

# Building INclusive Urban COMmunities

N E W S L E T T E R July 2018

**B IN U COM**



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## Note on BINUCOM:

Ainsley Lewis

### Introduction:

'Discussing Informality' was the title of the conference held at DUK (Danube University, Krems), Austria, in May –June 2018. The two projects funded by the European Union under the Erasmus Plus program are the BinUCom (Building Inclusive urban communities) project with Indian institutions, and SES (Social Inclusion and Energy Management for Informal Urban Settlements)with Ethiopian institutions.

This meeting was attended by the various partner institutions which include TWENTE (University of Twente), Netherlands; Lund University, Lund, Sweden, along with KASSEL (University of Kassel), Germany as participants of this conference. Both the project teams and the partner institutions were represented by their respective faculty.

This conference was an important mile-stone for both the projects. The researchers of the BinUCom project, had begun work on their case studies nearly a year ahead of the SES project. Hence it was a pointer to how the SES project could proceed. The presentations by the SES partner institutions were in a nascent stage and focused on formulating and articulating their research concerns for various cities in Ethiopia.

The advantage of such a platform was that there was cross learning from the varied sets of issues articulated during individual presentations. Because the two projects were at two ends of the spectrum there was a lot to learn from the feedback the researchers received. The documentation of this conference 'discussing informality' is online and is available at the following link as mentioned below

<https://moodle.donau-uni.ac.at/binucom/mod/page/view.php?id=300>



### EXPOSITION UNDER THE BRIDGE.

The title 'Exposition under the bridge' was an event held under the bridge with the intent to explore the use of such neglected spaces in the city. It showed the way forward for these negative spaces in our urban fabric so that they can be inhabited and integrated into the city fabric. The content of this exposition was to understand the housing conditions of refugees in Austria. The location of the exposition reinforced the idea of inclusion that is much of the debate about refugees in Europe.

It started with a long walk along the Danube River through Doktor-Franz-Riel Promenade with Tania Berger leading the whole under the bridge of Kremser Bundesstrasse.

While driving across the bridge on a car, bus or taxi, the thought of what happens under the bridge never crosses our conscious mind, as our mind has not yet perceived a possibility of inhabiting these spaces to create such awareness platform. Here we understand the importance of context. So we ask 'Why under the bridge?' it was this intentional effort of creating a space under the bridge so that visitors get a glimpse of how it feels to be under the bridge, those sounds of the vehicle passing through the bridge above, the feeling of visually been deprived of the cityscape, cause who knows what happening under the bridge? It was an attempt showing that how these 'unknown' spaces can create magic in terms of human experience.

Therefore context becomes the highlight of this event. Then as the event commenced, it was further elaborated by Tania and her team giving us a broad understanding about the housing condition of refugees, spaces in which they inhabit across the globe. The factors like increasing land prices, population explosion, urbanization, migration and government policies were briefly talked and discussed about. This results towards the growth of informal housing sectors.

So an hour into the Exposition interacting with people understanding the situation of refugees, it soon looked like a small community gathering under the bridge with people talking, discussing ideas and giving a unique function to these negative spaces of our urban fabric. The motives of the exposition were not only crisp in the panels but also conveyed the subconscious setting of the context, and when motives get registered as experience in our minds, it stays with us. Over a period of time one might forget the details of the exposition but that experience of context stays with you, 'Exposition under the Bridge'.

Jay Choksi  
Team KAHE



Figure 1: Participants of BINUCOM and SES along with organizers., Source: Author.

## KRVIA CASE STUDIES: Presentation and feedback on Case Studies

The KRVIA case studies were presented at the Big Meeting and were widely appreciated. Feedback from partner institutions helped facilitate cross learning that will eventually lead to enhanced case studies.

### **Kimaya Keluskar:**

My case study paper on “Mapping livability within lower income housing in the city of Mumbai”, was presented at Danube University, Krems on 30th May, 2018 as part of the BINUCOM partner’s big meeting. The paper presentation discussed the environmental performance monitoring data and analysis of the three case studies; Natwar Parekh compound, Charkop site and services scheme and Sainathnagar informal settlement on the edge of Dahisar River. The methodology and process of analysis using the empirical data was highly appreciated by the fellow researchers. Few of them commented that the paper raised two important research questions, one discussing the definition of livability in informal settlements and the other on environmental performance of the housing unit itself. The primary question was about proposing a method to assess the existing lower income housing schemes to derive their own livability score. This required qualitative and quantitative analysis at the macro, neighbourhood level as well as the micro, unit level. Livability being directly an equation for well-being and growth it is important to address both the parameters. Hence, the paper is written as one paper, however the conclusion was written and the recommendation chapter was divided under two broad heads; guidelines to be followed while acquiring land for rehabilitation or resettlement schemes and guidelines for the housing scheme at planning level and the unit.

### **Shweta Wagh:**

My Case Study paper titled, “Commoners as Speculators: Land Tenure and conflicting claims in a Mumbai Koliwada was presented at the BINUCOM Project Meeting in June 2018. The study attempts to understand the factors affecting the transformation of land tenure, and micro-speculation on the commons in Versova Koliwada. Other researchers commented that the scope of the study was now more focused due the introduction of the framework of land tenure and the

commons. They felt that since the case was complex and touched upon several different aspects, I could introduce maps to explain the various types of land tenure and land-uses within the Koliwada.

### **Hussain Indorewala:**

My Case Study paper on discriminatory planning and environmental deregulation in Mumbai was presented at the BINUCOM Project Meeting in June 2018. The study explores the resettlement township of Mahul in the M/W ward of Mumbai, and the larger planning and policy shifts that have facilitated the development of resettlement townships in Mumbai in recent decades. While other researchers found the analysis of land regulation in Mumbai intriguing, the main suggestion was to provide more material on the Mahul case, in the paper.

### **Mamta Patwardhan:**

My case study paper titled, “Climate Change Impacts on the Health of the Vulnerable : A case study of Deonar was presented at the BINUCOM Project Meeting in June 2018. The Case Study of the communities living in informal slums (Adarsh Nagar, a neighbourhood in Deonar), occupying marginal low-lying land adjacent to the dump-yard, examines how these harsh existential conditions are being exacerbated through environmental forces (driven by climate change) like flooding, water logging and urban heat island effects, and specifically aims to establish an interlink between climate change and health. Further, it seeks to design some planning solutions that can play an important role in ameliorating the severe health outcomes suffered by Mumbai’s marginalized, forgotten population.

Dr. Ebba Brink, my reviewer, mentioned that though the study was interesting, the link between the extreme climate events and the poor health was tenuous and the argument had to be tightened. Other researchers found that the presentation of the results of the data also needs to be worked upon.

#### **Inprint:**

This newsletter is a product of the BINUCOM-project

<http://moodle.donau-uni.ac.at/binucom>

It was edited and produced by KRVIA (USM’s Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies), Mumbai.