



Ahmednagar

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Regenerative Slum Redevelopment in Ahmednagar (India)

• DURATION

Ongoing Since 2018

• POPULATION 2024

425,000 (Growth rate 1,67%)

• URA SCOPE

ECOLOGY. Green Urbanism

SOCIETY. Staying Human

• TOPICS

HOUSING, CLIMATE CHANGE
ADAPTATION, SOCIAL INCLUSION,
GREENING, CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

• MAIN ACTORS

Community Design Agency
Ahmednagar Municipal Corporation
(AMC)
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)

In the heart of Ahmednagar, India, a transformative journey began to unfold. This inclusive participatory design initiative, crafted in collaboration with local public authorities, set out to provide quality, affordable housing for 298 families, turning the struggling community of Sanjaynagar from a slum into a thriving neighbourhood.

Imagine a place where once there was only despair, now reimagined into vibrant, climate-resilient communities. Here, designed courtyards and lush rooftop gardens not only beautify the environment but also foster social connections and well-being. Open spaces, sun breakers, and native plants work together to keep the heat at bay, while innovative climate solutions have raised groundwater levels. The carefully engineered sewage and waste systems are also making a real difference, revitalizing the soil.

What sets this project apart is its participatory planning process, which allows the community to guide its outcomes. By leveraging a blended financial model that taps into various funding sources, residents have a voice in shaping their future. Gender equity is at the forefront, with women now holding 50% of the homeownership—an incredible leap from past norms. Additionally, residents receive financial literacy training, empowering them to navigate the complexities of homeownership.

In 2022, the first residential building welcomed 33 families, marking a significant milestone in this transformative journey. This initiative not only exemplifies a regenerative approach to slum redevelopment but also significantly improves the quality of life for everyone involved, creating a hopeful and sustainable future for the community.





Impact

Well-designed, climate-friendly homes can transform slum communities, lifting generations from poverty. Harnessing residents' resilience and social ties enables neighbourhood upkeep and disaster response. Our regenerative approach integrates design, sustainable materials, technology, and architecture for lasting impact

In this project, they aim to construct eight adaptive, climate-resilient buildings, blending traditional and modern techniques. Interspersed among them are over 25 social spaces, including green courtyards, wide corridors, rooftop gardens, and community health centres. Families moving into their new homes of the first building report improved thermal comfort, with studies showing an 8-10°F reduction in temperature due to thoughtful ventilation and sustainable materials like compressed fly ash blocks. Open spaces buffer heat, and the introduction of native plants has led to a 54% reduction in local temperatures.

Additionally, integrated solutions like rainwater recharge pits have raised groundwater levels by 10 cm, while efficient sewage and waste systems help remediate contaminated soil. Our co-design process, involving 937 residents, has fostered social inclusion and empowerment. The community now feels closer than ever, enjoying significant improvements in their quality of life. Notably, gender equity has advanced, with women now holding 50% of homeownership—up from just 5%. Residents have also received training in financial literacy, equipping them to navigate the formal banking system and homeownership processes effectively.

But this is just the beginning. CDA's vision is to scale this model, creating climate-resilient, thriving communities for low-income families not only in India but across the Global South, proving that housing can be a pathway to lasting change.

The Challenge

In 2020, nearly 49% of urban India's population lived in slums, a stark reminder of the housing crisis, with a shortage of 29 million homes recorded in 2018. Communities like Sanjaynagar bear the brunt of this reality, facing the dual threats of inadequate infrastructure and climate risks. Yet, beneath the surface lies a powerful resource: social capital.

At Community Design Agency (CDA), recognized this potential and set out on a journey to redefine affordable housing. In partnership with the Ahmednagar Municipal Corporation and supported by the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), CDA launched India's first in-situ slum rehabilitation project in Ahmednagar. Together with the residents of Sanjaynagar, CDA co-designed a future—one that transforms this community into a vibrant neighbourhood with quality, affordable homes for 298 families.

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Solution Proposed

Community Design Agency (CDA) is transforming housing for marginalized communities by turning slums into vibrant, climate-smart neighbourhoods that promote equity and foster generational change. Committed to raising quality housing standards, CDA ensures access to safe, healthy living spaces for economically disadvantaged individuals.

Their designs include courtyards, rooftop gardens, and health centres to foster wellness and social connection. Using innovative materials, solar energy, and rainwater harvesting, they build climate-resilient homes. CDA empowers communities by involving residents in decisions about their homes and neighbourhoods through participatory planning

In Sanjaynagar pilot, CDA leverages land from the municipality, secures funding from governments and philanthropies, and implements a peer-to-peer housing finance model emphasizing women's ownership of 50% of homes and fostering lasting change in education and livelihoods

In 2022, CDA completed Phase 1, welcoming 33 families in passive-cooling apartments. Results show improved well-being, reduced violence, and growing hope. Phase 2 begins in 2024, advancing their vision of climate-resilient, equitable communities across India and the Global South