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Session 1

Thank you very much Sheila, I think its interesting to have a variety of perspectives for what we are to aim to do next. We will have a few minutes now for questions of clarification. But I think I would ask people to save their exploration of the ideas until we have the world café that Jane Samuels is going to provide for us as a means of interacting on some of these ideas.

We have a few minutes now for questions and clarification if people would like to ask any of the presenters this morning and then after coffee, which we are leading up to in a moment, the room will magically be transformed away from this sort of presentational style to more of an interactive style with the tables split up around the room and it will remain like that for the rest of the day. As I say the objective of looking towards five questions we want to put to Professor Amartya Sen later in the afternoon. If people have questions they would like to ask anybody straight away, please do so now.

Question to the Speakers

Mike McCarthy from DFID

"I thought what you were saying Sheila was very interesting, and lead me to think along the lines of people that live at a micro level, that are analysed at a macro level and there is no connections in the meso level. And people don't even want to perceive things at a macro level. People vote if they feel like it in Britain we are really quite apathetic because people in this country don't vote therefore they don't look at the macro level. Everybody is dealing at a micro level and your life changes as to what do you do with the person sitting next to you? I had a question but I'm not sure what it is. "What is it that you feel is the thing that needs to change or the thing that has be done differently from what you were doing in Bombay because it clearly seems to me that it was something done at a micro level that changed, without any, looking at what the macro effect would be. People leading their own lives and changed something because there was a blockage-- usually somebody is preventing you from having something unless you give them a bribe. Something where people extort money from everybody else -- its all micro things.

So what was the one thing, if you would enlighten me, is the thing that your approach is different from the other macro approaches?"

Reply

Sheela:

"I think the exciting thing about the process that we have NSDF is that it starts by being intensely micro but no micro solution is the same unless it comes up and goes down again. To be sure bribes are offered to the local policeman but it doesn't end there, its part of a larger system. And unless you are able to track it up the system and then down again there cannot be any changes. So what has happened now is, you have a situation in which, to give an interesting example about this process, the day after tomorrow when Jockin goes back to India, he is going to sit with the police commissioner of Pune who has seen all the work that is happening and they are going to design community policing for the whole of Pune, based on the micro problems that happen in communities. We are going to set up a whole system like that. And if that works that is what happens at the state level. So the important thing is that we have become the specialists at saying, how can you take something that's important and change the system and how can you make it to run on a small level? But you can interact with policy makers and political managers at the government level or at other levels who institute policy. The same thing happens with relocation. Slum dwellers want to move from this place to another to the other, but the state has to provide a policy and I think what the presence of the Federation at so many locations actually provides us with is political interaction at that dialogue.

So I think it is that ability of saying just because I speak at this state or the national level, I no longer become, you know, I'm only this or I'm only that. What they are saying is, you need people who understand how to make the change happen at the micro level and also sitting on policy level- that's what we're saying. We want a space, the Federations want a space at all the tables of decision making. So if your going to sit at DFID and talk about something that is happening in India, we want to come and talk to you as well, that is what we are saying. We say that it is possible.

Michael Mutter

I think that what's also interesting about NSDF is that its not only an NSDF what you see is what you get in India, but its part of a very international network. And this story has percolated to, as I think we were saying, sixteen countries and there is interaction between the "Jockins" in these sixteen countries so that they

are sharing this experience on a truly international scale. That is facilitated by only a very small input from the otherwise known as the "international community". It's truly a people driven process, Rod you had your hand up. Rob Hackney, past president from the RIBA.

Question

ROD HACKNEY

..... I was saying that Michael has told us that we were here to raise the spirits and when I heard Jockin and Sheila they did that for me. The reason that I would like to talk to you, Jockin, and I apologise for this, is that you create so many jobs for people in this room, the academic or governmental work that you are our lifeline to survival so thank you for that.

Laughter

The gentlemen on my left said we don't vote in this country because we are so apathetic. People are apathetic. People are very clever, we can fill in a ballot sheet, but as you know from your experience, we don't waste our time with people who can't have an influence on our lives. And we have found out in this country, like you have in yours, the governments have no power. So why do you bother getting up and voting for somebody who is not going to do it? And in a way, I think, we have a solution seeing as you are the breadwinner for so many people in this room. We need to have guts to acknowledge what you have done, what you saying and what Sheila has interpreted. You say your are the washing machine, well we have so many people starched here today laughter.

But we, I thought, I know what your saying. But I think you are in a much better position than in some parts of Europe where we have some slums, because we have become individuals in this country and we have been taught that we must stand on our own two feet, tread on your neighbours feet and you will get on. Sheila said the women said that the Mahila Malan women, they have more common sense than men, I don't know why that is most of my team leaders and my slum dwellers chairperson, there is one, a Jean Daniels is a famous one for me -- another washing machine by the way.

(Jockin) You had a problem, because you didn't have a language, that is my interpretation, you were unadulterated with clichés. My question is having proved to the world that you have a product that was worth being associated with by academics, by environmental agencies, by professionals so you became a lifeline to their success. How you then are then, and you have managed so far, not joined in the sort of interpretive, your theory of development practice, how did you survive all these horrible trotters coming in and saying, "I know what you've done, you've done this", and you think, "did I", and they will say, "yes this is exactly what they did in Peru." And you say. "Where is Peru?" And then comes along the Government organisations saying now your clean we want to back you, there is more money! But you don't need that much more money because with the money comes the price, the rules, this is how you spend it. These are the headings we spend it on. How have you managed so far to remain clean and not joining in the theorists, the red tape requirements that fall into this bracket and still have the legitimacy to represent Slum Dwellers?

Michael Mutter

Jockin how have you managed that? You claim to be illiterate but I know that's a lie, (laughter). Could be an advantage. My theory is that he is shorter.

Rod Hackney

People who are illiterate without any money are the richest people.

Jockin

I don't know how to answer this question, but trying to say I don't think I need to claim or the Federation need to claim that we have overcome everything. There is still hundreds and thousands of miles and distance to walk in bring change within our community. Forget about joining anybody, that is entirely different task. As far as what we are trying to do is, our task is not yet over. Its not, I don't know whether we thought, we were working for a product and the product is ready therefore you are become an expert and now you join someone or whether export somebody. Why don't you just join somebody else, support somebody, I don't think I believe in that. What we have done is a collective and it's with individuals. I don't know, but when talking to Romi in Bombay, how are these individual aspiration been covered? What we have been talking about said that after collective, the individual has to have more and more needs addressed. My way of thinking. In our organisation or SDI's, the Slum Dwellers International.

Just about a year back we received an invitation from Uganda. The Ministry in Uganda has asked us to come and train us. First thing we are experimenting in Uganda where the Slum Dwellers Federation Housing is training the ministry of housing in drafting policies about land, etc. that does not mean that we are an expert, you become something, therefore we can sell theory or ideology or backing somebody an idea, pack it and sell it to somebody.

Sheila Patel

I will tell you the situation. Insatiable, I think the special spirit of the federation which makes its leadership stay in this way is that is that people, that all of us in a group retain the collectivity. We find that we get offered individual consultancy's—you come and do this. We say no don't give us individual consultants we say you call SDI. And the whole of SDI will come. Now what it does, it does three things.

One is that it builds and enriches the capacity of leaders in the community to use their own experiences to help somebody else. Usually it is a consultant from the north who comes and by helping somebody else he gets very enriched and then goes back, and that experience is, as all of you know, goes back with you. It does stay in that community. Here it stays within community.

The second thing is that your own government your own institutions who have brought up a different paradigm, start respecting you because we are always like this, somebody else honours you and they say, oh he is my neighbour, he is invited there, must be worth something. Our own Governments begin to treat this individual, who has travel all over country and world and other people with more dignity and honour and their whole self-confidence improve.

I think the third and more important thing is having exposure to what is happening in the rest of the world. Communities begin to challenge development that comes from other people and I think that is important and very important because this is where development does most injustice to poor people and their knowledge. Because they have no right to contest in the development information that all of us as educated professionals and I am including myself in this, we bring our university education which is obviously not that this education is wrong, but just as we give ourselves the right to contest each others' perspective, we don't give poor people the right to do that. I think staying with that, believing in the rights and entitlements of this whole section of people as a group is what fires

the Federation and retains that quality. And, it keeps us on our toes, because it isn't as if, I could say something to Jockin and he will listen to it. I think there is n a dialogue between him and me, it is much broader, we represent the symbolic of two sets of people. And I think the important thing is that there is a lot of conversation, a lot of negotiation which then builds our ability to deal with the outside world.

Michael Mutter

Okay well we are going to have a lot more opportunity to have this interactive discussion towards the end of the next session. We have to move the coffee now so that the room can be rearranged, but I would like to thank Romi for exploring the ideas to Jane for explaining how far we have got and for Jockin and Sheila for their thoughts.

Clapping