

# Lisa Novacek ~ Empower Shack

[Empower Shack](#) from [Urban-Think Tank](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The Empower Shack project is directed by [Urban-Think Tank](#) and the local NGO [Ikhayalami](#) in collaboration with the BT-Section community and associated local and international partners. The project aims to develop a comprehensive and sustainable informal settlement upgrading through addressing their core components:

- a two-story housing prototype,
- participatory spatial planning,
- ecological landscape management,
- integrated livelihoods programming,

There is an ongoing pilot phase is focused on a cluster of 68 houses within the BT-Section of Khayelitsha to be completed in 2017.

Read more: <http://futurecapetown.com/watch-empower-shack>

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# Brandon G. Donnelly ~ How Megacities Are Changing The Map Of The World

In advance of his new book, titled [Connectography](#), Parag Khanna recently delivered an interesting TED Talk called, [How megacities are changing the map of the world](#). It's about 20 minutes long.

A lot of what is covered won't be new to this audience, but I like how he talks about the importance of urban connectivity, the shift from political to functional geography, and the idea that, in a megacity world, countries can actually be the suburbs of some cities.

One thing you might notice about the talk is how he glosses over both Canada and Europe. This is a reminder to me that if Canadian cities are going to continue to compete against the emerging megacities of the world, we are going to need to think at [the scale of the megalopolis](#). And a big part of that means a focus on extra-urban connectivity.

Read more: <http://brandondonnely.com/how-megacities>

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## **Megan Valley ~ Architecture Students Present Design Proposals For Affordable Housing Options**

Eight undergraduate architecture students, directed by Kim Rollings, assistant professor of architecture, presented design proposals Friday for a facility that will provide safe and affordable housing options for homeless people in South Bend.

“Permanent supportive housing [PSH] links safe, affordable housing with social support services that address challenges associated with chronic homelessness, addiction and other disabilities,” Rollings said in an email. “The facility in South Bend will be the area’s first permanent supportive housing, with 32 one-bedroom apartments and a variety of shared and support spaces, including outdoor space.”

Rollings said she and the University’s School of Architecture became involved in the PSH project when she heard about it through the St. Joseph County Health Improvement Alliance, where she spoke about community-based teaching and research.

“I proposed the student project to the South Bend Heritage Foundation, who will own the local supportive housing facility, and Alliance Architects, the local firm designing the building,” she said. “They were very interested in learning from the students, as well as providing the students with a real-world project experience.”

Read more: <http://ndsmcobserver.com/architecture-students/>

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# Luis Triveno ~ How Latin America's Housing Policies Are Changing The Lives Of Urban Families

In an effort to harness the benefits of urbanization and improve the living conditions of the urban poor, Latin American countries have experimented with housing subsidies. Now that the region has several decades of experience under its belt, it is time to look back and ask: Have subsidies worked? What kind of impact have they had on the lives of lower-income residents? Moving forward, how can cities pay for ongoing urban renewal?

To address those questions and share their experiences, officials in charge of designing and implementing national housing policies in eight countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru) recently met in Washington DC, along with representatives from the World Bank, [Cities Alliance](#), [the Urban Institute](#), and [Wharton's International Housing Finance Program](#).

Looking into the future, while the discussions covered a lot of ground, at least three major issues caught my attention.

*1. How to align the national level policies and programs with local level decision making in urban planning and management?*

Each country's housing policy has its own unique scale, context, political circumstances and measure of progress, but a number of common challenges were clear: How to implement national housing policies when working with local governments with very diverse technical and financial capacities; and avoid and/or manage the costs of urban sprawl (both formal and informal)? The Urban

Institute synthesized the [US experience working with block grants](#) channeled from Washington to local governments for community development and housing so that participants could see what best fits their realities. Although the contexts are different, all governments were interested in learning from what has worked (or has not).

Read more: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/how-latin-america-s-housing-policies>

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# WHO ~ Urban Health: Major Opportunities For Improving Global Health Outcomes, Despite Persistent Health Inequities



New data on the health of city-dwellers in almost 100 countries show that as the world's urban population continues to grow, health inequities - especially between the richest and poorest urban populations - are a persistent challenge, according to a report by WHO and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

For example, only half of households in urban areas of 91 countries with comparable data have access to piped water, with the richest 20% of households being 2.7 times more likely to have access to piped water than the poorest 20%. In Africa, this ratio is closer to 17 times.

About 3.7 billion people live in cities today. A further 1 billion people will be added by 2030, with 90% of the growth being in low- and middle-income countries. This intensifies the need to realize the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of ensuring universal health coverage (UHC): that all people obtain

the health services they need without suffering financial hardship when paying for them, by 2030.

### *Health inequalities undermine progress*

The report finds that in 79 low- and middle-income countries, children in the poorest one fifth of urban households are twice as likely on average to die before their fifth birthday compared with children in the richest fifth. In nearly 9 of 10 countries for which comparable data was available, the urban poor did not achieve the Millennium Development Goal target for reducing under-five mortality.

Read more: <http://who.int/urban-health-report/en/>

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## **Srinath Perur ~ Story Of Cities #11: The Reclamation Of Mumbai - From The Sea, And Its People?**

Of all the ways in which Mumbai has been called a city of dreams, at least one is literal. It is sometime in the late 18th century, and the engineers of the East India Company in Bombay are losing a battle against the sea. They're dumping boatloads of stone into Worli creek to build an embankment, but it has collapsed once and it collapses again.

That's when an engineer named Ramji Shivji Prabhu has a dream: the goddess Mahalakshmi and two others inform him their stone idols lie submerged in the creek. Can some space be made for them on land? Prabhu has them fished out and installed in a shrine built nearby on land gifted by the administration. The wall holds.

This story was found in a *bakhar*, a Marathi literary form that recounts colourful histories, and may seem a little fanciful for our times. But that embankment - the Hornby Vellard, completed in 1784 - was very real and can be said to have

given shape to the modern city of Mumbai (the official name since 1995). It was built at the initiative of William Hornby, then governor of Bombay, and over the next few decades was followed by the construction of causeways to link the seven islets separated by sea and swamp.

Read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/mumbai>