URBAN POLICIES AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN INDIA
Rights, responsibilities and citizenship

The aim of the Urban Development Programme of UNESCO is to increase the Organization's contribution to urban public policies which respect, protect and promote inclusiveness, social cohesion and local democracy. Our work is based on the development of multi-disciplinary knowledge and comparative research, and on capacity-building of urban professionals and civil society, as well as their national and local governments, and, in the context of Delivering as One UN, in close cooperation with other UN-agencies, such as UN-HABITAT - with whom a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 18 March 2005. UNESCO has been promoting the flagship principle of “Humanizing the City” in close cooperation with UN-HABITAT Global Governance Campaign and UNDESA (United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs) since 1996 to contribute to the United Nations Social Summit Declaration in Copenhagen Creating Inclusive Societies (1995), the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements (1996), as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

Problem Analysis: Building Inclusive Cities

Over the past 60 years, the principles affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) have gradually become recognized, expanded, and incorporated into the ordinary lives of an increased number of individuals and societies. However, despite the profound socio-economic, political and territorial changes that have taken place in the last years, there is still a need to build more respect for human rights – whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social. The first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the eradication of extreme poverty by 2015, and now, in 2010, we are in grave danger of lagging behind in our commitment to this goal. As per India, reaching this MDG by 2015 seems increasingly unlikely despite earlier progress in reducing poverty.

A rights-based approach can help generate the political will and create a culture of resource allocation that places the needs of vulnerable groups and individuals on an equal footing with the interests of those who are better off. Most encouraging initiatives oriented towards combining urban development with social equity and justice have been recently launched in India by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, such as the National Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy (2010 – 2020): “A New Deal for the Urban Poor - Slum free cities”, including schemes such as Rajiv Awas Yojana, and the implementation of the reform agenda of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

However, a right-based approach in the context of Indian cities has not yet been extensively documented and researched. This publication wishes to fill in this gap by providing policy makers...
with a set of good practices for social inclusion in Indian cities and initiatives in law and urban planning that strengthen rights and responsibilities, interfaith tolerance, and the inclusion of the most vulnerable (urban poor, women, migrants) in urban management. This project aims to adapt to the Indian urban context the policy paper jointly produced in March 2009 by UNESCO and UN-HABITAT on *Urban Policies and the Right to the City – Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship*, and to highlight existing Indian good practices and initiatives. The *right to the city* is not a positive right in a legal sense: neither UNESCO nor UNHABITAT have the intention to promote a new international legal instrument.

The specific objective of the MOST Policy Paper is to develop the *right to the city* as a vehicle for social inclusion in cities. The *right to the city* should imply:

- Liberty, freedom and the benefit of the city life for all
- Transparency, equity and efficiency in city administrations
- Participation and respect in local democratic decision making
- Recognition of diversity in economic, social and cultural life
- Reducing poverty, social exclusion and urban violence.

Finally, the goal of the MOST Policy Paper on *Urban Policies and the Right to the City – Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship* is to:

- Advance the knowledge and research on the right to the city concept for a better understanding of inclusive societies and a better dissemination of good practices and initiatives;
- Raise awareness among key decision-makers (local authorities) on the need to adopt a right-based approach to urbanization for a better inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable population in Indian cities;
- Constitute a reference point for policy makers at local level as well a basis for the exchange of knowledge between researchers, city professionals and local authorities on developing inclusive cities.

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