People Building Better Cities aims to exchange knowledge, build networks, and promote dialogue between communities, urban professionals, universities, non-governmental organizations, and policy makers on the challenges of equitable development, inclusive urbanization and climate change.

Building on the work of Global Studio, an international educational program, this exhibition documents community-driven projects that share a common goal: the promotion of inclusive urbanization to improve the lives of the urban poor through innovations in participatory design and planning.
Around the world, too many people are excluded from the freedoms of development, and basic entitlements: decent housing, security of tenure, and access to water and sanitation, excluding them from prosperity and equal opportunity.

New forms of urban education and practice can expand those freedoms. Working with people in low-income households and communities, urban professionals can better address the problems of the contemporary city and help unlock the benefits of development.

People Building Better Cities wants to provoke a conversation. We invite your participation.

Resilient, equitable, inclusive, smart, and sustainable cities require citizen involvement.
Inequality is the hallmark of cities in both the developed and developing world.

Inequality can cause exclusion by class, race, gender, or ethnicity. It increases vulnerability to disasters. It results in uneven access to housing, health, employment, education, and income.

**Inequality between people**

Women and children bear a disproportionate burden of the world’s poverty. An equitable city requires gender equality. In many cities, women do not earn equal pay for equal work and have significant responsibility for raising children. Their voices need to be heard.

**Income Inequality**

Inequality is measured by the Gini Coefficient, where 0 = perfect equality and everyone has the same income and 100 = perfect inequality and all the wealth goes to one person.

The Gini coefficient is a measure of income and wealth inequality. It does not reflect inequality within a country, nor does it account for tax systems and social spending.

"Inequality undermines the strength of our economy and contributes to economic instability."

"Poverty is not natural… it is manmade, and can be overcome by the actions of human beings."
— Nelson Mandela, 2005
‘Push and pull factors’ draw people to cities in search of jobs and a better life. By 2020, 4.2 billion people will live in cities.

Population growth is an increasingly urban phenomenon, concentrated in the developing world. Today, over one billion people live in slums, including 56 million in the slums of developed countries.

In many cities, slum dwellers are more than 60% of the population but are rarely included in decisions about city development.

When included, the urban poor are a resource for achieving economic development and social and environmental justice.
The urban poor are on the front line of climate change. Their homes and livelihoods face greater risk from floods, landslides, and extreme weather.

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“Poor people living in slums are at particularly high risk from the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. They live on the most vulnerable lands within cities, typically areas that are deemed undesirable by others, and are thus affordable. Residents are exposed to the impacts of landslides, sea level rise and flooding. Exposure to risk is increased by overcrowded living conditions, lack of adequate infrastructure and services, unsafe housing, inadequate nutrition and poor health. These conditions can turn a natural hazard or change in climate into a disaster, and result in loss of basic services, damage or destruction to homes, loss of livelihoods, malnutrition, disease and loss of life.”

Source: Baker, J., Climate Change Disaster Risk and the Urban Poor, 2011
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Reducing CO2 emissions and curtailting the effects of Global Warming should be front and center of urban policy.

**RISING CO2 EMISSIONS**

“CO2 emissions increased by 3% in 2011. These emissions were the highest in human history and 34% higher than in 1990. In 2011, coal burning was responsible for 43% of the total emissions, oil 24%, gas 18%, and cement 5%.”

— Global Carbon Project, 2012

**CO2 EMISSIONS CO2 TONNES PER CAPITA FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES IN 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CO2 Emissions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>18.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>0.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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</table>

**CO2 EMISSIONS PER COUNTRY & WORLD RESIDENTS, 2009**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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**CLIMATE CHANGE: SOME SOLUTIONS**

**Urban agriculture**

- Increase public space, improve access to food and local industries
- Accommodate vulnerable groups
- Increase and retrofit urban forests
- Capture landfill gas
- Recycle waste

**Mass Transit**

- Decrease car dependence, expand clean technology public transit for all socio-economic groups
- Accommodate vulnerable groups
- BRTs have social, environmental and economic benefits

**Bicycles**

- Incentivize energy-efficient design, materials and technologies
- Provide public spaces
- Increase urban forests

**Density**

- Build social, commercial and mixed use
- Provide for walking and cycling
- Create public spaces
- Increase urban forests

**Green Building**

- Increase public space, improve access to food and local industries
- Accommodate vulnerable groups
- Incentivize energy-efficient design, materials and technologies
- Provide public spaces
- Increase urban forests

**City Greening**

- Increase public space, improve access to food and local industries
- Accommodate vulnerable groups
- Incentivize energy-efficient design, materials and technologies
- Provide public spaces
- Increase urban forests

“**The biggest contributors to global emissions in 2011 were China (20%), the United States (16%), the European Union (11%), and India (7%).**”

— Global Carbon Project, 2012
Does citizen engagement produce a more inclusive city?

The Inclusive City promotes opportunity for all in social, political, economic, and cultural life.

Citizen Engagement is inclusion in decision making about how a community’s resources will be allocated.

Public Participation in design and planning means people are active agents in shaping their environment.

A “Rights-Based” Approach

A “rights based” approach privileges human rights principles, environmental sustainability, social equity, political empowerment, and economic growth and redistribution.

A “Rights-Based” Inclusive Model

Established in 1996, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is “a network of community-based organizations of the urban poor in 33 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. SDI’s mission is to link urban poor communities from cities across the (global) South that have developed successful mobilization, advocacy, and problem solving strategies. SDI believes that the only way to manage urban growth and to create inclusive cities is for the urban poor to be at the center of strategies for urban development.”

Source: SDI website
Learn more: www.sdinet.org

Community savings, often managed by women, are the backbone of people driven development. Community mapping of land use, services, housing and households is a tool for mobilising people and lobbying governments.

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How do designers and planners work effectively with individuals and communities to address urban problems, and help deliver better outcomes?
GLOBAL STUDIO
Inclusivity and Education

GLOBAL STUDIO educates urban professionals, in place, to promote inclusive, equitable cities.

PEOPLE AS PARTNERS
Rethinking architectural practice and education

Global Studio is a design and planning “think and do tank” spearheaded in 2004 by the United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum dwellers.

The focus of Global Studio’s efforts has been international and interdisciplinary, involving work with disadvantaged communities, NGOs, and local governments. Global Studio offers conferences and symposia to disseminate knowledge and encourage understanding across diverse platforms.

To date there have been over 600 participants from 66 universities, more than 30 countries, and 10 academic disciplines.


Why action planning?
Because top down planning and design have not best served the urban poor well. 21st century professionals require new skills.

Learning to work with communities should start in universities, and professional silos broken down.

Action planning provides new opportunities.

Top-down planning and design put urban professionals in the driver’s seat.

Bottom-up planning does the reverse, and loses the benefits of professional expertise.

Working together in multi-disciplinary teams makes ‘top-down meet bottom-up.’ Effective action planning becomes possible.

Five keys to educating for resilient, equitable, inclusive and sustainable cities

Academic commitment
Useful outcomes
Partnerships with relevant organizations
Engaged community
Long term involvement

Principles and Priorities

1. Work with, and learn from, disadvantaged communities.
2. Develop participatory design and planning skills to support community-driven change.
3. Empower participants: be driven by local needs; promote social entrepreneurship and on-going action.
4. Communicate outcomes to communities, local government, organizations, and general public.
5. Create global networks of professionals, educators, students, and communities.
6. Contribute to knowledge production, build bridges between communities and institutions and deliver innovative, proactive solutions.
7. Encourage development of the “citizen scholar” and “citizen professional.”
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A Global Studio and CSUD at Columbia University project to share and exchange knowledge, build networks, and promote dialogue between communities, urban practitioners, universities, NGOs and policy makers on people's participation in meeting the challenge of inclusive urbanization and climate change.

For more information and resources on this topic —
Use your smartphone's QR Code reader.

Adopting a participatory process, design professionals can partner with communities.

Global Studio uses a nonlinear process—developed with students, academics, urban practitioners, and community partners—to create action planning, participatory practices, and partnership building, always adapting to a specific context.

LISTEN, OBSERVE AND ASK
What do people like/dislike about where they live?
What would improve their lives?
What physical changes could help improve their lives?
What is the political, developmental, and historical context?
Does the community have a vision for the future?
Will the project build capacity?
Will it generate income or create jobs?
Will it build community confidence?
Will it build partnerships?
Is it something people want?

CAN DESIGN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
No project is too small. One size does not fit all.
Reconciling heritage with rapid urbanization

Bhopal, a city characterized by its lakes and hills, is home to 1.8 million people. The city’s old and new areas are separated by a narrow, congested land corridor adjacent to the Upper Lake. With the participation of Bhopal’s citizens, this project explored “knitting together” the two areas as a strategy to re-energize the Old City’s architectural and cultural heritage, and, through the development of a lake front public space, create a more inclusive city center.

Connecting the City and Boosting the Local Economy

A long-term vision and management plan for the Old City of Bhopal proposes:

- Designation of the historic core as a heritage precinct, and a management plan for significant buildings.
- Identification of key sites that could be linked through heritage trails.
- Strengthening pedestrian infrastructure to promote safe and easy access to the heritage precinct.
- Development of the precinct as a tourist hub and a driver for new social and economic development.

Revitalizing Cultural Heritage

Heritage Assets

Finding new uses for historic buildings vacated by the government, to avoid decay or demolition by neglect—A new Community Consultation Center was proposed to be housed at Sadar Manzil, in the historic precinct, to serve as a space for communication and exchange of ideas for the city, between local communities, citizens, and institutional bodies.

Heritage Trails

- To Mosque and Taj Mahal Precinct
- To Hospital and Fort
- To Old City through Pari Ghat
- To Kamla Park

Key Sites

- Significant Hub
- Significant Heritage Buildings

Our Process

1. Understand, Document, Analyze
   OBSERVE public opinion on the old versus new city.

2. DOCUMENT topography, morphology, land use, local history, community recreational spaces, pedestrian and vehicle movements.

3. ASK “How often do you come to the lake front?” “Where are the landmarks?”

4. IDENTIFY community leaders, local partners.

5. ENGAGE the local community

6. ENGAGE a public event—“We are Bhopal!” at Pari Ghat on the lake front.

7. RE-INTRODUCE communities to their history and heritage through organized walks, photography, film, and art.

8. FACILITATE exchange of information, and ascertain public opinion on public projects.

9. SEEK local opinion on proposed master plan, and design interventions at Pari Ghat.

10. BRAINSTORM, Plan, and Design

11. INTEGRATE “We are Bhopal” findings into master plan and Pari Ghat design.

12. ENGAGE Public Institutions

A Living Heritage: Appreciation of architectural and cultural heritage.

A People Friendly City: Appreciation of people—scale design and planning.

A Community Voice: Including community participation and promoting citizens’ ideas in government decision-making.

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- Identification of key sites that could be linked through heritage trails.
- Strengthening pedestrian infrastructure to promote safe and easy access to the heritage precinct.
- Development of the precinct as a tourist hub and a driver for new social and economic development.
**CASE STUDY 1**

**NONPROFIT: GLOBAL STUDIO**

**PROJECT: INCLUSIVE CITY CENTER**

**LOCATION: BHOPAL, INDIA**

**DURATION: 3 WEEKS, 2012**

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**CREATE**

**Public Space**

Two proposals for public “commons”

**A PEDESTRIAN-CYCLIST FRIENDLY LAKE FRONT**

Cantilevered pedestrian walkway

Provides safe pedestrian access to the lake front promenade.

Generates health and environmental benefits: cleaner air for pedestrians; water-cleansing plants.

Floating pontoons

Resolve pedestrian congestion and connect to strategic points along the lake front.

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**GIVE**

**People a ‘Voice’**

"WE ARE BHOPAL" FESTIVAL AT PARI GHAT

"We are Bhopal," was a Global Studio event that promoted connectivity amongst residents, and involved speakers, musicians, and participatory activities. The event provided Global Studio with an opportunity to present and receive feedback on its urban design proposals.

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**WE ARE BHOPAL**

**FESTIVAL AT PARI GHAT**

Unlocks social, economic, and environmental opportunities through a public park at Pari Ghat, creating a space for children’s play, creative and commercial activities; and urban agriculture.

Brings attention to Pari Ghat as a “social connector” between old and new areas of Bhopal, with potential to be a public destination.

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**ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY**

The festival provided an opportunity to present the master plan for the lake front and Pari Ghat to the local community and visitors, and gather their feedback.

Children, youth, and adults were encouraged to illustrate their own visions for the Ghat.

---

**USE ACTION AND RESEARCH TO DISCOVER ISSUES AND ENGAGE PEOPLE.**

**CONSULT LOCAL EXPERTS.**

**USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INCREASE OUTREACH AND GATHER FEEDBACK.**

**PROVIDE FUN PUBLIC EVENT THAT PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION.**

**PRESENT OUTCOMES TO LOCAL COMMUNITY.**

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**GLOBAL STUDIO**

A Global Studio and CSUD at Columbia University project to share and exchange knowledge, build networks, and promote dialogue between communities, urban practitioners, universities, NGOs and policy makers on people’s participation in meeting the challenge of inclusive urbanization and climate change.
SLUM FREE Kabadkhana
Kabadkhana is an inner city neighborhood in close proximity to the former Union Carbide pesticide plant. Over 2,500 people died on December 3, 1984 when toxic gas escaped from the factory into streets and houses. Over 500,000 poor people were affected, and environmental justice remains elusive. Contaminated soil and groundwater continue to impact nearby communities. The new SLUM FREE City (RAY)** will likely be implemented in Kabadkhana.

Community Potential

Understanding the Infrastructure of the Community
Mapping the existing water supply and housing stock.
Understanding and documenting how space is used and how space enables social activity and community life is integral to any place-based incremental improvement of housing conditions.

Design Alternatives

Housing Needs—Big Picture Design Alternatives
By 2017, the urban housing shortage in India could reach 15 million units, 80% resulting from overcrowding. The shortage can be met by building new housing and/or by intelligent upgrading. Government programs JNNURM (National Urban Renewal Mission)*** and RAY** (Slum Free Cities) appear to prefer developer driven one-size-fits-all housing blocks.

To understand the impact of the government housing typology, Global Studio conducted a post-occupancy study with residents in a nearby four story or G+3 block at Madrasi Colony. The research proposed incremental and infill housing development that account for the social and economic conditions of Kabadkhana local residents, and the important connections between street and home.

Our Process

1. Understand, Document, Analyze
   TALK to people on the street.
   VENTURE through the neighborhood to understand its physical reality.
   IDENTIFY stakeholders and gatekeepers to the local community.
   HOLD small meetings with diverse community stakeholders and city administration.
   ASK questions, observe, take notes, listen and listen between the lines.
   DOCUMENT observations on the built environment and on community issues.

2. Build Trust with Community
   SHARE information from different interest groups.
   SEEK feedback on problems, issues, and possible plans.
   FACILITATE agreement on principles for a community vision.

3. Brainstorm, Plan, and Design
   CONSIDER how divergent views can be accommodated, and prioritize actions.
   UNDERSTAND local resources, assets and community capabilities.

4. Implement Improvements in Partnership with Community
   School-yard and open space clean-up with local children and residents.

5. Longer term improvements requiring funding and political will
   DISCUSS proposals for open space improvements, safe water supply, and incremental housing solutions.
   RESEARCH how partnerships between community, academics, government, and NGOs actualize projects.
   SHARE knowledge with the community.

CASE STUDY 2
NONPROFIT: GLOBAL STUDIO
PROJECT: KABADKHANA NEIGHBORHOOD
LOCATION: BHOPAL, INDIA
DURATION: 3 WEEKS, 2012

A Global Studio and CSUD at Columbia University project to share and exchange knowledge, build networks, and promote a global community of urban practitioners, universities, NGOs and policy makers on people’s participation in meeting the challenge of inclusive urbanization and climate change.
A Global Studio and CSUD at Columbia University project to share and exchange knowledge, build networks, and promote dialogue between communities, urban practitioners, universities, NGOs and policy makers on people’s participation in meeting the challenge of inclusive urbanization and climate change.

Kabadkhana’s wastewater partly runs in open sewer systems and collects to the North in a large waste canal (Naala). The waste lines are among the few open space resources in the neighborhood and are a major health concern.

A design study helped understand how the Naala and its tributaries could be turned into a resource to remediate wastewater while providing accessible public space.

The public school as hub for community engagement and as part of a network of interconnected public spaces.

Research groups provided essential data for the design and planning teams for all projects.

The research reports can be found on theglobalstudio.com:
- ‘Urban Poverty and the Slum Free City’
- ‘Communication and Union Carbide’
- ‘Water Access and the Urban Poor’

QUESTION THE STATUS QUO
OBSERVE
RESEARCH
DOCUMENT
PARTNER
FEEDBACK
DESIGN
ADAPT
DEVELOP
COLLABORATE

CONDUCT Research

Small change— big difference. Smaller, incremental projects can significantly improve community well-being and the physical environment, including wastewater management, cleaning, upgrading and interlinking of open spaces, and the installation of play equipment for children.
Confidence and Community

Capacity-building through school improvements

Prempura is an urban village of 3,000 people outside of Bhopal. Around half of the housing stock is “informal,” and many houses lack adequate sanitation. Prempura Public School is a two-room building and serves the village’s poorer children. An NGO (Muskaan) provides a storytelling program and mothers take an active role at the school.

THE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Prempura Public School has no toilets, desks, or chairs. The treeless “playground” is the site of open defecation and dumping. Vandalism and theft of school property is frequent. Through a participatory design process with school children, teachers, parents, and villagers, a collective vision to improve this situation emerged.

PROCESS & OUTCOMES

Global Studio prioritized projects by immediate or long-term feasibility. It devised innovative ways, including games, to engage children in the implementation of projects to improve their health (waste pickup, recycling, personal hygiene); environment (tree planting); education (murals and playground slide).

The site plan proposes that the school and community share a new public open space, with shade structures, toilets, and community gardens.

Opportunity for Women

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Many Prempura residents are under or unemployed. Local women initiated a tailor shop located in the school. With Global Studio assistance, they developed a tailor skills course, and have since been able to purchase their first two sewing machines.

The initiative recognizes the vital link between the economic empowerment of women, the well-being of children, and the community as a whole. The school has the potential to enable a range of activities to further community development.
A new public commons through school ground clean-up and tree planting

Mobilizing community dissatisfaction with the state of the school ground, the cleanup and waste recycling was converted to an educational game, providing lessons that could be repeated by teachers or parents. Children embraced their roles as “planet protectors,” and received a planet protector badge after the cleanup.

Global Studio, the school, and the broader community enthusiastically developed ideas to transform the cleaned space. Relying on input from children, the overall principles for the use of the site were agreed on, and consolidated in the site plan. The tree planting, the beginning of an ambitious site afforestation plan, was based on children’s vision drawings.

Wishes were placed in a hole dug by the youth, and a mango tree—the children’s choice—was planted. A symbol of a greener future, but one that requires commitment if it is to survive, the wishing tree is the first step in providing a shady social space for children and community.

For a project to be successful it needs to be owned by the community. Global Studio invited everyone to write down his or her wish for a better Prempura.

CASE STUDY 3
NONPROFIT: GLOBAL STUDIO
PROJECT: INCLUSIVE PREMPURA SCHOOL
LOCATION: BHOPAL, INDIA
DURATION: 3 WEEKS, 2012

A Global Studio and CSUG at Columbia University project to share and exchange knowledge, build networks, and promote dialogue between communities, urban practitioners, universities, NGOs and policy makers on people’s participation in meeting the challenge of inclusive urbanization and climate change.
In 2007, Global Studio partnered with WITS University and the City of Johannesburg to engage in participatory action planning in Alexandra, Diepsloot, and Marshalltown. Global Studio 2008-2009 focused on Diepsloot Township, working with local government and the community to build capacity, help form local NGOs, and develop environmental, sanitation, and cultural projects.

2007
Led by local and international mentors, 85 students from 52 universities worked in Alexandra, Marshalltown, and Diepsloot. Action research and asking individuals what would improve their lives revealed that people’s concerns were housing, sanitation, the environment, and communications. Some projects were implemented in 2007; others were finished in 2008 and 2009.

2008-09
Global Studio 2008 and 2009 worked in Diepsloot (est. 1995), a township outside Johannesburg of around 170,000 people, 75% of which live in informal settlements and shacks. Global Studio liaised with local government, further developing environmental, sanitation, and cultural projects. Over three years, the academic-community collaboration built knowledge, trust, and capacity and laid the groundwork for new organizations to become change agents.

In Three Townships

MARSHALLTOWN, 2007
Inner city migrants experience lack of basic services—water, electricity, and heat.

ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP, 2007
Corrugated iron shacks are cold or hot. With simple insulation, comfort is substantially improved.

DIEPSLOOT, 2007
Upgrading of existing shacks

ENVIRONMENT

Sewage seepage and rubbish dumping in the Diepsloot floodplain generated projects that addressed environmental, health, and safety issues over the longer term including remediation of the floodplain; new pedestrian bridge with commercial and cultural opportunities; urban agriculture.

SANITATION

Leaking drains and defective toilets contribute to contamination of streets and the floodplain. The double sieve system addressed blocked drains, and GPS was used to plot toilet locations and rubbish collection points in the most densely populated areas of Diepsloot. Toilet defects were catalogued. Working with Global Studio a new community organization, Water, Amenities, Sanitation Services, Upgrading Program (WASSUP), was formed.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Over 200 people self-identified as artists at Global Studio community meetings in 2008. After a Global Studio suggestion to register as a non-profit organization, the Diepsloot Arts and Culture Network was established in 2009. Global Studio-DACN collaborations included an arts festival, development of plans for DACN center and a film promoting the local hip hop group.

Shack insulation

Shack waterprooﬁng

Shack lighting

New arts and community centers

Arts and culture festival 2008

Artists' Culture Map of Diepsloot

Planning research with community stakeholders

Face tattoo illumination

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DACN and WASSUP work effectively in Diepsloot Township.

The 2007-2009 academic (Global Studio)-community (Diepsloot) collaboration provided a basis for innovative community development, supporting and nurturing local strengths. Using design as a tool, academic-community collaborations can unlock some of the benefits of development.

Growing out of Global Studio, Sticky Situations made a long-term commitment to the community of Diepsloot. It currently works with grassroots groups to build organizational capacity, develop cultural and environmental projects, create partnerships with relevant organizations, and build on academic and professional initiatives.

To learn more: www.stickysituations.org

DACN partners with local government and operates as a self-managed communal toilet repair and maintenance business, providing employment to some residents.

To learn more: www.wassupdiepsloot.com

Diepsloot has a rich cultural life in music, theatre, dance, hip-hop, and visual arts. Global Studio suggested the creation of an organization to address lack of resources and opportunities. The Diepsloot Arts & Culture Network (DACN) was formed in 2008, and celebrated with the city’s first arts and culture festival. Registered as a non-profit in 2009, DACN provides opportunities for local artists, and works in “edutainment” on issues of public health and sanitation.

To learn more: www.diepslootarts.org
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For more information and resources on this topic — Use your smart phone’s QR Code reader.

How are designers engaging communities around the world?

“Community architects help the community visualize new possibilities and new solutions for community transformation. Architects can quickly visualize a variety of solutions and design possibilities when they are presented with a ‘design problem or situation’. Having this skill is an enormous help to them when guiding the people through the process of physical transformation of their community. In this way they can help the community generate options for development that are realistic.”

— Lumang et al., ACCA, Environment & Urbanization, Jan 2012

“We have little grasp of how communities reason or understand their political and economic realities, even though people build their own cities. And rarely do we participate in their process. We advocate shifting the process of community participation 180°. More inclusive cities will result from the devolution of power. This requires we think of ourselves as minor … and requires we move from a logic that favors projects to one that strengthens programs and systems.”

— Marie Aquilino, ESA Paris and Maggie Stephenson (UN Habitat, Haiti), 2012

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“The most common mistake is that participatory processes are used to merely solicit needs. In most urban contexts the needs of people are relatively well known and most governments do not have the resources or capabilities to address them comprehensively, due to the scope and scale of basic deficiencies, not to mention entrenched interests. Effective participatory processes engage people in reflecting on what their needs are but in relation to an explicit and transparent account of what government can do, have resources for and is willing to commit to in terms over an extended period of time.”

— Edgar Pieterse, University of Capetown, South Africa, 2012

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CASE STUDIES 6 & 7

**Housing For Health**

“People who are marginalised or disadvantaged, rarely trust the words of those seen to be outsiders, and if those doing the talking are promising improvement and change—whether planners, architects, engineers or students—their words will carry very little weight. And if the words are not trusted, the content will be ignored and the community will be disengaged.

Whether in projects in rural Nepal, urban New York City, or remote Australia, the common, and usually unspoken, question at any initial meeting is ‘why should we trust you?’ The path used in Healthabitat projects to encourage participation is to make some action that improves the lives of some of those living in any project community... immediately.”

—Marc Phelan, Healthabitat

**HAITI (2007-ongoing)**

In partnership with the Community Health Development Society (CHDS) in Nepal, Healthabitat developed designs for mosquito-proof house designs to address public health and economic issues. Free, smokeless bio-gas produced from human and animal waste is now used for cooking and replaces smoky fires that cause respiratory illness. Increased yields from crops fertilized by the bio-gas waste have also generated greater incomes, health and hygiene programs for women and the establishment of an ongoing maintenance fund and work team ensure a sustainable approach. Architecture students will work with villagers in the next stage of this project, to assist with the building of toilets and biogas digesters.

**CAMEROON (2006)**

In Cameroon, Healthabitat has partnered with Fondation Esther Boucicault to develop an international design competition with the goal of improving the health and living conditions of some of Cameroon’s most vulnerable people. The project’s goal is to encourage participation is to make some action that improves the lives of some of those living in any project community... immediately.

**USA (2015)**

Much of New York City’s public housing stock needs repairs. Working with Common Ground and the Brownsville Partnership, Healthabitat was asked to trial the “Housing for Health” model on 10 apartments in Brooklyn. Fixing defective items on the first day, this successful and cost-effective trial paved the way to scale-up, and speed up health and housing improvements for New York’s urban poor.

**NEPAL (2007-ongoing)**

In rural Nepal, Healthabitat partnered with the Community Health Development Society (CHDS) to develop an international design competition with the goal of improving health and living conditions of some of the most vulnerable people in Nepal. The competition outcome has been used by the government to develop an international competition to disseminate results.

**NEW YORK CITY, USA**

Healthabitat began as a partnership between an architect, a doctor, and an anthropologist. Healthabitat’s goal is to improve the health of the disadvantaged, especially children, by improving their housing and surrounding living environment.

**ARCHIVE Global**

Healthabitat began as a partnership between an architect, a doctor, and an anthropologist. Healthabitat’s goal is to improve the health of the disadvantaged, especially children, by improving their housing and surrounding living environment.

To learn more: www.healthabitat.com

**MAKING SOMETHING IMPROVE PEOPLE’S LIVING CONDITIONS**

Do something that makes a difference.

**NO SURVEY WITHOUT SERVICE**

They need both data and action.

**BUILDS TRUST WITH LOCAL PEOPLE**

Have long-term commitment to place and people.

**EMPLOY LOCAL PEOPLE**

Building technical capacity to sustain the project.

**MONITOR PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

Can raise awareness of health issues, especially among vulnerable groups.

**THINK LATERALLY**

Simpler principles apply when approached from an innovative viewpoint.

**INVOLVE STUDENTS IN PROJECTS**

They will learn the real processes of participation.

**MORE ACROSS DISCIPLINES**

The project requires cross-disciplinary involvement.

**ASSUME FAILURE**

The project community will be disengaged.

**CREATE STUDENTS IN PROJECTS**

They will learn the real processes of participation.

**TEST, LEARN, IMPROVE**

They will learn the real processes of participation.
“Technique and technology are important, but adding trust is the issue of the decade.”
—Stephen Covey, *The Speed of Trust*, 2008

**ACCA (Asian Coalition for Community Action) Thailand**
(est. 2009)

ACCA is building a community upgrading process in Asian cities that is implemented by people, based in concrete action and the sharing of knowledge, with respect to local strengths and potential. Since 2003, ACCA professionals and community builders have played a key role. Their efforts have transformed what is “possible” into what is “deliverable.” CAN works with community mapping, upgrading, city planning, training, university programs and knowledge sharing.

To learn more: www.acca.net

**Trust Through Education**

**BRAC UNIVERSITY**

Bangladesh

The Department of Architecture at BRAC University, Dhaka, has been developing programs that address poverty through action and the sharing of knowledge, with respect to local needs and aspirations.

The program builds trust through action teams. These teams include majors — building, planning, public, service, landscape architecture, management, and science — and works with community leaders, landscape workers, disaster managers, and students of architecture.

**People-Driven Change**

“The question is not how to ‘train’ the urban poor or change their behavior but rather, to identify how development interventions can nurture and develop the strength that already exists, letting people make change.”


**BUILD**

**FACILITATE**
Given the opportunity, the tools, and the access to information how do the urban poor become effective agents and leaders of change?
How can you participate?

Share your experience: expand the network of organizations, educational programs, and communities engaged in creating the inclusive city.

Consult our resource base of books, films, talks, organizations.

Add new organizations, books, films and programs to our lists.

Build the People Building Better Cities Network at peoplebuildingbettercities.org

“For more ways to get involved—use your smart phone’s QR code reader.”

“How can you participate?”

“Don’t try to sort out the mess and ambiguity — engage with it. Give chance a chance. Be prepared to get muddled because you cannot possibly hold it all in your head. Recognize that getting muddled is a prelude to creative work. Encourage random encounters... position yourself with purpose and then let circumstances guide you along.”

— Nabeel Hamdi Small Change 2004
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How could design help improve your neighborhood or city?