

HOW AFFORDABLE HOMES FACILITATE WELLBEING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

REALL HAS BEEN WORKING IN INDIA TO BUILD A COMMERCIALLY VIABLE AFFORDABLE HOMES MOVEMENT SINCE 2000, PARTNERING WITH SSNS (NIRMAN) AND SPARC.



THEVAR WAS ABLE TO CHANGE HIS LIFE AND CARVE OUT A CAREER OF HIS OWN AFTER MOVING INTO AN AFFORDABLE HOME

BEGINNINGS

Thevar was born and brought up in Dharavi, India's largest slum. Thevar and his family lived in a one-room temporary structure made from metal sheeting, with little access to water and toilet facilities, and many of the houses would flood.

Thevar was 10 years old when his father told him that they would be leaving their house and moving to a transit camp. Following highly participatory discussions between the community and SPARC, their slum neighbourhood was about to be demolished and a new apartment building would be constructed in its place. At the time, he didn't realise that this new building would become his new home.

A NEW HOME

In 2010, Thevar moved into his family's new home. The apartments were constructed by Reall and SSNS, as part of the [Rajiv Indira](#) project.

In India, there are official restrictions on the height of building construction, but builders can be granted additional development rights that allow them to build higher if they also construct

housing for slum dwellers. These rights can then be used on site or sold to other developers for profit. SSNS has harnessed this scheme to generate funds for the construction of permanent homes for families such as Thevar's, who previously lived on the project site.

The housing was granted to the families at no cost, to ensure that the most vulnerable people can benefit. Without the project, it would never have been possible for Thevar or his family to move out of Dharavi slum, as the cost of renting within a building was too high for his parents' earnings.

"THERE WAS MORE PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING."

THE IMPACT

After moving, Thevar witnessed a huge shift in the mental wellbeing of his family and neighbours. His parents stopped fighting and everyone in his family became more relaxed. His mother had her own place to cook and the children had space to play.

Owning their own home gave his family the liberty to make the space

comfortable and their own. There were no conflicts between neighbours, and residents were motivated to keep the building clean, prioritising health and hygiene.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

For Thevar, living in the new apartment meant that he was able to have a separate space in the house to study. There he could concentrate effectively, and despite the interruption to his education of moving to a transit camp, he did well in his exams, went to college and is now a qualified engineer.

A CHANCE TO BUILD A NEW CAREER

After working as an engineer for a few years Thevar chose to re-train in yoga. He now works full time as a yoga instructor and continues to teach engineering at a nearby college on weekends. This career change was only made possible through his family owning their home. Without the pressure of rental payments, Thevar was free to experiment with his time and build a career that would not have been possible for him before.