REPORT

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

NO TIME TO WASTE! BUILDING RESILIENT URBAN COMMUNITIES AND CITIES THROUGH LOCALLEY LED CLIMATE ADAPTATION

08 DECEMBER 2021

4 - 6 PM

PRIA@40
SHAPING OUR TOMORROWS, TODAY

B_RE_U_COM_
Building Resilient Urban Communities

Sustainable urban future

CONTENTS

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- ***Find a common language*** – There is a need to use simple language to make things understandable for citizens and policymakers. Often the language used in climate change discussions is highly westernised. We need to break it innovatively and make it contextualised at the local level so that the communities can be engaged.

- ***Engage with civil societies*** – As municipal governments have limited capacities to engage with local communities, thus civil societies need to engage with local communities through organised conversations regarding their concerns and needs.

- ***Need formal financing for building resilience*** – There is a need to shift towards a more innovative approach for generating formal financing to build resilience which can empower local decision-making.

- ***Collection of data adds value*** – Data needs to be collected in a systematic format and analysed so that there is value addition, and it can further be translated into meaningful actions.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- **Mr. ABINASH MOHANTY,** Council of Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
- **Mr. ADITYA BAHADUR,** IIED
- **Mr. ASHISH RAO-GHORPADE,** ICLEI
- **Ms. BARSHA PORICHA,** CURE
- **Ms. HENNA HEJAZI,** Sphere India
- **Ms. RHEA,** Sphere India
- **Ms. MITASHI SINGH,** Centre for Science and Environment
- **Mr. MOHAK GUPTA,** Development Alternatives
- **Ms. NIDHI MADAN,** Shakti Foundation
- **Ms. SHEELA PATEL,** SPARC
- **Ms. SHREYA WADHAWAN,** Council of Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)
- **Mr. SHUBHAGATO DASGUPTA,** CPR
- **Ms. TANIA BERGER,** DONAU/BREUCOM
- **Mr. TANMAY TAKLE,** Govt. of Maharashtra
- **Mr. UMAMAHESHWARAN RAJASEKAR,** NIUA
- **Mr. VIVEK M CHANDRAN,** Shakti Foundation
- **Ms. ZEENAT NIAZI,** Development Alternatives

As Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) completes its 40 years, it recommits to continue institutional strengthening and capacity development support to civil society and non-profits with a special focus on new-generation civil society and non-profit groups. Between August and December 2021, PRIA will be convening **PRIA@40 Conversations** with communities, partners, associates, supporters, experts, investors and colleagues, drawn from civil society, government, business, media and academia, to share ideas and experiences that can help 're-imagine' PRIA, its interventions and the world in the coming period.

In this context, PRIA convened a virtual roundtable discussion on No Time to Waste! Building Resilient Urban Communities and Cities through Locally Led Climate Adaptation on 8 December 2021 in collaboration with Building Resilient Urban Communities (BREUCOM). The roundtable was attended by 25 participants and co-moderated by **Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay** (Director, PRIA) and Ms. Sheela Patel (Executive Director, SPARC, India)

The conversation began with a short presentation by **Ms. Nikita Rakhyani** (Youth Trainer, PRIA) on PRIA's journey of the past four decades – a journey about sustaining an independent forward-looking and energetic civil society organisation in an otherwise rapidly disruptive and uncertain world. PRIA's *theory of change* follows something unique in the development sector which acts as a bridge between the supply and the demand side of issues or themes that PRIA invests in. On the demand side, efforts are made to mobilise individuals, especially the poor and marginalised sections to make them aware of their rights and responsibilities and thereby fuelling a sense of agency to demand services, inclusion, participation and so on. On the supply side, PRIA works with government and private agencies to sensitise them to deliver their mandates and be accountable to citizens. PRIA continues to engage with as many stakeholders as possible to explore answers which are long-lasting and effective.

Next, **Dr. Bandyopadhyay** spoke about PRIA's intervention on the theme of a *Sustainable Urban Future*. PRIA recognised the emerging urban challenges as early as the 1980s. After the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) enacted in 1993 in India, PRIA tried to address capacity deficits in elected counsellors through innovative trainings and learning with donations. PRIA has established more than 50 urban resource centres to support both supply and demand sides of the issues. PRIA also facilitated the first-ever participatory town plans and participatory city development plans in India. For more than two decades, PRIA has been working towards sustainable urban development and inclusive urban governance keeping citizen engagement at the centre. We have remained faithful to our core values of working with the marginalised and vulnerable urban poor and enabling their voices in the city planning process. Read more...

Climate change is a reality, and its impact is being felt every day by everyone. However, it has also exacerbated the already existing vulnerabilities of the urban poor, mostly residing in often hazardous, untenable and overcrowded informal settlements. The recently concluded COP 26 and its outcomes are extremely relevant and, in this context, we are having today's conversation, primarily to re-look and re- strategise PRIA's work on a sustainable future. The conversation explored the following key questions:

- *What are the good practices adopted by cities and communities to promote locally led climate adaptation?*
- *What strategies should be adopted for promoting local knowledge solutions through active ownership of municipal authorities and communities?*

- *What roles do civil society and other stakeholders play to strengthen locally led governance of city governance?*

Dr. Bandyopadhyay invited **Mr. Aditya Bahadur** (Principal Researcher, Human Settlements, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), UK) and **Mr. Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar** (Chair, Urban Resilience Unit, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), India) to set the stage for the roundtable discussion.

Mr. Bahadur said that the issue of urban community resilience is of immense importance. Today more people live in towns and cities than in non-urban areas. Around 2018, for the first time in the history of the world, cities became the dominant locales in which most of the world's population resides. In addition to the trend of rapid urbanisation today, the intensification of climate risks is yet another defining environmental shock of our times. Almost every city is going to experience a 1.5-degree temperature rise within our lifetimes, which is significant. Two-thirds of all cities are 'low lying areas' and therefore they are highly prone to flooding. Almost 95% of all cities in the world are located along the coast or the river and therefore are highly exposed to the impacts of changing climate.

Besides, cities in the Global South have a large number of vulnerable people who don't have enough resources to adequately prepare for the environmental shock. A conservative estimate says that the number of slum dwellers in the world cities is at about 1 billion, which is an average of 30% across the world. This number is only rising. Of these billion people who live in the slums across the world cities earn less than $1 a day. Therefore, they do not have the financial safety net to fall back on once the shocks and stresses arise. In this light, building urban community resilience is extremely critical.

Speaking of the different ways to build resilience, he emphasised that the foundation of good community resilience rests on high-quality data. The data landscape for building resilience has been dominated by top-down scientific approaches that do not communicate the full picture hence they are not useful for decision making. They look at problems through the lens of their expertise as opposed to the lens of the lived experience of those who are at the front lines of the battle against climate change in cities. As a community of practitioners, we need to shift to a more decentralised and disaggregated data approach.

We need to work closely with vulnerable urban communities to ensure that they have the capacities to respond to shocks and stresses of climate change. The current landscape of community-based adaptation in cities is typified by initiatives that are incremental, piecemeal, ad hoc and unsustainable. The need is to shift towards a more 'transformational' approach for engaging with local communities. The idea of building and supporting local institutions is imperative to enable them to take decisions on adaptation. Building capacities of people who run key urban systems like water, energy, transport and health is yet another approach towards building urban community resilience. Across the board, investments in resilience in the core urban sectors have been dominated by infrastructure development. Around 97.5% of the money that goes to the cities for dealing with environmental change ends up being used for infrastructural development a fraction of that amount is earmarked for the capacity development of the officials. We need to ensure that we balance the expenditure on infrastructural development and capacity development of the officials so that they can understand the impacts of climate change, manage adaptability and develop strategies for dealing with extreme situations as they emerge.

Urban planning has proved to enhance the resilience of the cities by reducing hazard exposure and vulnerability. So, a comprehensive urban planning process in consultation with the multi-stakeholders is of utmost importance. We are often focused on mainstreaming resilience within formal planning processes, without adequately acknowledging that over half

of the city is comprised of informal people who live in slums which are beyond the writ of a master plan, the land use plan, the municipal development plan and the city development plan. There is a very little link between the plans that exist on paper and the ground reality of the cities. We need to shift towards a much more meaningful engagement with the informal sector with people living in slums and working in the informal economy. We need to bridge the gap between the formal planning processes and informal actors.

Sufficient financing is crucial to enhance urban community resilience. At the moment, financing has been temporary and difficult to access. The international climate funds that provide formal financing for building resilience is often slow-moving and out of touch with the realities on the ground in the cities of developing countries. We need to adopt more innovative approaches to generating funds which include climate budgeting where the government's resources are spent more judiciously on activities for climate, economic and social benefits. There is a history of inequitable investment of the proceeds from the municipal bonds. We should not give up on them yet because it has the potential of raising funds that can be invested in urban resilience. An enabling environment needs to be built for the same to ensure the health, wealth and well-being of the city's most vulnerable residents.

"urbanisation is the defining demographic trend of our times"

'*Post- independence, our first 40 years were concentrated on developing mega projects. We have no memory of urban development till the globalisation took place*', said **Mr. Rajasekar**. For the past 4 decades, we have been more reactive to urban development per se. Our systems and approaches have been geared towards addressing this rapidly changing demography. With the changing demography, new people are settling into urban systems. They are not aware of the systematic approaches that are crucial for them to safeguard themselves and their environment. We have moved away from the land use and land cover-based planning approaches. We are now working with invisible systems that drive the open economy. We need to find ways to make people understand and appreciate these invisible systems. For instance, when we talk about water supply, much of the connection is underground; much of the sewage base water is also underground, so when people throw waste chunks it leads to localised flooding. The question is how do we make them understand that there is a hidden system below the ground?

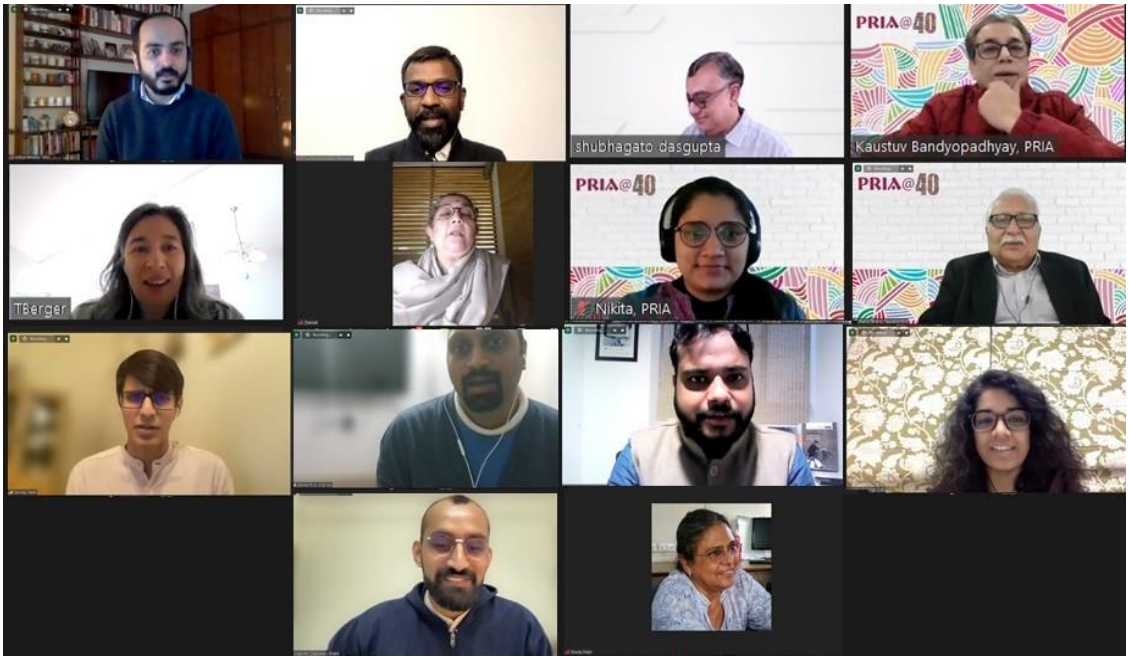
We need to work on the psychology of the people to ensure attitudinal change. People who live in urban areas are not sure whether they are going to stay in that particular city for the next one or two generations. They may move in place of better job opportunities. Hence, the feeling of belongingness to the city is lacking. In the case where people migrate from rural areas, it takes generations for them to change their attitudes and practices when they come to urban areas. For instance, people who are born post-2000 are much more conscious of their urban systems because they are born into the system. They get used to it and are more aware and sensitive more so than ever owing to the digital revolution. So, the concern is around creating awareness and an enabling mechanism where collective action can be taken by all the stakeholders.

Data is an important medium through which one can get a holistic picture of what's working and what's not. The data standards and data collection has substantially increased. Data maturity framework, launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, enables the city governments to move forward in the way they collect and manage data. We need to develop a project management system in the cities at a large scale under the new National Urban Information System. This will enable cities to make informed and timely decisions.

There are very few cities in India where a computer science engineer is also a city engineer. But in the recent past, city data officers have been at least instituted in 100 smart cities – it is a step in the positive direction. Data needs to be collected in a systematic format. It is not only about collecting a huge amount of data, but it is also adding value to it by providing value-added services and decision supports.

Speaking of Chennai's lake rejuvenation initiative, Indore's solid waste management process, Eco- Niwas Samhita (ENS) 2021 scheme, etc., he said that the other challenge facing us today is that of scalability. For instance, even though Chennai has touched its 1000 lakes under the lake rejuvenation initiative, this won't address the problem of floods and water scarcity in the region. One can achieve results because of community engagement but one cannot replicate a particular model across different cities or states. It is important to understand how well cities can communicate to their citizens and engage them in the process and link them to social activities to make sure there is some kind of a strength achieved in the process. He concluded, 'It is important for us to recognise the complexity of urban challenges. It is not simple so we cannot have a straightforward solution.

Meet the participants…



L to R: Mr. Aditya Bahadur, Dr. Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar, Mr. Shubhagato Dasgupta, Dr. Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay, Ms. Tania Berger, Ms. Zeenat Niazi, Ms. Nikita Rakhyani, Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Mr. Tanmay Takle, Mr. Abinash Mohanty, Mr. Ashish R. G., Ms. Mitashi Singh, Mr. Vivek Chandran, and Ms. Sheela Patel

Opening the floor for deliberation, **Dr. Bandyopadhyay** invited **Mr. Tanmay Takle** (Special Assistant to the Minister for Environment & Climate) to share his reflections.

Mr. Takle said that when Mumbai became a part of the C40 City, in late 2020, they started working on the C40 City approved Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP) for Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). While working on MCAP, they realised that similar effort is needed in other cities as well. They were doing a study on greenhouse gas emissions which required coordination at different levels of government – local and national. In this context,

data became crucial. The idea was also to include prime Amrut cities (like Pune, Nasik, etc.) to commit to the *Race to Zero* campaign, which essentially commits these cities to decarbonise completely and reach Net- Zero by 2051. Political leadership and political will to achieve this goal are very important to make this a reality. From their experience in Mumbai, he said that institutionalising this commitment would not only need an ecosystem to be created but would also need a community that could help in achieving the goal of decarbonising the city. For this, it is imperative to engage with civil society organisations.

However, language can be a barrier because the language of climate change is highly westernised. We need to adopt the simple language and break it down to the very local context so that it is easily understandable by the people. This could not be done with traditional capacity building and workshop sessions. In Mumbai, they conducted several rounds of consultations and informal chats with different stakeholders – consultants, think tanks, experts, professors from universities and so on. The most important lesson from the process was that it is crucial to contextualise any intervention in the region that it is intended for.

Mr. Takle also spoke of the *Majhi Vasundhara Abhiyan* which was launched in Mumbai. It is a performance incentive programme that focuses on climate mitigation and adaptation through the five elements of nature – earth, air, energy, water and awareness. It covers air quality monitoring, waste management, biodiversity, water conservation, rainwater harvesting, renewable energy adoption, electric vehicle adoption, charging infrastructure set up, awareness events, and so on. They were able to mainstream the conversation on climate through state initiatives.

The *Race to Zero* campaign had the potential of scaling it up in all Amrut cities. It started with a two-page letter (in Marathi) by the *Majhi Vasundhara Abhiyan* director. The letter explained the *Race to Zero* campaign? What is decarbonisation? Why should these cities do that? At the same time, they worked with the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) to put out a tender for an agency that would help to record a greenhouse gas emissions inventory of all 43 cities. As the entire community was committed to tackling climate change so they convened a workshop for all 43 commissioners. He concluded, '*Mumbai is a state where at this point, every level of administration, even at the ground level knows climate change, climate mitigation and adaptation and is in some way, actively working on it*'.

Endorsing **Mr. Takle's** comments, **Mr. Ashish Rao Ghorpade** (Deputy Director, ICLEI- SA) said that, at ICLEI, they have been engaging with cities for compiling information to assess the level of emissions and climate vulnerability. This information was used to identify priority areas and then based on prioritisation; they explored the availability of funding options that could be utilised for making change reality on the ground. In terms of the process, they followed the approach of action planning that is in line with the master plan or city development plan. This process informed the government plans that were being developed at the city level. This helped in bringing clarity and understanding at the city level in terms of what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, how it can be done and identifying ways and means to make change happen on the ground.

An important strategy for mainstreaming local knowledge would be to start and support conversations. Through all of their climate action methodologies, ICLEI's work has a process of initiating and continuing conversations that are open and consistent that in turn allows them to absorb experiences from the ground. We need to build acknowledgment of the lived experiences of people to improve our information systems. The involvement of local communities in decision-making is an important strategy. Our cities and municipal governments have limited capacities when it comes to engaging with local communities. Hence, civil society can play a crucial role in this context. Engaging with the local community,

getting clarity through organised conversations in terms of the emerging concerns and demands of the local community is important. If this can be organised better, it can help cities, city officials, elected representatives at the city level to understand the priority needs of the community and how they could best serve the community.

Invited **Ms. Nidhi Madan** (Senior Programme Manager, Shakti Sustainable Energy) and **Mr. Vivek M. Chandran** (Associated Director, Shakti Sustainable Energy)

Ms. Madan, from her experience in the field of adaptation and resilience, shared some examples of good practices. She said, '*Traditional knowledge is an important asset when it comes to the rural community*'. For example, in Punjab, some farmers planned their paddy sowing as per the monsoon date and it was a success. This traditional knowledge got mainstreamed into policy planning. It is also important to note that there are challenges when traditional knowledge is combined with local science and information.

Mr. Chandran spoke about Shakti's work on policy design and implementation. There is a need to find a good niche where the government is willing to work, and the communities are willing to engage. For example, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Network (SUM Net) has seen a very strong grassroots presence in many cities ranging from Pune to Patna. However, the biggest challenge is for the communities to engage with the policymakers because policymakers do not engage at the ground level. In this light, Slum Networking Programme was an incredible attempt that saw a lot of success.

In terms of strategies; **Mr. Chandran** said that the availability of information and data is crucial. We need to find ways of turning data into meaningful information on the problem and its solution. The other important strategy is about building capacity. For instance, the way SUM Net was able to work with the grassroot level organisations to open up solutions is remarkable. We need to do more local-level stakeholder interactions and institutionalise them to an extent; CSOs have been able to contribute meaningfully.

It is important to empower local decision-making through finance – budgeting that is devolved to a ward level. To an extent, the 74th CAA gave a direction towards it, but it needs to be taken down to the ward level, it is a legislative change. Unfortunately, climate change is not going to wait for us to change our legislation. Urban planning has not worked for us. We need interventions in terms of networking programmes on the ground because that is where people are located today.

Mr. Abinash Mohanty (Programme Lead, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), India) said that data and granular risk assessment are significant. In December 2020, CEEW did a granular assessment of cyclones, floods and droughts. The study revealed that 75% of the Indian districts are extreme hotspots for these hazards. Of these, 40% showcase a swapping trend. The swapping trend means that traditionally flood-prone areas are becoming drought-prone and vice versa. Some of the cities are witnessing this simultaneously. At this juncture, he endorsed **Mr. Chandran**'s remark that climate change is not going to wait for our legislative changes. Similarly, communities are not waiting, they are building up and expanding.

Unfortunately, in this entire debate of urban resilience, the primary focus on having the granular risk landscape is missing. We need to use the granular risk assessment and information to build the natural ecosystem buffers. The granular risk assessment numbers state that 45 to 50% of our landscape has already been degraded. These landscapes include Mangroves, tree covers, forest covers, and so on. These landscape indicators state that we need to revamp our ecosystems from a landscape perspective to build a natural buffer.

Climate change is in an evolving and dynamic state. Our assessments and the policies coming out of these assessments need to evolve. Each of the districts should have a district disaster management plan, but only 30% of the Indian districts have an updated district disaster management plan. These district disaster management plans should factor in that dynamic information about hazard exposure, risk and vulnerability. Currently, this aspect is completely missing. We need to integrate dynamic climate science into our public policy discourse.

We need to use simple language to provide empirical evidence to the community, and not use jargon. This is important so that a community can understand climate change and its adverse impact – loss of livelihood, lessening of agricultural productivity, extreme temperatures, etc. We have all the information that we need but before we integrate, we need to identify the development risk landscape and then translate it into a common language. We must create a common language to talk about climate change. All of the strategies discussed above need to be scaled and implemented with the community at the forefront.

'*There is a lot of empowerment and enablement from the government currently, in terms of climate action, adaptation, mitigation*', said **Ms. Mitashi Singh** (Deputy Programme Manager, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)). As urban planners, we often face a lot of policy paralysis and a lack of support, whether financial or regulatory, from the government. India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) was launched in 2019; it's about the adoption of Eco- Niwas Samhita (2018). Eco- Niwas Samhita is for residential buildings. We have the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC, 2017) for commercial buildings. Today, when the cities are warming up, our buildings need to adapt to the rising temperatures. CSE's *Affordable Housing Programme* and *Advocacy for Thermal Comfort* are working in this direction and working towards the implementation of ICAP.

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme was released in 2015, 70% of the houses in urban areas were developed by the beneficiaries. 65 to 70% of all the houses sanctioned under the scheme are to be self-constructed. The beneficiaries need to follow the mandate of using good materials like good roof coating, good orientation or shading devices, etc. so that the impact of rising temperatures do not affect the houses. The mandate is in place, but we need the capacity, knowledge and awareness to do this effectively. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) scheme 2016, the beneficiaries have to construct their own houses. The government has released a guidance document that captures the various climate-responsive, traditional building construction techniques and materials that can help the beneficiaries to withstand the effects of changing climate as well as extreme weather events.

Building local leadership is essential for building community resilience. Formal institutions like RWAs office complexes, educational campuses, etc. can be good microcosms and ecosystems for climate adaptation and mitigation that can further trickle down to the informal communities. CSE has a Green Campus Programme that documents such case studies. This can spark a multiplier effect in the wider society. These formal systems can be a good demonstrator of climate action. Speaking of local governance, the National Clean Air programme, asks Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to plan their activities to integral sectors. ULBs have received a lot of funding under the 15th Finance Commission Recommendations. The Solid Waste Management rules talk about the development of a waste management plan; for building permission, one has to develop a construction management plan, etc. and submit it to the ULB. All these mandates have given some impetus for the community to act towards it.

Ms. Zeenat Niazi (Chief Knowledge Officer, Development Alternatives) stated that we need to focus on citizen and community engagement in facilitating solutions whether it is about construction or waste management and so on. Speaking of her experience in the rural housing space she said over 2002- 2011, a very interesting civil society facilitated network came together in South Asia. In India, the focus was on 23 network partners – some grassroots, some technical institutions, some think tanks, they came together intending to look at the Indira Gandhi Niwas Yojana. The community of practice came together not only to share a space and knowledge but actively work in a network. There were members of that community that are still part of the task forces of the government. There was a whole series of work that was being done to engage with local panchayats. It is crucial to note that this platform was a civil society initiative, and it was driven by civil society. It was an initiative to bring the different stakeholders to the same level playing field. We need to balance the power imbalances that exist between the government and the community.

Mr. Shubhagato Dasgupta (Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research) emphasised that one of the major global concerns for us today is to explore what urbanisation looks like in the future and also take proactive action along the value chain of urbanisation, given that we are urbanising at a particular speed. The second concern is around the urban planning principles around climate change that need to be not only established and understood but also implemented effectively. For instance, the Jaga Mission in Orissa looks at climate justice from a local government, in-country perspective, not only intergenerational, as it has famously been understood.

In this context, an important question to ponder upon would be around how would the communities that are looking forward to development in the future, going to comprehend policies, institutional changes and the pressures? Is it going to constrain their growth model? For instance, as a result of the Jaga mission, the land rights were being given over to slum dwellers and in that process, Slum Upgrading Programme was initiated. The Slum Upgrading Programme further benefited from the Urban Wage Employment Programme where livelihoods in the wake of COVID were being lost. Thus, local self-help groups and slum dwellers associations in Orissa were engaged on a wage employment basis to upgrade their slums. The poor themselves are building their cities and it covers both the social and governance aspects of integrating marginalised communities into cities.

'*Despite the geographical difference, it is fascinating that the problems concerning climate change is very similar between India and Europe*', said **Ms. Tania Berger** (DONAU/ BReUCom). We can learn from each other across these divides of graphically distance and different societies. The notion of democracy underlying the participation of communities in this process is of utmost importance. For instance, in Australia, some districts have many migrants who do not have citizenship and as a result, they are not eligible for any kind of democratic rights. This poses a question about finding solutions that respond to the needs of all who are living in a specific place. The other challenge is to be able and willing to adapt our lifestyles to the changing climate conditions. We need to have a political and administrative will for doing the same, as was highlighted by **Mr. Takle**. She reiterated that we need to find a common language so that the communities and other stakeholders can better understand and also engage effectively in the process. It is important more than ever to engage in capacity-building activities.

Ms. Sheela Patel (Executive Director, SPARC) said that the human problem of scaling amazing innovations; dealing with governance structures and making top-down and bottom-up institutional arrangements demonstrates the need for all of us to join hands. We need to

create new partnerships and alliances that bring all the knowledge together to make cities work for everybody. The issue of equity, social justice and informality, especially within cities, remains an unexplored global discussion.

We need to create a robust framework that uses information, negotiation and dialogues between formal and informal institutions, science and technology providers and think tanks and consulting firms. The knowledge that comes from different elements for aggregating challenges, finding solutions and monitoring change have the potential of providing instruments and tools to different voiceless constituencies so that they can participate in this change process. Most poor communities need to see something tangible happening for them to believe that it works.

'*It is crucial to make the community the fulcrum of building any kind of resilience*', said **Dr. Rajesh Tandon** (Founder- President, PRIA). The cities cannot be resilient unless the community is resilient. A substantial part of the urban community comprises informal, less-resourced, vulnerable, precarious urban communities. In India, this is the nature of urbanisation and is unlikely to change. The nature of the economy is such that informality in cities is cohabiting with formality. The knowledge production function remains formal and does not tap the informal.

Putting the onus at the city level also entails providing them with macro as well as granular data. In this light, community-driven data production links their lived experience to the rationale and the logic of climate the impact is significant. The central players like the elected councillors and mayors, in local government, continue to be ignored at the national level. The amount of investment that has gone in Panchayati Raj elected members over the last 30 years, not even 2% of that has gone into working with the councillors.

When it comes to learning by the elected representatives, the learning has to be in-situ i.e., learning by doing on the ground. If we want them to take leadership then we have to find a way to have a conversation with them that starts from where they are, in their dialect and highlight the link between the development of the city and resilience that needs to be built. We have not mediated this relationship adequately.

Our work on participation of the communities in finding local solutions, civil society platforms have historically been very strong in India but when it comes to inclusive urbanisation and resilient organisation, civil society platforms have been non-existent. We need to create a mechanism that brings think tanks, experts, community voices and local civil society groups together to have a conversation about problems and their solutions.

In December 2021, the World Inequality Report 2022 was released by the World Inequality Lab which was authored by Lucas Chancel. The report said in 2021, the top 10% and top 1% of the Indian population hold 57% and 22% of total national income respectively, whereas the share of the bottom 50% has gone down to 13%. This growing inequality is visible in every city of our country. Unless we find a way to put this at the centre of our resilience work, mere changes in policies will not make a difference. We need to anchor our work on building resilient cities and communities within a larger framework of equity and justice.

The roundtable ended with a vote of thanks by **Dr. Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay**.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

4.00 pm to 4.10 pm
Welcome and Introduction to PRIA@40 Programmes and Conversation

Moderator: Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, Director, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India

4.10 pm to 4.30 pm
Setting the Stage -

- Dr. Aditya Bahadur, International institute for Environment and Development (IIED), UK
- Mr. Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), India

4:30 pm to 5.50 pm
Strategic Conversations

Each discussant reflected on the following questions

- What are the good practices adopted by cities and communities to promote locally led climate adaptation?
- What strategies should be adopted for promoting local knowledge solutions through active ownership of municipal authorities and communities?
- What roles civil society and other stakeholders play to strengthen locally led governance of city governance?

5.45 pm to 5.55 pm
Key Takeaways

Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Founder-President, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India

5.55 pm to 6.00 pm
Vote of Thanks and Closure

Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, Director, PRIA, India

PRIA@40 EVENTS

DATE	TITLE	THEME
12 August 2021	Youth Participation and Active Citizenship	Citizen Participation
20 August 2021	Planning for Urban Informalities	Sustainable Urban Future
31 August 2021	Accelerating Capacities in Civil Society and Non-Profits	Empowering Civil Society
2 September 2021	Nurturing Civil Society Partnerships in Uncertain Times	Empowering Civil Society
15 September 2021	Redesigning Civil Society Ecosystem: From Local to Global	Empowering Civil Society
28 September 2021	Unlearning Patriarchy: Expanding Impacts of Gender Training	Making the Gender Leap
30 September 2021	Investing in Civil Society Innovations	Empowering Civil Society
01 October 2021	Community-led Adaptations: Water is Life	Decentralised Community Governance
06 October 2021	Inspiring Leadership of Mayors and Councillors for Inclusive Urbanisation	Sustainable Urban Future
12 October 2021	Trajectories of Participation: From Development to Governance	Citizen Participation
20 October 2021	Scaling up Citizen Engagement for Inclusive Urban Governance	Sustainable Urban Future
01 November 2021	Gender Transformational Organisational Renewal: Towards Gender Equality	Making the Gender Leap

17 November 2021	Participation, Representation & Accountability: Strengthening the Movement	Decentralised Community Governance
23 November 2021	Making a difference: Adapting Impact Measurement	Empowering Civil Society
25 November 2021	Young Scientists Learning Open Science	Knowledge Democracy
26 November 2021	tInstitutionalising Online Citizen Participation in Public Policymaking in India	Citizen Participation
29 November 2021	Changing Contours of Development Cooperation: What Roles for Civil Society?	Empowering Civil Society
30 November 2021	Local Knowledge, Social Movements & Participatory Research: Indian Perspectives	Knowledge Democracy
8 December 2021	No Time to Waste! Building Resilient Urban Communities and Cities through Locally Led Climate Adaptation	Sustainable Urban Future