



ENHANCING LIVES OF THE URBAN POOR

www.shelter-associates.org

India's urban informal settlements house millions of families invisible to municipal systems — unmapped, undocumented, underserved. Without data, governments cannot plan. Without planning, basic services do not reach the people who need them most.

SA was founded on a simple conviction: map it first, then plan around it. Spatial data is at the core of everything we do. We work across three integrated verticals — Data Mapping, Social Housing, and the Sustainable Sanitation Model. Each begins with mapping a settlement household by household, structure by structure — identifying where toilets are missing, which families lack water connections, where drainage doesn't reach. It turns invisible communities into actionable evidence.

This evidence then shapes policy. SA's citywide mapping in Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad informed the national RAY policy. Our OHOT model led to a policy paper on the Swachh Bharat Mission portal. Our housing work in Kolhapur produced a case study rooted entirely in ground-level implementation.



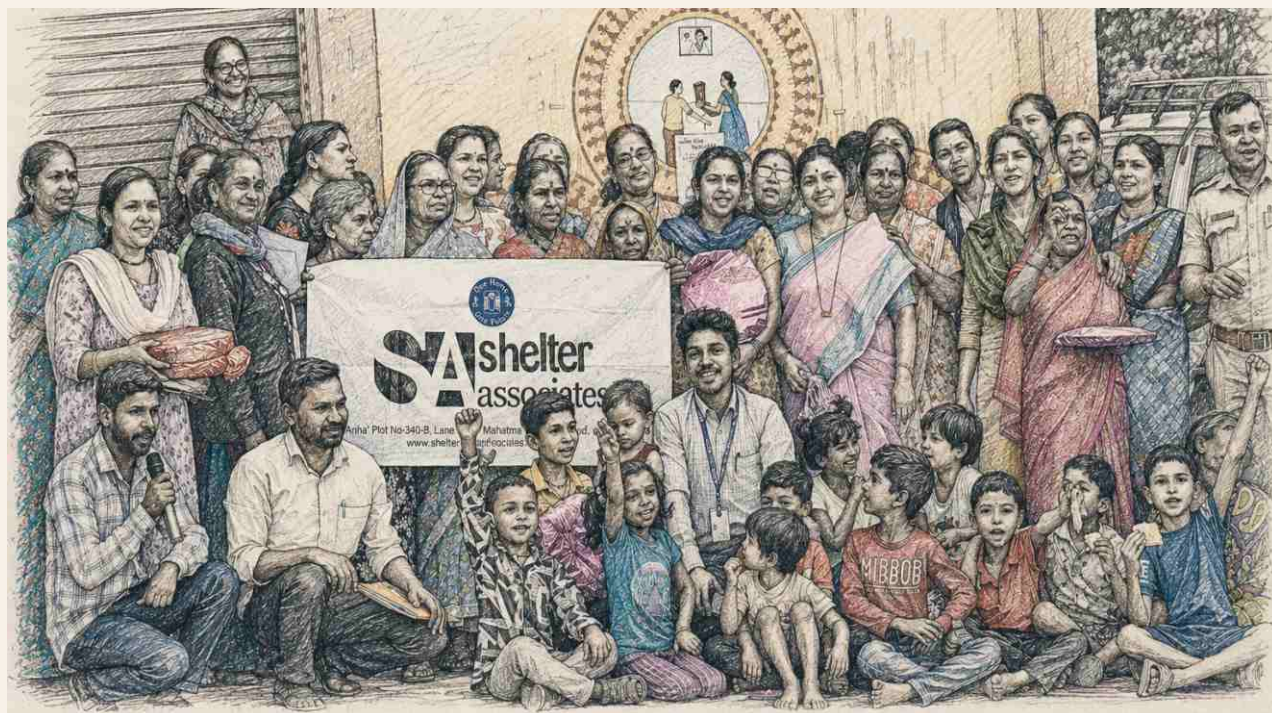
Data Mapping

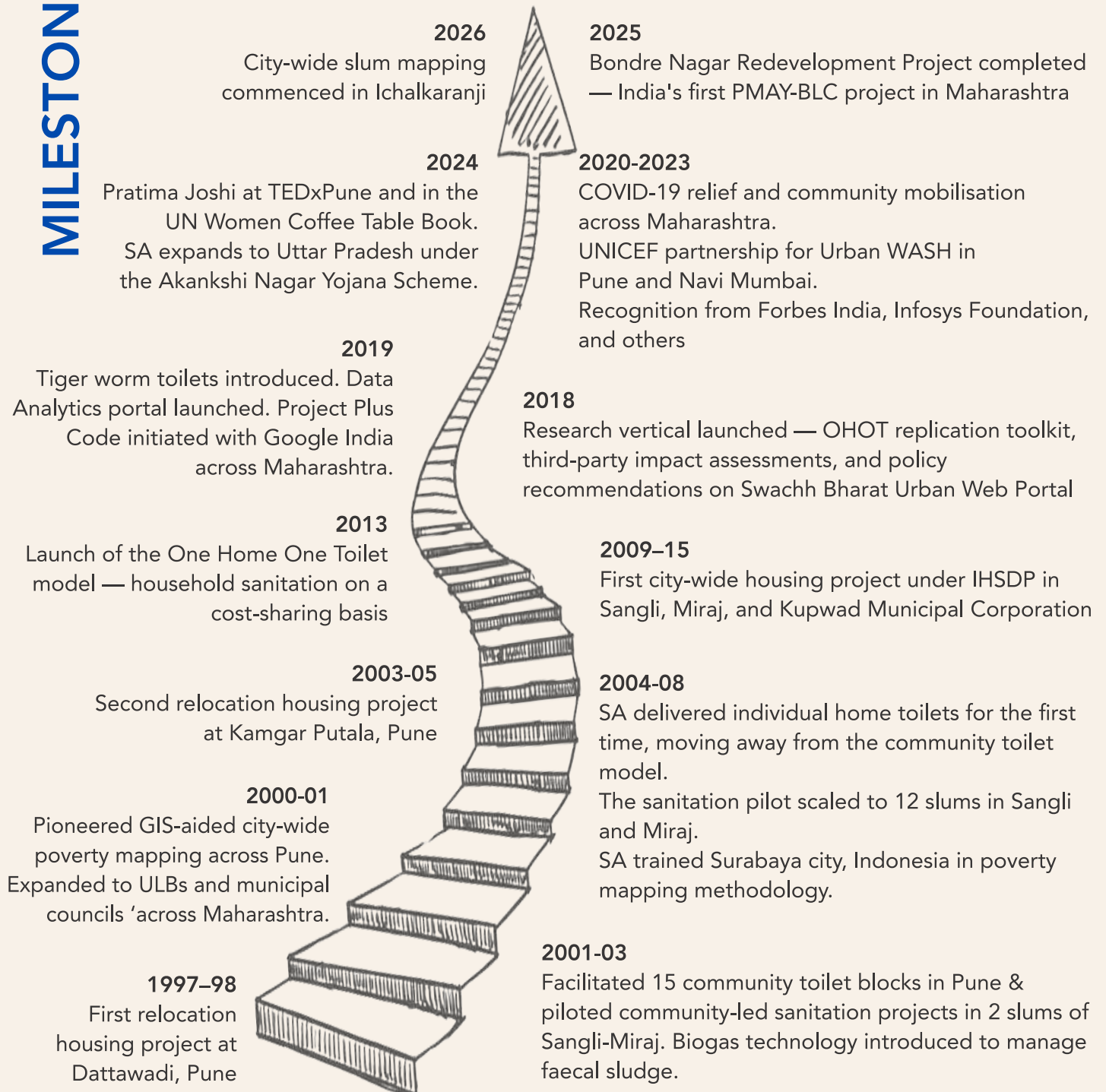


Social Housing



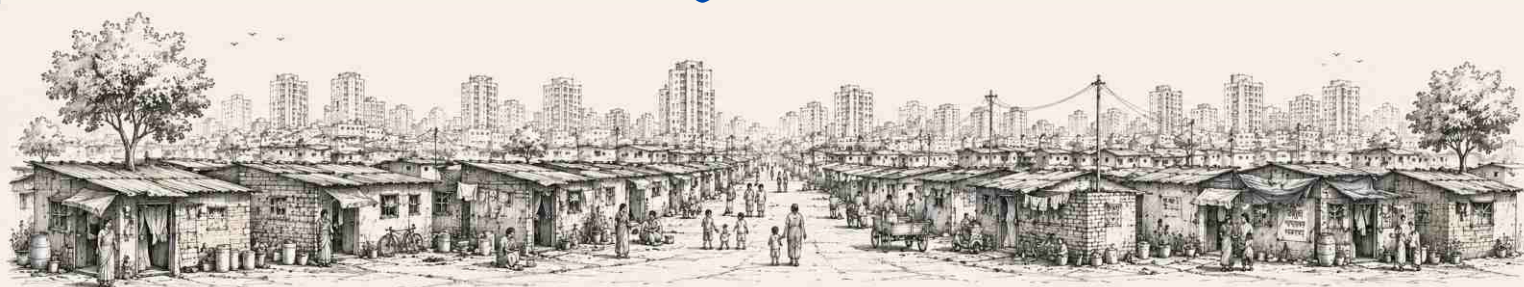
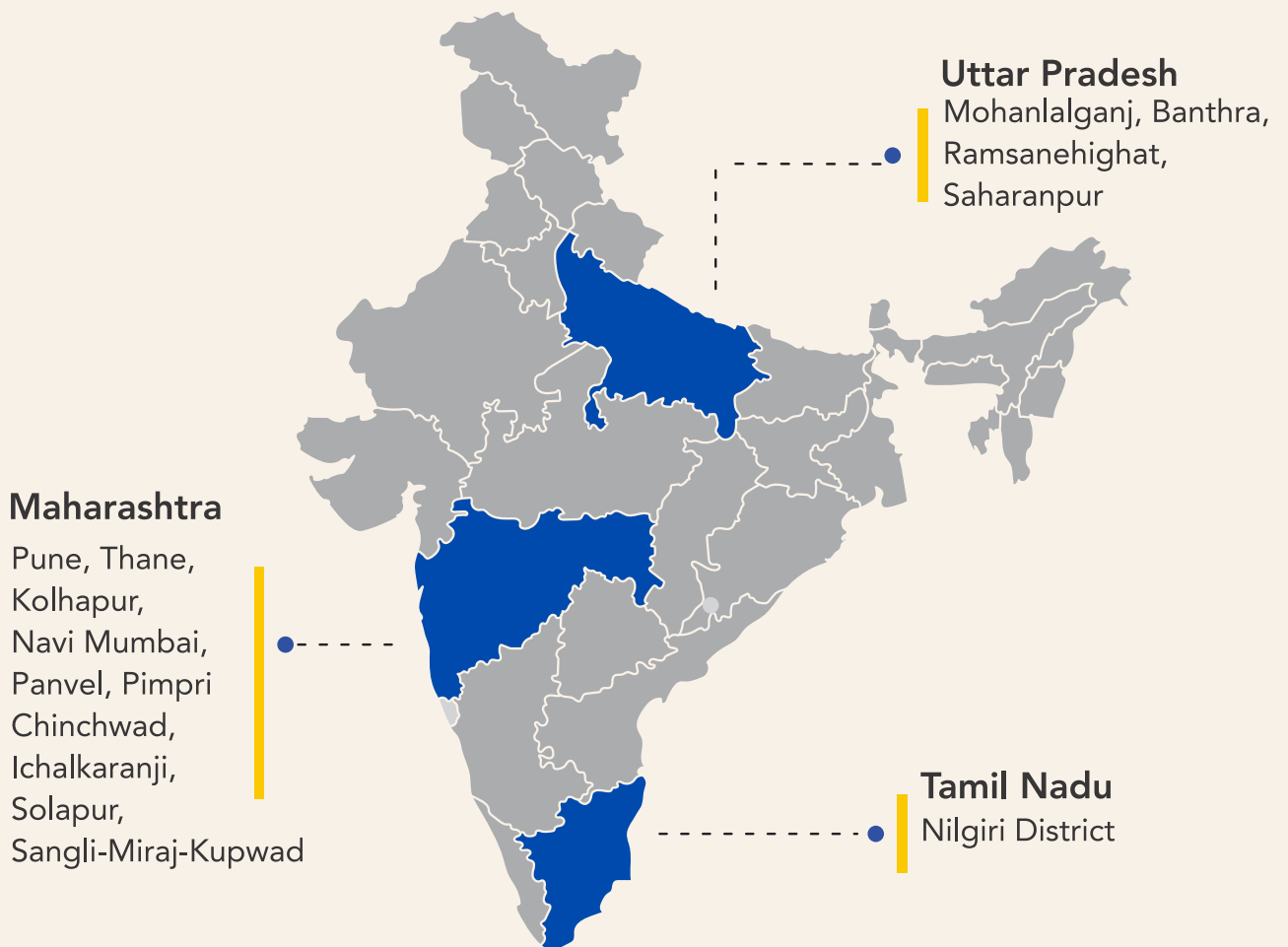
Sustainable Sanitation Model





Our footprint spans multiple regions, reflecting years of collaboration with communities and urban local bodies. Together, we generate reliable data that informs planning, strengthens governance, and improves access to essential services.

Every city we work in adds to a growing movement for inclusive and sustainable urban development.





- 2007 ▶ Pratima Joshi awarded the Ashoka Fellowship for outstanding work as a social entrepreneur
- 2015 ▶ Times Network 'Digital Social Innovation' Award; HUDCO Award for Best Practices in Sanitation (with PMC)
- 2018 ▶ ISC-FICCI Award for Innovative Use of Data
- 2021 ▶ Forbes India — 20 'Self-made Women in India'
- 2023 ▶ Infosys Foundation Aarohan Award for 'One Home One Toilet' initiative



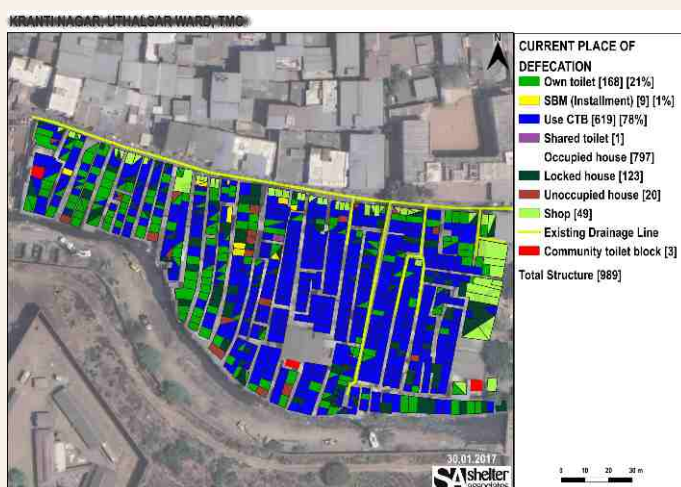
Team SA receiving the Aarohan Award

- 2009 ▶ Google Earth Hero Award (Only Indian Organisation)
 - 2013 ▶ Google Impact Challenge & Dasra Giving Circle Grant
 - 2017 ▶ NASSCOM Social Innovation Forum 'Environment' category
 - 2020 ▶ LPC HONOR Award, UN Habitat World Urban Forum 10
 - 2022 ▶ Two-time finalist — Time Now's Amazing Indians Award (First in 2011)
 - 2024 ▶ Speaks at TEDxPune; Listed in UN Women Coffee Table Book
 - 2025 ▶ MIT-ADT Women Achievement Award; Best NGO in Sanitation (NMMC)
 - 2026 ▶ Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Award for contributions to the social sector and equitable urban development
- Honoured as the Jury's Top Choice at the DesiDhaakad™ Sustainability Excellence Awards

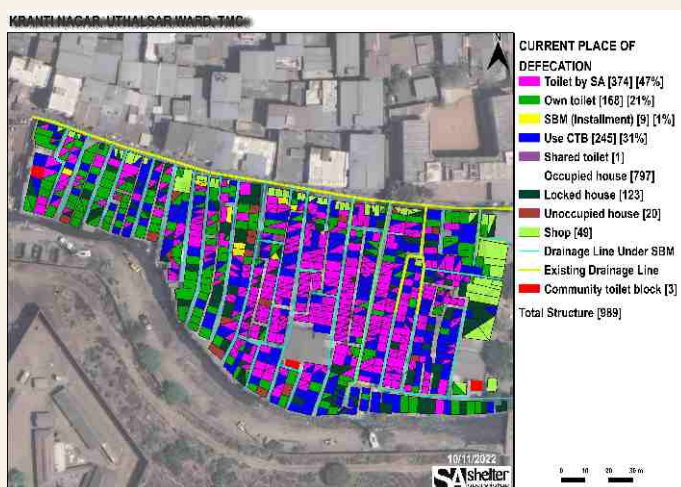


Data is the foundation of everything SA does. Our work begins with mapping — using Google Earth, Geographic Information Systems, and ground-level household and infrastructure surveys to build a precise, community-verified picture of informal settlements.

This spatial data allows us to identify households without sanitation access, pinpoint infrastructure gaps, and present evidence to local governments for targeted investment. SA's maps have directly influenced municipal decisions — from drainage network upgrades to toilet construction — by making the invisible visible.



Pre-intervention spatial map



Post-intervention spatial map

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Rapid Infrastructure Mapping

Mapping drainage networks, water supply, roads, community toilet blocks, waste management systems, and other settlement infrastructure.

Rapid Household Mapping

Collection of household-level data including family details, water connections, sanitation facilities, and house area.

Impact Assessment

Post-intervention surveys conducted through random selection of beneficiary households — measuring satisfaction levels and identifying bottlenecks for continuous improvement.

Mapping of Households & Structures

3,66,010+*

Slum Households
and structures
mapped

668+*

Communities
mapped

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS*

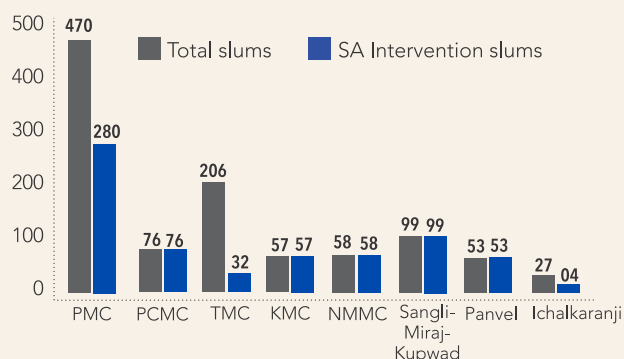
Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad	8500
Pune (PMC)	127170
Pimpri Chinchwad (PCMC)	37804
Kolhapur (KMC)	18109
Navi Mumbai (NMMC)	61100
Thane (TMC)	52252
Panvel	7750
Ichalkaranji	324
Solapur	2249
Saharanpur	3967

NAGAR PANCHAYAT*

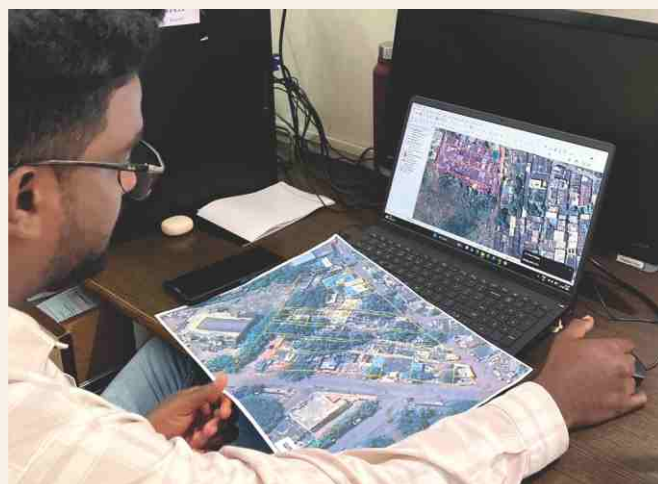
Mohanlalgaon	11241
Banthra	8855
Ramsanehighat	5878

Nilgiri District..... 548

Project intervention slum count



* Updated June 2026



In-house GIS Analysts

“

"The creation of spatial data through the use of GIS, mobile and remote sensory technology by SA has helped the Municipal Corporation to identify critical gaps in the delivery of sanitation. This has led to the additional budgetary allocation of laying additional drainage lines in some of the slums of PCMC to encourage families to build their own toilets either through SBM funds or CSR funds through SA. SA's model of providing individual sanitation which is sustainable, replicable and cost effective has given the impetus for achieving ODF status of the city."

- Mr. Shravan Hardikar (IAS)

Municipal Commissioner, Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation

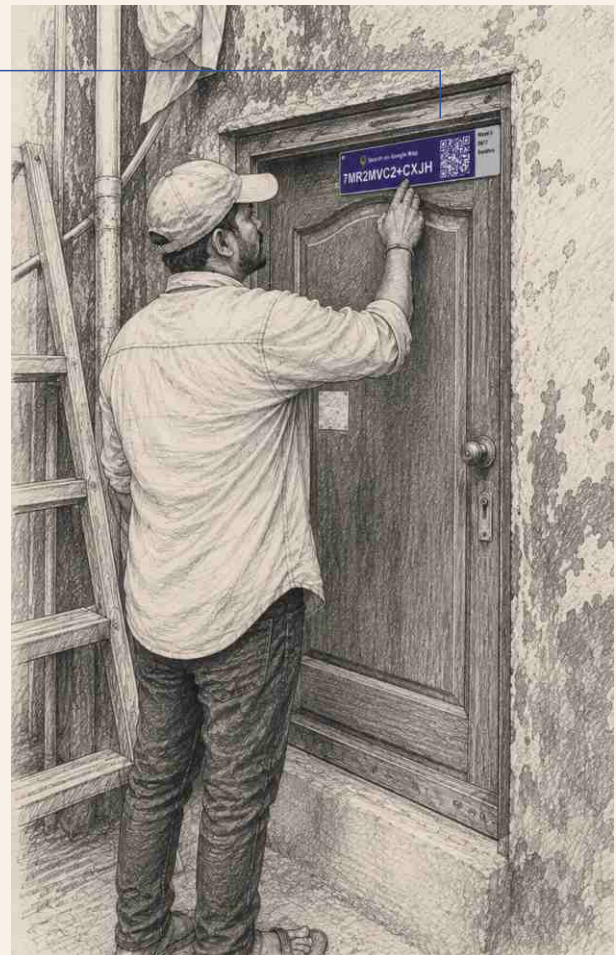
Slum dwellers are often invisible to the systems designed to serve them — no address, no identity in government databases, no way for emergency services to find them.

SA has partnered with Google to assign Plus Codes — unique digital locational addresses navigable through Google Maps — to every household, shop, and piece of community infrastructure in the informal settlements we work in. For the first time, slum residents have an address that emergency services, municipal departments, and delivery systems can find.

Plus Codes have also become a tool for e-governance. Every municipal department can link this data to their own systems, enabling direct, accurate outreach to settlement communities.



Plus Code plate



1,39,698⁺

Digital locational addresses generated in the informal settlements in Maharashtra + Uttar Pradesh

* Updated June 2026

METHODOLOGY



In-house GIS experts select and map slums, collecting household and infrastructure data. Slum maps are generated.



The Urban Local Body validates the slum data.



Plus Codes are generated and linked to individual houses and infrastructural facilities. SA is also an early adopter of DIGIPINS, fully covering two Nagar Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh.



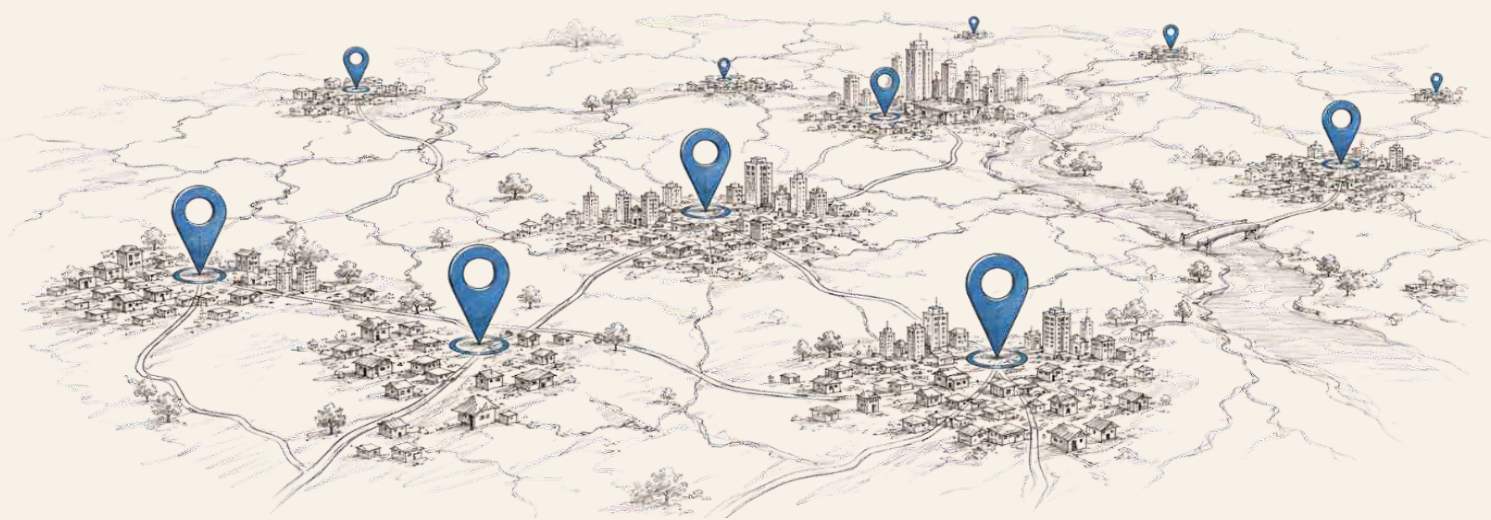
Individual slum maps with their Plus Codes are uploaded to Google MyMap.



Acrylic Plus Code plates are fixed on the doors of houses, shops, and community toilets.



Community mobilisation is conducted to educate residents and ULBs on Plus Codes.



Millions of India's urban citizens live without security of tenure or access to essential services. Poor habitable conditions directly undermine the health, dignity, safety, education, and economic prospects of families in informal settlements.

SA FACILITATES SOCIAL HOUSING AND SLUM REHABILITATION PROJECTS THAT ARE:

- (1) Based on accurate, spatially organised data.
- (2) Generated from a citywide approach that considers housing as part of a larger urban system — integrated with employment, healthcare, education, and convenience.

- (3) Designed and implemented in partnership with beneficiary communities.

Community consultations sit at the heart of SA's design process. Scale models, life-size drawings, and live mock-ups are used to develop proposals with — not just for — residents. The community's culture, aspirations, and economic realities are reflected in every site layout, building, and communal space.



Enabling ULBs with GIS Mapping



Communities creating life-size mockup of the units

SA HAS EXECUTED FOUR MAJOR RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN PUNE, SANGLI-MIRAJ AND KOLHAPUR.



56*
families

Dattawadi, Pune



176*
families

Kamgar Putala, Pune



3465*
families

Aba Dhotre, Sangli



77*
families

Bondre Nagar, Kolhapur

9000+* Individuals impacted

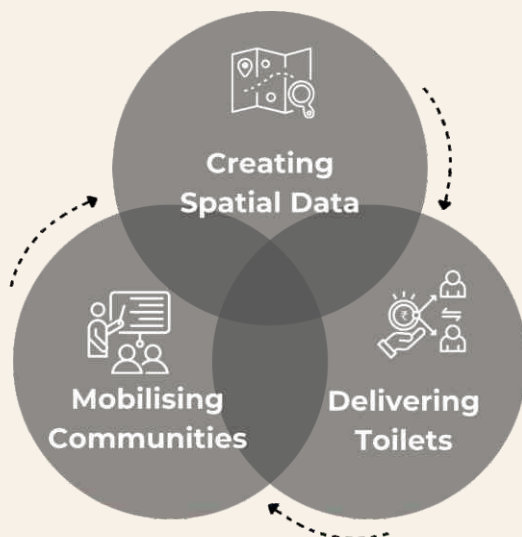
* Updated June 2026

“The gutter behind our house gets flooded during monsoons. This causes inconvenience, health issues and added expenditure for us every year. We are so happy to see our new house getting constructed — we will finally be free of many troubles.

- Ram Dhere
Resident, Bondre Nagar

SA's Sustainable Sanitation Model addresses sanitation as a whole — not just the toilet. It works across three components that together deliver lasting change in informal settlements.

ONE HOME ONE TOILET (OHOT)



SA maps sanitation gaps, mobilises communities through workshops and door-to-door engagement, and delivers toilets through a cost-sharing model — SA provides materials, families contribute labour. This builds ownership, keeps costs low, and makes the model replicable. Slum-level committees are formed so communities can engage with ward offices independently after SA withdraws.



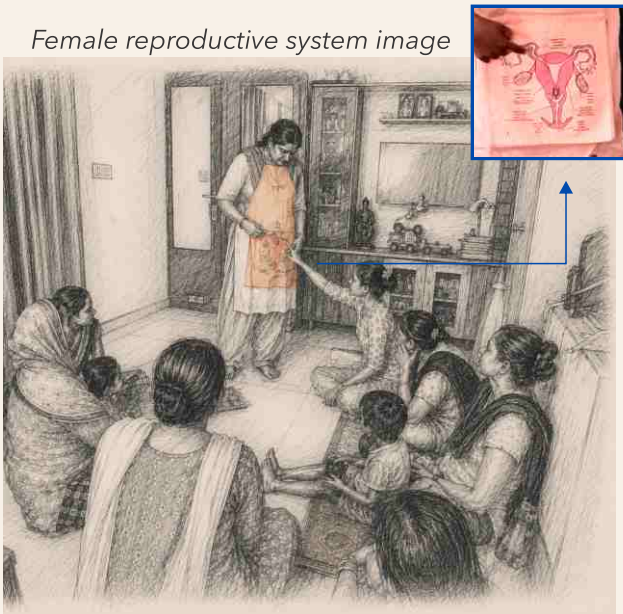
Beneficiary toilet

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT (MHM)

For women and adolescents in informal settlements, menstrual health is closely tied to safety, dignity, and everyday participation in public life. Most women rely on chemical-based disposable pads — at significant cost to their health and the environment.

SA's MHM programme begins with the community. Through household surveys and focused group discussions, we first understand existing practices and knowledge gaps. Menstrual Education and Awareness Workshops are then conducted — creating an open platform where women and adolescents can discuss menstrual health and access information on eco-friendly alternatives such as menstrual cups.

Female reproductive system image



Demonstration of Menstrual Cups

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT (SWM)

Poor waste management in informal settlements is both a public health and an environmental concern. SA works with communities to establish source segregation practices, engage with municipal solid waste systems, and build community-level accountability for waste disposal — ensuring that cleaner settlements are maintained beyond the period of intervention.

ONE HOME ONE TOILET (OHOT)



Distribution of Toilet construction material

28,874+*

Individual household
toilets facilitated

* Updated June 2026

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“I live with my 5 daughters, one being physically challenged. This toilet in my home has benefitted me beyond imagination. My daughters don't need to starve for the fear of going out in the open. They feel so safe and secured.”

Chaya Shinde

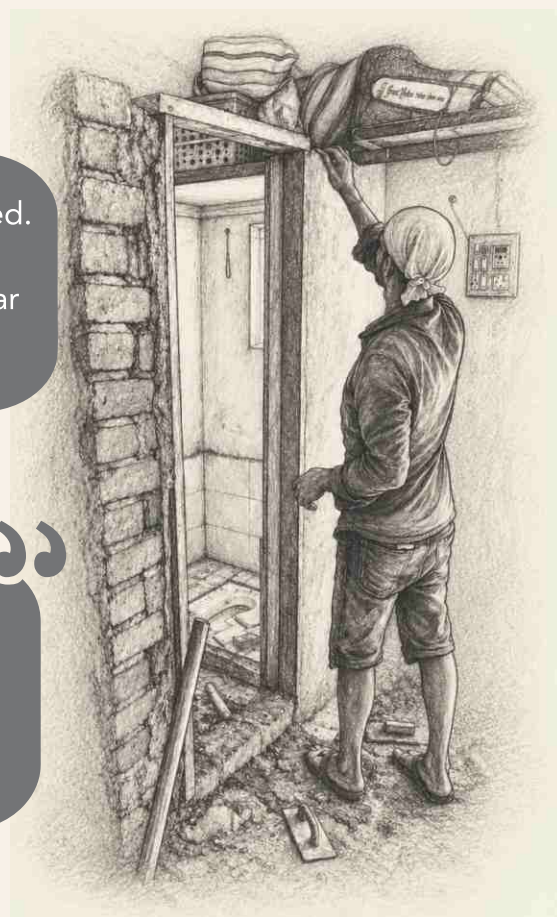
Resident, Ramamata Ambedkar Nagar, Belapur

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“Periods meant constant discomfort—adjusting pads every hour. After switching to a menstrual cup, I discovered freedom. Easier routines. Money saved. And the confidence to step out freely.”

Ritu Anilchand Gupta

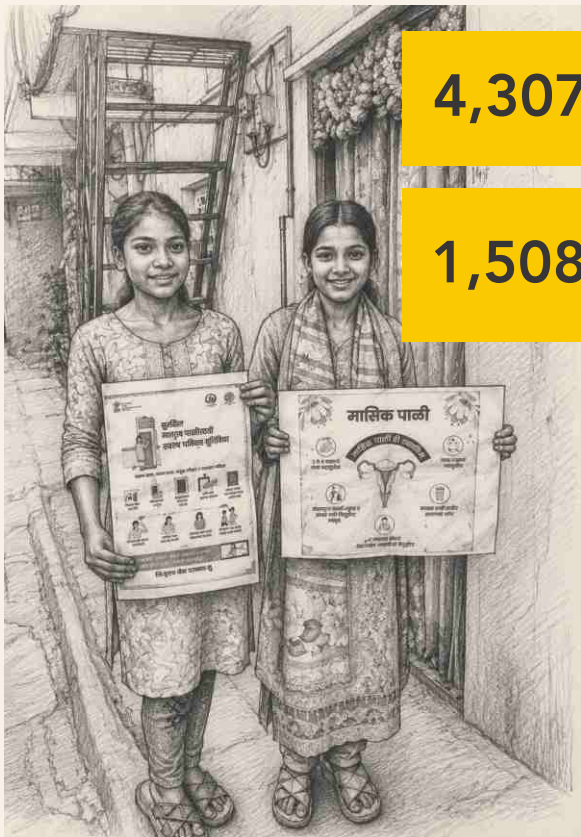
Resident, Gholai Nagar, Kalwa



ZERO WASTE MENSTRUATION

For women and adolescents in informal settlements, menstrual health is tied to safety, dignity, and everyday participation in public life. SA's MHM programme begins with understanding existing practices through surveys and group discussions.

Menstrual Education and Awareness Workshops then create an open platform for women to discuss menstrual health and access eco-friendly alternatives such as menstrual cups. SA also celebrates Maasika Mahotsav — a menstrual health festival held across programme cities — normalising conversations around menstruation and breaking long-held stigma.



4,307+* Women & Adolescents have stopped using chemical based sanitary pads

1,508+* Menstrual Hygiene Education & Awareness Workshops conducted

* Updated June 2026



Menstrual Hygiene workshop

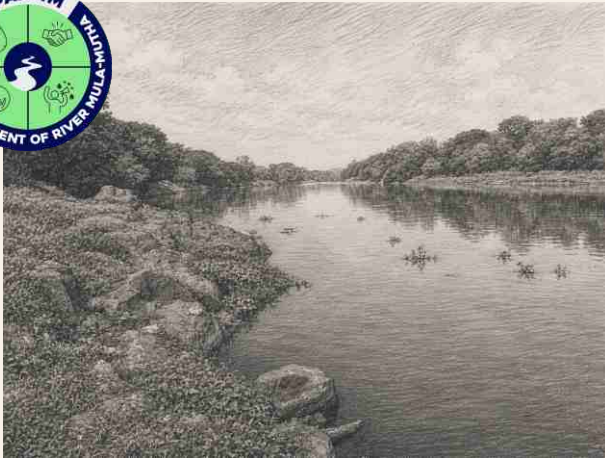
WORKSHOP CONTENT

- Understanding the female reproductive system and menstrual cycle.
- Promoting safe and hygienic menstrual practices.
- Raising awareness about the health and environmental impact of disposable sanitary pads.
- Addressing myths and misconceptions around menstruation.
- Introducing eco-friendly menstrual products and their correct use.

Beyond its three core verticals, SA has undertaken targeted programmes in response to specific community needs and opportunities.

PARMM — POLLUTION ABATEMENT OF RIVER MULA-MUTHA

SA implemented the PARMM project in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) across Pune Municipal Corporation zones during 2025–26, alongside Ecosan Services Foundation. SA covered two zones and Ecosan Services Foundation covered three. The project worked towards reducing pollution in the Mula-Mutha river through community mobilisation, behaviour change, and direct engagement with ward-level administration on waste and sanitation practices. Field activities spanned data collection, community outreach, and coordination with municipal bodies to strengthen last-mile accountability for river health.



Key Impact

- Cleaner Mula-Mutha River.
- Improved waste and sanitation practices.
- Increased community participation.
- Greater environmental awareness.
- Healthier urban ecosystems.
- Strengthened collaboration between citizens and local government.
- Contributed to a cleaner, healthier, and more resilient urban ecosystem.



Waste collection drive

10,300+*

Persons reached through community mobilisation

241+*

Activities conducted across SA's two PMC zone

* Updated June 2026

COVID-19 RELIEF & VACCINATION

When COVID-19 reached India's informal settlements, the gaps that SA's spatial data had long documented became urgent. SA deployed its GIS data and field teams to drive COVID relief and vaccination across Maharashtra — distributing hygiene kits, conducting telephonic counselling, training community volunteers, facilitating CoWin registrations, and setting up vaccination camps in coordination with local health departments.



Covid-19 Vaccination drive

Key Impact

- Improved public health awareness.
- Higher vaccination uptake.
- Enhanced community participation and ownership.
- More targeted and effective resource allocation.
- Strengthened community resilience during the pandemic.
- Supported government-led public health interventions across Maharashtra.



Appreciation letter by PM Shri. Narendra Modi

SHELTER ASSOCIATES, founded in 1994 by a group of architects and urban planners, works to ensure a better quality of life for the urban poor. We partner with communities to provide technical support for, and facilitate access to, improved housing and essential services.



OUR VISION

An India where every citizen has access to basic infrastructure and secure tenure, leading to equal distribution of rights.



OUR MISSION

To empower communities living in informal settlements to pursue their right to dignity and an elevated quality of life.



OUR VALUES

Dignity : We nurture respectful relationships

Quality work : We exceed expectations and ensure sustainable outcomes

Honesty : We seek, present, and abide by the truth

Innovation : We find new ways to serve better

Team work : We build together

Collaboration : We engage all stakeholders in decision making



OUR TEAM

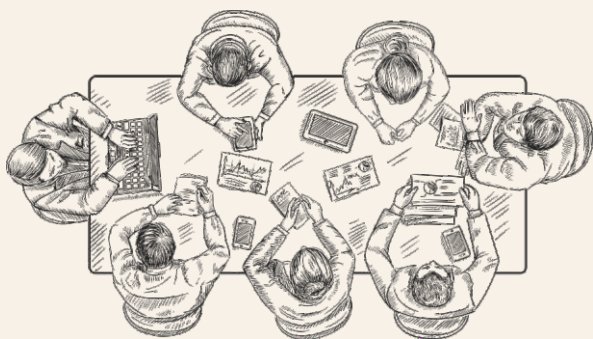
We are a multidisciplinary team of architects, social workers, GIS analysts, community workers, and professionals in administration, finance, and marketing.



FOUNDER

Pratima Joshi recognised the gaps in safe access to water, sanitation, social housing, and waste management long before urban planning placed these at the centre of policy. Her background as an architect and her conviction that rights and resources must be equitably distributed led her to found Shelter Associates in 1994 — and to pioneer the use of spatial data to address service delivery gaps systematically.

Pratima brings principles of multi-stakeholder consultation, user-centric design, and participative governance to everything SA does. An architect turned social entrepreneur, she has spent over three decades elevating the quality of life of urban poor communities across India.



Arun Kadekodi
President



Pratima Joshi
Secretary



Supriya Vaidya
Treasurer



Manas Rath
Member



Dr. Nirmala Pandit
Member



Ashwin Trimal
Member



Vishal Jain
Member



Vaishali Bhagwat
Member

SUPPORT OUR CAUSE — JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

We deeply express our gratitude to our partners and funders who have supported and enabled us to reach out to many more communities.

FUNDERS

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Chintu Gudiya Foundation | Cities Alliance
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FANUC India Private Limited
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Sangli Miraj Khutwad Municipal Corp.
Thane Municipal Corp.
UNICEF



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