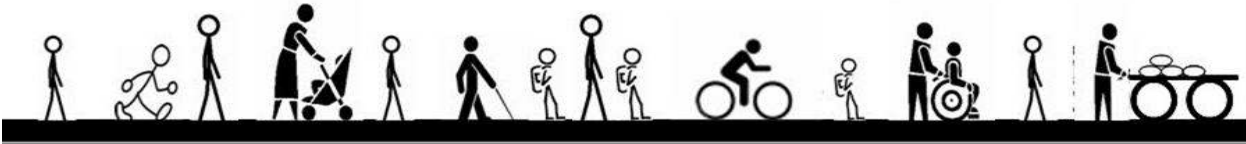


What's Happening **in Bangalore ?**

Meeting the challenge of Protecting Lives,
Livelihoods, Public spaces and Our Commons!



Public Workshop – July 4th, Bangalore

Venue : Institute for Agricultural Technologists, Queen's Road, Bangalore

Date : July 4th, Saturday

Time : 10.30pm – 4.30pm

Session Plan

Session Details	Time
Introduction to the workshop	10.30am – 10.45am
<i>Conversations for Sharing</i> Each session will have a short presentation followed by discussions	
Threat to public spaces, access and living heritage*	10.45am – 11.30am
Impacts on Lives and Livelihoods	11.30am – 12.15pm
Planning and Design	12.15pm – 1.00pm
Law and Public Policy	1.00pm – 1.45pm
Lunch – 1.45pm – 2.30pm	
<i>Conversations for Action</i>	
Introduction to session	2.30pm – 2.45pm
Focus Group discussions	2.45pm – 3.45pm
Reporting back and Summary	3.45pm – 4.30pm

For details, please contact -
hu.bangalore@gmail.com or 98802 83974 / 2671 3559

>>>> Read about the workshop in the next page >>>>

About the workshop

In many ways it might seem that Bangalore city has caught 'fire' and any attempt to respond is merely 'fire-fighting'. Traders, home-owners, street vendors and slum dwellers are being dislocated without appropriate compensation due to a slew of infrastructure projects. Hundreds of trees are being felled everywhere, for projects that may or may not meet their proposed objectives. The approach adopted in executing urban infrastructure projects in Bangalore is clearly brazen and largely undemocratic – all in the name of the city's development. But whose development are we talking about?

In this context, one can assume that it is best to resign to adjusting to a life in the city that is, at best, a compromise for some and a struggle for most. It might seem a vain exercise to invite you to a workshop to discuss what each of us can do about this; or to appreciate the implications of various laws and policies for urban planning and infrastructure development; or to devise plans for collective action.

Why should one invest time in an exercise of such 'futility'?

Consider this: If the interventions taken by various groups and individuals over the past several years were missing, the BBMP would have implemented its short-sighted road-widening scheme launched in 2005. As a result almost all our trees that we still enjoy would have disappeared. Many or all the houses and businesses in about 91 streets would have been demolished, and in their place there would be sterile, wide and highly dangerous roads. Almost all street vending zones would be flushed out – causing joblessness and povertisation for thousands of urban poor. Hundreds would be injured and killed in road accidents, leaving behind suffering families. It could happen to you or anyone you know.

The campaign and legal initiatives of Environment Support Group, Hasiru Usiru and others, have not only contended the basis of the reckless development projects in the city, but has actually made many people talk about and discuss its implications. Laws such as the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, which even bureaucrats were unaware of, are now common discussion points. Hundreds have mobilised across Bangalore questioning how and why a few bureaucrats, at best, have decided to implement projects without consulting the wider public. Women, children and the elderly have come out in protest against encroachment of parks and public spaces by infrastructure development and commercial exploitation. The city is on fire, no doubt. But the fire is not spreading. On the contrary, infrastructure agencies are on the defensive, searching for arguments to justify why they initiated certain projects, running for cover when asked why trees are being felled recklessly, and apologetic, rather than aggressive, when questioned about forcible displacement of urban poor communities.

Contrary to popular belief, all hope is not lost. Just imagine what would be the result if these hundreds of people could transform into thousands?

This workshop is being conducted with the idea that a more informed public across the city is far better, than merely a few. We are proceeding with the intention that hundreds should file RTI applications to question governmental decisions than merely a few dozens. We believe in the possibility that IF thousands to come out to protest against the alignment of the Metro through Lalbagh and Lakshman Rao boulevard, even now, no Government would have the strength to defend its illegal actions of selling Lalbagh (*Yes, Government has ordered a piece of Lalbagh to be sold, for a start*). The Race Course can still be preserved as an open space; street trees can still be a part of Bangalore's landscape.

All these progressive steps need you to come out and work together intelligently, creatively and cooperatively.

So please step out. Come participate in a workshop to understand *what's happening to our city and what we can together do about it*. It is that simple, really. Stepping out and making time for meaningful conversation and progressive actions.

