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# Psychosocial Perspectives on Peacebuilding

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# Chapter 2
# Transforming Conflict, Changing Society: Psychosocial Programming in Indian Jammu and Kashmir

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## Introduction

Societies emerging from violent political conflict confront myriad challenges as they endeavour to heal the wounds inflicted on individuals and on the community, and to establish amity between divided and hostile groups so that violence does not recur. In so doing, they come up against the economic and social inequities and power asymmetries that may have provoked the conflict in the first place. Lasting peace cannot be secured without addressing these structural imbalances. This can be identified as another form of violence, which Galtung (1969) calls structural violence, that is violence caused not by direct physical harm but by systems of unequal power that structure unequal life chances such that a person's potential is unrealised. Recognising its role in conflict, Galtung (1985) notes that structural violence could just as well be taken as the point of departure for development studies as for peace studies. Understood from the human capabilities paradigm, which asserts that development must mean an enhancement of human capacities, a widening of choices, and an expansion of freedoms and assurance of human rights (Kumar 2006), it is evident that development, peacebuilding and social transformation are intertwined in the process of recovery following violent conflict.

Based on the findings of a research study conducted in Kashmir, which has been the site of political violence since 1989, this chapter explores the potential for psychosocial programmes to make the relapse into conflict and violence less likely by facilitating social change that promotes development, social harmony and social justice. Kashmir is commonly used to refer to the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and Indian Jammu and Kashmir, the location of this study, will henceforth be referred to as JK in this chapter.

Psychosocial programming in JK is a little over a decade old. The earliest interventions aimed to bring relief to orphaned children and widowed women, and were

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focused on trauma and mental disorder. Today the field encompasses a wide variety of programmes spanning the mental health, community-developmental and social justice spectrum (Galappatti 2003). They are psychosocial in the sense that they recognise that there is a close, ongoing and circular connection between psychological aspects of people's experience and their wider social experience (Psychosocial Working Group 2003). International organisations with experience in systematic and professional psychosocial programming in other parts of the world have also entered the field. In the initial years, a chaotic proliferation of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the perception that these had money-making rather than humanitarian intent, as well as the fear of "outsider" influence on Kashmiri culture and values, contributed to a public wariness. The earthquake that ravaged northern areas of Kashmir in 2005 brought in humanitarian aid that helped change perceptions and now psychosocial programmes are well established.

## Background

They make desolation, and call it peace (Kashmiri poet Agha Shahid Ali cited in Ali 1997, p. 21).

The region of Kashmir is divided between Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir (Population 12,548,926, 2011 Census) and Pakistan administered Kashmir (PAK). India's independence from British rule in 1947 was accompanied by the partition of the country into secular India and Muslim Pakistan. The dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan is central to their foundational identities and wars have been fought in 1948, 1965 and 1999 over this. India maintains that JK is an integral part of the country since the Hindu raja of the princely state acceded to India in 1947 seeking help when invaded by tribal raiders from Pakistan. Pakistan claims it as a Muslim majority state. The promise of a plebiscite giving the people of the state a choice of joining India or Pakistan never took place and the ceasefire line that now demarcates PAK and JK has become the de-facto border. Being a Muslim majority state, Kashmir is central to the idea of India as a pluralistic, secular nation and equally important to the idea of Pakistan as an Islamic nation. The politics of nationhood readily collapse into competing Hindu and Muslim fundamentalisms in both countries.

JK comprises three regions with distinct cultures and languages. According to statistics based on the 2001 Census India District profiles, these are the largely Hindu and Sikh (68.8 %) region of Jammu, the predominantly Buddhist (45.89 %) and (Shia) Muslim (47.4 %) region of Ladakh, and the predominantly (Sunni) Muslim (97.16 %) valley of Kashmir. The latter has been at the heart of the insurgency, which spread to Muslim-dominated areas of the Jammu region. This social heterogeneity in JK finds reflection in heterogeneous political aspirations. In general, the non-Muslim minorities want a Kashmir that is part of a secular India. Many Muslims want an independent secular Kashmir or a Muslim Kashmir united with Pakistan.

India asserts that the people have exercised their democratic rights in the successive elections held in JK since 1947. However, the experience of rigged elections, the systematic erosion of constitutional guarantees to separate status of JK as enshrined in Article 370 of the Indian constitution, and the central government's political manipulation led to an upsurge of popular feeling against India and culminated in the cry for azaadi (freedom). The policies of the Indian state have thus been crucial to the eruption and spread of militancy in JK. According to Bose (2005), the defining theme of democratic India's policy towards Kashmir since 1947 is "unfortunately the purposeful denial of democratic rights" (p. 53). Thus, militancy began in 1989 with hundreds of young men going across the border to Pakistan for arms training. Over time, the ferocious rivalry between pro-azaadi and pro-Pakistan militant groups and the brutal counter-insurgency measures unleashed by the Indian state led to psychosocial conditions that were fertile ground for threatened identity polarisation around Islam and the absorption of militancy into the global Islamic jihad (for further reading on the Kashmir conflict see Ganguly 1997; Schofield 2004; Puri 1993).

The toll of this political violence has been high. The approximate fatality figures range from 40,000 according to government sources to 80,000 according to civil rights groups. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, the JK government's count is 38,228 fatalities from 1990 to 2007. Its own figure compiled from news reports for the period 1988 to May 2012 is 43,247 (South Asia Terrorism Portal 2012). Human rights groups and local NGOs put the total figure at 84,000 (Pal 2006). Most commentators quote a figure around 70,000 (Chatterji 2010). It is estimated that there are 32,400 widowed women and 97,000–100,000 orphaned children due to the conflict (Dabla 2010), and 1550 "half-widows", that is women whose husbands have disappeared but not yet been declared deceased (Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons 2011).

Numerous human rights violations have been documented including massacres, targeted killings, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual violence and intimidation by both government security forces and militants (People's Union for Civil Liberties 1993; Amnesty International 1999; Human Rights Watch 2006; Public Commission on Human Rights 2006; Chatterji et al. 2009; Bhatia et al. 2011). A survey conducted by Medecins Sans Frontieres (De Jong et al. 2006) on mental health in the Kashmir valley also noted that frequent cordon and search operations, frisking, round-up raids, physical and psychological maltreatment at the hand of military forces was widespread. They found that one in six respondents had been legally or illegally detained and of these 76 % was tortured in custody. Although sexual violence was not easily talked about, 11 % said they had been victims of sexual assault and one in seven claimed to have witnessed rape.

An exhaustive door-to-door survey conducted in Baramulla district of the Kashmir valley by the Jammu & Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (2007) found that of the 5106 people killed during the period 1990–2007, 67 % were in the age group of 18–35 years of age and 96 % were male. The deaths of civilians accounted for 49 % and of militants for 44 % of those killed. There were 408 custodial killings of which 72 % were civilian and 343 cases of enforced disappearance of which 72 % were

civilian. Regarding the identity of perpetrators, 55 % were identified as belonging to government forces and 8 % as militants. The rest were unidentified, but it is conjectured that 24 % were targeted shootings carried out by "renegades" or ikhwanis" working for government forces. "Renegade" is the term popular in JK for surrendered militants who become counter-insurgents supporting the government security forces. They are also called ikhwanis after the militant group, Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen, to which many initially belonged. The authors conclude that civilians have been seen by the state as legitimate targets in the war against militancy (Jammu & Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society 2007).

The toll on mental and social health has been enormous. A survey on the mental health consequences of this violence found that 33 % suffered from psychological distress and that fear was a pervasive problem for children and adults alike (De Jong et al. 2006). A common refrain heard across the Kashmir valley is that when people left their homes in the morning, they could not be certain whether they would return alive in the evening (Husain 2002). Psychiatrists coined the term "midnight knock syndrome" to describe the commonly seen anxiety states arising from night raids by security forces. The number of people consulting at the government psychiatric hospital rose from 18,000 in 1999 to 48,000 in 2003, and reports from psychiatrists in the Kashmir valley quote an alarming rise in suicide rates and substance abuse (Khan 2009). Some psychiatrists estimate that 55 % of the population in Kashmir valley suffers from some form of psychiatric disorder (Altaf 2012).

There has been massive internal displacement of approximately 160,000 Kashmiri Hindus from the Kashmir valley (Evans 2002), as well as of Muslims from border districts. A culture of fear and impunity prevails fostered by laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which gives the armed forces wide-ranging powers to detain and shoot on suspicion and confers immunity from prosecution and the Public Safety Act (PSA), dubbed a lawless law (Amnesty International 2011) which permits police to detain without trial, sometimes for years.

Currently, militant violence has reduced considerably and a peace process is underway. A significant development is that free and fair electoral processes have been established and the last assembly elections in 2008 saw a high voter turnout even in bastions of militant separatist sentiment. Analysts concluded that people voted because they wanted issues of governance to be addressed and further, their votes brought in a coalition of centrist parties rather than parties that adopted extreme positions (Puri 2009). In 2011, full panchayat (local bodies) elections were held successfully after 33 years with the voter turnout reported to be nearly 80% (Editorial, EPW, 2012).

But this did not mean that the political issue of separatism and the alienation of the people from the centre had ended (Chaudhary 2009). These are evident in the frequent agitations on the streets taking the form of stone pelting mobs of youth. Typically, the triggers are perceived threats to Muslim interests and human rights violations by the security forces. The situation therefore continues to be volatile and the state has been rocked by massive protests in the streets and hartals (a form of political protest where shops are shut and work suspended) in 2008 (against proposal to give land to a Hindu shrine), 2009 (triggered by the alleged rape and murder of two women by

security forces) and in 2010 (triggered by the deaths of three civilian men killed by the Army and faked as militants killed in an encounter). This uprising saw the Kashmir valley locked in hartals for 4–5 months. More than 100 youth were killed in police shooting. The opposition leadership revoked violence as a means of resistance and vowed to carry on their agitation for a separate Kashmir through non-violent means. An alarmed Indian all-party parliamentary delegation visited the state in September 2010 and acknowledged the gravity and depth of alienation. The Indian government promised to expedite economic development and create employment opportunities for disaffected youth, and appointed a team of interlocutors who reported on their discussion with wide sections of Kashmiri society and proposed the contours of a political solution (Group of Interlocutors for J&K 2011).

The state continues to maintain a highly militarised presence despite the decline in militancy. Police sources declared the number of militants active in JK to be 500 (Times of India, January 3, 2011). It is estimated that there are approximately 500,000–700,000 security force personnel deployed in JK both along the international border and in counter-insurgency making it one of the most highly militarised regions in the world (Public Commission on Human Rights 2006; Navlakha 2011). Parrey (2010) has commented:

There is a bunker every few hundred metres and a camp for every few villages. There are so many security checks and so many orders to produce ID proofs that the whole of Kashmir is transformed into a jail for the natives … To the ordinary Kashmiri … the nature and memory of the relationship the people share with the security force is such that in a common space the former is reduced to an inferior class, further enraging the natives who see such degradation in their own land as one of the worst possible disgraces. (p. 49)

Under these circumstances, all sectors of society have suffered. There had been a collapse of health and education infrastructure, which is slowly being picked up by the private sector. The economy, largely dependent on horticulture, floriculture, sericulture, animal husbandry, handicrafts and tourism, was shattered (Mahapatra 2009). Frequent political disturbances impede stable recovery. On the human front, more than two decades of political violence have damaged the social support structures that once sustained the community materially and psychologically and have created an emotional climate of insecurity and distrust.

## Methodology

### Focus

The objective of the case study was to determine the impact of psychosocial projects on peacebuilding, development and social transformation in the context of political violence in JK. In order to meet this objective, three projects were selected for in-depth analysis. They were selected on the basis of diversity of sectors of intervention and representation of differences along lines of gender, ethnicity, age, trauma and assumed political inclination. They were "homegrown" and challenging in terms of

developing local leadership and capacity while being less insulated from the politics of their location and had been in existence long enough to have generated outcomes of interest to the case study. The term homegrown means developed largely as local Kashmir-based initiatives. The APDP and Help Foundation originated and developed as local initiatives whereas Athwaas was conceived and supported by WISCOMP (a Delhi-based organisation) but developed in directions determined by its core group of local Kashmiri women. Being local initiatives, the organisations and the people involved were vulnerable to the suspicious and polarising politics typical of conflict zones. International organisations, e.g. MSF are more insulated from this given their so-called outsider position. To work under such conditions and emerge as capable and confident and be recognised as community leaders is challenging. Apart from these three projects, interviews were conducted with people in leadership positions in a further five projects. Brief descriptions of the three projects follow.

## Projects

### Athwaas Project, Purkho Camp Samanbal (Jammu)

The Athwaas (meaning "handshake") project is an initiative of Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and was launched in 2001 with the aim to rebuild trust between Hindu, Sikh and Muslim Kashmiri women, identify and nourish peace constituencies, and articulate the concerns of women to policymakers. It aimed to provide a context where instead of being caught up in a syndrome of victimology the women could become empowered and their own agents of change (Basu 2004). Through an intensive engagement with one another's differing realities, the Athwaas members began a personal journey of peacebuilding leading up to devising their own projects, suited to their particular skills and interests. These became the Samanbals. The Samanbal is understood to be a safe physical space for women to be used for reflection, sharing, and activities related to a specific project.

The case study examined the Athwaas initiative through interviews with four Athwaas members, and also studied the work of the Samanbal located at the Purkho Migrant Camp in Jammu, which is 1 of 14 government—run camps for Hindu Kashmiri Pandits who fled the Kashmir valley when militant violence erupted in 1989.

Hindu Pandits had been a privileged minority in the Kashmir valley. Drawing on accounts of European visitors and the 1931 census data, Evans (2002) shows that Hindus dominated finance, administration and education in Kashmir and also had the largest agricultural holdings. European visitors in the early twentieth century portrayed Kashmiri Pandits as well-to-do merchants, Brahmin priests and civil functionaries. In contrast, the Muslim population was mostly engaged in agriculture or domestic service. Forced labour (from which Hindus were exempt), heavy taxation and debt added to the woes of the ordinary Kashmiri Muslim.

The actual number of Kashmiri Pandits who fled the valley after militancy erupted in 1989 continues to be debated with Hindu groups claiming an exodus of more than 250,000–350,000 people (see Panun Kashmir 2013). Extrapolations from the census indicate that there were about 170,000 Pandits in the Kashmir valley in 1990 of which 160,000 fled (Evans 2002). Of the displaced, approximately 25,000 lived in "migrant" camps in Jammu. The Indian government has refused to give them the status of internally displaced people on the grounds that they are being looked after by the Indian state and refers to them as "migrants". The government provision for "migrant relief" consists of housing in one or two-room tenements, monthly food rations and cash assistance (see Relief Organisation (Migrant), Jammu 2013). By 1997, most had moved into their own homes in Jammu or elsewhere in India (Human Rights Watch Asia 1999, cited by Evans 2002). Those that remain are predominantly rural folk uprooted from their farms and orchards in the valley, lacking the resources of more fortunate brethren. They live in over-crowded and squalid conditions, which they term "shame" accommodation. Surveys indicate that they suffer a host of physical and mental health problems, economic hardship, and are dogged by fears of cultural extinction (Dabla 2004). The return to the Kashmir valley of some Pandits has become a possibility after the announcement in 2008 of a government package for their return and rehabilitation. The package provides for housing, employment and business opportunities, student scholarships and financial assistance.

The Purkho Camp Samanbal has undertaken a variety of trainings and activities for income-generation. The members have also participated in workshops for psychosocial healing, awareness workshops related to gender and domestic violence, and peacebuilding dialogues between Hindu and Muslim women.

### Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP)

This association originated in one woman's search for her son who went missing after being picked up by security forces in 1994. This association of family members of disappeared persons campaigns collectively for accountability and justice, and seeks the whereabouts of their missing relative. It is estimated that there are approximately 8000 cases of disappearances of which 1417 have been documented (Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP-CCS) 2011).

The APDP split into two groups in 2006, namely APDP and APDP-JK Coalition of Civil Society (APDP-CCS). The former is led by the founder-chairperson and the latter by a lawyer-civil rights activist who had helped set it up initially. The former identifies itself primarily as a victims' group, while the latter carries the stamp of the strong civil rights agenda of its parent organisation. Thus, for instance, the latter is scrupulous about use of the term enforced disappearance rather than missing and considers enforced disappearance a human rights violation whether the victim was innocent or had militant links.

Both APDPs hold monthly inter-district meetings of members when relatives from all over the state sit-in as protest at a local park. They address the media, display

placards and photos of the disappeared person, plan campaigns and follow up on their legal cases. The APDP's assists with the filing of habeas corpus petitions and other legal action, and arrange capacity-building and legal literacy workshops for their members. The nature of the work of the APDPs set them in direct confrontation with the state and its security apparatus and members often face threat and intimidation as they take on the might of the Indian state.

The present study has included interviews with persons in leadership positions in both the APDP and APDP-CCS. The ordinary APDP members interviewed for this study belonged to the former group.

## HELP Foundation (HF)

This organisation was set up in 1997 to provide help to underprivileged sections of Kashmiri society in the sectors of health, education and economic assistance. The health-related programme includes a polyclinic that, along with other medical help, provides free mental health services to children and families and creates awareness in society about mental health issues. It also trains teachers, students, caretakers of orphanages, counsellors, special educators and others in psychosocial care of children and families.

In the education sector, the organisation has set up three schools providing a rounded educational experience to those who would not otherwise be able to access good quality education, and also provides financial assistance for the schooling of children from financially distressed homes. These projects target the children and youth who have grown up in a polarised environment where conditions of fear, insecurity, loss and violence prevail. Many have lost family members, seen their elders threatened and humiliated, and some have had to take up jobs in the informal sector (e.g. in the carpet industry) to support their families. It also has a residential facility to facilitate the education of boys from poor families and remote locations who have lost their father.

HF has also set up centres for women's empowerment in which needy women are imparted training in vocational skills and livelihoods, helped to access micro-credit and to market their products.

## Other Projects

In addition, information about the work of five other projects was considered in the study by interviewing persons who had leadership roles in these organisations. These include APDP-CCS (described above), Action Aid (that runs a mental health and psychosocial support program and is active in community mental health initiatives) and the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (which facilitates dialogue between civil society members from different regions in JK, between Kashmiris in JK and Pakistan, between Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus). Two organisations that focus on youth were also included. These are the Yakjah Reconciliation and

Development Network (which works among youth from different regional and religious backgrounds in JK to foster peaceful coexistence) and MercyCorps (that is engaged in capacity building among youth for leadership and entrepreneurship).

## Sample

The sampling method was purposive. After being informed of the specific needs of the case study, senior project staff assigned the respondents for individual interviews and participants for the focus groups. Individual interviews were held with 40 respondents: 10 male and 10 female youth beneficiaries of HF, 10 members of APDP (3 male and 7 female reflecting the preponderance of women in the APDP membership), and 10 women from the Purkho Camp Samanbal.

The youth were aged between 16 and 20 years and all came from low-income families. They were studying in high school except for two students in college. In the majority of cases, the father was dead and in the rest the father was disabled due to illness or injury. The loss or disability of the father was conflict-related in approximately half of the cases. The Samanbal women were largely in the 30–50 age group, nine were married and one was divorced, and all but one had high school education or more. Half of them were from lower middle class backgrounds and the rest had low but stable incomes. The APDP group ranged in age from 26 to 65 years and the majority was from low, unstable income backgrounds. Only three had high school education and six were illiterate. In the sample, three women were "half-widows" their husbands having disappeared, two women had missing brothers and five respondents were parents of missing sons.

Four focus groups were conducted: (a) 10 teachers of a HF School, (b) 6 HF staff including health centre staff, counsellor, and coordinator of residential home for boys, women's empowerment centre staff, (c) 8 members of APDP and (d) 7 members of the Samanbal. Focus group participants and individual respondents were different people.

There were 12 staff respondents distributed as follows: HF-2, APDP-2, Athwaas and Purkho Camp Samanbal-4, Action Aid-1, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation-1, APDP-CCS-1, MercyCorps-1 and Yakjah Reconciliation and Development Network-1. The staff-respondent from the last named had been the coordinator of the Athwaas project and was interviewed regarding both projects.

## Measures

The measures consisted of (a) semi-structured interviews with participants/ beneficiaries from the three projects selected for detailed study, referred to henceforth as individual respondents; (b) semi-structured interviews with persons in leadership positions in the three projects selected for detailed study as well as the five additional

projects mentioned above, referred to as henceforth as staff-respondents; and (c) focus group discussion at the three main projects.

The research protocol for individual respondents inquired into their life circumstances, their psychosocial well-being and their vision for an ideal Kashmir, and perception of the impact of the project on their lives and on society at large. Psychosocial well-being was understood in terms of the PADHI (Psychosocial Assessment of Development and Humanitarian Interventions) model developed at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka (Social Policy & Analysis Research Centre 2008). It proposes that psychosocial well-being comprises of five interconnecting domains. An individual or community is thought to experience well-being when they are able to access physical, material and knowledge resources; experience competence and self-worth; exercise participation in family, community, social and political life; build social networks; and enhance physical and psychological wellness. Psychosocial well-being is mediated by power and identity and subject to the facilitating or undermining influence of surrounding sociopolitical and cultural systems and institutions.

The interview protocol for staff respondents inquired into what the goals of the project were and how these related to the sociopolitical context; the outcomes for project participants and beneficiaries; the larger impact of the project on society and at policy levels; the factors that enabled and obstructed the work of the project; and the role of operational factors such as funding, alliances with other organisations and capacity building.

The theme questions for the focus groups varied slightly for the different groups. The shared themes pertained to their vision for an ideal Kashmir and their thoughts on the impact of the project on well-being and social transformation.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection was largely carried out between December 2010 and April 2011. Data collection in the Kashmir valley was conducted with the help of a Kashmiri-speaking research assistant. The interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed and also translated in the case of those that were in Kashmiri.

The data was subjected to thematic analysis within a broad frame that sought themes relevant to issues of development, peacebuilding and social transformation, as well as noted other emergent themes relevant to overcoming suffering arising from political violence. The data transcripts were reviewed and the responses categorised to represent the themes that emerged in each set of data, that is, data from individual respondents, staff respondents and the focus groups. These were further reduced by identifying themes that recurred within and across data sets, and next by combining related categories into overarching themes.

Satisfaction in different domains of well-being had been rated by respondents on a 4-point scale. In the analysis this was collapsed into "Satisfied" and "Not satisfied" categories. A crude index of satisfaction in each domain of well-being was thus obtained for each group of individual respondents.

### Ethical Issues

The study was formally approved by the Ethics Committee convened by the Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi. It was intended to conduct the research in a manner that was ethical, respectful and appropriately participatory. All participants gave informed consent. The researcher was mindful of the interviews' possible emotional impact. However, there were no instances of troubling emotional distress in the course of the interview. The major findings pertaining to each project were shared with the program senior staff separately.

### Limitations

The sample of psychosocial projects selected for study does not cover all sectors of psychosocial programming, nor do these projects address the needs of many other sections of the population affected by the conflict. Further, although one project was located in Jammu, the respondents were displaced from the Kashmir valley. Hence, it could be said that the study is reflective of conditions in the Kashmir valley and that it neglects other parts of JK. This implies that the findings can only be extended to the rest of the state with caution. However, they are indicative of some broad approaches to psychosocial work in the region. Finally, although all efforts were made to ensure that the data was not compromised by the author's inability to understand and speak Kashmiri, it is possible that some nuances were lost in translation.

### Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study are discussed below in turn to terms of the impact of psychosocial programming on three domains, namely, development, peacebuilding and social transformation. This will be followed by findings and discussion pertinent to trauma and resilience and the importance of an enabling environment to recovering well-being.

### Impact of Psychosocial Programming

This section will consider each domain in turn to analyse the impact of the projects. In doing so, it will draw on data extracted from interviews with individual respondents associated with the projects, interviews with staff respondents and focus group discussion.

## Development

Merging peace and development into a single framework by synthesising the ideas of Galtung (1969), Sen (1999) and Barnett (2008) it can be proposed that the means and ends of peace and development practices should be to ensure equitable distribution of economic opportunities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security, as well as freedom from direct violence. The understanding of development in the following section is consistent with such an approach and sees the expansion of human capabilities as the overriding objective of development. However, this may not be the understanding that informs all development interventions in JK. As shown by DasGupta (2012), the government's special economic packages and schemes for development in JK and the North-East India (the latter being the site of another long-standing insurgency) amount to pacification rather than peacebuilding since these sidestep issues of justice, human security and dignity. She quotes the memorandum presented by JK civil society members to the Indian All Party Parliamentary Delegation in September 2010 "No economic packages and cosmetic administrative measures can be substitutes for demilitarization and a life based on political justice and rule of law" (p. 21).

The Indian army's Operation Sadhbhavana (Goodwill) project in JK is instructive in the light of the above. It aimed to restore the credibility of the government and its associated institutions by providing developmental facilities and inculcating patriotism in disaffected border communities. It is a product of the doctrine of sub-conventional warfare of the Indian army that gives a central place to winning the hearts and minds (WHAM) of people in counterinsurgency operations. In JK, its activities have included infrastructure development, health care and sanitation, veterinary camps, education, human resource development and national integration. It is reported to have had a positive impact because of services provided to people, especially in areas that the civil administration has failed to reach (Anant 2011). However, it has done so at the cost of undermining the civil administration and creating a dependency on the Army for all manner of things. Through their ethnographic study of the project in Ladakh area of JK, Aggarwal and Bhan (2009) show how the discourse of democracy and development has been appropriated by the military for securing the border and controlling the civilian population. They caution that the rhetoric of "disarming violence" through democracy and development may be used to consolidate militarisation and to offset intensification of military violence for national security. The ethnography of Aggarwal and Bhan (2009) also revealed the impact on inter-religious relations between the Muslim and Buddhist communities since the interventions used often produced religious and ethnic identity, and social hierarchies.

The psychosocial projects in the present study demonstrate a variety of effects in the domain of development by contributing to economic well-being, educational improvement and the development of human capital.

## Economic Well-being

In families with low unstable incomes, even small amounts of regular financial assistance go a long way towards ensuring that children do not drop out of school or enter the workforce, and that health problems are addressed in a timely fashion and without overwhelming resources. Help Foundation (HF) provides financial assistance to families for schooling children and children's education. In addition to this direct assistance, women attending the women's empowerment centre of Help Foundation, many of whom were widows, and the women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal are given training in income-generation activities (embroidery, crochet, tailoring, making pickles and condiments, as well as files and bags for conferences and other items) and helped to market their products. Help Foundation has set up a shop for these products and has linkages with a women's microcredit organisation through which women who want to set up small businesses can get start-up capital.

## Education

From a recent review of available research on the impact of violent conflict on educational outcomes, Justino (2011) concluded that even relatively minor shocks to a population's level of education can cause significant and long-lasting detrimental effects on human capital formation. These effects persist well after the conflict has ended with consequences on school achievement, health outcomes and future earnings. There is a firm conviction among the population in JK that education is the most important route to a life of dignity and prosperity. This is reflected in the present study with almost every respondent, young and old, mentioning it as important to personal well-being and social improvement. The comments of student respondents from Help Foundation illustrate the value they give to education. One said "without education we are no better than animals" and another said "ignorance is a prison". Teachers in the focus groups emphasised that for poor and illiterate families the education of one family member opened up possibilities of social mobility for the entire family. In their words: "the lift to one person means a lift to the whole family". This is indeed true in a family-oriented and socio-centric society.

There are other reasons for the value given to education by this Kashmiri Muslim population. Historically, Muslims (and girls) were discriminated against and denied education. Under the regime of Hindu rulers, Kashmiri Hindu Pandits gained access to higher and professional education whereas only few elite Muslims could do so (Rai 2004). It was this that enabled Pandits to monopolise government service. Among the Pandit women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal (all of whom were literate) several had aspired to higher study and professional qualification as teachers or nurses but had to give this up when they fled the valley. The frustrations of the Pandit community in the camp are, therefore, related to not having suitable employment opportunities despite their education.

The educational facilities provided by Help Foundation through its schools, and its determination to ensure that children enrolled do not lack for books, uniforms, school bags, winter clothes and transportation from remote villages are seen to prevent drop-out and raise the standard of society. Further, unlike ordinary schools where rote learning is prized, the HF puts a premium on expressive and creative activities by giving importance to art, sports, theatre, creative writing, and other forms of self-expression, and also facilitates children to engage with social and cultural issues.

Not all the student respondents, however, were satisfied with the above. Three male youth criticised it for not including study of the Koran and for not inculcating values and behaviour appropriate for a society based on Islam's sharia law. It may be mentioned that despite a trend towards Islamisation in JK society, JK has the lowest madrassa (Muslim religious school) enrolment (Sachar Committee Report 2006) compared with other Indian states. Most madrassa students are from rural areas and poor families and new admissions are mostly orphans of violence (Arshad 2008).

While education is highly prized, there is a mounting challenge as more educated youth enter an already saturated job market. It is estimated that 48 % of youth aged 18–30 years in the Kashmir valley are unemployed. The private sector has remained underdeveloped due to the conflict and pervasiveness of corruption in the state, while the availability of coveted government jobs is outstripped by the growing pool of unemployed youth (MercyCorps 2011a).

## Development of Human Capital

Across all the psychosocial projects, the development of human capital was a major effect. Self-confidence, better communication and interpersonal skills and discovery of latent talents and strengths were important markers of personal growth for participants.

The women of the Athwaas team came from different communities and had different political inclinations. Their journey entailed an initial phase of intensive engagement with one another's perspectives. In interviews with four Athwaas members who were staff-respondents in the present study, this phase was recalled as being significantly transformative. Their most difficult challenge was to confront their own prejudice and tolerate the hostility of members of the other community. Their personal growth and committed social activism continue although the original Athwaas group has itself broken up. Further, the Samanbals that each Athwaas member created had positive outcomes for the women who participated. One Samanbal equipped young women with computer literacy skills, and another trained village health workers in psychosocial counselling skills. The capacities built became marketable. Although both the Samanbals wound up, some of their participants went on to higher education and others found better jobs utilising their new skills.

Beyond the personal benefit, many respondents also felt that it made them catalysts of social change. Women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal said that their personal growth enabled them to be better mothers. They felt they were imparting to their young the confidence and belief in self-reliance they had themselves acquired, and

by influencing the younger generation in wholesome ways, they were contributing to a better future. A young girl from HF echoed the sentiments of several of her peers saying "if I become a star, I can help others become stars".

Indeed a significant number of respondents in the study described their experience of belonging to the group and participating in collective action as a turning point in their understanding of society and of themselves as having social agency and efficacy. In this sense, their involvement contributed towards their "conscientisation" (Freire 1970). Teachers at HF learned about a marginalised section of society with whom they had little contact and some misconceptions. There was now openness to new experience and understanding of social realities, and satisfaction in contributing to the betterment of deprived sections of society. Through workshops and discussion, women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal became conscious of their gendered strengths and constraints. They confronted the problem of domestic violence and a few became proactive in reaching out to victims in the camp. The members of APDP gained knowledge of the operation of institutional systems and legal processes, and of the power of collective action. Thus in different ways and to varying extent all these people were moving towards agency, and agency, including being politically active, is known to be a protective factor in situations of armed conflict (Tol et al. 2010; Punamaki et al. 2001).

It should be noted that a significant number of respondents across the three projects mentioned the importance to their growth of having admirable role models such as leaders of the organisations or other members.

## Peacebuilding

When asked to envision an ideal Kashmir in the future, the majority of respondents in the valley gave precedence to peace (aman or shanti). A typical response was "there will be no military, no conflict, no violence, no disappeared". Projecting into such a future, an elderly woman respondent from APDP hoped "to live and die in peace; to have my family around me; to know that my last rites will be conducted properly in accordance with our customs".

The psychosocial effects that emerged in this domain included inner peace, meeting the developmental needs of children at-risk, repair of the social fabric, improving the human rights environment and reducing impunity, dialogue and reconciliation and working with disaffected youth.

## Emotional Well-being and Inner Peace

The effects of protracted political violence on psychological well-being and social fabric are well-known. Referring to the pervasive presence of emotional stress in their lives, the adult respondents in the study yearned for peace of mind (man ki shanti or sukoon). HF was among the first organisations in the valley to recognise and respond

to this need by providing professional psychological support to the young people in their care and to distressed women. The other programmes have met this need by introducing psychosocial healing workshops conducted by trained professionals. These efforts were highly valued by the respondents. Equally important was the mutual supportive and caring practices within the group as mentioned often by APDP respondents, as well as the respondents from Purkho Camp Samanbal.

## Meeting Developmental Needs of Children at Risk

The focus of a major part of HF's efforts is the group of children at risk due to adverse socioeconomic conditions and family losses. A long-standing initiative is a home for boys who lost their fathers in the conflict, as well as through illness or accident. They come from remote villages in the valley and go to regular schools while living in the home until they graduate. The home is characterised by facilities, activities and relationships that are meant to meet the developmental needs of these children in a culturally congruent way. Interviews with respondents who were residents of this home indicated that they were thriving and full of hope and optimism. Several factors known to be significant to restore the normal flow of development in children at risk were in place such as secure bonding with caregivers, meaningful peer relationships, developing a sense of belonging and self-worth, physical and economic security, and access to opportunities for cognitive and spiritual development (Duncan and Arnston 2004). This is in striking contrast to the findings that children living in orphanages in Kashmir had a high prevalence of psychiatric disorder including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depressive disorder and conversion disorder (Margoob et al. 2006).

## Repair of the Social Fabric

Societies ravaged by political violence are known to suffer a loss of communality (Erikson 1976). With an emotional climate dominated by fear, distrust and suspicion, life in the Kashmir valley is marked by social withdrawal and isolation (Sonpar 2000). Where victims of conflict are many and resources meager, people become bitter contenders for financial aid and relief. In Dardpora, known as the village of widows, the women themselves said "in Dardpora, the image of an enemy is another widow"" (Hussain and Kaul 2004).

In this context, teachers at HF noted that its significant contribution was to create a powerful sense of social responsibility and a caring community in the face of damage to social trust and networks. Initially, HF's efforts were met with suspicion and cynicism about the sincerity of the initiative. The establishment of trust took much time and effort.

Respondents from the APDP spoke wistfully about lost mohalla (neighbourly) feeling. Many had not felt supported or helped by the larger community in their hour of need. In one case, a young woman's independence and travel in the course of APDP

work and in search of a missing relative led to a rumour that she was an informer for government forces. This led to her killing by militants (Association of Parents of Disappeared persons and JKCCS 2011). It was only within the organisation that APDP respondents began to have a sense of community and hope. Over the years, both APDPs have forged links with other organisations (such as HF, MSF, Action Aid) for assistance and collaboration. They have also won the support of the local media, which has repeatedly brought to public attention their plight.

A measure of a community's social caring is also evident in the extent to which it looks after its less fortunate members. The practice of zakat, the Muslim requirement to donate a portion of income to charity, is a concrete instance. In the case of HF, zakat constitutes a substantial source of its funding. Its polyclinic is funded entirely by the zakat contribution of one family.

## Improving Human Rights Environment and Reducing Impunity

The activities of both APDPs aim to reduce impunity and improve the human rights environment. Both put pressure on the government through public protest and work with the media to keep their concerns in the forefront of public attention. In this endeavour they have met with some success. The APDP respondents were pleased that cases of enforced disappearances were now fewer, particularly in the city. "They hesitate to disappear people now... they know that if anyone is missing we APDP members will get together and raise a public outcry" said one respondent.

However, the work of documenting enforced disappearances and seeking accountability in individual cases moves very slowly. Families seeking legal remedy have not made any headway in the courts. The documentation task undertaken by APDP runs into difficulties of establishing facts and gathering documents that will stand up in court. This is also a sensitive issue that cannot be approached without a concern for security.

While there has been no tangible outcome for individual families, it is no longer possible for the state to disappear people with impunity. Public silence has also been broken with respect to disappearances at the hands of militants. The human rights environment is thus strengthened. "The debate on disappearances in Kashmir is almost on par with the issue of Kashmir itself in the international media. In a conflict scenario, we cannot expect more progress" said a staff-respondent of the APDP/CCS.

The APDP-CCS collaborated with the International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian Administered Kashmir to document 2700 unmarked graves containing a total of 2943 bodies (Chatterji et al. 2009). It thereafter successfully campaigned for a government inquiry. An independent investigation by the state Human Rights Commission confirmed that the findings and further investigations are in progress.

## Dialogue and Reconciliation

The loss of kashmiriyat, a treasured syncretic cultural identity that embraced Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities, and the displacement en masse of Hindu Pandits from the Kashmir valley have been one of the painful costs of the political violence in JK. The outcome of the Athwaas project which involved women from Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities illustrates the challenges of inter-community dialogue and reconciliation. Interviews with staff respondents involved with the Athwaas initiative revealed that it had been assumed that women had natural capacities and inclination for peace and that building an "inclusive feminine space" would lead to successful peacebuilding but that the process was in reality significantly more challenging. During the initial phase, the Athwaas women engaged intensively and honestly with one another's differing realities, and the personal transformation that resulted continues to be cherished by them. However, over time community and political loyalties were not transcended and an impasse developed. Fears, grudges and aspirations related to community identity prevailed over good intentions and gender solidarity. These schisms within the group impeded the efforts to articulate the concerns of women to policy makers and it has not been able to fulfil the objective of lobbying effectively for women to be at the peace table regarding the Kashmir conflict.

The women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal participated in a workshop that brought them together with Kashmiri Muslim women in the valley. It was an intensely emotional event since almost all were returning to the valley for the first time after the Pandit exodus and were also hearing stories of the sufferings of the Muslim women in the valley. They were moved by the warmth of their reception and the possibility of return to the valley became tangible. But it was not enough to assuage their fears about physical safety and freedom of belief. In the focus group, the women agreed that a plural society is ideal but "if we can't be together in a cordial and mutually respectful way, it is better to be separate... If we are together then there should not be any coercion, harassment, taunts, and we should each follow our own beliefs without hindrance". These findings point to the difficulties inherent in peacebuilding work, one in which social identities are central and emotions associated with personal and community narratives and traumas run high.

It indicates the need for methodical and sustained efforts over a long period and the use of diverse methodologies. In this regard, Aiken (2010) suggests that effective inter-group reconciliation must consider socio-emotional, instrumental and distributive ends. Socio-emotional reconciliation refers to confronting the emotional and perceptual legacies of the past conflict, arriving at a mutually shared understanding of past events and providing for justice. Distributive reconciliation refers to sustained attempts to reduce structural and material inequalities and limit the perception of inequitable power relations between antagonistic groups. Instrumental reconciliation involves interventions to engage former antagonistic groups in sustained cooperative interaction through which they can begin to transform relationships with one another.

The work of the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) is another initiative that aims to build peace through sustained dialogue. The interview with a staff

respondent of CDR revealed how the understanding and mode of intervention had evolved over time. It initiated civil society dialogue between the different regions of JK and also between civil society of JK and Pakistan administered Kashmir and has sustained these processes over several years. The former gave voice to the large areas of the state that were hitherto neglected such as the border communities whose fields and homes were destroyed by shells and mines. The latter provided inputs to the Track One peace talks between India and Pakistan and some of the confidence building measures adopted reflect these inputs. In the early stages, the dialogues dwelt on sharing experiences and stories of suffering. When dialogue expanded from personal tragedies to sociopolitical grievances, it became apparent that it was necessary to interface with the state. Thus, advocacy became an important intervention. A strategy that emerged was the commissioning of research studies that were used to anchor dialogue to facts and to strengthen advocacy. Another development was the decision to foster linkages between institutions. In one example, the Chambers of Commerce in Jammu and its counterpart in the Kashmir valley were involved in a dialogue that resulted in mutually agreed ways to prevent political agitations from getting regionally polarised as so-called Hindu Jammu versus Muslim Kashmir valley. The dialogue had a pragmatic component too in that it discussed means to ensure that the 2008 blockading of the Kashmir valley which had devastating commercial consequences was not repeated. They have been successful thus far despite major political agitations in 2009 and 2010. In general, the CDR's approach has been to initiate dialogues at the grassroots level to understand ground realities, with influential civil society actors, followed by lobbying and advocacy with the government or its institutions. Based on her work in Brazil, Wheeler (2009) concludes that generating information and knowledge at the community level is an important first step but is not sufficient to bring about significant policy changes without further pressure and this requires legitimate interlocutors. The CDR attempts to have an impact by playing the role of interlocutor. In order to do so successfully, it has been assiduous in cultivating a credible and trustworthy position with all shades of opinion in JK and the government.

## Youth Alienation, Unrest and Peacebuilding

The huge youth involvement in anti-government protests referred to by some as the new intifada, and the rising prevalence of substance abuse (Boga 2010) has triggered an alarmed concern about youth. As per the 2001 census, JK is experiencing a youth bulge with 71 % of the population under the age of 35 years. In India, youth bulges in the population have been found to be related to violent political events, armed violence and Hindu–Muslim ethnic riots (Urdal 2008). Since 2008 young stone-pelting Kashmiris, the sangbaaz, have been in the frontline of street protests against the Indian state and have turned to Facebook and YouTube in a major way to express themselves (Anjum and Varma 2010). For example, it was through the internet that young Kashmiri rap artists reached out to the world. The best known was 19-year-old MC Kash whose song "I Protest" became a hit in 2010. The captures the mood of these young men (see Kak 2011, p. xvii):

I Protest, Against The things You Done!
I Protest, For 'A Mother Who Lost Her Son,
I Protest, I Will Throw Stones an' Neva Run!
I Protest, Until My Freedom Has Come!

However, signs of this disaffection were apparent many years earlier. A survey of the impact of violence on the student community (Kashani et al. 2003) noted that over 90% experienced both intense anger and fear in their current situation. The educational system had collapsed with academic routines disrupted and college premises taken over by the military. Student unions were banned and freedom of expression and association restricted. Leisure time pursuits, sports and entertainment no longer existed. Young people were lost and directionless regarding vocational choice and daunted by the dearth of employment prospects.

In the present study, male youth who were beneficiaries of the HF were most affected by the political unrest of the summer of 2010. These boys were born and bred in a highly militarised context where fear, insecurity and violence were part of life as they knew it. While many of the respondents from this group talked about the need to settle the political conflict in JK through dialogue and development, others noted the inevitability of attack-retaliation cycles and the righteousness of revenge. One asserted "people don't pick up the gun or stones for nothing". They had impassioned views about the sociopolitical situation and engaged with the discourse about azaadi and Islamic jihad. Many had wanted to join the protests. The staff of HF was alive to this tension and intervened through group discussion, as well as theatre-based expressive activities. In the FGD, they opined that it was the insecurity and rage engendered by the state's repressive measures that had led to explosions such as this youth agitation, and implosion as in substance abuse.

The Hindu Pandit women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal were also worried about the youth of their community losing moorings in Pandit culture, flouting traditional values and taking to "bad habits" such as smoking, drinking and mixing freely with the opposite sex. Those with marriageable daughters were particularly anxious about preserving their daughters' reputation as chaste and modest. These youth, born after their parents fled from the Kashmir valley and with no personal experience of life in the valley, had intense animosity and distrust of Kashmiri Muslims. They had grown up witnessing the grief and tribulations of their parents and grandparents, hearing accounts of their flight and stories of the terror and violence of that time. They felt hatred and talked revenge. Similar attitudes were found in Cyprus where those who experienced ethnic violence "personally, intensely and devastatingly" were more open to coexistence and reconciliation that those who experienced it at second hand (Sitas et al. 2007, p. 5).

Rogers (1990) in her discussion of the intergenerational transmission of historical enmity points out that when children grow up in situations of political conflict and have chronic exposure to the older generation's powerlessness and inefficacy in the face of intimidation and injustice, their idealisation of parental figures crumbles. Further, the young generation of such a group catapults forward their elders' unfinished struggles. These ideas resonate with the ambivalence about the youth unrest expressed in the FGDs by HF staff. Although they were diligent in ensuring the

safety of the youth in their care, they were privately jubilant that other young people were standing up against oppression and that the Indian state was forced to take cognisance. At the same time, they expressed concern and a sense of helplessness in dealing with the anger of young people around them.

It is evident that there is enormous disaffection among the youth in JK and complex factors related to cycles of violence and intergenerational transmissions are at play. An attempt had been made by the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) to introduce peace education in secondary schools and although over 200 teachers were trained in the curriculum that was developed, further progress has been stalled in bureaucratic machinery. It is only in recent years that the youth are being focused upon in psychosocial projects such as those of MercyCorps and Yakjah Reconciliation and Development Network. The former have worked to impart leadership and negotiation skills to youth and trained them to think critically and constructively about sociopolitical issues and has also begun work on a youth entrepreneurship development project (MercyCorps 2011a, b). The latter works with youth through the medium of interactive workshops, theatre and films. It aims to change attitudes in the direction of coexistence and harmony in place of prejudice and hostility. Interviews with staff-respondents from these organisations indicate that they were highly encouraged by the responsiveness of youth to their programmes and saw conflict transformation lying in being able to channel the idealism and openness of youth to alternative perspectives and experiences. However, there is also a danger in the new-found enthusiasm, aspiration, and agency being stymied by an unyielding sociopolitical environment. Some young staff-respondents who had started out with passion and commitment have ended up cynical, bitter and burnt-out by the wearying nature of battling what they describe is a brick wall.

## Social Transformation

The evolution of psychosocial programming in JK has moved from a focus on trauma and helping victims of political violence to empowering people in a manner that involves greater participation and exercise of agency. The distinction between the relief model of humanitarian assistance and the developmental model (Mimica and Stubbs 1996) is apt here. The activities undertaken are more in line with the latter such as leadership training for community level workers, economic empowerment of women, enabling people to know and access their entitlements under government schemes, using Right to Information to expedite government functioning, filing public interest litigation, holding legal literacy workshops, organising and implementing actions to lobby policymakers and to generate public support and so on.

In his interview, a staff respondent from APDP-CCS described the field as starting with a "passive" and traumatised population, to "NGOisation", and increasingly to community-led initiatives. Describing the impact of the civil rights work of his organisation:

Our reports have spread awareness of all the abuses that have been happening all these years. A lot of people now come for information and want to contribute time and help us... They are now taking initiatives and working on their own. We only give some guidance. In one such effort, a small group decided to do a people's census. They collected data through a survey of 50 villages—population, sex ratio, births, deaths and killings, rapes, education, health status, disability. Hindus who migrated, upkeep of temples left behind, etc. There were three outcomes: when people went from house to house for the survey they really got to know in depth all that had occurred and a sort of collective grieving took place as well as a sharing. All felt a change in themselves. They also began to understand things in a broader perspective not just in pieces. Now rhetoric is completely finished. They have a more thoughtful and informed view of things. Now they feel a sense of ownership of this work and are ready to take on more.

This transition in psychosocial programming catalyses, intersects with, and reinforces important transitions taking place in society. These include cultural shifts in attitudes towards self-assertion and in age and gender-related social hierarchies, the integration of previously marginalised sections—and changes in polity whereby electoral democracy is complemented by new citizenship practices that deepen democracy. As might be expected in transitional times, there is a contradictory mix of old and new attitudes and practices. The psychosocial effects on social transformation that were found in the present study are discussed below in terms of social justice, generational shifts relevant to hierarchical relations, citizenship practices that deepen democracy, the development of civil society and the improvement of human security.

## Social Justice

The psychosocial projects studied played an important role in promoting social justice by contributing to the upliftment of deprived and marginalised social classes and the empowerment of women. The HF programmes specifically target the poor and under-developed sections of society and reach out in geographical areas that are remote and neglected. Without this support, many of the children would have remained illiterate. It is likely that they would have begun working to supplement income for their families through agricultural or unskilled, daily wage labour. By providing them with quality education and thus better earning prospects and status, it helped promote a more equal society. As one teacher mentioned it "gave confidence to the poor, that they are not inferior".

Women in Kashmir have had a tradition of political activism not only in vociferous support of the azaadi struggle of the 1990s but earlier in the 1930–1940s during the popular struggle against the rule of the Maharaja. They also formed militias to resist the attacks of the Pakistan-backed tribal raiders in 1947–1948. During the 1990s, women in Kashmir resisted the forceful imposition of Islamised practices that went against their cultural ethos such as the wearing of burqa (Mattoo 2002).

However, women are also victims of structural violence in JK. According to the 2011 census (Census India 2011), female literacy is 58.01 % (male literacy is 78.26 %) and the sex ratio is 883 per 1000 males (940 in the rest of India). Women's

lives are marked by early marriages and social practices discriminating against and oppressive to women such as dowry. A high prevalence of domestic violence is also reported (Dabla 2009). There is little tradition of women's organisational activism in the secular sphere and an absence on the political stage and the peace table (Manchanda 2001).

The women encountered in the psychosocial programmes studied—staff, beneficiaries and participants—display a complex manoeuvering to maintain esteem congruent with cultural ideals of womanhood while expanding their sphere of action beyond the domestic realm into public space and supplementing traditional caring roles with others that allow them to be economic providers and social agents.

The women of APDP use the symbols of motherhood and mourning in the public space to protest and claim their rights. This "domestic activism" may be viewed as a political activity that draws on and stretches women's traditional role of caring and protecting their family (Manchanda 2001; Manchanda et al. 2002). It also humanises politics and its practice in public space (Padmanabhan 2010). The strength of women's activism in this form is that it is not seen as threatening by security forces or militants. Its limitation is that translating their power from informal spaces to formal political spaces is extremely difficult. Indeed women in JK have struggled to have a voice in formal peace processes.

Adherence to the gender ideology of women being the honour bearers of the family and community is evident in the interviews with young girls, as well as the older women of both the Kashmiri Muslim and Pandit communities. While they subscribed to traditional gendered ideals, their enthusiastic participation in all the activities of the psychosocial programmes indicated a clear expansion of their life space from private domestic spheres to the public. This expansion was exhilarating and imparted a new confidence and competence in speech and action. But it was also daunting in that it was not always received well by the family and community. The Pandit women of the Samanbal and the women of the APDP had to survive disapproval of kin and community for stepping out of strictly domestic spaces. Small victories such as being able to travel alone by bus to another village, to be able to have money in hand by embroidering a shawl or making pickles, or stand with placards in full public glare in a park with other women constitute a major step in breaking the barriers of gendered socialisation and expectation.

For the women of the Samanbal, this transition was enabled by having a "place of one's own" where they could learn to push the limits of their world at their own pace and in the company of women like them. Within the confines of camp life where three generations lived in one room and where the neighbours were literally a wall away, privacy was a sore issue. To have a physical space where they could be themselves in the moment was a great relief. "Here we can talk to other women, joke and laugh, share our worries, get advice and support, work if we want or laze idly if we want. . . here we also talk about what is happening outside, what the government is doing for us migrants, what our leaders are saying. . ." said one participant.

The income generating skills acquired through the Samanbal gave them a new-found sense of self-reliance and competence. They noted that the Samanbal's workshops and other activities made them conscious of the rights and strengths

of women even as they struggled personally to translate these in their own lives. In envisioning the future, they hoped for a more equitable society where "girls and boys get equal opportunity" and "women do not have to feel intimidated by their in-laws or husbands". The awareness that "women can do something and be something, not just stay at home" was exhilarating even as they were daunted by the possibilities that opened up. Thus, the women questioned the hierarchies within the family while grappling with the costs of shifting these hierarchies.

There are interesting parallels with the change dynamics noted by Estrada and Botero (2000) in a group of Colombian women organised in economic-solidarity based enterprise. In their case too, the original motivation was to overcome isolation and have a space of their own. The transformation of the self-narrative was not so much the appearance of new roles but qualitative transformation in the assumption of traditional roles thus allowing for stability within change.

It is important to note that among the women in the field of psychosocial programming in JK, there are several admirable models of leadership, commitment and activism. Most of the psychosocial programmes set up in the earliest years of political violence were initiated by women. In recognition of their contribution, three Kashmiri women and another working in JK were among the 1000 women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 through the 1000 Global Women for Peace initiative. Three of these women were interviewed in the present study as staff respondents.

Mention should be made of the fact that although sexual violence against women, including mass rape, has been used to punish, intimidate, humiliate and degrade women by security forces and militants (Committee for Initiative on Kashmir 1990; Manchanda 2001; De Jong et al. 2006), psychosocial intervention in this regard has been lacking and rape has not been located in gender politics.

The data in the present study indicates that men are a neglected group and vulnerable to violence and emotional stress by virtue of the notions of masculinity to which they are subject. Men of APDP spoke of bottled up distress that they could not express being men, and the expectation that they had to hold things together in crisis as head of the family. According to the women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal, the men in the camp suffered deeply due to their loss of role as providers as well as lost social status. They had high levels of illness and physical disability (developed during their years in the camp and unrelated to direct violence) along with the "bad habits" (drinking and playing cards) of enforced idleness. The problem of domestic violence was also brought up in focus groups and attributed by the women to the cramped living arrangements and the silent distress the men underwent. One woman said "they don't speak: how can they? It would not be proper. We women talk easily, share our tensions, and get it out… They were something before, now they feel they are nothing".

The young male respondents from the HF were keenly aware of being young men of the "other" community in a heavily militarised zone. They were the ones most liable to be stopped by security forces for identification and interrogation and subjected to harassment and humiliation. In their interviews, the longing for freedom from fear repeatedly appeared along with the struggle with their angry and revengeful feelings. While the impact of the violent conflict on young men had been noted

earlier (Kashani et al. 2003) there has not been specific psychosocial interventions addressing men as a group.

In a poignant example of gendered frames recruited in conflict, Chhachi (2002) quotes from an interview with a woman whose militant husband had been killed,

"Will your son become a mujahid?" we asked, watching a 10-year-old playing with his toy gun. "The child of a freedom fighter will become a freedom fighter!" But then, caressing the cheek of her 17-year-old, she almost whispers, "As soon as even a tiny bit of beard appears, I shave it off. I can't lose him as well".

## Deepening Democracy: Citizenship Practices

In a meta-case study analysis of 100 research studies of citizen engagement in 20 countries of varied degrees of political stability and democratisation, Gaventa and Barrett (2010) found that citizen participation (through local association activities, social movements and campaigns as well as formal participatory governance) produced highly significant positive effects. They found engagement in itself a way of strengthening a sense of citizenship. An awareness of rights, knowledge of legal and institutional procedures, disposition towards action, organising skills and thickness of civic networks were all indicators that helped to measure the degree to which democratic citizenship was emerging. Psychosocial programmes that further the practice of substantive citizenship could be considered political (Montero 1998). These kinds of changes are nascent but evident in the Kashmir context.

Psychosocial projects are enabling people to access resources and services by imparting knowledge of their entitlements and rights and legal instruments, processes and practices. The APDP has conducted legal literacy workshops for its members many of whom have ongoing court cases, and the APDP-CCS disseminates information on the legal rights of citizens when dealing with the police and other state authorities. The Right to Information (RTI) Act that came into force in 2009 in JK mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information and has imposed some transparency and accountability in government functioning. Action Aid in JK has begun to file public interest litigation and use the RTI to enable people to access services and resources. In one instance, people who were entitled to benefits under schemes of the Department of Social Welfare were unable to make any headway. However, once an RTI application was filed requesting the numbers and status of pending applications, the department cleared the entire backlog so that their reply could claim that all applications had been settled. According to the staff respondent, Action Aid classes this intervention as a peacebuilding initiative because it views public frustration with shoddy governance to be a significant trigger for violent unrest. The APDPs' campaign against enforced disappearances, and APDP-CCS facilitation of community initiatives to conduct independent investigation of government cover-ups of suspicious deaths or encouragement to young film-makers to make amateur films to document the youth uprising are likely to have a long-term impact in that citizenship practices are being strengthened that demand accountability and protest government failures.

Such changes mark an important stage in the transformation of an essentially feudal society through the limitations of representative democracy towards an entitled, empowered citizenship democracy. Speaking of India's transition to democracy following independence from British rule, writer and activist Arundhati Roy (2004) remarks "a deeply impoverished, essentially feudal society became a modern nation-state. Even today, 57 years on to the day, the truly vanquished still look upon the government as mai-baap, the parent and provider". Such attitudes run deep and were reflected in the respondents' oft-mentioned disenchantment with "selfish" leaders and the belief in sincere, honest and caring leadership as a remedy. One respondent remarked "children listen to their fathers when he also listens to them, and he too listens to them when they behave well. In the same way the government should listen to us when we protest peacefully, do not break the law".

The respondents in the study did begin to see themselves as public actors exercising agency through project activities, but did not see this as political. Politics was seen as dirty, corrupt and cynical and the province of leaders and activists. Most of the project staff interviewed insisted on calling their work "humanitarian" even as they undertook activities that challenged established power structures or were squarely in the domain of justice and accountability such as exercising the Right to Information, initiating public interest litigation or organising collective protests. This may be partly due to the fact that it is important for security and strategic reasons for these NGOs to appear politically neutral. It could also be a narrow understanding of the term politics, which has accrued nasty connotations. Only the staff-respondent of the APDP-CCS acknowledged their work as political saying "we are not political in our actions".

## Intergenerational Shifts

Sociocultural and political changes in the past 20 years have challenged traditional intergenerational relationships. Young people blamed elders for historical mistakes and compromises. With militancy arising in 1989, traditional authority structures were upturned as young militants began to adjudicate interpersonal and family problems. Other young people were frustrated by the social stagnation and stifling of discussion where the young are taught not to question. "Mainstream Kashmir culture does not talk about social consciousness, honesty in public affairs, a spirit of discovery, change, experimentation and does not value the adventure of ideas. Most institutions like the family, religion and education promote the status quo" (Kashani et al. 2003, p. 19).

Although youth-led street agitations have characterised the Kashmiri sociopolitical scene for a few years, intergenerational relations may be described as being in a state of flux. While most youth in the present study respected the traditional deference to seniority, there were voices of dissent too. One boy from HF grumbled "I hate all this old stuff, small minds that like frogs can't think beyond the well they live in". Another expressed disenchantment with the older generation saying "the older generation has no ideals, only politics…Hopes for the future can only lie with young people".

As described in the earlier section on youth unrest and peacebuilding, the attention of several programmes has turned to youth recognising that an entire generation of children born amidst political violence has now reached adulthood and that the opportunity to change the sociopolitical environment away from entrenched positions lies with them.

## Development of Civil Society

It was found that there was a constructive collaboration amongst many organisations of civil society including those examined in this study. For instance, HF extended its training for income-generation activities to women members of APDP and also its resources for mental health and psychosocial care. The APDP/CCS is part of the Coalition of Civil Society, which is largely a human rights oriented network. These organisations have also networked with civil society outside JK to lobby and equip themselves with relevant skills and knowledge. These developments mark a healthy change from earlier years when organisations worked in isolation and given the political climate, in wariness of one another. An important advance has been learning the value of acting collectively.

## Improving Human Security

All the programmes studied are engaged in bringing about legislative and policy changes so that human rights and security are in line with international standards. Athwaas and Samanbal inputs were significant in the preparatory phases of lobbying for a law against domestic violence, which had emerged as a significant concern for women. The JK Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act finally came into force in 2011. HF is collaborating with Save the Children in a Child Protection Program that "gave respect to children". It has made village committees responsible for the welfare of orphaned, destitute children in a facilitative way contributing to changing the way that children are otherwise treated in poor, backward areas where they become a cheap source of labour. HF is also lobbying for the adoption of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in the state, while the APDPs are campaigning for the ratification of the UN International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance. APDP also succeeded in making a submission on the issue of enforced disappearances in Kashmir before the UN Working Group on Involuntary and Enforced Disappearances in 2008.

## Well-being and the Enabling Environment

Well-being is fostered or undermined by the systems and institutions that characterise the larger sociopolitical and cultural environment. These exist at micro (family, informal social groups), meso (religious and other community bodies, health and

education services, NGOs, local government bodies, militias, etc.) and macro (economic, political, judicial, legislative, etc.) levels. The individual respondents from the three projects in the present study reported on their psychosocial well-being in terms of access to material, physical and knowledge resources, experience of competence and self-worth, exercise of participation in family, community, social and political life, nature of social networks and sense of physical and psychological wellness.

It was found that the Purkho Camp Samanbal respondents reported more satisfactory levels of well-being than did the respondents from the projects in the Kashmir valley. This was despite dismal living conditions, poor health status and the thick strand of loss in their lives. Two protective factors may be discerned. The first is that they had better resources to cope with adversity being better educated and from better economic backgrounds. Secondly, their family units remained intact.

Unlike the groups in the Kashmir valley, they had a positive experience of institutions and services although they also encountered bureaucratic obstacles. The larger system was responsive from the start to their predicament and tried to meet their needs for housing, financial support, food security, and protected the jobs of those in government service. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2008) in Norway, Kashmiri Pandits receive significantly greater assistance from the government than any other displaced group in India.

Also significant is that having fled the Kashmir valley, they were no longer exposed to the conditions of fear, physical insecurity and uncertainty that described the emotional climate in the valley. They had moved to an environment of safety where instead of being a threatened minority, they were part of the Hindu majority. There was a reason for added satisfaction in that they were soon to move into more spacious apartments built by the government for displaced Pandits.

The respondents from APDP, based in the Kashmir valley, expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction in psychosocial well-being particularly in the domains of material, physical and knowledge resource, physical and mental wellness and in their dealings with systems and institutions. This group of people continues to live in a situation that festers. Their grief is unresolved, there is no closure as to the fate of the missing person and court cases remain pending. Their experiences with government agencies particularly the police, the judicial system and social welfare department are highly negative. Often their enquiries with the police are met with scolding and threat. Support from kin and community is not always forthcoming. Being considered inauspicious, they are not welcomed at festive occasions. Women venturing to army camps and police stations in search of a missing relative are viewed with disapproval and suspected of being informers. Their predicament bears out the fact that people may adapt relatively well to isolated incidents of trauma, but adapting to a long-term situation involving significant resource loss is much harder (Hobfoll et al. 2003).

These findings highlight the crucial importance of the first level of the IASC pyramid (Interagency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings 2007) addressed to the need for basic services and security. It prescribes that "the well-being of all people should be

protected through the (re)establishment of security, adequate governance and services that address physical needs (food, shelter, water, basic health care, control of communicable diseases)". It also notes the intimate relation between psychosocial well-being and the protection and promotion of human rights.

In contexts of political violence, basic services and security become hard to ensure. In the JK context, the state is party to the conflict and complicit with the insecurity visited upon the people of the Kashmir valley through heavy militarisation and human rights violations by security forces. In addition, the form of democracy that is present is disjunctive (Pearce et al. 2011) in that although political institutions are democratised in aspects like elections and legal codes, the civil component of citizenship and its constituent elements of justice and law in the real lives of citizens are seriously lacking. Furthermore, there is much corruption and red tape in the governing system. JK was categorised as "alarmingly corrupt" in a countrywide study of corruption (Transparency International 2008), and data from interviews with coordinators repeatedly brought up the difficulties of working with an unresponsive and obdurate bureaucracy.

Several staff-respondents complained of frustration, fatigue and disillusion due to these factors. Gaventa and Barret (2010) note that state behaviour such as bureaucratic "brick walls", failures to implement or sustain policy gains, and reprisals against those who challenge the status quo lead to feelings of disempowerment and reduced sense of agency among a significant number of those involved in citizen engagement activities.

Advocacy and lobbying the government and policymakers are required to establish or restore basic services and security but entail special strengths and skills that many psychosocial programmes do not have. As described by Moncrieffe (2009) in the context of social violence in Jamaica, influencing policymakers is not easy. They often have preconceived ideas of what is appropriate. Furthermore, they may be part of the problem and may not be interested in knowing about or changing the realities on the ground. This is especially pertinent in JK where the imperatives of national security overtake that of human security and well-being, and where investment in a corrupt system resists change.

## Trauma and Resilience, Victims and Survivors

While the focus has shifted from trauma, the widespread prevalence of psychological distress cannot be discounted. Programmes that did not initially envisage it have eventually added specific interventions to meet the needs for psychosocial support. Thus, there has been a coming together of the "psycho" and the "social". Further, there is increasing attention to psychosocial support at the Tier 2 level of the IASC guidelines (i.e. community and family supports), as well as at the Tier 3 level (i.e. focused, non-specialised support such as psychological first-aid in the case of an incident). This contrasts with the earlier thrust on specialised Tier 4 psychiatric and psychological services. However, there is little mental health and psychosocial

support coordination among organisations in JK and a general lack of awareness of the IASC guidelines. In contrast, in Nepal steps have been taken to form a steering group to facilitate inter-agency collaboration, raise awareness about the IASC guidelines in government and non-government sectors, translate the guidelines into the local language and draw up a contingency plan for emergencies (Jordans et al. 2010). Similar movement in JK is at a very preliminary stage. The first steps in this direction have been initiated by Action Aid, according to a staff respondent.

The understanding of people's suffering has also moved from the PTSD model that was current a decade ago to one that is closer to the idea of sequential traumatisation (Becker 2004), a process in which situations consequent to specific extreme events exert their own demands and pressures that eventuate in a continuing traumatisation. This understanding of trauma is well-illustrated in the accounts of APDP members. They spoke of families destroyed due to deaths and disappearances, of grieving mothers cutting themselves off from social life, of stoic fathers holding in their feelings in order to keep the family going, of children not being able to believe in a future in a world where anything can happen. There was the emotional suffering of not knowing the fate of the missing person, harassment from security forces, hurt arising from community perceptions of being badkismet (inauspicious), profiting from the loss through compensation or aid and allegations of being informers. Most were from poor backgrounds and losing a breadwinner made their situation more precarious. Heavy expenses were incurred in the search for the disappeared person and many were cheated of large sums paid to people who promised to help in the search. Housing was a major problem for women who were dependent on a missing husband's family or their own family of origin for a place to live. The psychosocial interventions initiated by both APDPs reflect this range psychosocial need.

As mentioned in an earlier section, the Pandit women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal had satisfactory levels of well-being in all but the domain of physical and mental wellness. The women suffered a host of ailments of which thyroid problems, fatigue, migraine, hypertension, diabetes were common. It was also found that more than half the women had spouses who had some debilitating illness or injury occurring after their flight from the valley. Other studies have indicated severe psychological and physical problems afflicting Pandits in the migrant camps (Shekhawat 2009). It would seem that the longer-term impact of traumatic events is yet to be fully understood.

Studies indicate that resources such as self-esteem, optimism, personal control and sense of meaning act as buffers against stressful life events (Taylor et al. 2000). In Sri Lanka, a thematic analysis of qualitative data on well-being in the context of war (Jayawickreme et al. 2009) yielded a culturally specific constellation of what promoted resilience. This consisted of "thinking the right thoughts", religion, fulfilling family needs, achievement/education and positive family attributes such as harmony.

In the present study, the well-being domain of competence and self-worth emerged as the most satisfactory for respondents from all three programmes suggesting it to be an important resource for resilience. Fulfilling family role related expectations contributed in a large way to self-esteem. Girls were satisfied with being "good" girls

and hardworking, caring daughters to their burdened mothers. Boys were happy that their studies were going well and looked forward to achieving goals that would fulfil family expectations of sons. The APDP members' self-worth derived from their unflagging search for the disappeared relative, in shouldering responsibilities of the family that required some to be both mother and father to children, ensuring their children's education and being active in the work of APDP. Being god-fearing, doing khidmat (service) and namaaz (prayer) were other sources of self-worth. The women of the Purkho Camp Samanbal felt worthy having coped successfully with difficult life circumstances. Their greatest source of esteem derived from fulfilling the role of wife, mother and daughter-in-law in a manner that met the ideal of the Hindu Pandit woman. Performing religious rites and participating in the community's festivals were important to this. Their social identity was important to self-worth and they cherished the uniqueness of Pandit culture and the god-fearing attribute of Pandit identity.

Social support is known to be highly significant in promoting resilience. The presence of helpful and caring relationships within the family and community was cited by all respondents as crucial in enabling people to overcome the tragedies in their lives. The integrity of the family unit itself played a role in well-being as did their engagement in the social life of the projects with which they were connected.

The Samanbal women in the Jammu migrant camp were more satisfied in this regard than the respondents from the other projects. Their families were whole and their closeness to other women, particularly in the Samanbal, and female kin was a source of great comfort and pleasure. The other groups of respondents, that is, youth from HF and members of APDP, all of whom had suffered some blow to the integrity of the family unit, had mixed experiences in this domain. The extended family was not always supportive or gracious in giving help and community attitudes were sometimes stigmatising, judgemental or rejecting.

The defocusing from trauma in the psychosocial programming field has accompanied a discourse about "now getting them away from this victim mentality" as one staff-respondent said, discouraging the expression of dependence and emotional distress (rona-dhona) and affirming their strengths as survivors. This may be partly because the earlier focus on trauma and victimhood has served its purpose of making a moral claim for attention to suffering under political violence. However, victims themselves do not always welcome this change. This is most evident in the case of APDP members who stoutly assert their identity and positioning as victims. Similar findings are reported in the case of victims of political violence in Sri Lanka for whom the resilience discourse evoked angry repudiation since it was perceived to minimise their suffering, the reality of the injustice done to them, and their negligible control over resources, decision-making and social institutions (Manchanda et al. 2002).

Condemnation of the commoditisation of suffering is another theme in the public discourse in JK. The respondents in this study were well aware of the social power of being victims and spoke readily about the sympathy card they sometimes played. There was poignancy to this in that it was currency gained at considerable cost. One young respondent from HF remarked "maybe I am a lucky guy that my father died."

Otherwise, I would not have been able to go to school, and never a school like this with such facilities".

In describing the unintended consequences of humanitarian and developmental interventions in Haiti following military rule, Erica James (2010) draws attention to the "compassion economy" that was created as victims of human rights abuses framed their suffering according to criteria that would bring them political recognition and redress. She notes that fabricated stories of trauma are not uncommon where the "compassion economy" commodities suffering and where significant power inequalities exist between givers and recipients of aid.

While resilience is about positive functioning under fire, the consequences of negative experiences are not uniformly negative. Post-traumatic growth describes positive changes to cognitive, emotional and behavioural life that results from challenging experiences (Tedeschi et al. 1998; Bannano 2004) The mobilisation of latent capacities in activist personalities in situations of crisis is seen in the personal stories of several staff respondents. An example is the founder of APDP. She describes many months of crazed anguish after her son's disappearance following which she gradually recovered through the formation of the APDP. Her story is an inspiring example to many. She says "if I, an ordinary housewife who could only speak Kashmiri and hardly went to school can do all that I have, so can others".

## Conclusions and Policy Implications

From the data gathered in this study it is evident that psychosocial programmes in JK are having an impact on development, peacebuilding and social transformation. Several of the effects noted represent intermediate outcomes in these domains, which are to be expected given that these are processes that bear fruit over the long term. A related question is that of the level at which change is happening and how changes at individual, group and social levels translate from one to the other. A consistent finding at the individual level is that of personal transformation, a transformation that conscientises and fosters the development of a critical consciousness, apart from fostering growth in knowledge, interpersonal skills, confidence, a sense of agency and efficacy in individual and collective action. Such changes at the individual level may have ripple effects in the larger social fabric (Schmelzle and Bloomfield 2006). Indeed several respondents saw themselves as agents of social change.

At the meso-level, the expansion of civil society and cooperative linkages among organisations indicate on one hand an ongoing repair of social capital badly damaged in years of violent conflict and also a powerful force for social change through networks, coalitions and other co-operative relationships (Shapiro 2006). The impact at the macro level, on institutions and systems, is harder to determine. However, there is evidence that intermediate outcomes that bode well for macro-level changes are happening. A case in point is the awakening of an empowered citizenry aware of its rights and entitlements and prepared to act on them. As Gaventa and Barrett (2010) point out, engagement strengthens the practices and efficacy of participation through

more effective action, the transfer of skill across issues and arenas and the thickening of alliances. In turn this helps to build responsive states that deliver services, protect and extend rights and foster a culture of accountability. This suggests that although psychosocial programmes may need to maintain an apolitical stance to protect their humanitarian efforts, they could foster a new way of doing politics by empowering people.

In order that changes are sustained and broadened, four sectors are identified as fundamental pillars, namely the protection of human rights, inclusive governance, sustainable development and an accountable security establishment (Schmelzle and Bloomfield 2006; Garcia 2006). The last is problematic where the state is party to the conflict as in JK. Issues concerning the security sector though pertinent are difficult to address through the intervention repertoires of psychosocial programmes. Thus there are real limitations to psychosocial intervention in contexts of political violence. Psychosocial programmes may not have the requisite skills or the leverage to intervene effectively when the sociopolitical situation and administrative machinery are not conducive or actively hindering. Policy must also address this and consider how optimism can be maintained among psychosocial practitioners to make the long journey.

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