

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INHABITANTS

“Another World is Possible”

www.habitants.org

*Presentation on the 20th February, 2007, for ‘UP01: The City and its Relations’
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Presentation Outline

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- Introduction to IAI
- Partnerships and Relationships
- Activities
- Case Study: W Nairobi W! Campaign, Nairobi, Kenya
- Strengths and Weaknesses of IAI

WHAT IS THE IAI?

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A GLOBAL NETWORK of grassroots organisations, NGOs and social movements of inhabitants; Including communities; Tenants; Homeless; Slum dwellers; Indigenous populations etc.

KEY OBJECTIVE: ‘the construction of another possible world starting from the achievement of the housing and city rights’.

BACKGROUND: the IAI began in 2003 when representatives of urban social associations gathered in Madrid to discuss how to create a coordinated effort to fight the negative effects of neo-liberalism.

Neo-liberal Globalisation?

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IAI on neo-liberal globalisation:

“...privatises public services and human rights, increases social segregation, debases and merchandises human relationships”

IAI on the causes of increased evictions worldwide:

“The main cause is the subjection of the urban question to the neo-liberal dictates of the IMF and the World Bank which impose privatizations in the public service sector and cuts in social policies. “

And finally:

“The reign of capital in third-world cities can only lead to the realization of the chilling predictions made by George Orwell in his famous book "1984": cities where police control millions of poor individuals who survive with great difficulty in the vicinity of the official city. Only those who do not know the shortages suffered by the majority of the urban population in developing countries in cities like Lima, Sao Paulo, Mexico D.F., Buenos Aires, Abuja, Nairobi, Harare, could find this to be an exaggerated statement.”

IAIs Principles:

The rules of conduct for all the members

- Equity and sustainable gender, social and ecological development
- Social justice
- Promotion and protection of inhabitants' global rights
- Unity with other progressive social movements
- Tolerance, multiculturalism, respect of inhabitants' rhythms
- Participative processes acknowledged in right to housing, to the city and to a suitable habitat
- Autonomy of the popular urban movement from political and institutional powers

ETHICS & VALUES

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KEY VALUE 'Another World Is Possible'

- Anti forced evictions
- Anti-neoliberal globalisation
- Upholds the value of solidarity
- Upholds the principles declared in the International Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art.11) and in the Human Rights Universal Declaration (art.25)
- Emphasises the importance of women in the social struggle
- Emphasises the importance of 'strengthening the voice of the voiceless'

Objectives:

Short, medium and long-term programme

- Encouragement of associations who have “no voice” internationally
- Provide visibility
- Elaborate proposals of social change
- Fight for acknowledgement, application and protection of right to housing
- Economic, social, political and cultural rights of inhabitants
- Search for alternatives to neo-liberal development approach

WHO DECIDES?

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The IAI activity programme is decided by regular assemblies and is coordinated by a democratic structure.

- Coordinating Committee
- Technical Support Committee



Partnerships and Relationships

PARTNERSHIP

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CONAM,(BRAZIL) -----The National Confederation for Inhabitants Associations

- CONAM co-founded the IAI
- Organised national congresses
- Fights for the universal right to quality of life, with particular focus on the issue of the accessibility



UCISV-VER----The Union of Tenants and Housing Applicants, Veracruz ,

- IAI share and nourish the idea with UCISV-VER
- A community organization
- Reinforce people capacity

RELATIONSHIP

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UN-HABITAT

- Exchange
 - information, technique, suggestion
- Collaboration
 - people work for UN-HABITAT and IAI



SHELTER FOR ALL

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

NGOs

- Are IAI members
- Created a committee, which offers technical and promotional support to proposals and initiatives approved by the IAI associations and social movements

RELATIONSHIP

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IPS ---Inter Press Service News Agency

- collaborate with IAI
- an international, not-for-profit association of professional journalists and others in the field of communications
- dedicated to promoting democratic participation in economic, social and political life
- promotes a global communication strategy



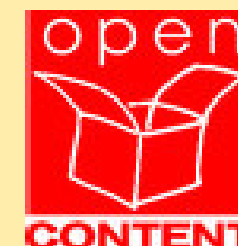
fph---Foundation for Human Progress

- Support IAI
- is an independent foundation under Swiss law.
- to finance, through donations or loans, research and initiatives that contribute in a significant and innovative way to the progress of humankind through science and social development.



Open Content

- Support IAI
- provide the free software to give the opportunities of education



Activities

International Forum

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- **World Social Forum**

- 2005: build a unified, common space for debate, encounter and proposals for inhabitants' organizations and social movements striving for a different possible world, starting from the defense of housing rights
- 2006: promote some seminars
 - The Zero Evictions Campaign
 - Toward the Urban Popular University
 - Urban Reform and the right to a city
 - Poverty and the right to housing
- 2007: register some initiatives
 - The Zero Evictions Campaign
 - Popular Funds for Land and Housing
 - World Action Days for the right to housing 2007/2008



International Forum

- European Social Forum 2006 in Athens
 - Development of a European mobilization against the violations of housing rights
 - The Role of the City in an Alternative Europe: Towards Housing and Habitat Rights
- Mediterranean Social Forum 16-18 Jun 2005 in Barcelona
 - Mediterranean Zero Evictions! Regional perspectives of the global campaign
 - People's University of Social Movements and/or Knowledge Networks
- The Barcelona Forum
 - International forum against evictions
- The Americas Social Forum
 - Participatory democracy, cancellation of the debt in exchange for public town-planning and housing policies with international participation and control

International Campaigns

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- Zero Evictions
 - Cause: another 700 million threatened by homelessness by 2020 mainly caused by the subjection of the urban question to the neo-liberal dictates of the IMF and the WB which impose privatizations in the public service sector and cuts in social policies
 - Aim: to mobilize international solidarity to achieve dignity and security in housing
 - Launch: 4th World Social Forum, Mumbai, Jan, 2004



International Campaign

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- Zero Evictions Red Wheels in UK

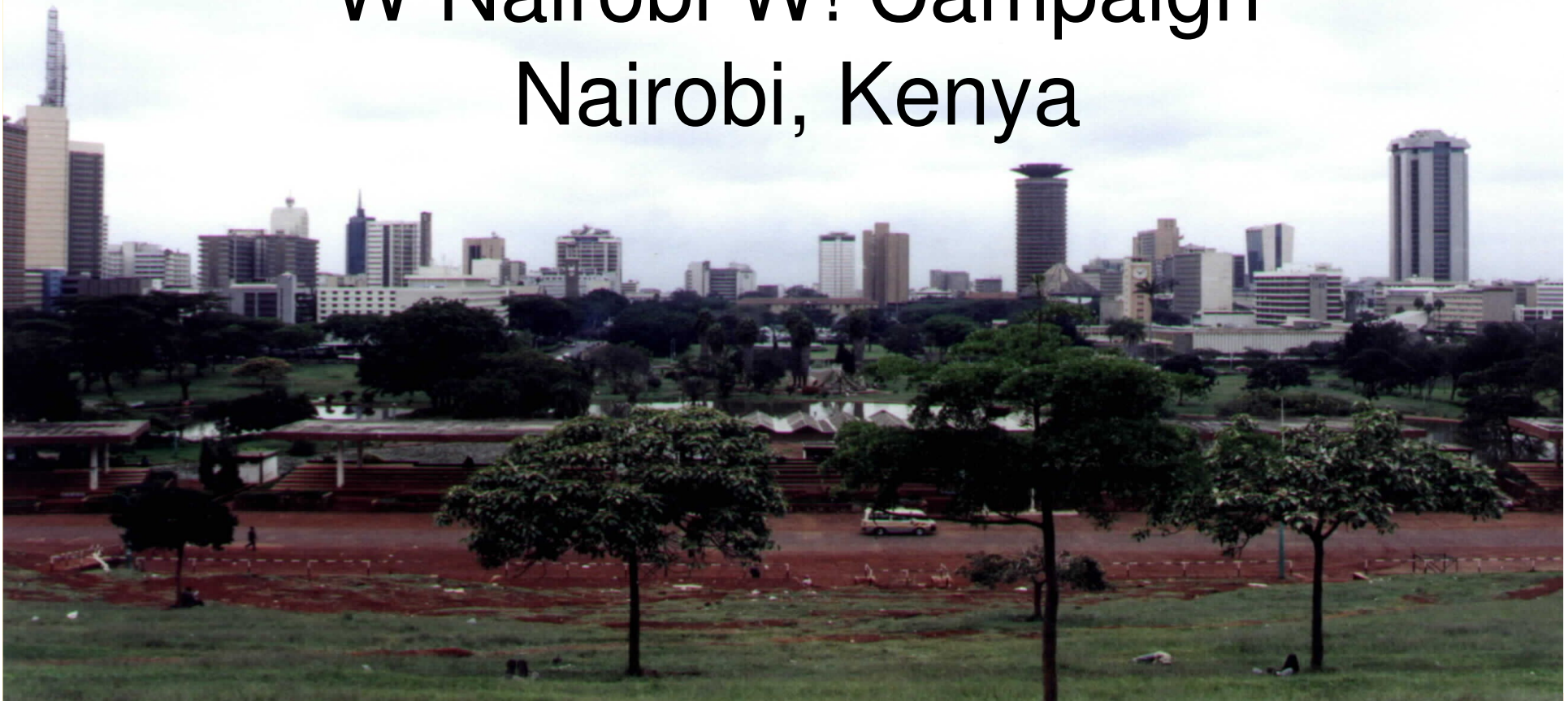


- Appeal W Nairobi W!

- Zero Evictions in Croatia, Dominican Republic, Kenya, Indian, Italy and Nigeria



Case Study: W Nairobi W! Campaign Nairobi, Kenya

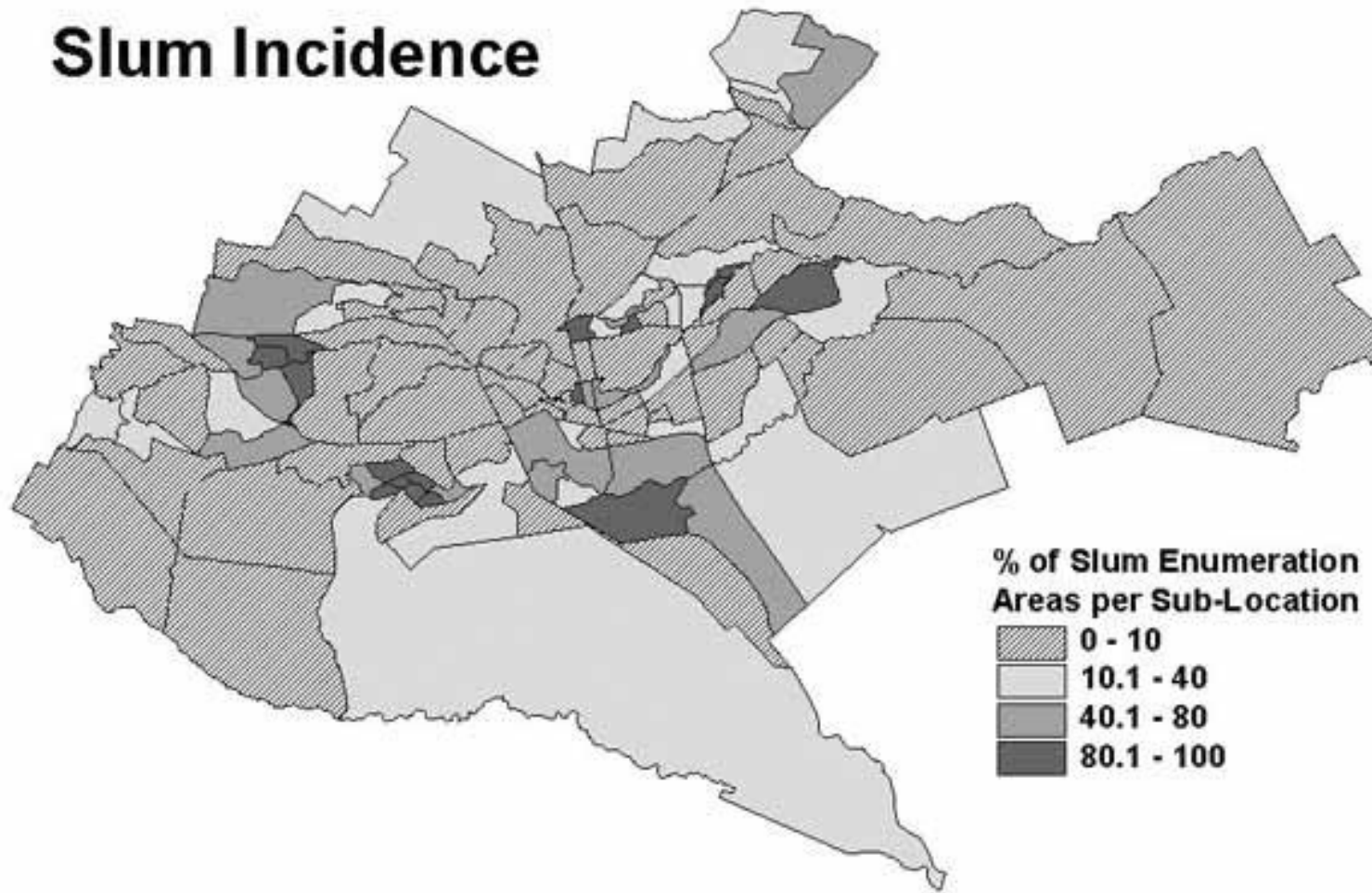


Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya: Location

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Du



Slums are concentrated on...

<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/2004/07/16/kenya.nairobi.jpg>

http://www.itc.nl/news_events/archive/projects/urban_poverty_nairobi.asp/

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya: Key Figures

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- Population of Nairobi
 - 4 million
- Slum dwellers
 - approx. 2.5 million
(55% of population)
- They lives
 - within 5% of city territory

- The example of Korogocho
 - 150 thousand people
11.150 hovels
within 1.5km wide, 1km long
20-25 sq. meters living space

- Demolitions in early 2004
 - Over 300.000 people affected

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:
WNW! Campaign Overview

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□ **Arisen Dates**

March, 2004

(when people were threatened by the large-scale forced eviction by Government of Kenya)

□ **Objectives**

‘Demand the recognition of the slum-dwellers’ right to live in Nairobi with dignity and justice.’ (IAH, 2006)

□ **Member organisations**

- The Kutoka Parish Network, of Nairobi, with the direct participation of the Combonian Missionaries and the Missionaries of the Consolata
- The International Alliance of Inhabitants
- The Justice and Peace Commission of the Combonian Missionaries in Italy
- Tam Tam Association for Korogocho

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:

Stage One

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□ The Beginning

- demolition of the hovels in a violent re-urbanisation plan which offered no alternatives
- first shanty towns were demolished in order to build a motorway
 - approx. 400 structures demolished, including schools, clinics, churches
 - 2.000 people affected
- Authorities implementing the eviction
 - Kenya Railways Corporation
 - Ministry of Roads, Public Works and Housing
- The Kutoka Parish Network asked local and international mobilisation with support of the IAI

□ First Victory

- global Zero Evictions Campaign
 - IAI launched at the 4th WSF (Mumbai, January, 2004). Objective is; '...to mobilize international solidarity, starting from the inhabitants directly concerned, in order to give them back some hope of achieving dignity and security in housing.' (IAI, 2004)
- Campaign based on international initiative
 - over 6,000 protest messages have been sent to the Kenyan government, the Municipality of Nairobi, UN-Habitat, European Commission, European Investment Bank
- Brought the demolition and the forced eviction to a halt

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:

Stage Two

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□ New Appeal

- Objective

'...is to work on the structural issues which are among the causes for so many people to end up living in slums' (IAI, 2006)

□ Proposals

- **The five years' suspension of demolitions and evictions**
- **Redistribution of land**
- **Urban improvement**
- **Improvements in housing**

... through the swap of Kenya's foreign debt towards Italy
(funds released would be utilised to find housing solutions for slum dwellers)

□ Channels

- The creation of **People's Fund for land and housing**
 - 'funds, controlled by inhabitants' organizations and local authorities, into which resources of the cancelled foreign debt, in particular, would be channeled to finance public urban and housing policies' (IAH, 2005)
 - Jubilee Debt Campaign: Agenda of the movements for the cancellation of the debt by G8
- The participation of all involved parties, first of all slum dwellers
- To organise a meeting held by 2005, the participants are;
 - representatives of the Kenyan and Italian governments, those of other 'creditor' countries, the Municipal Admin. Of Nairobi, the religious communities, and representatives of WNW

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:

Stage Two

□ Appeal by IAI

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We demand the recognition of the slum-dwellers' RIGHT TO LIVE IN NAIROBI WITH DIGNITY AND JUSTICE:

We appeal to the Kenyan government and the Mayor of Nairobi:

1. To block all demolitions and forced clearances;
2. To observe the obligations contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
3. To develop new public housing and urban policies which respect the housing rights of all people (security of tenure, participatory town-planning and urban renewal, rehabilitation).

We appeal to the European Commission, Governments and the European Investment Bank:

To block any funding for Kenya to build infrastructure which does not respect the conditions listed above.

We appeal to Kenya's "creditor" countries (Kenya's foreign debt amounts to over 6.5 billion dollars):

To convert the "debt" into housing and social policies for the 2.5 million slum-dwellers, with the aid and control of all parties concerned, in particular the inhabitants themselves and the civil associations and organizations, with well-defined mechanisms to safeguard their transparency.

We appeal to UN- Habitat

To set up a board with representatives from the Kenyan government and the rich countries, as well as recognized representations from the slum-dwellers, the NGOs, and international networks in order to put our demands into effect.

<http://www.habitants.org/article/articleview/1180/1/241/>

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:

Stage Two

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□ Outcomes

- Continuing effort to raise awareness and to inform, both in Kenya and abroad
 - Photo exhibit
 - Post cards
 - Articles and Reports
 - Media exposure: TV interviews, newspapers, web pages
- Exhibits and events regarding the debt
- Interaction with the authorities
 - Many local administrations and authorities are supporting the campaign
- Reinforcing Involvements
 - Italian Church directly involved, in collaboration with the Justice and Solidarity Foundation

□ Visible Achievements

- WNW convinced the Italian and Kenyan governments to sit down and discuss the transformation of Kenya's debt into a fund which would be used primarily to improve conditions in two shanty towns

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:

Contribution to UDP

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□ Contribution to Urban Development Planning

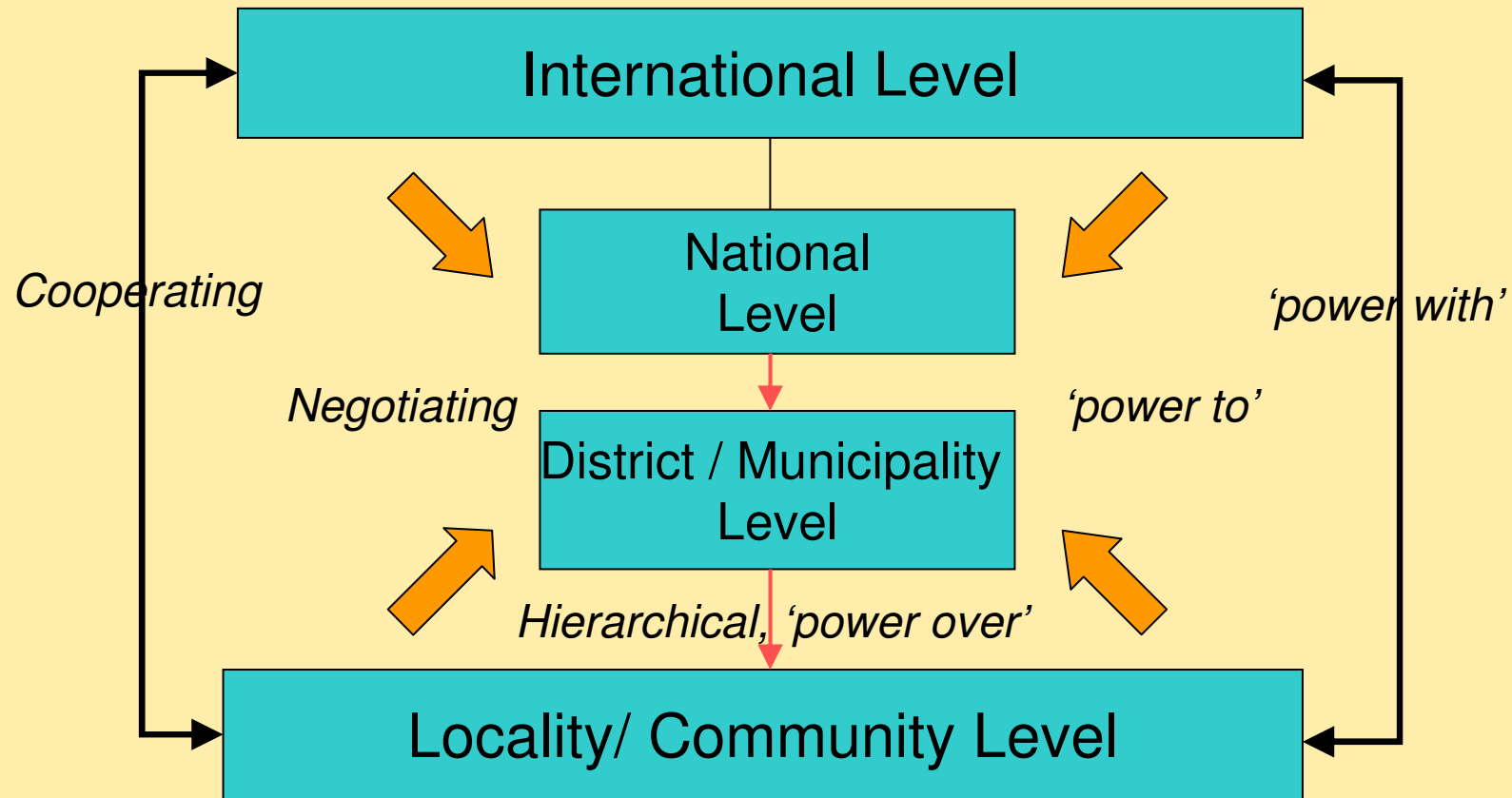
- Key issues from IAI's objective
 - Encourage inhabitants' associations and movements, which internationally have "no-voice", so that they may know one another, struggle and seize it.
 - Coordinate and give visibility, strength and solidarity to national and international inhabitants' activities and to their associations.
 - Contribute to the search of development models being alternative to neo-liberalism and to its negative consequences for the world countries, on the grounds of a new leading role of the public sector in relation to the civil society.

- Analysing from WNW case
 1. Opening structural boundaries and facilitating involvement of local stakeholders through establishing relationship between local and international level
 2. Promoting socially just urban development and governance, specifically with obtaining resources

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya: Contribution to UDP



□ Opening Structural Boundaries (Blackmore and Ison, 1998)



Involvement of local stakeholders through establishing local and international contacts (IAI as a facilitator)

Case Study; W Nairobi W! Campaign, Kenya:

Contribution to UDP

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□ Progressing Achievement of Social Justice

- **Social Justice** (Young, 1990)

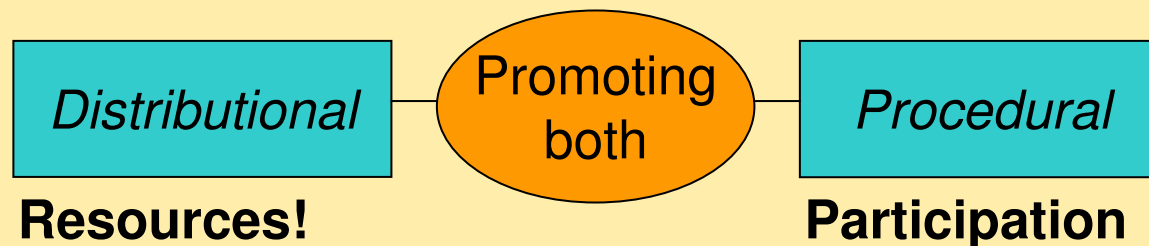
‘...the elimination of institutionalised domination and oppression’

- **Distributional**

‘the morally proper distribution of social benefits and burdens among society’s members’

- **Procedural**

‘participation in deliberation and decision-making’



Channel.1

The creation of People’s Fund
for land and housing

Channel.2

The participation of all involved parties,
first of all slum dwellers

Channel.3

Organise a meeting with other stakeholders

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- Strong connections with the UN
- Bringing the poor onto the global stage
- Recognition that local protection is insufficient, when cities are faced with the threats of globalisation (foreign debt, monetary parameters, etc)
- Focus on building policy, not just on carrying out projects
- The focus is on a shift in the power balance → focusing on the roots of the problem
- bottom-up work with grass-roots organisations
- Accessibility to petitions through the internet

Strengths

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- An attempt to 'overcome the rigid division between theory and practice' (through Urban Popular University)
- Independence
- Not focusing only on problems: also on the opportunities that they provide

“Foreign debt as a injustice but also as an opportunity for civil society and the local to join forces and to propose payment of the social debt by providing housing in poor countries.”

- Democratic decision-making within the alliance
- Large volunteer base

Weaknesses

- Power of the International Finance Institutions is not matched
- Power structures are very rigid, biased towards IFIs and private 'big business'
 - SAPs limit the available possibilities
- Funding is very concentrated on one source (Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme) although attempts to diversify are underway.
- System of decision-making is not transparent or institutionalised
- Under-representation of Sub-Saharan Africa?

IAI

Instead of improving living conditions in most cities, neoliberal globalization caused new problems stemming from the mercantilization of the land and basic services, as well as from wasting limited resources such as water...
...[it has] favoured the privatisation of public services all over the world and the transfer of elementary responsibilities to the local communities, both through the local authorities and through the organized community, **while the State provides only insufficient subvention**, concentrating only on welfare policies for the poor, whose numbers have risen everywhere during the last decade.

American Enterprise Institute Mission statement:

"to defend the principles and improve the institutions of American freedom and democratic capitalism-- **limited government, private enterprise**, individual liberty and responsibility, vigilant and effective defense and foreign policies, political accountability, and open debate."

“Another World is Possible”

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