



Social entrepreneur | Tech Innovator | Humanitarian Advisor. Integrating strategic and analytical skills with field insights to take ideas from concept to project implementation. Managing research and programs related to innovative solutions for community based implementation models.

Leading mHS GLOBAL IMPACT, an interdisciplinary action-research team that focuses on inclusive development, disaster preparedness and response, sustainable and resilience in rural and rapidly urbanizing contexts.

- Conceptualizing, planning and executing projects and strategic planning exercises in various geographies and with various stakeholders, from governments to multilateral agencies.
- Providing strategic advice and supporting on-field implementation of multi million USD NGOs, governmental and multilateral agencies programs on rehabilitation projects, urban and climate disaster mitigation, community engagement processes, housing finance projects.
- Secured funding and collaborations with a wide range of agencies, government boards, foundations and multilateral agencies viz. MIT-JPAL, Clinton Global Initiative, World Bank, Ashoka, Cisco USA, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Ford Foundation, SEWA Mahila Housing Trust, etc..
- Communicating and sharing mHS's philosophy and insights from fieldwork in universities and at conferences/events in India, Europe and US. Organizing workshops with key stakeholders including foundations, universities, policy makers and regulatory boards.
- Publishing research papers, reports, articles and blogs to contribute to the debate on inclusive cities and disaster risk reduction measures in low-income contexts.

POSITIONS/PROJECTS [selection]

2020>now mHS GLOBAL IMPACT | Netherlands **Co-Founder and Director**

2009-2020 mHS CITY LAB | India **Co-Founder and Director**

mHS mission is to make cities more inclusive, sustainable and resilient through design, affordability and community participation.

- 18>now **NEEV** Project Lead. The creation of NEEV required the creation of a new startup, the MHS Global Foundation. From initial concept to fundraising, building the team and secure partnerships, product software architecture and development, implementation with Partners. NEEV is a digital tool and project that aims to scale to reach millions of residents of informal settlements in developing countries, making their buildings more sustainable and resilient. Secured over half a million USD for the initial phase.
- 15-18 **MIT-J-PAL Study** Designed and implemented with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and SAATH (an Indian NGO) a study to evaluate the seismic resilience and quality of informal housing through technology. Developed the strategy and methodology to collect and elaborate data, lead and coordinate between agencies and on field in India.
- 14-15 **ek-SHELTER** Designed and produced a tent to serve the homeless population living on pavements. Launched a successful crowdfunding campaign for production of 150 units and with a local NGO distributed to over 100 families. Stimulated debate on homeless, set a precedent for possible short-term solutions.
- 2014 **Low Rise High Dense (LRHD) Proposal** Project Lead. Developed a study on low-rise high-density typologies later presented to the Delhi Urban Arts Commission as alternative to the high-rise development that Government is considering and implementing in slum clearance.
- 2014 **TOD & Equity Study** Led the critique of the draft Transit Oriented Development policy of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). Developed a concept design for a pilot site based on stakeholder consultations, addressing issues of inclusion equity and affordable housing. Coordinated the research across specialists to develop site programming and schematic design options.
- 11-13 **World Bank/National Housing Bank** Co-led an 8-people team to inform the Bank on-lending credit facility for incremental housing of USD 100M USD and obtain internal approvals. The two-year support studies assigned a) *demand and supply of low-income housing* b) *social and environment assessment for housing finance*, required multiple-city surveys and interaction with governmental agencies and financial institutions.
- 2013 **Ashoka ratings for affordable housing** Directed the team to provide key technical and community advice for

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the Ashoka team and guided the development of methodology for metric development. The result was a rating system for affordable housing projects initiated by the private sector.

- 10-12 **Building Resilience in self-built Environment.** Project co-lead. Pioneered an innovative financial product to combine access to finance and technical design assistance to the self-construction context of low-income communities in India. Implemented and directed a 18-months project after securing a partnership with BASIX, leading microfinance agency. Raised financial support by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and Ford Foundation (approx. 180,000 USD).
- 2012 **Ranchi Study** Project lead for feasibility study for SEWA MHT to improve housing and living conditions in the informal settlements of Ranchi, India. Facilitated field interviews and developed recommendations for housing and water & sanitation programs that were to inform and secure a three-year program for approximately half a million USD with Oak Foundation, UK.
- 2012 **In Situ Slum Redevelopment Project, Sunder Nagari** Co-led the design of a pilot scheme to be presented to the Indian National Government as part of the ambitious Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) policy. Facilitated initial topographic and social surveys (over 1500 families). Coordinated mHS team and NGO field personnel over three months of community interaction, define design schemes, including phases for implementation and cost estimations. Project expected to rehabilitate 1500 households in a settlement in East Delhi and has been executed in collaboration with community based NGO Mahila Housing SEWA Trust.
- 2010 **Urban Study: Savda Ghevra -Rethinking Resettlement Colonies** Co-Led the study on planning issues for resettlement colonies in Delhi. Detailed research of Savda Ghevra RC in Delhi.
- 09-11 **Modular Shelter for homeless** Project Lead. Conceptualized and implemented an innovative design for the homeless shelter in Delhi and advocated with municipalities financially sustainable business models to manage them. The two shelters accommodated over 90 people each night over three years.

OTHER POSITIONS

- 15>16 **Consultant for More Than Shelter**, German NGO, to implement innovative projects in Za'atari, Jordan Syrian refugee Camp. Lead and coordinated a team based in Germany and Jordan to interface with other agencies work on camp (mainly UNHRC and Oxfam).
- 2014 **Consultant for Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI)**. Seconded to the Philippines by HFHI to support the National Habitat Office in their response to typhoon Haiyan. Advice and monitor the implementation of the multi-Millions USD project aiming to rebuild 100.000 houses. Interaction with Governmental bodies and other agencies.
- 11>13 **Housing Expert for UTTIPEC** [agency within the Delhi Development Authority (DDA)]: Advised on projects and policies related to their mission *Slum free India*.
- 11>13 **Consultant for World Bank** [mHS hired as technical consultant]: co-lead two critical studies as part of the 100 Millions USD program for the *Informal Housing Finance Project*.
- 10>13 **External Advisor to Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB)**: Particularly as technical expert for projects related to winter shelters for the homeless.
- 02>09 **Design Architect**: From schematic design to detailed drawings, approval processes, coordination with clients, site coordination and edification. Worked on a variety of projects @ **RK-DS Romi Khosla Design Studio** (Delhi, India 2005), **SCDA Architects** (Singapore 2006), **CBT ARCHITECTS** (Boston, USA 2008) and own practice (Italy).
- 2004 **Intern at Grameen Bank**, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

PUBLIC LECTURES/ TEACHING [selection]

- 18>now **Teaching Staff** at Polytechnic of Milan for the Master *Design for Development*, Milan. Lecture on informality, technologies and projects.
- 2021 **SIL- Social Innovation**: Teacher at Milan University (UNI). Presented concepts of social innovations and tools (canvas, fast prototyping, lean approach, human centric design, etc.) over a four weeks course.
- 2020 **The Seasonal Arrival City**: Lecture at a workshop on informality and migration at ETH Zurich, Switzerland.
- 2019 **Social Entrepreneurship**: Lecture at Master on Start-up and Innovation by *il Sole 24Ore*, Milan.

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- 2018 **TEDx Chennai:** Speaker. Presented insights on informality and digital innovation @ larger TEDx event in India.
- 2017 **Contested Spaces and the Critical Practice of Urban Design:** Lecture for the Master on *Building and Urban Design in Development* at UCL, Development Planning Unit, London.
- Risk Creation in Urban Areas:** Panelist at Urban ARC 2017 | *The City in Transition*, Annual research conference at the Indian Institute of Human Settlements, (IIHS) Bangalore.
- Milan CSR and Social Innovation Conference:** Panelist at *Startup and Social Innovation* Session, Milan.
- Building Resilience in Informal settlements in Indian cities:** Panelist at the *Cities for Inclusive Prosperity* Conference at the Urban Thinker Campus, NIUA, India.
- Confronting informality:** Lecture at Delft University Symposium on Informality.
- 2014 **Empowering Communities through Urban Planning and Design:** Panel session at City Alliance, Delhi.
- Low-Rise High-Density Housing Options for Low-income Neighborhoods:** Presentation made to Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC).
- From Homeless Shelters to Urban Design for Inclusive Cities:** Public Presentation at *DesignxDesign*, Alliance Françoise, New Delhi.
- 2012 **Social inclusion and Incremental Housing in Indian Cities:** Co-presenter at the Homegrown Cities Conference, organized by the JJ School of Architecture, Lafarge & URBZ. Project Mentor for student team. Mumbai.
- 2011 **Assets for the Urban Poor by Design:** Strengthening Urban Planning and Design in the Global South: Roundtable Table discussant invited at Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, New York.
- 2010 **Portfolio of Housing Solutions:** Presentations made to the Ministry of Housing Kumari Shelja, Secretary Kiran Dhingra at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi August 2010.

PUBLICATIONS/ WRITINGS [selection]

- 2019 **The resilience of informal settlements -addressing quality in the built environment.** An article on incremental housing and informality (with Rakhi Mehra, Amarinder Arora). Published on ISOCARP Review.
- 2018 **Digital Tools for Low-Income Housing in Indian Cities.** A research paper on mHS work in digital technology (with Rakhi Mehra, Swati Janu). Published in the Facts Reports Journal 'Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in the City' by the Veolia Institute and The Future Society at Harvard Kennedy School.
- 12>16 Regular contributor for **URB.im**, blog on inclusive development, Dallant Network and the Ford Foundation.
- 2014 **Brick by Brick.** Documentary funded and published by Universitas Forum, online journal with thematic focus on Innovative Practices in Urban Development, University of Winnipeg, USA.
- 2013 Series of **Manuals for local builders and masons**, mHS CITY LAB.
- 2012 **Self Construction.** Report on the implementation of the project Design Home Solution (DHS) supported by Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. micro Home Solution (with, Mehra Rakhi, Naik Mukta, Van Noppen Aden).micro Home Solutions.

SEMINARS/ WORKSHOPS [selection]

- 2013 **Acara Workshop:** University of Minnesota. Advised the design and facilitated a workshop in Delhi by mHS for a group of 25 students. Coordinate with local NGOs to exercises including field visits with partner NGO to immerse students to issues faced by residents in informal settlements in Delhi.
- 2012 **International Workshop Paradigm Shift in Housing:** Co-chaired and designed the workshop theme and agenda for the interdisciplinary workshop co-organized by mHS in partnership with Centre for Policy Research (CPR) at Ford Foundation offices in Delhi. Themes focused on issues of safety, land tenure, finance and access to basic services in non-formal settlements; participants from local government, technical experts and funding institutions.

REFERRED ARTICLES [selection]

- 2019 Safe and Quality Housing at Your Digital Fingertips. URBANET, digital blog.
- 2013 *Lessons in Affordability:* The Mint and Wall Street Journal Newspaper.



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Traditional Livelihoods and Community Centered Urban Development. Mehra Rakhi, Naik Mukta, Randolph Greg. *Context: Cultural and Livelihoods, Pages 85-90.*

Contextualizing the promises of Social Entrepreneurship: A case study of Micro Home Solutions, a social enterprise in the low-income housing sector in India. London School of Economics and Political Science.

- 2012 Kerr, William R., and Alexis Brownell. *micro Home Solutions: A Social Housing Initiative in India.* **Harvard Business School Case 813-092**, September 2012. (Revised February 2013).
- 2011 Global Urbanist. *The Big Idea: Global Spread of Affordable Housing.* Compiled and edited by Scott Anderson for Next Billion and Rochelle Beck for Ashoka Full Economic Citizenship.
Design with the other 90%. Hewitt-Cooper Museum Publication, New York.
Urban Housing as a Social Enterprise. Nisha Kumar Kulkarni. Searchlight South Asia, Intellectcap Urban Poverty.
- 2010 *Hands of Our Houses:* Rahul Srivastava, Matias Echanove. NY Times Article.
Designing Future of Housing for India's Poor: FastCompany.com.

AWARDS/ HONORS [selection]

- 2019 **NASSCOM Social Innovation**, winner, financial Inclusion award for 'NEEV'.
- 2016 **Architects sans Frontieres UK**, Commendation Prize for Design Home Solutions Project.
HUDCO, Commendation Prize for Design Home Solutions Project.
- 2015 **Internet.org Innovation Challenge in India**, Impact Award Winner under *Migrants-* Technical Tools for Migrants involved in Low-Cost Construction; 25,000 USD.
Oxford Social Innovation Case Competition (OSICC), SKOLL Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, SAID, Oxford. *ekSHELTER* Project (shelter for the homeless) selected as one of the three featured cases.
- 2012 **Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)**, Received complimentary membership. Commitment on *Partnering for Quality & Safety in Self-Construction Housing.*
CITIES EXHIBITION, Hewitt-Cooper Museum, New York. Modular shelter and pilot project on Design Home Solution selected for *Design with the other 90%*, exhibition and publication.
- 2011 **ASHOKA CHANGEMAKERS & Omidyar Network Challenge:** *Property Rights: Identity, Dignity & Opportunity for All.* Finalist out of over two hundred entries.
- 2010 **ASHOKA CHANGEMAKERS & Rockefeller:** *Sustainable Urban Housing: Collaborating for Liveable and Inclusive Cities* Competition. Finalist and invited for discussion in Washington.
- 2009 **Harvard Business School Contest:** Rent-to-ownership business model for low-income housing, Semi-finalist. [Co-founder of mHS Rakhi Mehra received HBS Social Enterprise Fellowship Award for 2011 for USD 25,000.]

EDUCATION/ TRAININGS

- 2011/15 Global Social Entrepreneur (GSE) program, **Yale School of Management**, New Haven, USA.
- 2002 **Master Degree in Architecture** Polytechnic of Milan, Italy.
- 1995 **School Of Art** Liceo Artistico A.Frattini Varese, Italy.

LANGUAGES & SKILLS

Italian, mother tongue.

English, level C2 Proficient (CEFR).

French, level B1/B2 (CEFR).

Good proficiency in Office and **Adobe** suite.

Familiar with some coding languages (**python, C#**)

Fair understanding of the fundamentals of computer science and software design.

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