This flyer has been prepared to record the experiences and observations of two Architect volunteers who, in May 2012, visited two slums sites in Yerwada in Pune that are included within the Pune Municipal Corporations (PMC) Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) Initiative; Mother Teresa Nagar, and Nagpur Chawl.

In Pune, under the BSUP initiative, there are ‘brown field’ projects and ‘green field’ projects; ‘brown field’ projects are concerned with sites which are developed in-situ and ‘green field’ projects are concerned with slums which have come up in non-buildable zones (as defined by the adopted Development Plan).

Most of the projects associated with ‘green field’ sites have been contracted to builders, and land has been made available by the PMC which has been developed as multi storied structures, varying from ground+4 floors to stilt+9 floors.

While these ‘green field’ projects were being designed, the communities for whom they were intended were not taken into confidence and so the designs that were drawn up have failed to address the aspirations and nuances of the target community’s culture. The process leading to the ‘green field’ buildings, was insensitive and has resulted in huge resistance from the target communities in relocating to these sites.

Of late the PMC has roped in NGO’s to help mobilize communities to move into these completed buildings and it is proving to be an arduous process.

The ‘brown field’ projects are all on government land and aimed at in-situ rehabilitation which are being implemented in isolation from the rest of the city. They are rehabilitated in a scattered manner across the slums, as only kuccha (impermanent materials) houses are being targeted. The PMC has engaged NGO’s to implement these projects. This methodology has resulted in the inefficient

“The BSUP in Pune focuses on slums in isolation; no holistic strategy for the rehabilitation of the slums has been prepared.”
use of the cities most valuable resource (land), and the loss of an opportunity to create an additional housing stock for other slums in non-buildable zones and/or people who will migrate to Pune.

As the ‘brown field’ sites included within the PMC’s BSUP project were largely on the periphery of the city, they were of a relatively low density, and could have been developed to a higher density in ‘walk-up’ structures to allow vulnerable sites in the same area to be relocated. This represents a wasted opportunity as the PMC, have not been able to address the situation of slum dwellers that reside in non-buildable zones as the ‘green field’ projects have not been successful. This isolated approach is the reason why the city had to forgo large amounts of funds that had been granted for this project by the Government of India.

In the event that an isolated approach is to be adopted settlements which are included within the PMCs ‘brown field’ project still cannot be used as a precedent due to the fact that it actually worsens the situation in the slums from the point of view of safety, health and security of tenure.

The ‘brown field’ methodology of rehabilitation is as follows: the site layout of the slum to remain the same; the kuccha houses get rebuilt with more durable materials; extra floor space added to make the all houses a minimum of 25 square meters (270 square feet); and, basic services are installed in the houses.

This method is not a solution for the slum as the narrow streets remain and restrict access for the emergency services and restrict the evacuation of the residents. In the event of an emergency, access and egress would be further restricted by two-wheelers which park within the narrow lanes and the projections of the first
floors. And, as houses are demolished and rebuilt on the same footprint in more durable materials, access for the emergency services would actually be worse after the process of rehabilitation.

To provide the minimum 25 square meters it is often necessary to build additional floors with projections which cantilever over the access lanes. These projections reduce the natural light and natural ventilation available to the houses; meaning that all homes require constant artificial lighting and artificial ventilation. This is detrimental to the health of the residents and is a very energy-intensive, expensive, and unsustainable solution to lighting and ventilation. It also, produces houses where space is very inefficiently used as the circulation necessary to provide access to a first floor significantly reduces the small ground floor area; the majority of the space in the houses is consumed by vertical circulation.

The BSUP in Pune has failed to free slum dwellers from the risk of eviction because it has not provided security of tenure to the beneficiaries. Due to the haphazard nature of the project where all houses are of varying sizes and planning principles cannot be applied it becomes complicated to work out tenure issues.

At the end of the rehabilitation process the slum dwellers are still exposed to the risk of eviction; so what happens in the future when the public or the private sector becomes interested in the land which is ‘encroached’ upon by these slums?

It is to be noted that even in relocation projects under VAMBAY, implemented between 2003-2005 the PMC has failed to hand over the land on a 99 years lease basis. Approved layouts were implemented and provided housing for 1000 families which relocated from Kamgar Putala to Hadapsar under the VAMBAY initiative, and even though co-operative societies were registered

"With no security of tenure, what happens to the slum dwellers in the future, when the public, or the private sector, becomes interested in the land which has been ‘encroached’ upon by these slums?"
Summary

Shelter Associates believe that all citizens have the right to basic services and would never deny access to water, electricity, or drainage from any slum dweller; however, we do strongly feel that the BSUP approach, as it has been realised in Pune, should only been considered as a temporary solution due to its severe limitations in relation to addressing the plight of the people living in the informal settlements.

This is why Shelter Associates, when asked by the PMC, chose not to be a part of the BSUP initiative in Pune. We believe that the BSUP initiative in Pune represents a failure, as a slum rehabilitation project, as it has:

- Failed to provide safe layouts for the residents.
- Failed to provide healthy, sustainable, homes.
- Failed to address the issue of slums in non-buildable zones.
- Failed to rationalise the provision of services in the slums (see picture below).
- And, most importantly, failed to free the slum dwellers from the risk of eviction.