urban designer at Metaform in Bangalore, India. She pursued BA in architecture from Mumbai University, following which interned and worked as an Architect with design studios in Mumbai. Also taught design for a year at KRV (School of Architecture and Environmental Sciences, Mumbai) before pursuing Masters in urban design (MASUD) from ETH (Zurich) and worked as an intern with urban think tank (Zurich) for a brief period.



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# THE BANGALORE CHANGE MAP

November 2013 Edition

## CONTENT OF THE CHANGE MAP

The Change Map is a first visualisation of the many ideas, wishes and problems that have been posted on Nextbangalore.com or have been shared in other ways. Discuss them at [Nextbangalore.com](http://Nextbangalore.com).



### Nextbangalore POSTS

Over 200 ideas, wishes and problems have already been posted so far on Nextbangalore.com. Many of them address the traffic situation and the problems it creates. Other posts relate to housing or the lack of green spaces within the city.... discuss them at [Nextbangalore.com](http://Nextbangalore.com)



### INSPIRATIONS

On the basis of the ideas and wishes eight inspirations for a future Bangalore were created in a joint process... discuss them at [Nextbangalore.com](http://Nextbangalore.com)

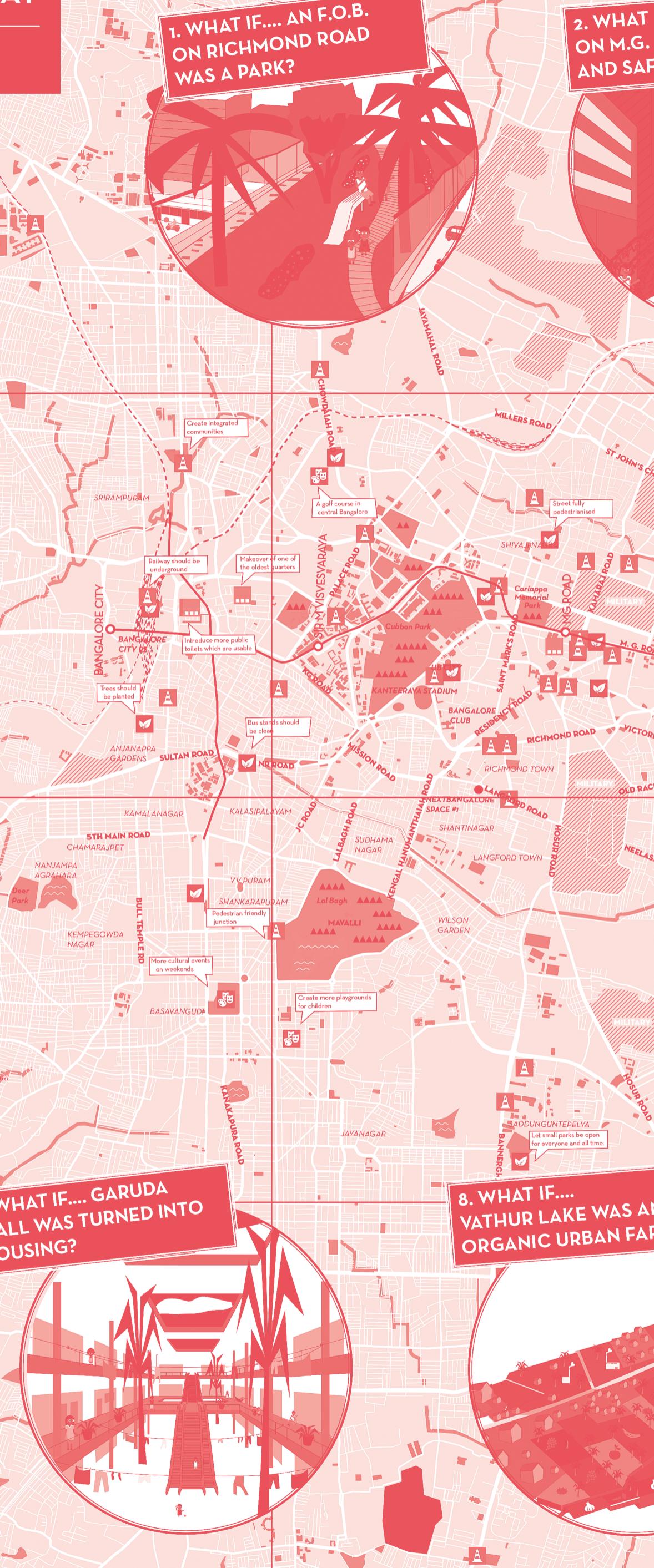
### SCALE

approx. 2000m

### 5. WHAT IF.... RESIDENCY ROAD HAD A BUS LANE?



### 6. WHAT IF.... YOU COULD MAKE TEMPORARY USE OF ABANDONED BUILDINGS ?



### 1. WHAT IF.... AN F.O.B. ON RICHMOND ROAD WAS A PARK?



### 2. WHAT IF.... ON M.G. ROAD AND SAFDARJUNG ROAD WAS A PARK?



### 8. WHAT IF.... VATHUR LAKE WAS AN ORGANIC URBAN FARM?



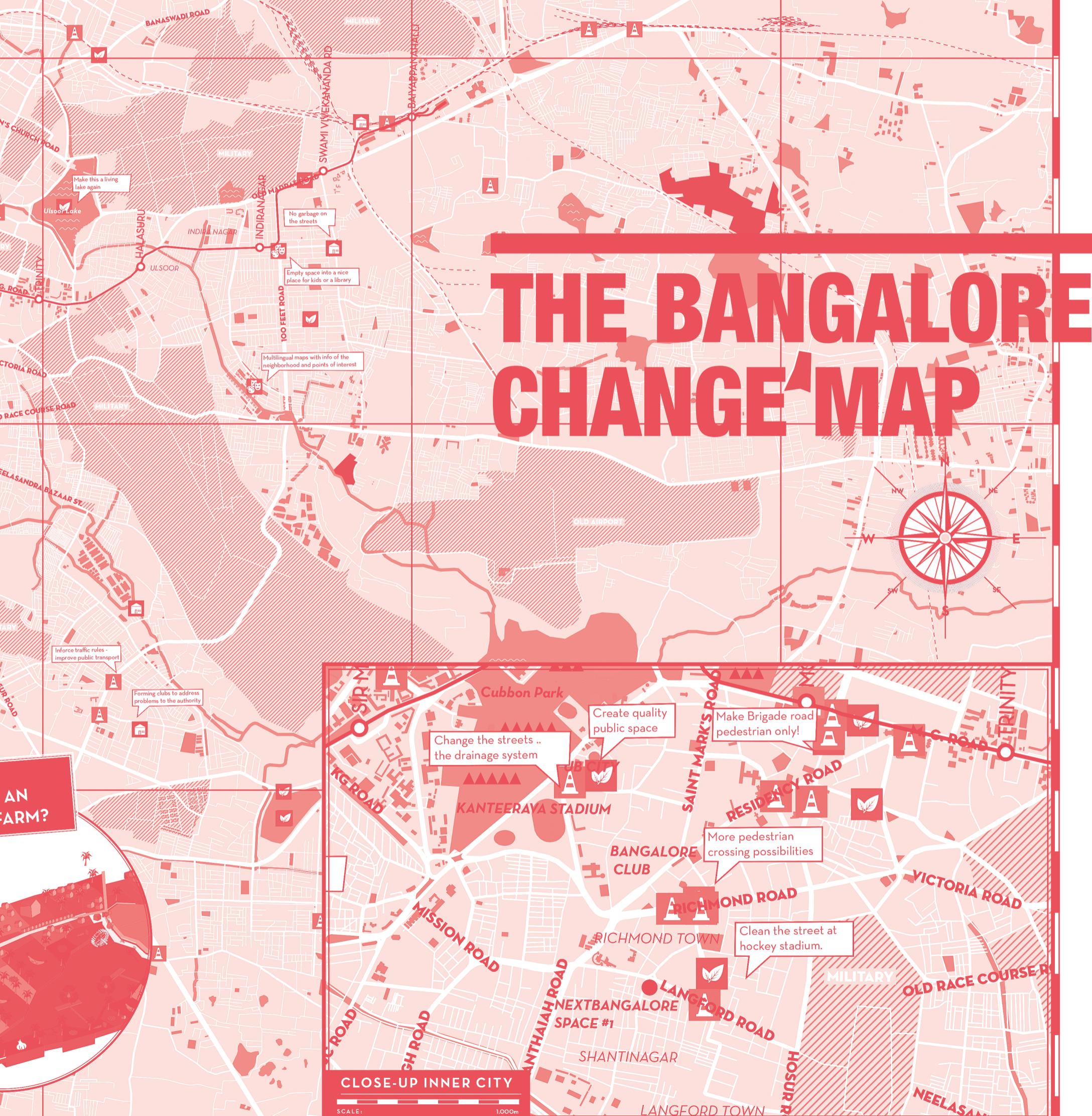
### 7. WHAT IF.... GARUDA MALL WAS TURNED INTO HOUSING?



AT IF... THE SIDEWALK  
G. ROAD WAS GREEN  
SAFE?

3. WHAT IF.... AFFORDAB-  
LE HOUSING WAS BUILT  
WITHIN THE CITY ?

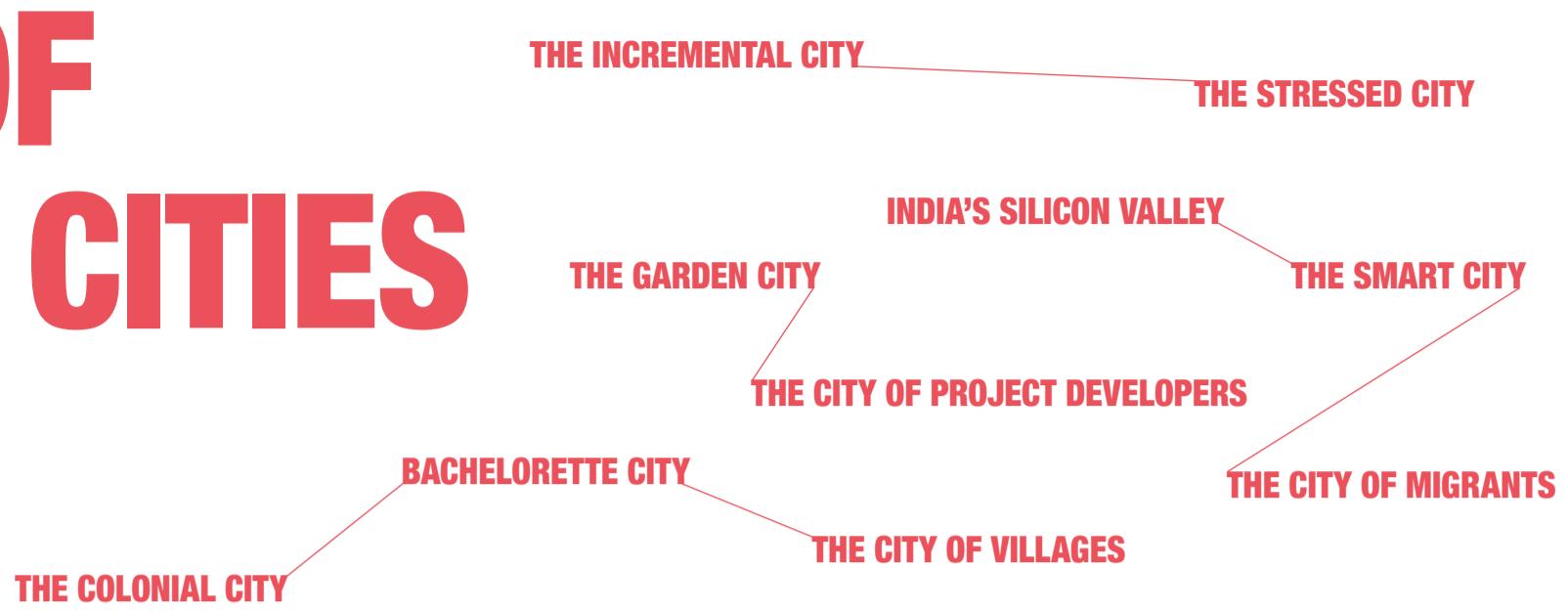
4. WHAT IF....  
SAMPIGE ROAD WOULD  
BE CAR-FREE?



# THE BANGALORE CHANGE' MAP

# CITY OF MANY CITIES

Jörg Stollmann



## BLUR

**FRIDAY EVENING, BENGALURU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KAATI ZONE CAFE.**  
The architect Anne-Katrin Fenk and I are meeting with Rupali Gupte and Prasad Shetty from CRIT, a collective of architects and urban researchers from Mumbai. Rupali and Prasad are on their way to Mysore where they want to discuss the idea of an Open University in India with friends and colleagues. After five days in Bangalore I have a long list of impressions and questions to discuss with them. A conversation ensues that is simultaneously serious and happy. The reaction to my question, "Who creates the Indian city?" is particularly animated. Instead of an answer, I'm bombarded with stories and counter-questions. Lots of apartments on the periphery of large cities have multiple "owners", which renders them eligible for cheap bank loans to start a business. It's a race with the digital land register, which does not yet include the buildings on the periphery. The growing densification of inner city neighborhoods is achieved by small construction companies who present the architectural design of the buildings along with bribes for the local authorities in one package. In Mumbai, construction work often starts on the second or fourth weekend of the month – when the authorities, who could halt the building work, are closed.

When Prasad notices that I am having difficulties keeping up with the conversation, he changes the subject. In contexts such as the Indian one, where a multiplicity of actors, from all levels of society, build cities often without formal safeguards, it is impossible to provide a coherent urban development narrative. And according to CRIT, it's also dangerous. Classical urban research that precisely identifies these actors and makes their approaches transparent threatens the politically or financially weak citizens the most. Prasad calls for a form of multiple urban narratives that makes a certain incoherency possible. On the one hand, this reflects the real incoherence, and on the other, it can protect specific actors. He has found the right form for his own research: he writes stories about the city in which the documentary and fictional parts cannot clearly be discerned. If I want to write about Bangalore I can learn from Prasad: a certain blurriness is part of my role as correspondent.

## THE WELTSTADT CORRESPONDENT

Who creates Bangalore? With this question in mind I spent a week in Bangalore taking part in the NextBangalore crowdsourcing project. I met people who are trying to create an image of their city. In order to generate a negotiating tool, NextBangalore is attempting to make the city observable with the help of the citizens. Is Bangalore a world city? Sociologists and geographers understand a world city to be a network of parts of different cities, which are in close contact due to the controls of global production and markets.<sup>1</sup>

These partial-cities interact with the local context, the other neighborhoods, in different ways. In Bangalore it is clear that parallel to the world city Bangalore, a variety of other cities exist.

Some of these cities allow vague images of the colonial past to surface in my mind, others appear totally exotic to my Eurocentric eyes, and others allow me to look directly into the future – a future that perhaps defines a different relationship between India and Europe than that of the past. However: each of Bangalore's cities unites the very specific physical and local with the increasing digitalization of the urban environment in different ways. The influence of information technology is not limited to the world city of the global IT-economy – Bangalore's growth engine for over twenty years – but also embraces the level of everyday life in Bangalore's other cities. The many cities of Bangalore, which will be discussed here, provide a view into the new digital order of the everyday life of the city.

## BACHELORETTE CITY

Bangalore with its 9 million inhabitants is the third largest and most rapidly growing city in India. In comparison to Delhi and Mumbai, the city began expanding relatively late. Until the 1990s its reputation as the "Garden City of India" was still apt. Under the British colonizers and the Maharajas of Mysore, in the first half of the twentieth century Bangalore was defined by the generous layout of the British cantonment with its avenues and bungalows, and the parks and public facilities of Bangalore City. In the 1960s the city didn't have much more than one million inhabitants and its mild climate made it a popular retirement destination for the middle class. In the 1980s Bangalore began attracting international IT companies, which led to a significant immigration of well-educated workers in the technology and service sectors. Supported by scientific institutes such as the Indian Institute of Technology, in Bangalore there is a specific mix of neo-liberal urban development and IT catalyzed migration of the better educated youth from the north to the south of India. An entire generation of young people with Bachelor degrees have been able to break out of traditional life and work milieus. They are the new inhabitants of the "Silicon Valley of India."

## THE CITY OF PROJECT DEVELOPERS

Since the IT boom, municipal or state planning has had little significant influence on the exponentially growing city. It is worth noting that during the drafting of the last valid master plan in 1995, the dynamic of the IT enterprises as developers of a future Indian "Silicon Valley" was not given an important role.<sup>2</sup> They were not recognized as urban actors despite the fact that large project developers were planning entire urban areas on behalf of international companies. By buying land and negotiating with local authorities the project developers were able to fill the planning vacuum that the master plan intended to formulate. In 1985 Texas Instruments was the first global IT company to establish themselves in Bangalore. Hewlett Packard, 3M, Siemens and Indian companies such as Infosys followed. It is amazing how much freedom the project developers have been granted, especially when you consider that the Indian government had already set up a Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

## CROWDSOURCING CITY

In 2006 the term crowdsourcing was popularized by the editors of Wired magazine explicitly in connection with the possibilities of the Internet. Digital platforms are ideal for gathering and exchanging information from and with the wider public. Like every other medium or tool, they must be regarded critically in terms of their range, the potential for participation and the interests of their initiators. In India there is a series of crowdsourcing initiatives that function primarily as innovative start-ups. In relation to urban research and development, crowdsourcing offers an alternative to and an extension of existing quantitative and qualitative sociological or geographic surveys. It is here that an apparent weakness becomes a strength. Crowdsourcing cannot be representative. The concept contains a certain inherent blur, which can generate themes and questions that had not previously been visible or part of the discourse. For example, the 5000 members of the facebook group Bangalore – Photos from a Bygone Age have created an amazing visual archive of Bangalore as it was before the last big period of growth. There is great potential here in relation to the many cities of Bangalore. What perceptions of urban history and urban life are formulated and visualized by the users?

In the prosperous new neighborhoods, crowdsourcing projects are developing that mainly have cleanliness as their aim, for example Whitefield Rising and their Spot Fix actions.<sup>3</sup> Although they often have a rather paternalistic attitude towards the poorer population, these projects show that there are common issues and a belief in the shared responsibility for space. Many of the projects of such groups address public space. Bangalore, however, has a tradition of informing and sharing in the older lower-middleclass neighborhoods that have grown incrementally throughout the 20th century – for example Austin Town or Murphy Town. Here the inhabitants have replaced the terraced housing that was built at the beginning of the last century for lower income groups with multi-level houses. An efficient building industry is tailored to their needs. Functioning neighborhoods have developed that are supported by socially organized networks. The neighborhood erects temples and shrines on local streets as tactical measures to protect the neighborhood from gentrification and alterations. These religious interventions cannot easily be relocated or removed, and the street becomes the common property of the neighborhood.

## THE CITY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

At first glance the urban development that has taken place as part of the IT boom seems to have led to a kind of enclave of global architecture on the periphery. This is particularly apparent in Whitefield in the east of Bangalore. From the terrace of the Vivantes Hotel, a huge grass-covered wave directs the view over the International Technology Park Bangalore, which resulted from an agreement between the Prime Ministers of India and Singapore in 1992. Today the operators boast that they have created a "virtually self-contained city" on 28 hectares.<sup>4</sup> This city is only accessible via a gated and controlled approach road. The

Romanian employees of the Vivantes Hotel live in their very own gated community. As part of their contract, they live in a residential development with a swimming pool near the hotel that the directors built especially for the well-trained staff who were recruited from around the world to serve the international customers of the 5-star hotel. They say they hardly ever visit the centre of Bangalore.

The obvious problem of the tech-park and the residential developments on the periphery is the misdirected infrastructure planning, which was made through contributions from the businesses through public-private-partnerships, for example, but not in the public interest. Even the rich businessman or the German professor on his way from the tech-park to the airport in a taxi during the rush hour has to take alternative routes across country roads and through farming villages, thereby perhaps getting his only glimpse of the local.

## THE PPP CITY

John Stallmeyer used the term "informational cascade" to describe Bangalore's urban development.<sup>5</sup> According to him, the information, codes and worlds of images that are accessible to internationally operating companies are limited, and, through planning processes, result in a reproduction of global architecture and city images. But that is only half the story. The IT business newly defines urban spaces, ways of life and everyday life. When they are implemented, the global architecture images always meet with local situation with which they coincide.

Opposite the NextBangalore Space in Shantinagar, in the heart of Bangalore, is one of the Indian headquarters of Cisco Systems. For the Californian stock-indexed company, which is currently specialized in cloud computing and presents itself as an innovator in the Smart Cities sector, the expansion to India was a conscious step towards tapping into the local internet market. 20 percent of the managers were persuaded to move from Silicon Valley to the 1 billion USD building in Bangalore's central business district. Private project developers and the city planned the scale-breaking building on the former water reservoir as a public-private-partnership. Generally the reservoirs of the former garden city are reserved for public use. In this case, half of the site was converted into a hockey stadium, but its area was also added on to the calculation of the new construction. In a final step, the city sold its shares and the biggest office building in the centre to be built on previously public space is now privately owned.

## THE SMART CITY THAT IS ALREADY THERE

In the basement on the rear side of the Cisco headquarters in Shantinagar the entrance to a car park also leads to a branch of Bangalore One, another public-private-partnership. In 96 branches in the city and a further 100 in the rest of the state, the Karnataka state government and CMS Computer Limited offer public and private services. In addition to the Government-to-Citizen sector, in which payment services for tax bills, water bills and public transport tickets are provided, the Business-to-Citizen



The IT therapist © Jörg Stollmann



Prasad Shetty and Rupali Gupte © Jörg Stollmann



Bangalore © Jörg Stollmann

sector combines telecom companies, insurance firms and job markets. The branches are open 24 hours and multilingual staff work at 2-8 counters. The branches are strategically located in terms of accessibility while mobile branches, in the form of Bangalore One busses, serve isolated areas. Bangalore One is building up a new, decentralized infrastructure network in Bangalore's metropolitan region that reacts to the bad traffic situation. Through the parallel access to the databanks of private companies and government, all procedures are completed within about two hours. The director of the branch in Shantinagar declined to answer questions about data privacy and security.

### THE AS-WELL-AS CITY

The urban researcher Jyoti Hosagrahar used the term "indigenous modernism" to describe the character of the Indian city beyond the rigid pair of opposites "traditional" and "modern", thereby improving its legibility and our understanding of it. Here it is crucial to comprehend that the urban spaces and cultural hybrid of the Indian city are not conceived of as a transitional form or as a history of failure on the way to a western dominated modernism, but as a very particular mixture of culture, region and religion dominated lifestyles with the "universals of science, reason and liberation."<sup>6</sup> For Hosagrahar, the history of urban reconstruction from the British colonizers to current urban transformations demonstrates an "as-well-as". This "as-well-as" is particularly apparent in the narratives told by Bangalore's inhabitants. The hybrid perspective also opens up new access points to the culture of Indian cities.

### THE IT-THERAPIST: MIGRATION & URBAN STRESS

She calls herself an "emotional IT counsellor." With her company 1to1 she provides counseling to employees of the multinational and mostly IT companies. It all began at the end of the 1980s when she moved with her husband to Bangalore. Both are part of a young, well-educated elite that come from all over India to the city and find themselves in an unusual situation: far away from their family and friends. The city of migrant workers is a city of opportunities but also a city that a lot of the young, better off newcomers find stressful to live in. Bangalore is the Indian city with the highest suicide rate. With a partner, she founded her first office in her apartment. In India, however, seeking psychological or therapeutic advice is stigmatized and her practice remained empty. Similar stories are told by international IT firms that operate in Bangalore and offer comparable services to their employees. The offices of the counsellors were avoided.

It was only with the expansion of the Internet that she and her partner saw a new chance and founded 1to1 help in 2001, whose success is due, aside from counseling centers in all of India's large cities, to the online counseling service. A secure server and appropriate encoding methods enable the clients to come into contact with the therapists anonymously. Professional problems are manageable. 85% of the emotional crises are personal and connected to the new requirements of an urban life.

Women, in particular, in competitive and often coveted professional positions suffer. Juggling family expectations to be a perfect wife and mother as well as a professional expectations to contribute significantly to the family income, urbane women often suffer in the absence of a suitable social network or role models. But men too have difficulties articulating emotional stress and marriage problems. Until now 1to1 help has held more than 100,000 counseling sessions and has been booked by private people and contracted by large companies such as Bosch, Siemens, City Bank and IBM.

She is sure that Bangalore is one of the most livable cities in India. For the ambitious Indian middle class, Bangalore is an emancipation opportunity, professionally as well as in relation to gender roles. New forms and ways of organizing everyday life are being tested. The speed of this process has been increased by the IT industry and conveyed through the technologies of the IT counseling.

Who makes the city? "The IT industry. 80% of the office buildings are used by the IT industry and 80% of the new residential buildings are inhabited by their employees."

**THE ENTREPRENEUR:**  
**CAFE MAX, MAX MUELLER BHAVAN, INDIRANAGAR.**  
At the age of almost fifty he successfully began his second – or third – career. His company develops and distributes software that measures and evaluates other software. At the beginning of the 1980s after graduating in mathematics from college he saw an advertisement for part-time student jobs at the Indian Institute of Technology. 300 Rupees per month. Instead of embarking on a training program at a bank as planned, his IIT job involved folding computer print outs and bringing the calculation results to the operators. But he was interested in the calculating machines. A friend, who is an IT scientist and programmer, convinced him to become involved in the branch and he became part of unbelievable boom of the 1990s. His company developed software for US banks. In 1990 Bangalore did not have an international airport. However, ten years later he spent his time commuting between American clients and his company headquarters. Six hours of sleep and maybe an hour a day spent with his family.

Totally burnt out at 40, he took a six-year break and looked at the city he had helped to build. Indiranagar, the neighborhood in which we are meeting, has been transformed beyond recognition. The beautiful bungalows and their gardens, still the retirement choice for the middle class only 20 years ago, has been almost completely resettled by the IT elite. Rents and property prices have increased tenfold. A quite avenue is now home to not one, but 200 restaurants. One line of business – and in this way Bangalore really is comparable to Silicon Valley – has transformed the city and its region. This is clearer to him now that he is no longer part of the process. What can be done? He lives in a gated community 30km outside the city. He built his villa to the highest standards of ecological building design and has almost finished building a golf course that is based on the principles of ecology and minimal water usage.

Who makes the city? "The question is wrong – not who, but what makes the city! Opportunities make the city! And the people who take those chances are the ones who make the city!"

#### POSTSCRIPTUM: THE GOETHE INSTITUTE'S MAX MUELLER BHAVAN BUILDING IN BANGALORE.

"Just look at this building. Supposedly just a temporary home for the Goethe Institut. Here all opportunities were taken to create the city – and against better knowledge and reason! What is the floor-area ratio? Where are the setbacks? This is all prescribed! Why are rainwater and solar energy not used? Here in Bangalore you can break every rule and get away with it by paying bribes. Of course this beautiful building was also inspected. 20ft instead of the mandatory 25ft minimum to the street. They got a "fine" without a receipt for that. That's how it works."

### THE MASSEUR: GLOBAL MONEY & URBAN VILLAGE

**A TRADITIONAL COURTYARD HOUSE IN HALASURU**  
As we speak to a street trader in front of her house, she stands in the entrance to her single-storey courtyard house. When we ask if we can see her house, she invites us inside and welcomes us as guests. We sit on chairs while the family sit on the father's bed in the living room and drink lemonade. She works as a secretary for a large washing machine dealer, he is a masseur and their daughter still goes to school. He moved from the countryside to the city in 1990 and after their marriage they moved into his mother-in-law's house. Around the courtyard are small living rooms and bedrooms. Perhaps six or seven. The mother-in-law and the sister's family live on the other side of the courtyard. Educated as a sport teacher and the trainer of cricket team, he found a new professional field in Bangalore. In the main it is employees of the IT companies who book him as a masseur and therapist. He proudly shows us photographs of his clients on his smart phone.

The neighborhood is undergoing transformation. On many of the neighboring plots, the courtyard houses have already been replaced by multi-storey residential buildings. When we ask about this, the discussion becomes very animated. This family has also been saving money and plans to buy their rented house next year. What will happen then? They want to build a new, bigger house. To begin with they will probably let a large part of the new building. But they have noticed that in their neighbors' experiences this has often been a transitional phase. We realize that in their minds they are already living in the new house. After we leave, we walk through the neighborhood and observe the mix of courtyard houses, demolition sites and new buildings – and a couple of goats waiting to be slaughtered.

Who creates the city? "This neighborhood is created by us. And then there are the big companies that have changed Bangalore. That's why the Hyatt Hotel is now our neighbor."

## CONCLUSION THE HUMAN GEOGRAPHER

Who creates the city? "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."<sup>7</sup>

The question "Who creates the city?" resonates with David Harvey's demand that everyone be empowered to participate in the development of the city. To whom is the demand directed? To a kind of government that is no longer able to share power because the neo-liberal logic of the urban economy controls it rather than it controlling the economy? The many cities of Bangalore show that access to a new definition of urban development and perhaps also a new type of urban governance has to begin where people can negotiate a common idea of the city. Discussing the Garden City with an entrepreneur can lead to nostalgic wallowing in times past. But he would be willing to negotiate about the city in which he lives and works. There must be connections between the many cities of Bangalore that planners, architects and researchers can observe, visualize and explain in order to locate the interdependencies of the cities and include them in planning processes. These connections could guarantee that the less powerful urban dwellers and their cities are not regarded as isolated and marginalized, but as an integral part of the workings of the world city. Crowdsourcing provides an opportunity to recognize what commons, and what common property are. Mediating between these different cities could perhaps be successful in a city in which the new digital order of the urban everyday is already a part of its inhabitants' daily experience.

The author would like to thank Mahua Bisht and Naresh V Narashiman for their support.

1 Ahrenz, Daniela, Grenzen der Enträumlichung, Selke + Budrich, Opladen 2001

2 Stallmeyer, John, Building Bangalore. Architecture and Urban Transformation in India's Silicon Valley, Routledge, New York 2011

3 <http://whitefieldrising.org>

4 <http://www.itpbangalore.com>

5 Stallmeyer, John, Building Bangalore. Architecture and Urban Transformation in India's Silicon Valley, Routledge, New York 2011

6 Hosagrahar, Jyoti, ARCH+

7 David Harvey (2008). "The Right to the City". New Left Review 53. pp. 23–40.

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# MAXIMIZING THE LOCAL / REALLY MODERN

Rachel Lee

The German born architect Otto Koenigsberger was one of the most influential urban visionaries in India's modern development. Because Koenigsberger's concepts and ideas were both visionary and practically oriented, his work is of high current relevance – not only for Bangalore, but also for urban development in India. One main focus of his work was to develop innovative architectural solutions to social, economical and ecological questions while facing not only the enormous problems of refugees from Pakistan and Bangladesh, but also the challenges of the patriotic and ambitious pre-independence Mysore State and the fledgling democracy after de-colonization. His idea of "architecture as part of society" opened a general vision and approach in modeling and in building that initially influenced Bangalore's development, but seems to have been lost or forgotten in the city's more recent history.

For Nextbangalore the unknown or forgotten aspects of the city's past can harbor potential for the city's future.

Addressing an audience at the Mysore Engineers' Association in Bangalore in 1940, Otto Koenigsberger, an exiled 31-year-old German architect and town planner employed by Princely Mysore State, defined the really modern architect as follows:

"The really modern architect is only he who takes the trouble – and it involves a lot of work and trouble – to apply to his profession the principles of scientific research."<sup>1</sup>

Continuing his argument, Koenigsberger suggested that India could become a spearhead in developing a new scientific architecture, equating it to the creation of a national style:

"We in India are in the fortunate situation that other countries, even the USA, are not very far ahead of us if we start right now with a new scientific architecture. We must do our own investigations with reference to the particular climatic and social conditions of the country and the materials, which are at our disposal. Everybody can and should collaborate by bringing each building to the maximum of efficiency that can be achieved under the particular conditions of Mysore. Only if we do this, shall we create structures in which people will find the qualities of a new national style."<sup>2</sup>

Far from transferring internationally styled white cube European modernism to India, or decking the Deccan plateau with Domino-Houses, Koenigsberger envisioned modern architecture in Bangalore to be climate-optimized and homegrown, founded on an understanding of the needs and habits of the local population and built of indigenous materials. In addition, progress was to be achieved through a collaborative effort. In order to scientifically test local building materials, Koenigsberger recommended setting up an institute for building research in Bangalore, which, despite Princely Mysore State's much publicized commitment to progress and modernization, was not realized.<sup>3</sup>

Moving from science to the subject of art in architecture, Koenigsberger expanded his mantra of local needs, local materials and local climate to include

local architectural elements. Rather than adorning buildings with expensive ornamentation, Koenigsberger saw great potential in inherently expressive local architectural features like the chajja. While simultaneously performing several functions (controlling the penetration of sunlight, reflecting glare, protecting from rain, limiting the need for glazing and windows, and providing shade), these protruding horizontal slabs with their long lines, sharp angles and transparent shadows could contribute to defining a building's external form. Thus for Koenigsberger, combined with a scientific approach, a key aspect of developing modern architecture in India lay in the experimentation with and conscious use of existing vernacular forms such as the chajja or jalli. Simply put, he wanted to maximize and modernize the local.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that Koenigsberger's concepts were ignored, but the Mysore government and particularly Mirza Ismail, the dewan at the time, certainly did not share his enthusiasm for simplicity. Buildings such as the Krishna Rao Pavilion (1940) at the centre of Krishna Rao Park, or the recently demolished Bangalore City Bus Terminus (1941) exhibit the conflict between Ismail's predilection for domes, clock towers and axial symmetry, and Koenigsberger's desire to optimize the vernacular. In a forthright letter to his uncle Max Born following Ismail's retirement, Koenigsberger expressed his frustration:

I am still on good terms with Sir Mirza who sends you his regards, but at the same time, I am very glad not to have anything to do with him professionally. His taste in architectural questions is abominable and his knowledge in town planning matters 50 years behind time. Both would be harmless if it was not for his unshakeable conviction that he is an expert in both.

However, through his friendship with the influential and well-connected physicist Homi Bhabha, Koenigsberger was able to build for private clients who shared his progressive approach. At the Indian Institute of Science, Koenigsberger built the Aeronautics Department (1942), the



Krishna Rao Pavillion © MOD Institute

Dining Hall and Auditorium (1946) and the Metallurgy Department (1947) for the Tatas. These buildings all demonstrate an economic use of local materials, careful detailing and an awareness of local climate and culture. As well as boasting India's first closed circuit wind tunnel, the Aeronautics Department features very slender chajjas. Both the Aeronautics and Metallurgy Departments have south-facing, semi-enclosed access corridors/walkways, which shade the laboratories and classrooms from the sun but allow for cross-ventilation, while large, north-facing glazed areas provide natural lighting. The hybrid dining hall/auditorium building, which was featured in Architectural Forum, functioned as a dining hall for 130 students with separate vegetarian and non-vegetarian kitchens, and as an auditorium for an audience of up to 300. Timber trusses support the roof of the brick building and define its form, and the large side openings show an interesting, wraparound interpretation of the chajja. Along with other commissions for the Tatas, notably the Jamshedpur Development Plan (1944-45), these works built Koenigsberger's reputation as an architect and planner in India, and led to his appointment as Director of Housing in 1948.

Since Koenigsberger left Bangalore over sixty years ago, the city has undergone massive changes. Swamped by a burgeoning self-styled IT metropolis, not much remains of his legacy, and it is tempting to question its relevance. However, if it had been heeded, Koenigsberger's approach to architectural design could by now have produced several generations of sustainable, low-cost, climatically responsive buildings rooted in local building traditions and engaged with the local community. Instead, generic, inefficient, air-conditioned concrete blocks dominate the city. Is that progress? Is that really modern?

1 Otto Koenigsberger, "Scientific Research in Architecture" (Bangalore: Lecture to Annual Meeting of Mysore Engineers Association [unpublished], January 06, 1940).

2 ib

3 However, a building research station was set up in Roorkee in 1947

RACHEL LEE is architect and urban researcher at the Technical University Berlin. She wrote her PhD thesis on "Otto Koenigsberger: Bringing Modernism to India" and is part of MOD Institute's research unit on urban history.

**Since Koenigsberger left Bangalore over sixty years ago, the city has undergone massive changes. Swamped by a burgeoning self-styled IT metropolis, not much remains of his legacy.**

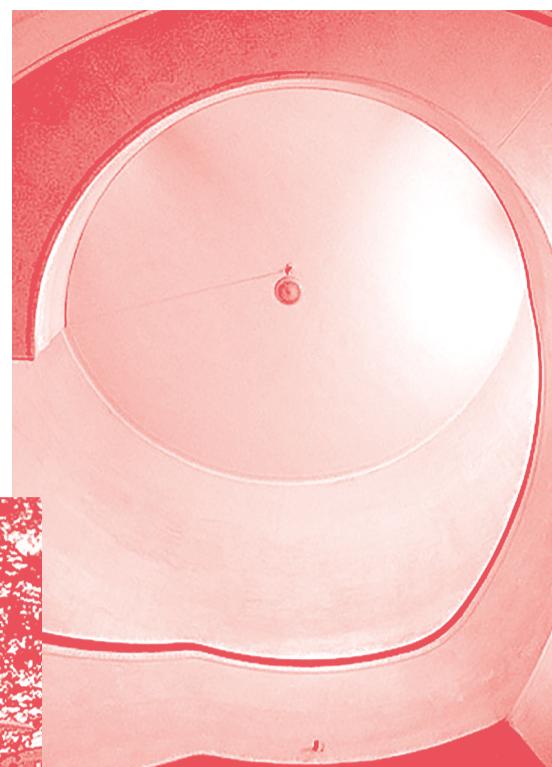
— Rachel Lee



A



B



C



D

# SEARCHING FOR OTTO KOENIGSBERGER'S SHRINKING HERITAGE IN BOOMING BANGALORE

Rachel Lee

Recently we set off on a mission to find two of Otto Koenigsberger's buildings in Bangalore. The first was the Bhatia House, an elusive urban house with particularly beautiful chajjas and an interesting mix of transitional interior/exterior spaces. The second was the Natural Science Block of the erstwhile Central College, which existed only as a single line in Koenigsberger's 1961 CV.

With high expectations, we hailed an auto rickshaw at the crossing of O'Shaughnessy Road and Langford Road, next to a green triangle that, with the help of an artificial anthill, a snake and a flag, is incrementally and surreptitiously being transformed into a temple. We headed for Nandi Durga Road in Benson Town, a street on the former border of Bangalore City and the British-controlled Civil and Military Station. After years of trying to locate the Bhatia House, I had recently received a tip off via the facebook page "Bangalore - photos from a bygone age" from a Bangalorean who now lives in New York and is one of the many active and enthusiastic contributors to the rapidly growing facebook group.

Sandwiched between buses and mopeds, keeping a sense of orientation in a rickshaw is not easy and I was relieved that our driver knew where he was going. He dropped us off at a spot close to where the building was supposed to be. Disappointingly, there was no sign of it. On a corner site there was a white painted building with similar proportions to the Bhatia House, but with flat chajjas, exposed drainpipes and none

of the fine detailing. Perhaps this was the site, but the building had been razed and replaced?

As daylight was beginning to fade, we abandoned the Bhatia House search and headed towards the Central College campus near KR Circle, in an area dotted with works by Koenigsberger. After making our way across the leafy campus, passing squirrels and stray dogs, we found the Natural Science Block – a sturdy, three-storey stone building dating from 1947 and currently overlooking the huge excavations of the Namma Metro building site. Its two perpendicular, rectilinear wings are hinged around an atrium with an impressive circular staircase that coils loosely upwards to the wide verandas that provide access to the classrooms.

Though the building is now used as an examination center, it has remained relatively unchanged architecturally. In terms of maintenance, however, it has undoubtedly seen better days. The careful craftsmanship and detailing of the banisters contrasts with the ramshackle pieces of furniture abandoned in front of what was presumably a large lecture theatre, but which is now, judging by the movements of pigeons and squirrels behind the glass panes in the large doors, a store room. More distressing, however, was the state of the staircase at the north end of the building: it was piled one storey high with discarded exam papers and other paper waste. Not only is the heap of paper a breeding ground for rats, it is a fire hazard.

So who creates the city in this case? An architect who worked in Bangalore in the 1940s and was concerned with maximizing the potential of local building traditions and forms, and constructed solidly designed buildings that have sometimes survived several reincarnations? Or the activists, urban historians and Bangalore enthusiasts who contribute to the material and knowledge relating to the city? Or those who manage, administer and maintain the city's architectural resources, in some cases ignoring their potentials or even, as in the case of the Natural Science Block, threatening their destruction?

A Bhatia House  
B Not the Bhatia House  
C The staircase of the Natural Science Block  
D The trashed stairwell

all images © Rachel Lee

# PORTRAITS

Parallel to the temporary urban space in Bangalore the Nextbangalore team explored the city and its people during numerous field trips. One quintessential part was to meet Bangalorians in person. The following portraits show a selection of citizens and their own stories of Bangalore. The field trips were part of two tutorials "Nextbangalore – media of cooperative urban development" conducted by MOD Institute and the student exchange program between the Chair of Urban Design and Architecture at the Technical University Berlin and MOD Institute. The portraits were written by Olivia Grandi, Malte Heinze, Carolin Kuhn, Stefan Liczkowski, and Alisa Neumann.



© Olivia Grandi / Nextbangalore

## SONJA

Sonja is 9 years old. Every weekday her driver collects her and her friends in the neighborhood and drives them to school in a van. She learns English at school. She loves being with her friends. After school she is driven back to her neighborhood, and walks the rest of the way home with some of her friends. They make a lot of jokes and have some giggly fights. Sometimes they meet the local bad boys that they don't like and hope they won't get into a stupid fight. When she gets home, Sonja changes her clothes. The school uniform is too uncomfortable to play in after school. Her favourite sport for the rest of the day is skipping. Her father works all day but her mother is at home. In the afternoon she mostly goes to the nearby sports court. Her mother gives Sonja a lot of space for her afternoon activities. She only has to help in the kitchen and with the laundry sometimes. Mostly she has the freedom to do whatever she wants to.



© Olivia Grandi / Nextbangalore

## DHARUNA

A woman and a man are standing on the street talking. The man has just got off his scooter – he was doing a few errands. We quickly join the conversation and are invited to their house. The mood is relaxed, open and welcoming. Dharuna lives with her husband – an electrician – and son on the ground floor of her own house. Other family members live on the upper floors and the house is always crowded. Neighbors come to visit, as well as friends and relatives. Neighborhood interaction plays a major role in this community. A friend of the lady of the house sits in one corner of the main room; she just came by to visit. She seems to enjoy the busy atmosphere in which people work together. She doesn't have any contact to her own family. She's a Devadasi – a servant of the temple goddess, sacrificed when she was a child. Another neighbor joins in. It quickly becomes clear that the arrival of the man changes how the women react and behave – they become reserved, almost submissive. The mood in the room becomes quieter. The position of a man is still undisputed. The lady of the house tells us that her house is fairly new and was planned without an architect or a building company. As an electrician, her husband seems to bring the necessary design know-how. Afterwards, some craftsmen translated the plans and built the house, and the family moved in incrementally.



© Olivia Grandi / Nextbangalore

## PARMESHWA

Parmeshwa lives in Halasuru with his big family. He owns a real estate agency. His brothers are in the housing business too. His office is tiny – just 2 square meters. He lives in a colonial style house just a few steps from his office space with his wife and two sons. They also have their own temple right next door. His older brother lives around the corner in a very big and luxurious five-room apartment in a four-storey building. All the other rooms are connected to the central living room. The flat is decorated with marble surfaces, handmade carved wooden furniture, and technical gadgets. His brother's daughter lives in one room with her husband and their five-year-old daughter – so three generations live in one apartment.

Parmeshwa's family is strongly connected – they don't only share the same business, but their fortune and living space too. Thanks to Bangalore's fast urban development the family business has grown very successfully. They have constructed and rented many buildings in Halasuru and its surroundings. Although the wealthy family could move elsewhere, they prefer to stay in their original neighborhood, where their business started and grew, where they know the people and where they are well known.



Malte Heinze, Stefan Liczkowski / Nextbangalore

## KUMAR

Kumar Swamy is very proud of his new auto-rickshaw, which you can immediately tell is less than a month old. All Indian auto-rickshaws are produced in the style of the three-wheeled Ape by the Italian company Piaggio. The chassis of the Indian version extends from the driver's area back to the rear passenger seat, and the driver uses a kind of motorcycle handlebar to steer the small vehicle through the traffic. In the upper right-hand corner, above the driver, is an MP3 player with a radio and USB connection. In the lower right-hand corner is the round newspaper holder. A small carpet covers the floor. The fabric roof construction that extends behind the driver to form a protective shell for the passengers has been covered with an elaborately decorated second layer with a coloured ceiling lamp in the centre. The matching upholstery at the back has a grey-gold, pearlescent surface that is reminiscent of an art deco interior. The auto-rickshaw cost Kumar Swamy 2 Lakh (200,000 Rupees, circa 2400 Euro). While he paid half of the price directly, he has to pay off the rest in monthly instalments of around 5000 Rupees (60 Euro). That's quite a high amount for a rickshaw driver and member of the Shudra caste. Perhaps that is why he struck an almost celebratory pose for the photo in front of his shiny new vehicle.



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## NURU

Nuru is 21. She lives in Murphy Town with her family in a single-storey colonial house. Murphy Town was built by the British for lower administrative workers in the 1920s. Her house is one of the few original houses still left in the settlement. Due to the two patios that allow ventilation, and the cool stone floor, the house is fresh and airy. The rooms are cleverly distributed, allowing Nuru and her family to circulate freely around the house. Sooner or later, Nuru and her family will demolish their house as well. They are going to contract a building company to build a four-storey house as most of her neighbors already have done. They will ask a bank for a mortgage. By subletting the upper floors, they will pay the debt back. Thanks to the vision of her father, the fish seller in the local market, who believed in the importance of giving her a higher education, Nuru speaks fluent English and is about to finish her studies in economics. She owns a small motorbike and is very independent. Soon she will be looking for a job somewhere outside of the neighborhood. Murphy Town is transforming fast – most of the buildings that existed when Nuru was a child have been replaced. Nevertheless Nuru feels very rooted to her surroundings, which, even if undergoing a real metamorphosis, are still very familiar to her.

## THE ENGINEER



© Olivia Grandi / Nextbangalore

The engineer has lived and worked in Halasuru since he was a child. He created his own company 20 years ago, planning and constructing buildings, mainly in the residential sector. He and his 80-man-team construct around 3 buildings per year.

Having built many houses in the area, he is well known due to positive word of mouth propaganda. Plot owners or owners of old, dilapidated houses come to him with ideas and visions about how their future house should be. The new houses are generally three or four stories high, according to the building regulations in the specific area. The engineer provides the owner with a design, and sends the drawings for official approval. After this phase, the construction can start. His workers are specialized in different fields, from builders to carpenters, from painters to electricians. They work on an artisanal basis, building formwork, doors and window frames from scratch. Many of the workers move next to the building site during construction.

The construction work lasts around six months, but, if the client has financial difficulties, it can take longer. When the house is finished there is a big inauguration party where everybody that took part celebrates their work and a priest of the owner's religious preference blesses the house.



© Malte Heinze, Stefan Liczkowski / Nextbangalore

## JOHN

John Ratnam, a lively old man dressed in white, who knowingly looks at us over the top of his glasses with a hint of amusement, was an aeronautics engineer before he found his new calling. Now he brings people closer to his God by singing gospel and praying together. Everyone, regardless of language, religion or belief, is welcome. Despite his advanced years, he is not just the happy father of three children and numerous grandchildren, but also the minister, teacher and coordinator of the diverse social work involved in looking after the people in this neighborhood.

The "Church of Christ" is located in the publicly accessible part of the upper storey of the building complex at Main Channel Road 65, opposite the wall next to the water channel. On the ground floor is the private area of the building complex that includes the minister's apartment as well as a tailor shop.

In his opinion, India might be somewhat regressive in many ways, but faith, as diverse as it might be, gives everyone the hope, strength and security to lead a happy and satisfying life.

## STEPHEN



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Stephen C. Dass has been running his business for over thirteen years. He mainly deals in furniture for commercial and office use, but he also creates individual designs and represents the interface between the local craftsmen, architects and business clients. To manage this, Stephen speaks five Indian languages and communicates a lot with sketches and isometric drawings.

Eight years ago he moved into a building that only existed as a ground floor structure. Today the building has been transformed. The landowner developed the plot by adding 3 stories on top of the existing structure. But Stephen is still the only user of this building. The peculiar situation of 3 empty stories is expressed by a smooth plastered, perfectly white painted framework. No user yet, no façade or visible infrastructure. The 3-storey addition makes the structure a premium shell within a neighbourhood undergoing a phase of deep transformations. It is clearly an intermediate state.

Stephen talks about the rising prices of land and space in the area. These processes are the foundation for such structural developments of buildings. But there is a gap between the speed of development and the realities of the people's lives. Beside an inflated rental price, a 'Vastu Conflict' is also responsible for the vacancy. Vastu is a design concept that affects the Hindu beliefs, so that so far only Stephen as a Christian enjoys the space of this impressive structure.



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## ANIL

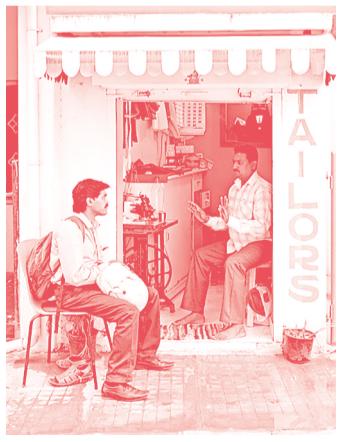
The construction of a building in Halasuru is nearly finished. The ground floor is an open concrete pillar structure made for parking cars. In one corner a small staircase leads up to the upper apartments, which are arranged on 4 floors. The construction company is building housing projects all around the city.

The house was planned and build for a private person. Anil, a man in his 60s, owns the land and wanted to build a new property. His family built a house on this site 150 years ago. He has a lot of memories of this old house where his grandfather and father once lived. It was an old house with a wooden structure. When starting the new project, the old house had to be demolished, but Anil insisted on keeping the old wooden beams, carved doors and small decoration details of his grandfather's house.

The new house will consist of double, single and studio apartments. Anil wants to rent the whole building to different families or single households, except for one special room on the first floor. He wants to keep this space for himself, his family or visitors. This room will contain all the little details from his grandfather's house. The wooden beams are going to be refurbished and put on the ceiling as decoration. The room will be entered through an old wooden portal – a contrast to the other, white-painted apartment doors. Small details like original light switches are going to be installed in the room as well. The floor is going to be of very simple concrete, to recall the plainness of the former house.

The memory room that Anil is going to create will give him and his family a space to remember his parents and grandparents, and their building tradition. It also attempts to preserve the former structure and show the multilayering of the area's history.

## MUNIRAJU



Malte Heinze, Stefan Liczkowski / Nextbangalore

Muniraju, a tailor, is a shy man who seems much too big for his small shop. "Prince Men Wear" is a 4m<sup>2</sup> tailor shop that he sublets from the "Church of Christ". In this room he makes school uniforms for the young pupils of a country in which everyone, regardless of profession and education, seems to wear a uniform with pride. The shop, in which every centimetre is used to advantage, accommodates at least three different work surfaces with different sewing machines used for various stages of production, a storage cabinet, a couple of variable seats and a clothing rack above the largest work station. Interestingly, as so often happens in this city, the shop extends out onto the pavement and into the public space. A chair, a few decorative plants and a small carpet at the entrance create a rather cosy atmosphere that invites customers to relax while the tailor takes note of their wishes.

# WHO IS SOURCING THE INDIAN CITY?

Interview with Sumandro Chattapadhyay, Research Associate, The Sarai Programme, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi by Anne-Katrin Fenk (MOD Institute)

WE HAVE TALKED MUCH ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF CROWDSOURCING AND THE MOMENTUM TO EMPOWER PEOPLE'S URBAN KNOWLEDGE. WHAT DO YOU THINK, WHO CREATES THE INDIAN CITY?

From what I understand about most of the “European approaches,” such as “crowdsourcing,” I doubt that you can get a deep sense of the Indian city if you approach it through a European lens. Many celebrated crowdsourcing projects in Europe that I know of, ones that introduce a kind of “new urban activism,” involve a coming together of creative professionals, technologists, residents’ groups and entrepreneurs. It is difficult to say whether similar initiatives can ever take place in India. One reason for this is the great density in Indian cities, which leads to intense, diverse, and contradictory spatial demands by various urban groups, and shapes the political specificity of Indian cities – in contrast to most European cities, where the question of density is a very different one. I see the same challenge when it comes to importing of programs such as smart cities or other large upscaling technological innovation.

Another important thing is that from most European crowdsourcing initiatives it seems that the urban creative class there (in Europe) is definitely closer to the working classes – at least there are moments of interaction. Much in contrast, India has a huge working class and the middle class is rather a thin section, but a very visible and powerful one. That is definitely something to think about – because one of the most fundamental problems Europeans face in India is that they never really get to interact with the Indian working class. Or more bluntly: all you read and hear about India is the image and impression of the middle class in India. The Indian middle class is all excited what happens in Europe – and they like to see European-style graffiti on Indian city walls, and to take part in creative start-ups. And, of course, in terms of aspiration, mobility, visual aesthetic etc., the European-style urban initiatives are very attractive for the Indian middle class.

IF WE TALK ABOUT THE INDIAN CITY – ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE INDIAN CITY OF THE MIDDLE CLASS AT THE SAME TIME?

This is a very interesting question: the so called new middle class in India, which dominates the mainstream media, lives in the big cities like Mumbai and Bangalore, or cities like Pune or Ahmedabad. Risking slight generalization, it can be said that this new urban middle class lives in cities generated by the state and private companies, also including privately owned “public (open)” spaces. Meanwhile, the majority of urban population struggles to create space for themselves, often at the margins of the cities developed by the state and private companies.

The middle class and the working class engage with the state in very different ways. Although, the former is a much smaller population, it usually enjoys various socio-economic leverages to shape the making of the cities. Sometimes, public activism by middle class citizens result in urban changes that prioritize class-specific expectations, and strengthen gentrification. Taking Indian realities in account, it is quite possible that methods and tools that are very participatory in Europe may end up reinforcing class alliances and dominations in Indian cities.

WHAT DO YOU THINK CAN WE LEARN FROM “MAKING THE INDIAN CITY OBSERVABLE”?

Coming back to the question in the beginning and also taking the MOD Institute’s work in account, one thing that is crucial to address while engaging with Indian cities is the consequences and manifestations of market-orientated city planning within an atmosphere of absent historical and cultural references. What makes it easier to observe this is the fact of extreme density – just because things are denser here makes their experience more explicit and direct. Hypothetically: if a city is less dense, the processes of urban transformations perhaps are less exclusive; while rapid growth in a dense city generates more intensive and extensive material effects upon the citizens, especially on the poorer and more marginalized groups. Documenting and making observable these various consequences of expansion of Indian cities is critical for any engagement with the underlying processes.

BUT WHO CREATES THE INDIAN CITY?

Even today – and maybe this is a surprising answer – the government shapes the Indian city in a big way, and often through inactions and unintended consequences. Large private organization, for example the large IT companies in Bangalore, have strong relations with the state, especially when it comes to “land acquisition”. But at same time the people create the city – since large parts of the urban fabric has not been built for them by the state in the first place, people are compelled to undertake self-development and self-building. They also often take back the city for them from the state and companies.

I ASSUME YOU ARE NOT TAKING ABOUT “SQUATTING” OR OCCUPYING SPACE IN A MANNER OF ACTIVISM OR PROTEST?

No, it is more a moment of transformation. Also, it is more mundane than acts of protest. One common situation is that of private houses adding functions of commercial usage. In result, spaces that are meant for living became commercial or even industrial spaces (small factories). Another crucial thing is the uncountable “illegal” extension of buildings. This is very difficult to observe without being experienced. Maybe just the ground floor of a house is legal but the other floors are not. The other way to take back the city is by voting, because you vote for candidates who support your demand for specific urban decisions, for example, a decision against demolition and re-development of a slum. Interestingly many of the older slums in Bangalore have been legalized in this way, but the constant threat of redevelopment and rehabilitation still looms over most such settlements.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE URBAN LANDSCAPE IN INDIA IS STILL STRIKING. IN THE LAST YEARS I HAVE WITNESSED THAT IN SOME CASE PEOPLE CREATED THEIR OWN FORM OF ACCESS THROUGH THE USE OF NEW MEDIA DEVICES.

That’s true. The thing with IT and India is that the device, which really changed everything, is the mobile phone. However, we are often not aware of the fact that even the mobile industry is again a very state-dominated industry – owned and operated by big companies but subsidized and regulated

by the government. But the mobile phone has really changed how people, across the classes, communicate in India.

The impact of crowdsourcing is much more difficult to forecast. As an analogy to the question “who creates the city”, we can ask the question: “who is sourcing from the city”? That is, who is gathering the urban knowledge from the crowds, and towards what end? The other obvious question is: what if the crowd has contradictory interests. In my point of view, crowdsourcing in India has to blend in with other methods of sourcing urban knowledge, and furthermore has to be very open and sensitive with the use of the data they get.

THAT’S THE REASON WHY NEXTBANGLORE ALSO USES “STORYTELLING”.

Yes, there is definitely knowledge in the streets. Repeating my argument about crowdsourcing, it is crucial to be transparent when it comes to the question of who is accessing the knowledge. In many cases, people, places or even neighborhoods survive, because they are somehow invisible or hiding data. So it is important for the neighborhood to understand how the knowledge of the neighborhood travels to various people. Stories – or qualitative data, to be more general – are exciting because those are political things. So neighborhoods – especially working class settlements – are sometimes worried about giving away both qualitative and quantitative data. On the other hand, I fully agree with you that within this data lies a critical and productive entry point in to exploring the culturally contextualized demands of a city.

SUMANDRO CHATTAPADHYAY is a researcher interested in history and politics of informatics in India, media and technology studies, and political economy. He works with The Sarai Programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. He is also variously associated with the Centre for Internet and Society, DataMeet, and GeoHackers. From 2010 to 2013 he was researcher at MOD Institute on urban data, processes and policies. (<http://ajantriks.net/>).

**“But at same time the people create the city – since large parts of the urban fabric has not been built for them by the state in the first place, people are compelled to undertake self-development and self-building.”**

— Sumandro Chattapadhyay



Happy under the flyover © Nextbangalore



Into the future: Nextbangalore Gatishil  
© Nextbangalore

# WHAT IS URBAN? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

A discussion round on the future of urbanity in India with Anne-Katrin Fenk and Tile von Damm (MOD Institute), and Bharat Palavalli (Fields of View Bangalore)

**ANNE:** To a great extent, the existing research (and political) dilemma is marked by three intertwined points that have a real impact on disabling, if not excluding, the development of the Indian cultural space:

**A)** The global discourse is based on a comparison between European and American urban research and is essentially oriented towards the measurability of global solutions and application models.

**B)** India's cultural complexity is generally reduced to two factors in discourses: squalor and promise, both of which are characterized by a dangerous simplification.

**C)** The research landscape is organized in a self-referential way, which often reduces the impact and the needed critical approach.

Can this dilemma be countered? Can there actually be an impact for India that will enrich the global urban research discourse on India by an Indian discourse?

**BHARATH:** The biggest problem we need to understand is that "urbanity" is mostly communicated in numbers, but to be honest, all data – big or small – is just a set of algorithms of uncertainty. In our work we are often confronted with the fact, that we access a lot of data but we never get the story behind them.

**Tile:** And we need to understand, that data is of course not "neutral". As researchers we should be very aware which data we collect, and how to use data. Data and technology creates de-facto standards – standards also on political and judicial levels. In our work we are often confronted with the fact, that we access a lot of data but we never get the story behind them.

**ANNE:** That would mean that a future-oriented approach lies in creating a modern reference

system for Indian cities – a suitable reference system that demands a specific new definition of urbanity.

**Tile:** Yes, a reference system that includes the social, political and cultural realities.

**BHARATH:** Yes, we live in a complex world. When we say complex, we mean a world where problems cannot be captured in easy equations. As the cliché goes, everything is interconnected. So you cannot look at one part in isolation. We believe that in order to grapple with this complexity, we have to embrace it. We have to understand all perspectives involved, the relationships between them, and how they affect each other. We have to let these perspectives talk to each other, push and pull each other, and have a dialogue with each other.

**Tile:** Absolutely agreed. I think that "interdisciplinary" discourse needs to go beyond risk assessment, which – again – is a very technological approach and is often not able to cover social and political consequences.

**BHARATH:** What we need are tools and aids that facilitate this communication, especially, in a future-oriented way. By extension, we need spaces that are open to allow for expression, dissent, and debate.

**ANNE:** It seems that the crux of most projects establishes with a) how we source urban knowledge and b) how we make cities observable. I personally think that the media revolution we observe in today's times can be a starting point to re-introduce Wurmann's concept of a 'Urban Data Center' (today we would call it Open Data) he formulated already in 1971. He proposed that every city should have a center of this kind for "the dissemination of information related to the public environment". He also spoke of an urban observatory on all scales and

all levels of complexity. We think this is an interesting approach to avoid what the tools of observing are not being created from an outside perspective only. In your work, you often use games to gain knowledge – what role can games play?

**BHARATH:** Games allow people to come together in a non-threatening environment and communicate with each other. The immersive power of games can be tapped to allow people to take risks, to explore options and alternate futures. Hence, gaming (for instance, in terms of disaster management, children perception etc.) will have the effect that the game results highlight alternative resources that we maybe would never thought of before. I think that's the same approach you are working with by merging crowd-sourced data with urban story telling.

**Tile:** Yes and we think the outcomes are comparable. One thing is that we find overlaps – sometimes there are spatial, political and even emotional moments. And, the second effect is that you are able to capture and process crucial social data. Making the city observable also means to understand that a city is its people. So we have to be aware to be careful with social data and protect privacy and data security.

**ANNE:** How people deal with urban issues shows a lot of the randomness of creating a city. And it shows the diversity, but also the inequality in the city.

**BHARATH:** I agree with you: we need a fundamental understanding of the social and cultural dimension of a city – and we have to take the social distinctions in account. The urban discourse in India is often an elite discourse.

**ANNE:** Which raises the question of accessibility and empowerment ...

**Tile:** ... and analysis of existing distribution of powers.

**BHARATH:** I think that is exactly where participatory approaches can fill the hole and can provide access to urbanity through interactive methods.

**ANNE:** Also I think the question of scale is an important one. We experience in our work that neighborhoods, as a synonym for smaller entities in the city, are not really included in the urban processes. But to re-read the transformation processes, it is necessary to look beyond the general mega-city discourses and large-scale projects.

**BHARATH:** Yes, the official urban planning discourse in India is detached from people, so alternative solutions very often cannot find a way into the urban discourse effectively. We think this is one of the reasons we have to translate the complexity of urban issues and to use open data.

**Tile:** You said earlier that we need spaces that are open for expression, dissent, and debate. To combine this argument with our discussion on neighborhoods and accessibility, we need a mobile space that provides the possibility to get involved into the urban discourse at the places where I live.

**BHARATH M. PALAVALLI** is a researcher at Fields of View. In the past he has developed simulation and games to explore complexities in urban growth and to identify challenges in disaster management. Bharath has graduated from International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore.



# BELGRADE

Markus Ewald and  
Stephan Landau, NextSavamala

**The local conditions in Bangalore and Savamala could hardly be more different: one place is the third biggest city in India, while the other is a manageable neighborhood in Belgrade. However, both projects have the same aim: to investigate collaborative urban development. We understand collaborative urban development to mean that as many actors as possible develop and discuss ideas together, and are open to a large range of stimuli and arguments. How do the inhabitants respond to this approach? Which methods were successful, and which weren't? Our Nextsavamala experiences are discussed here.**

## JUMP-START THE ONLINE PLATFORM!

The first step in the process was setting up a dialogue platform on the internet. The aim was to create an online community and prepare themes that would be further investigated at real-time events in Savamala. In contrast to the initial project Nexthamburg in Germany, in Savamala the online project only really took off when we were in the neighborhood and supported by the local media, which was very probably due to a lack of internet access.

## REVVING UP WITH LOCAL EVENTS!

Continuous work within the local neighborhood was essential. Nextsavamala lived from the long running time and the motivated local team: Katarina Antanaskovic and Ilija Lazarević accompanied the project for over a year, organized events, curated the ideas and were able to build up trust between themselves and the local inhabitants. In addition, a major part of the offline

community building process was setting up a local office in a central location. The easily accessible office was decisive in gaining acceptance for the project.

The Nextsavamala Office was located on Gavrila Principa Street, at a central area in Savamala that people pass on their way to the city center. During its office hours from 4–6 pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays as well as on Saturdays from 4–8 pm, people were invited to come in, have a cup of coffee, talk about their vision and get informed about further Nextsavamala events.

## VISION POSTCARDS AND POSTBOX!

Postcards were distributed all over the area asking Savamala's citizens about their vision for Savamala. Those postcards could be dropped off at the Nextsavamala Office Postbox. They were also used as door openers to the neighbourhood and for starting further discussions about urban development.

## VISION PING PONG!

The Nextsavamala team organized a Vision Ping Pong where people could get inspired to come up with their own vision or ideas for Savamala by playing a ping pong match.

## VISION RADIO!

Nextsavamala presented its work, ideas and visions twice on local radio. On July 27th on Radio Belgrade's "Street Journal" and on October 11th on the show "Pop Karusel".

## WORKSHOPS!

Three extensive workshops with different stakeholder groups led to exciting results for a future vision of Savamala. The first Nextsavamala workshop was held inside the University of Applied Arts directly on the invisible border to Savamala. A group of Interior and Furniture Design students developed different future scenarios for student housing in Savamala. Savamala could become an even more attractive place to live for future students, as it is located

very close to the university and offers cheap and interesting housing opportunities.

Savamala's residential building structures – small apartments that enclose inner gardens – are very special. The students built three models representing three different scenarios for the design of the gardens and for student living accommodation in the adjacent buildings.

In a second workshop school kids from Savamala's primary school "Isidora Sekulic" came up with their own visions about Savamala. The question, "What should your neighborhood look like in 2050?" was easy for them to answer: one bridge, one sun, one flower, one drawing. And all the children smiling. In just one day, they decorated their schoolyard walls bringing 30 children's visions into one. What the kids thoroughly enjoyed might be one of the core values for all the Savamala stakeholders: residents, private and public institutions, people working in and commuting to Savamala – all of them need to join forces in order to engage with their neighbourhood's revitalization, thereby bringing Savamala closer to their needs and wishes.

A third workshop was organized with the citizens and the unofficial representatives of Savamala. Through several group activities – including speed-dating to exchange ideas, group work to locate the present problems and the ideas for the future of Savamala, and creating "models" to define the future Savamala – we addressed specific topics of Savamala's current urban reality. In particular, we identified most of the major current problems, such as the transit traffic and the consequent constant noise, as well as the noise caused by inconsiderate club owners. Clubs and cafes are flourishing in the neighborhood, and virtually every corner now has new, noisy tenants, who, in addition to the traffic, contribute to making life in Savamala tremendously noisy. Savamala's citizens also complained about the absence of basic urban features, such as zebra crossings for pedestrians. Many of the ideas for the future reflected nostalgia for the past, and the ideas were often based on the way "it used to be". That's how we got the ideas for the open theater placed on one of the ships, or the pool next to the river,

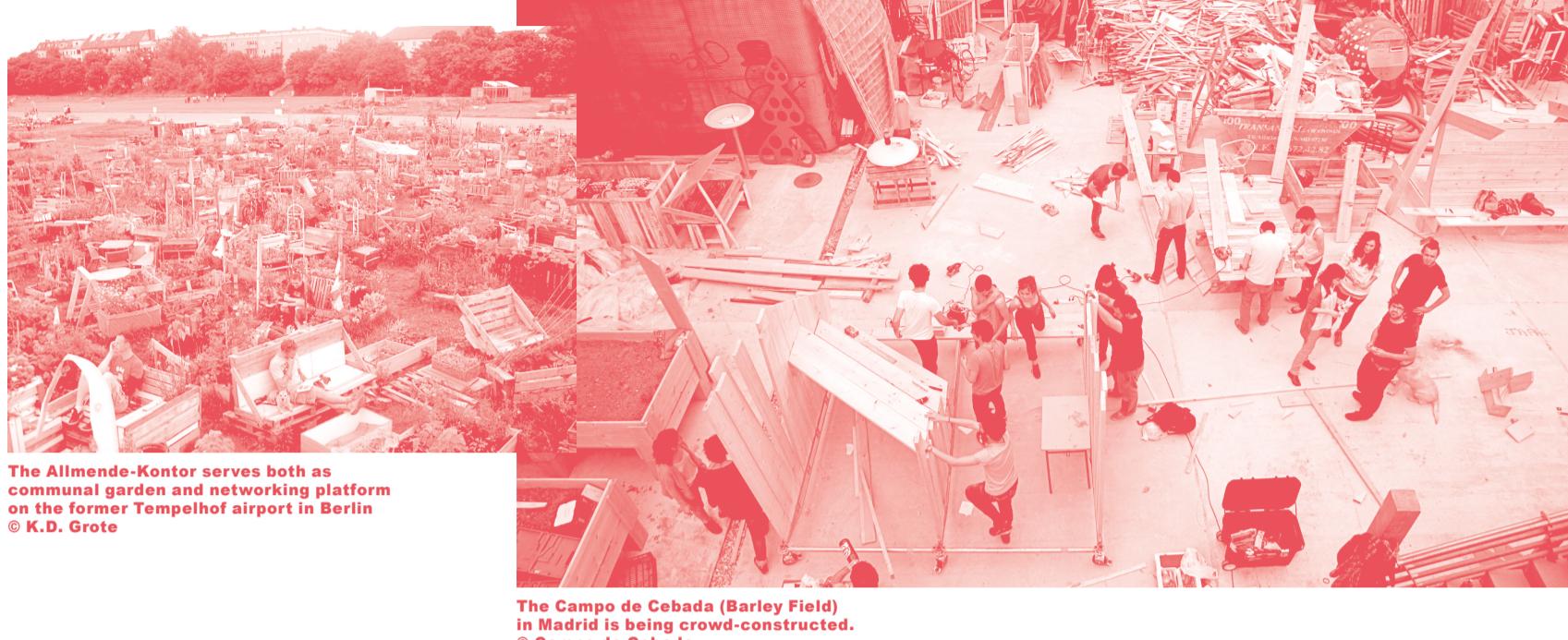
or the revitalized beach area on the river bank – just as it was in the '70s. Regardless of specific inputs, it is notable that the workshop has created a shared spirit and unity among the participants, giving them a way to individually, and collectively, bring the ideas to the surface, explain them and have them recorded for the future.

## HOW DO I REACH PEOPLE?

In Savamala a lot of quite elaborate activation work had to be done to get people actively involved in the project. Distrust of the local administration is strong, as is the lack of conviction in the importance of one's own opinion. We needed to adapt our methods in order to set the people's ideas free. In Savamala playful formats, such as a 24-hour vision hotline and a recurring "idea table tennis" (one game for one idea), were tried out. Target group specific workshops for school kids, students and local residents rounded off the mix. All these methods were just the beginning in testing appropriate tools for collaborative urban development. Other methods will have to be integrated into the continuation of the process and adapted to the local needs. The positive feedback from a lot of Savamala's residents confirmed that our approach was working, and underlined the necessity of establishing a permanent institution for collaborative urban development.

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## SOUTHWEST EUROPE

You cannot print a city. But cities are being made right at this moment, by people next door whose work doesn't necessarily involve digital manufacturing tools, but an ingenious use of strategies from the world of bits. The *Initiative Möckernkiez*, a cooperative housing project in Berlin becomes a serious competitor to private investors through crowd-funding. A neighborhood committee in Madrid transforms a deserted building site into the *Campo de Cebada*, a public space that is owned and self-organized by the local crowd. Urban gardeners in Berlin invite their neighborhood to cultivate and fund a communal garden on the former Tempelhof airport in the heart of the city. Co-working spaces and Fablabs like *Toolbox Coworking* in Turin, or *betahaus / Open Design City* in Berlin host new forms of exchange and open design with an international crowd within a local context. They are all makers that create not products but urban environments, and their work is already showing a tangible impact in cities across Europe. Meet the We-Traders.

### TRADING IDEAS ACROSS COMMUNITIES AND COUNTRIES

Citizens across Europe are currently taking the initiative to re-appropriate urban space. We call them "We-Traders" in the sense that they redefine the relation between value, profit and public good and are able to motivate fellow citizens to follow suit. The Goethe-Institut project *We-Traders. Swapping Crisis for City* connects Urban Makers and examines their growing influence in five different city contexts: Berlin, Lisbon, Madrid, Toulouse and Turin. Urban makers may come from the fields of design, urbanism, architecture, social studies, political activism or from those groups of people that do not define themselves by their profession. What unites them all is the desire to form their immediate surroundings to match their needs and ideals.

How do they do it and what does this mean for local politics? How do maker politics of crowd-sourcing and co-creation fare in the world of atoms? What unites We-Traders from a booming city like Toulouse and the

poorest town in northern Italy-Turin? And can their experience be shared with others like a construction plan for a chair?

### CREATIVE COMMONS – PUBLIC COMMONS

As urban makers are operating in multicultural settings, the "We" in We-Traders includes a diverse social set of people. This might explain, that urban makers rely less on high-end technology to practice their trade, but often fall back on traditional crafts like woodwork, silk-screen printing or gardening to facilitate access to their schemes.

Common to makers of both worlds is the wish to exchange knowledge and share skills, tools and materials. Most We-Traders devise educational programs or provide platforms for mutual learning. There is a focus on working together in non-hierarchical and self-organized ways and to create socially inclusive 'open spaces'.

Open space in a city though, doesn't mean you brainstorm together with post-it notes. The demand for open space in the urban context, translates into a very real fight for land-open access to public commons. Be it the fight about Mediaspree in Berlin or the *Campo de la Cebada* in Madrid, "Open Everything" has political consequences.

### DO NOT LET A GOOD CRISIS GO TO WASTE

Whereas the U.S. maker movement is fueled by technological advances and economic optimism, urban making in Europe seems rather rooted in economic crisis. We can observe that in our focus region of Southwest Europe, where cities have no money to invest into public infrastructure, citizens step in to fill the vacuum. Taking inspiration of the do-it-yourself spirit of the Internet, Urban Makers mark the shift from co-determination to co-authorship of the city. Self-empowerment features high on the We-Trader agenda—suddenly it not only seems possible to print your own furniture, but to remodel the built environment around you. With urban makers, the practical manufacturing of urban space does not

Angelika Fitz and Rose Epple,  
We-Traders

happen in competition to mass-market manufacturing, but to the inefficient bureaucracy of city governments. Like successful open source ventures, We-Traders often beat city councils in reacting more quickly, resourceful and inclusive to deficits in local planning. And similar to developments in the digital industries, where successful start-ups are swallowed by bigger players of the old economy, municipalities become increasingly interested in including these new urban players into their agendas. Even if this is not a stated purpose, We-Traders have become political prototypes for urban renewal.

**We-Traders. Swapping Crisis for City** is initiated by the Goethe-Institutes in Southwest Europe and curated by Angelika Fitz and Rose Epple. The project connects artists, designers and activists as well as many other citizens who are currently taking the initiative to re-appropriate urban space. We call them "We-Traders" in the sense that they redefine the relation between value, profit and public good. From October 2013 to November 2014 interactive forums, workshops and exhibitions in Lisbon, Madrid, Toulouse and Turin as well as open calls on the web invite you to join the We-Traders platform.

[www.goethe.de/wetraders](http://www.goethe.de/wetraders)

**"Citizens across Europe are currently taking the initiative to re-appropriate urban space. We call them "We-Traders" in the sense that they redefine the relation between value, profit and public good and are able to motivate fellow citizens to follow suit."**

## GARBAGE BINS INSTEAD OF GARBAGE DUMPS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

"Assuming that garbage collection is regular; provision of color coded garbage bins (one for dry waste and one for wet waste) that can be closed and clamped onto compound walls of individual residences to prevent toppling over and scatter of garbage on the streets by stray animals. (Half of Bangalore is sleeping – working in shifts – when the garbage collectors eventually come by and horn and residents are left to search for open dump sites and some dispose it in open storm water drains too!"

SUGGESTION FOR: ENVIRONMENT

## RICHMOND ROAD

"More pedestrian crossing possibilities!"  
SUGGESTION FOR: TRAFFIC

## TOWARDS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CONSCIENTIOUS CITIZENS

"I would like to suggest a plan to involve school children in solving the problems of the city in the following way. The city corporation (or each ward) must launch and publicize an initiative where it establishes a complaint registering mechanism (a phone line, email ID, webpage etc.) just for school children to report on the city's problems like garbage, water leakage, road condition, traffic navigation etc. Perhaps we could start with one problem at a time. All city schools must encourage their children to be sensitive to the issue and actively register complaints through the school. Registering a complaint needs to result in an acknowledgement of some sort for record purposes and a webpage should display the number of complaints on any particular problem. Now the school and the children who are most active need to be recognized on TV or at public ceremonies by the local government agency so that it becomes an incentive. Of course, we would hope this will put more pressure on the people in power to solve the problem. But most importantly, it will make children more responsible and sensitive to problems. In a further step, the school should also encourage its students to talk to the people in power by assembling in large groups and demand answers. I believe this initiative will progressively increase the number of conscientious citizens in the city."

SUGGESTION FOR: OTHER

## VIDYARANYAPURA

"The streets are never proper, so I'd like to repair it at the 1st thing. Also, demolishing the buildings nearby as if this isn't done would widen the turning road at the Doddabommasandra. If a single Volvo passes through the whole road gets blocked."

SUGGESTION FOR: TRAFFIC

## BANGALORE TURF CLUB AND GOLF COURSE ...

"I would like to see as city circular train connecting all the outskirts of Bangalore. I would like to see as urban forest, place untouched and assessed for another 20 years, then keep it open for public."

SUGGESTION FOR: ENVIRONMENT

## COMMERCIAL STREET

"As a real commercial center the pretty narrow street is mostly overcrowded with people, cars and two-wheelers. It would make perfect sense to make this street to Bangalore's first pedestrian area and exclude the vehicles."

SUGGESTION FOR: TRAFFIC

## I WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE MARATH HALLI

"I have so many friends in Marath Halli, so we planned to gather and start to planted in my area so kindly provide us 100 trees with beautiful and it should be give nice look to our area."

SUGGESTION FOR: ENVIRONMENT

## NEIGHBORHOOD MANAGEMENT

"Residents can form clubs in their respective areas and put forth the problem areas to the responsible authority. The corporate should hold fortnightly meetings in public and discuss the issues/progress. The respective MNC's and corporate offices in the area should actively participate in the development. The contractors, government employees who do an outstanding job should be appreciated and those who don't do their license or job should be taken away in public view after giving them a second chance."

SUGGESTION FOR: HOUSING

## LOCAL TRAINS IN BANGALORE

"We never realize but Bangalore city and suburbs already has about 200 kms of railway lines currently in existence and also being operational. These lines run in all directions from the city center and are also quite well interlinked.

This existing infrastructure can be put to good use by running local trains like in Mumbai or Chennai. This will ease pressure on the roads. The only expenditure would be to build more stations enroute and buy new train coaches.

BMTC can help a bit by providing feeder bus service from railway stations to nearby localities."

SUGGESTION FOR: TRAFFIC

## OUTER RING ROAD

1. Skywalk for all major crossover junctions like near all IT Parks
2. Major junctions to have MLCP and bmtc bus terminus like at silkboard, sarjapur junction
3. Special bicycle track
4. Remove bus stops before & after all flyovers in ORR

SUGGESTION FOR: TRAFFIC

Ten posts from [www.nextbangalore.com](http://www.nextbangalore.com)

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