

Ghana, an addition to Farouk's report

Some reflections: 14<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2008

Jockin, Rose and Celine

Agenda:

1. To attend the SUF Board meeting
2. To spend time with Farouk and the Ghana Federation (covered in Farouk's report)
3. Meeting with the Nigerian and Sierra Leon groups who were on an exchange in Ghana (covered in Farouk's report)

SUF: Has spent about 11 million so far. It is a classic UN project with a lot of talk but not much to show on the ground either in terms of impact or changing relationships.

One of the issues important to SDI is the management of land tenure and its related issues. Since Slum Upgrading should basically address this issue it is important for SDI to articulate more clearly its vision and strategy on Land. There is a discrepancy in how SDI views issues on land and how SUF does.

eg. SUF in its presentation on Tanzania claimed that it was going to give the local NGO in this case CCITZ (affiliated to SDI) money for purchasing land for relocating those not compensated in the Kurasini project. SDI has a clear view on this issue and wanted the local federation to negotiate with government for a compensation.

SDI believes that it is the business of the state to make land available for free or at a subsidized rate. There are many examples all over Asia and Africa where this has been possible. In the Philippines the policy makes the community buy the land and this is one way to secure tenure.

Purchasing land by itself is not an issue but it needs to be put in its context. The Kenyans bought land so that they could set a precedent to the city and the community that it was possible to make change. Many other groups have done a one off pilot of this nature.

In the Tanzanian context, the demolitions were done by the port authorities, who compensated the homeowners very well but did not compensate the tenants. It is a different context has to be managed differently from Kenya.

If UN habitat through SUF, supports the purchase of land, it sends the wrong signals as well that it is OK for government to demolish and the UN will pay for their relocation.

Ruth from the pilot team of SUF, when confronted with this completely changed the story and said that they were not supporting Kurasini to buy the land. When I checked with Tim, he also said that SUF had made no such commitment to buy land. So it seems that what was presented to the Board about the Kurasini was not the reality.

However, at some point we need to also have this discussion internally within SDI so everyone understands the logic and the strategy of when it is OK to buy land and when it is not OK. In the absence of that I worry that Ruth once again is sending out the message that SDI cannot make decisions on behalf of local groups and that the local groups have a right to decide on their own.

This incident makes it clear that we need to also have a discussion with SUF on some of these critical issues one of them being, the management of land. We did suggest this to SUF and hope they will take us up on this one. There however seems no interest within SUF to engage SDI on these issues.

To us in SDI, it seems like there are two parts to SUF. There is the Michael Mutter's SUF and an EMG SUF. SUF in Srilanka has got its capacity building money from the Mutter pilot and Ghana has got its first trench for capacity building through the EMG route. In Srilanka the federation refused to work with the EMG team due to a set of reasons on the ground that gave them the feeling that SUF was there for itself and for the banks and the communities were not its priority.

This myth gets cleared when we understand that EMG's mandate is to create relationships with the local banks in order to create finance facilities in the cities that they work in. While SUF has been very good at forging some of these relationships there seems to be no connection with the local political context. Neither has SUF found a way to get a sense of the pulse of the communities involved. There is tendency to adopt communities that will accept the SUF facility designed by EMG without an understanding of the critical dynamics which includes the politics of the city and the state and the communities involved.

One our assumptions, where we have been proved wrong is that because we know Ruth well, EMG will automatically be more community and people friendly in its disposition. While SUF has done so in some contexts and to some extent, SUF has a yet a long way to go. Wherever SUF has engaged, it has done so in a very adhoc and opportunistic style. As soon as one discards the above assumption it becomes much easier to deal with SUF.

From the side of the federation as well there are certain things they understand and do not understand. That is not an issue as it is well known that not every one has equal information at any given point of time in such projects. However, it would have been less of an issue if it was presented like there is no equality of information.

From the side of the NGO, they see it as an opportunity to get more resources and open up new spaces for themselves and the federation in their city. Like stated by one NGO member, “we should have been more cautious and not opened all our doors to SUF”. So this is also learning for the NGOs involved on how to begin to engage a new program when it enters the city.

SUF will continue for another year and may be more. As members of the Board, SDI has a role in influencing it presently or leaving it alone to have its own destiny. It is a difficult choice for us to make as there is hostility from certain members of the EMG towards SDI.

The SUF newsletters- The last newsletter on Tanzania is a good example of that. The UN has its way of publishing its glossy newsletters. We may want to influence what they write and report about if we see this as an essential role for SDI and the local groups to write about. In constantly having to present a rosy picture a lot of compromises get made on the quality of how issues get reported.

2. SDI’s meeting with the local federation: Farouk has covered this in his report on Ghana. The federation has done very well for itself . They feel that they now have a joint voice which gives them a better place. They said that OLD FADAMA had a very bad reputation but they see that has changed with people from the UN and the Minister for Labour who visit the settlement recently. All this makes a difference to their self image. The federation works in 6 regions and 9 municipalities covering 79 communities. There are 99 savings groups and the 4, 333 members of the federation have saved up to 1 billion old ghanian cedis, which is around 100,000 US dollars.

The Kenyans have supported the Ghanians with enumerations and that has been a great achievement.

While we were there we had a meeting with the Vice President and the federation also sees that another achievement as they think that is only possible because the federation is now strong.

The federation has also purchased its first piece of land in ASHAMA. They would like to understand more about SDI’s verdict on purchasing land.

Presently, the federation is thinking about creating a city level fund and a national fund. They are also trying to figure out the role and function of the different funds and the different pots of money. This is another area of support that they will need from SDI.

The Ghana federation has given birth to the savings group in Sierra Leon and in Nigeria.

3. Meeting with the Nigerian and Sierra Leon teams and general points : It was decided that Farouk will anchor the West African Hub. He has a very good sense of their

characteristics and their motivation and I feel confident that he is capable of giving them leadership. However, it will be good for Farouk to use Rose as the SDI coordinator to vet out certain issues in the region and use her support for the federation building process. I can help Farouk with his role as the NGO support and work out with him the capacities that he/ his NGO needs to build in order to play this role better. Jockin needs to keep tabs on the overall strategy and functioning of the federation with Rose's support.

So it will be good for Farouk to identify the areas that are good at and where they need their capacity to be built for the federation and the support NGO. Farouk needs to give SDI a signal of how he would like this support to come so that we make sure we do not cramp his style.

