

**FAITH-INSPIRED ORGANIZATIONS AND GLOBAL
DEVELOPMENT POLICY: A BACKGROUND REVIEW
"MAPPING" SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WORK IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA**

About this Report

This draft background report was prepared as part of the Berkley Center's global "mapping" of the work of faith-inspired organizations worldwide. The report serves as background for the consultation on faith-inspired organizations and global development policy in South and Central Asia in Dhaka, Bangladesh on January 10-11, 2011.

The South and Central Asia review is part of a comparative project on Religion and Global Development supported by the Henry R. Luce Foundation. Through a series of meetings with stakeholders and background reports, the Berkley Center and WFDD have worked to "map" the role of faith-inspired organizations around the world, highlighting best practices and policy issues that arise. Prior events have included: a meeting in Washington, DC in April 2007 focused on the United States; a meeting in Doha, Qatar in December 2007 focused on the Muslim World; a meeting in The Hague, The Netherlands in June 2008 focused on Europe and Africa; a meeting in Antigua, Guatemala in January 2009, focused on Latin America; and a meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in December 2009 focused on Southeast Asia.

About the Authors

The report was prepared by a team of researchers at the Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and the World Faiths Development Dialogue. The principal author is Michael Bodakowski, working under the supervision of Katherine Marshall. Sarah Singha, graduate research assistant at the Berkley Center, contributed significantly, as did Elizabeth LaFerriere. Claudia Zambra and Hahna Fridirici contributed significantly as well, and provided invaluable guidance and input throughout the process. Melody Fox Ahmed, without whose contributions this report would not have been possible, played a key role from the beginning of the consultation process. Esther Breger contributed immensely through editorial support and guidance.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA: RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT ROLES	7
CATEGORIZING FAITH-INSPIRED ORGANIZATIONS (A COMPLEX TASK).....	12
SECTOR FOCUS AND EMERGING POLICY QUESTIONS.....	18
Conflict and Peacebuilding	18
Gender	21
Education	23
Cross cutting sectors	25
Text Box 1: Corruption challenges in Bangladesh.....	1
Chart 1: The 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index – South and Central Asia	28
SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA: RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT ROLES	29
COUNTRY CHAPTERS.....	34
Bangladesh.....	35
Text Box 2: Working with Imams to combat HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh	1
Text Box 3: Leaders of Influence	1
Sri Lanka	44
Text Box 4: Insights from the Sarvodaya Movement	1
Text Box 5: Jansila Majeed of the Community Trust Fund in Puttalam, Sri Lanka	1
Nepal.....	54
Text Box 6: Nepal’s Dalit Women.....	1
Text Box 7: Farmer Suicides in India.....	1
Maldives.....	62
Bhutan.....	66
India.....	71
Text Box 8: Child Marriages In India	1
Text Box 9: Gandhi’s Wheel of Satyagraha	1
Text Box 10: Kerala Independent Fish Workers Federation: Coastal Activists of Southern India	1
Text Box # 11: Brahma Kumaris: Teachers for the Mind, Body, and Spirit	1
Text Box 12: Kashmir – Faith Dimensions of Peacebuilding	1
Pakistan	89
Text Box 13: Pakistan’s Female Madrasas.....	1

Text Box 14: Pakistan Floods	1
Text Box 15: Madrasa Reform in Pakistan	1
Text Box 16 : The plight of South Asia’s many widows	1
Afghanistan	102
Kyrgyzstan	106
Kazakhstan.....	112
Tajikistan	116
Turkmenistan	120
Text Box 17: Gulen Movement in Central Asia	1
Uzbekistan	124
APPENDIX 1: MAP – SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA.....	128
APPENDIX 2: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	129
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	140
ENDNOTES.....	150

Introduction

Religion is a pervasive and influential force across South and Central Asia. Religious beliefs are as diverse as the region's geography and peoples, and religious practices and institutions both shape and are changed by social changes that are transforming the region. Institutions and communities, influenced and motivated by links to faith, engage in widely ranging activities, some classically religious in nature (teaching scripture, pastoral care), others covering a wide gamut of services and community action, working from the many thousands of temples, churches, mosques, gurdwaras, and other religious institutions across the region.

This draft report, prepared as background for an exploration of religion's role in development in the region, examines practical, development related roles and work of faith-inspired institutions and the environments in which they work, historically but above all in the present-day, in the two linked but distinct regions of South and Central Asia. Its central aim is what we term a "mapping" of the landscape of faith-inspired organizations working in development, to identify and highlight areas with potential for increased collaboration, and their policy implications. It also sets out to identify areas where further investigation and discussion would be useful. Given the diversity and size of both South and Central Asia, not all issues and countries are treated in any detail; the investigation is partial and preliminary.. The report is based largely on desk reviews of existing material and literature, enriched by interviews with specialists and practitioners.

The country context in which faith-inspired organizations work (social, political, cultural, and economic) largely determines and influences their roles and activities. The report thus focuses on a country by country overview that highlights the challenges and constraints at a national level. A separate section takes a regional perspective on specific sectors – the main issues and challenges, faith dimensions, and the diverse roles of faith-inspired organizations in addressing them, in South and Central Asia.

The review is challenging. The wide range of religious beliefs that characterize the region give rise to an extraordinary diversity of institutional forms and activities. Their overall nature and form are not documented or analyzed in any systematic way, and they vary by country and region. Faith-inspired institutions work in all sectors of society, ranging from the spiritual realm, to those more commonly associated with secular organizations. They work on education, health, HIV/AIDS, environmental preservation, humanitarian relief, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, gender, and emergency relief, among many other sectors. They work independently, in collaboration with other faith-inspired groups, and in an extraordinary array of partnerships with secular institutions, public and private. As an exploratory review the report's findings are far from definitive.

The report makes no systematic effort to define religion or faith, and thus has not constrained its analysis to a tightly defined set of faith actors. Its approach is wide-ranging and inclusive. Use of the term "faith-inspired" reflects an appreciation of the complex links between inspiration and organization, belief and action. Religion and faith are tied to moral and ethical attributes that tend to emphasize human and spiritual contributions to political and economic domains.

Beliefs affect behaviors relevant to many endeavors that have clear social, economic, and political reach. The primary focus of the present exploration, however, is not on the ways in which faith and belief shape attitudes towards development and related behaviors, but on a set of more pragmatic questions linked to policy engagement and service delivery.

The report focuses on the largest faith communities, which tend to have the most active institutions: Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Sikh; but other religions and indigenous belief systems also help to weave the social, cultural, and religious fabric of both South and Central Asia. In many ways unique to South Asia, is the array of transnational faith-inspired movements, largely Hindu and Muslim, but also from other faiths; their activities in both South and Central Asia are explored in the report. Belief systems are syncretic in many situations, and each of the larger world religions has a uniquely South or Central Asia character.

The central threads running through much of the analysis and discussions are the purposeful focus of much faith-inspired work in poor communities on gender, education, and peacebuilding/conflict. The major faiths present in South and Central Asia all profess to address those who are excluded and marginalized in society, those who suffer, and those who are poor. Faith-inspired organizations are particularly active, and often have a significant value-added, at the grassroots level. In communities, faith-inspired organizations can have a nuanced understanding of the local context, significant and well established networks, and established relationships and trust with local leaders and community members. Recent natural disasters and conflict situations in South and Central Asia highlight how effectively some faith-inspired actors can respond and their extraordinary reach. They also provide hints of how faith inspired organizations will respond to the coming and present challenges linked to climate change.

In South and Central Asia, national borders and ethnicities overlap, to that faith communities live side by side. These ancient trends are accentuated by urbanization, migration, and the population displacements linked to conflicts. The results are both constructive cooperation and inter/intra religious conflict. Faith-inspired organizations thus find themselves often at the epicenter of local understanding and influence surrounding development work and humanitarian aid. In places where there are active conflicts, faith-inspired grassroots initiatives engage the poorest members of the community, who are often particularly imbued with their religious identity. A wide array of groups addresses social injustice, human rights abuses, and gender discrimination in concrete, practical ways.

The review is designed to inform and serve both faith and development practitioners. The different faith-inspired organizations form part of the development architecture, presenting attendant challenges of coordination and aligning with national and international strategic objectives. Often the faith-inspired experience suggests new insights and practical lessons, as well as special challenges on issues ranging from governance to effective community mobilization. The report's findings could serve as a useful enrichment for development discussions.

South and Central Asia: Religion and Development Roles

Religious institutions and faith-inspired organizations have a strong physical and spiritual presence across most South and Central Asian communities. Even the most remote and inaccessible locations are likely to have a vibrant religious center or centers that often function as a social and economic hub, beside more classic spiritual roles. Faith-inspired institutions are involved in a range of social and public services at the community level, including prominently but not exclusively education, peacebuilding, and health, as well as influencing complex social relations, including class and gender.

Religious demography, relations between state and faith, and the main where faith institutions are active vary widely across the region. Each country presents a quite different profile, sometimes mirrored also in wide differences among regions of a single country. This diversity gives rise to widely different arrangements and focus in terms of types of development programs and sector concentration as well as the way they relate to public services and local authorities. The respective roles of local versus regional and international organizations also differs markedly by country. Transnational religious movements have a special importance and character in South Asia, and actively participate in many facets of development (though it is not always so named). The capacity and disposition of the state also shape the approach to faith-inspired organizations, as well as to civil society more broadly. Thus, India, for example, with a vibrant and established democracy and rich cultural and religious diversity, has a large and dynamic civil society with many thousand different organizations working in virtually every imaginable sector, while in Turkmenistan, nongovernmental organizations, including those with a faith character, work under tight government restrictions.

This section briefly introduces the region's major religious traditions and their social engagement in development.

Hinduism

Hinduism is an oversimplified label coined during the British Raj to represent the very diverse practices of the native religious traditions in India. The classification “Hindu” tried to unify often conflicting beliefs that had no single founder, no clearly established beginning, no singular authoritative text, and millions of variegated local, communal, or individual gods.¹ Many object that for these reasons it is not a “religion” or even a “faith tradition”. However, there are important common threads, a host of leaders, places, and organizations, and beliefs that fall under the general rubric.

Hinduism is practiced by hundreds of millions of people in many countries across South Asia. It is the majority tradition in India and Nepal, and there are significant minorities in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Prominent Hindu beliefs and practices such as *dharma* (duty), *karma* (action), and *samsara* (rebirth) influence the formulation and implementation of the development agenda in India and Nepal, and the shape and direction of the widely ranging Hindu inspired development organizations. Temples, individuals, faith-inspired political parties, social movements, NGOs, and community groups draw inspiration from the basic Hindu principles. In India in particular, many Hindus engage in social welfare activities through membership in secular organizations, though their faith traditions still play a role in development activities.² Many organizations refer to Gandhian teachings and practices in their work, linking these, on occasion and in some settings, to Hindu spiritual traditions. Others reflect the teachings of the other many well known religious leaders.

There is a broad spectrum of Hindu Diaspora communities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada; more affluent communities, particularly, donate to Hindu organizations such as Hindu Aid, and the Hindu American Foundation to support development projects in the subcontinent.³ The Hindu Tamil Diaspora community has been influential in shaping political and development agendas in Sri Lanka – both fueling conflict, and supporting humanitarian aid. Hindu inspired religious movements, often with an international presence are also active in development; their faith inspiration is clear but often complex. As an example the Art of Living Foundation, founded and led by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, describes itself as spiritual, with Hindu tradition as one thread. It is one of the largest volunteer-based NGOs accredited to the UN.⁴

Islam

Muslim tradition is evident in development approaches and programs in various ways in South and Central Asia, including individual mosque and *imam* run charitable organizations, local Islamic FIOs, *zakat* focused institutions, local and international religious movements, and international Islamic organizations. The diversity and number of organizations involved in development reflect the importance of faith and its importance for approaches to social welfare to Muslims across the region. Muslim organizations trace their base-line concept for “redistributive justice”, or charity, to tenets of the Qur’an, particularly *zakat* (alms-giving), *sadaqah* (voluntary charity), and *waqfs* (pious endowments) which engage the construction of religious buildings, shelters, orphanages, refugee camps, and hospitals.⁵

The South Asian countries with Muslim majorities belong to Islamic international organizations including the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Large international Muslim organizations including Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid work in development across the region and partner with local Islamic humanitarian organizations, religious leaders, organizations of other faith inspiration, and secular development organizations and governments. Muslim religious movements are also active in development in South Asia. The pietistic group the Tablighi Jam’aat work through apolitical channels in the subcontinent to promote grassroots missionary revival and a return to faithful Islamic practices.

Sufi- Islamic charities operate in South Asia, focusing on education, counseling, and disaster relief. South Asian Sufi organizations include the Miran Saiyed Ali, Dargah Kabrastan and Masjid Committee Trust, and the Miran Saiyed Ali Spiritual Treatment Centre and Educational Welfare Trust. Traditionally, Sufi shrines and mausoleums are sites for almsgiving and food provision for the poor, and in modern times have expanded to cover education, healthcare, and other welfare activities.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Central Asia witnessed an Islamic resurgence of traditional beliefs and traditions.⁶ Today Islam plays important roles in everyday life in all Central Asian countries. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), established by Prince Abdul Karim, is perhaps the largest development organization inspired by the Muslim faith working in Central Asia. AKDN works in most Central Asian countries, and in several countries in South Asia, to promote economic development, education, government transparency, and the rebuilding of social bonds, among other development sectors. For Central Asia’s Sufi population, the Muslim pillar of *zakat*, or charity, is a central focus for charitable giving.⁷ the movement inspired Fethullah Gülen, runs schools throughout Central Asia.

Buddhism

Buddhism is the majority religion in Sri Lanka and Bhutan, and has significant minorities in Nepal; it is practiced in smaller pockets in most other countries in both regions. The Buddhist faith forms an intrinsic part of everyday life in countries where it is the majority religion, and well-established and trusted networks of religious leaders and monasteries are engaged in social development work. Besides its obvious and influential spiritual realm, Buddhism has been used by political leaders to derive power and support and as a force of national cohesion. In Bhutan and Sri Lanka, national development policies draw strong inspiration from Buddhist texts and traditions, as do political ethos. Historically, Buddhist temples were central in providing education. *Socially Engaged Buddhism*, the worldwide movement that works to transform society through active compassion and engagement of *dharmic* principles, has strong roots in Sri Lanka. Perhaps the best known such organization is the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. It works in over 15000 communities in Sri Lanka, and has projects in other countries in South Asia.

Diaspora Buddhist groups are influential in shaping political and development agendas. The Buddhist Sinhalese Diaspora supports development initiatives in Sri Lanka; during the civil war, some segments also participated in fueling the conflict. International Buddhist inspired NGOs include the US-located Buddhist Peace Fellowship which works on peacebuilding in Bangladesh and India, Buddhist Global Relief, also based in the US, and The Buddhist Leadership Initiative, that educates monks on HIV/AIDS prevention and other health issues.

Sikhism

Sikh communities are found throughout South and Central Asia, with greatest numbers in India and Pakistan. The Sikh tradition employs a strong emphasis on man's salvation, on hard honest work, individualism, rationality, and shared earnings.⁸ Sikhism follows the teachings of a group of gurus from different faiths; Sikh communities are particularly inclined to show compassion to and engage in interfaith initiatives. Sikh activities are sometimes affected by Sikh' minority status and the social issues that arise. Since the 1960s, a wealthy Sikh Diaspora has emerged in the US, Canada, and the UK; these communities provide substantial funds to international and local Sikh inspired organizations.

Private charitable organizations often operate around *gurdwaras* (temples), providing space for the provision of clothes, food, and first-aid for the destitute, disabled, or orphaned. Some organizations are also engaged in promoting values-based education. Noteworthy Sikh inspired organizations include: The Kalgidhar Trust/Society, the Chief Khalsa Diwan (CKD), the Kali Vein Environment Project, and the Shiromani Gudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

Zoroastrian (Parsi)

The Parsis in South Asia are originally Zoroastrian migrants from Iran and represent a wealthy and prominent religious minority in India and Pakistan; there are also small minority communities in Central Asia. Since the eighteenth century in Bombay (Mumbai), developmental assistance has been provided through Parsi "gifting" which matured into today's Parsi trusts and charitable foundations.⁹ These organizations continue to play an important part in development, particularly in metropolitan areas with Parsi communities. The Bombay Parsi Panchayat, the largest Zoroastrian institution, was founded in the seventeenth century to encourage charity work in rural areas of Gujarat and support local hospitals,

schools, and temples and in support of poor Parsis.¹⁰ Well known for their emphasis on education, The Parsi Benevolent Institution is a notable school open to all Indians irrespective of caste, gender, or religion.¹¹

Jainism

The essence of the Jain tradition is a concern for the welfare of all beings, peacebuilding, and non-violence.¹² Although small in number, most Jains live in India and emphasize philanthropy.¹³ Jain developmental organizations are commonly charitable trusts and foundations which draw on donations to assist Jains and non-Jains in various development projects. The Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust works with volunteer doctors in assisting nearly 25,000 Indians with physical disabilities.¹⁴ Other Jain trusts, such as the Institute of Jainology in Ahmedabad, India promote interfaith dialogue and encourage coordination between Jain communities and development organizations.¹⁵

Christianity

There are small communities of Christians throughout South and Central Asia. Despite their small size, the community is active in most development sectors including education, healthcare, and orphanages, as well as campaigning for human rights for marginalized groups and advocating for the poor.¹⁶ Churches and local Christian inspired organizations provide varying degrees of assistance to the poor, including running local schools and engaging in peacebuilding work. The role of Christianity as a minority religion involved in social outreach has contributed to tensions with other faith groups – difficulties can arise when groups are not open and transparent about their intentions in evangelizing. Christian development organizations work actively with minority groups, particularly Dalit groups in Hindu societies. Christian, and particularly Catholic schools, are often among the elite schools in South Asia.

Several international Christian organizations work in South Asia; Caritas, World Vision, and Lutheran World Federation are active in refugee rehabilitation and disaster relief. In Central Asia, The ACT Alliance, which includes Christian Aid and DaChurchAid, among others, works in most Central Asian countries and engages local religious leaders and promotes gender rights.

Post Soviet Transition – Central Asia

Under the USSR, religious leaders and members of the Islamic *ulema* lost their positions of influence in the community and were relegated to the sidelines.¹⁷ Since 1989,, religion, and particularly Islam has experienced a vivid resurgence. Central Asian countries, all of which had a rich Islamic heritage before Soviet rule, are rediscovering their religious and cultural traditions. The resurgence of religion has been met with growing pains in most Central Asian countries; secular governments tend to restrict religious freedom and engagement in social spheres, and promote a government approved version of Islamic practice (which varies by country). There is a rise of religious extremism in some parts, and government policies towards religion are largely shaped through that lens. Despite challenges, faith-inspired actors are playing an increasing role in development in Central Asia.

As Central Asians reclaim their religious traditions and heritage, Islam is emerging as major source of new identity and inspiration. Mosques are reopening and becoming vibrant centers of community; Sufi teachers are making their way back into mainstream society; and religious education and *madradas* are

made available for the general public.¹⁸ In practice, the reintegration of religion into the public sphere has elicited an overall positive response from a people who desire to practice their faith openly.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have among the most active faith involvement in development; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan have more restrictive environments, though some engagement is taking place.

Categorizing faith-inspired organizations (a complex task)

Faith-inspired organizations and actors in South and Central Asia are very diverse. Some organizations explicitly identify with a particular faith tradition, but many others draw inspiration from pluralistic less clearly defined institutional or theological tradition. Given particularly sensitivities around faith-secular links and concerns about fundamentalism, some organizations that draw quite evident inspiration from faith traditions are hesitant to label themselves as faith based.

To help in seeing some patterns in this diversity (and with many caveats) we suggest five useful categories:

1. International Faith-inspired Organizations – those with clear faith links that operate across international borders
2. Diaspora Groups – faith linked groups that are organized in countries outside those where their operations focus
3. International religious movements – these groups cross international boundaries and may include millions, or thousands, of followers, and their inspiration is clearly faith linked. Most, however, are not “nongovernmental” in nature, and their focus on the development agenda may be indirect or framed in distinctive terms
4. National faith-inspired organizations – groups with clear faith links, nationally based
5. Faith-inspired educational institutions (with a primary education purpose)
6. Faith-inspired political parties or organizations

Some organizations may be cross category.

International Faith-inspired Organizations

These development organizations work beyond the borders of the country in which the organization is headquartered and many (like Caritas and World Vision) are major international players on the development scene. Many have large operating budgets and a worldwide network of offices. Several are active across South and Central Asia, working in many different sectors. Some have their base and headquarters in South and Central Asia; others are based in North America, Asia, and Europe. Such organizations have international mandates and visions.. Their funding sources are often diverse (including but not limited to government donor agencies, international organizations, foundations, and individual contributions), as is the composition of their staff.

One of the largest international NGOs is Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which is active in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and across Central Asia. CRS works in many sectors, including community-based education, emergency response training, healthcare facilities, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Others are Islamic Relief, American Jewish World Service, World Vision, and the Aga Khan Development Network.

Diaspora Groups

Diaspora communities play significant roles in both the South and Central Asia development contexts. They have been influential in shaping political landscapes (including conflicts) in the region. Activities include fundraising and direct humanitarian or development assistance. Some diaspora communities form distinct organizations to promote the well-being of their community in their country of origin; Diaspora

temples, churches, gurdwara, shirines, mosques, and other religious institutions often sponsor and/or support development efforts.

An example of an active Diaspora community in the United States is the Sikh community, which is active in India through the organization Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE). The organization is committed to the preservation and promotion of Sikh culture in Indian states where the Sikh community is small in number to encourage the community to participate more fully in civil society.

Other particularly active Diaspora groups include the Tamil and Sinhala (Sri Lanka), Pakistani, Begladeshi, Bhutanese, and Nepali communities, as well as smaller communities from Central Asia.

International Religious Movements

South and Central Asia are distinctive in the prominent role of religious movements. Such movements inspire millions of people in the region, as well as worldwide. While the impetus and vision may be framed in different terms, the development role of these institutions is often substantial. Examples of religious movements include the Brahma Kumaris, the Sathya Sai Baba Organization, the Chinmaya Mission, the Art of Living, the RamaKrishna Mission, the Tablighi-Jam'at, and the Gülen Movement.

Muslim movements occupy special, often complex roles. It is not uncommon for a religious movement with pietistic goals to engage in welfare work if they witness unmet needs in the community. The international pietistic Islamic movement the Tablighi-Jama'at (TJ) is responding to a particular Islamic theological commitment to care for the wellbeing of the *ummah*, both spiritually and economically. The TJ is active in multiple Indian states, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. As a religious movement, the Tabligh infuses Islamic spirituality into the development services they offer. Ideologically, the religious movement is committed to making people better Muslims which includes empowerment through Islamic education, piety, and social values.

For Hindus,, the theological notion of *ahimsa* (non-violence), *dharma* (duty) and *karma* (action) is important and a driver in several international religious movements. For example, the core beliefs of the Hare Krishna Movement founded by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, are based on traditional Hindu scriptures including the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gīta*. The movement has inspired the international Movement for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON), active throughout South and Central Asia. ISKCON today is a worldwide confederation of more than 400 centers, including 60 farm communities, and 50 schools. In recent decades the movement's most rapid expansions in terms of numbers of membership is in Europe and India. ISKCON has inspired a project called Food for Life Food for Life which is active in over sixty countries and serves over 700,000 meals every day. ISKCON Youth Forum (IYF) is designed to raise Krishna consciousness and organizes festivals, retreats, dramatic performances, discussions, and presentations to engage the youth to become more socially and ethically aware.

National Faith-Inspired Organizations

National faith-inspired organizations generally work within the borders of one country with their particular faith groups, or with the wider community at large. There are many such organizations active in welfare and development work in South Asia and Central Asia - National NGOs, local religious movements and religious communities and congregations.

National Faith-Inspired NGOs

An NGO is a legally constituted body that operates independently from the government, receiving funding from a variety of sources, including individual donations, foundations, and government and independent donor agencies. NGOs are wide ranging in focus and mandate. Most local NGOs work across sectors in the development field including gender empowerment, conflict and peacebuilding, disaster relief and management, mobile health clinics and education. Faith-inspired NGOs draw motivation for their work in mission, in differing forms and to different degrees from one or more religious or spiritual faiths.

National NGOs in South and Central Asia vary in size and range of activities, and they participate in varying degrees in local and national coordination bodies with international organizations (including the United Nations) and networks. Some are large organizations and serve multiple regions beyond the city or town where they are located. For example, the Alamgir Welfare Trust provides food and health services to all over Pakistan. When the organization was first founded, their first welfare activity was distributing left-over food from lavish weddings to poor neighborhoods in Karachi. Today, the organization offers a variety of welfare and development services to the community including buying school supplies for children from poor families; burial services; and financial help to cover the cost for the *Hajj* pilgrimage, an important ritual practice in Islam.

Similarly in India, Veerayatan, a Jain organization focuses on *sadhana* or the spiritual development of the person as well as economic or social progress. The organization emphasizes prayer, meditation, and yoga for integrating the spiritual self into the realm of civic responsibility. In addition, the organization provides education and healthcare services including 100,000 successful eye surgeries, and offering artificial limbs and calipers to poor patients to improve mobility.

Mutakalim, the Muslim women's rights NGO in Kyrgyzstan was established in 1999, and today has offices throughout the country. The organization lobbied the government to make it legal for women to be photographed wearing the "*hijab*" – Islamic dress for women – for passport pictures. The notion behind the appeal is to protect a woman's right to religious practice as well as encourage the revival of faith in Kyrgyzstan.¹⁹

National/Local Religious Movements

Local religious movements are smaller in size and scope from international religious movements and are often working within one small region or town. The Arya Samaj in India is a Hindu reform movement founded in the nineteenth century by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. The swami was a *sanyasi* (renunciate) who believed in the supreme authority of the Vedas and preached a purified version of Hinduism without the ritualism and what he considered the excessive role of Brahmin priests. The Arya Samaj quickly expanded to all parts of India and has branches in almost every major metropolitan city such as Delhi, Chennai, and Kolkata. Apart from spreading a theological message, the Arya Samaj has made considerable steps in reaching out to the Dalit community providing education, mobile health clinics, and social welfare services. The movement has since spread and has an international following, though its work in India is substantial.

Other religions in the two focus regions, including the Jain, Muslim, Sufi, Christian, and Sikh communities have national/ local level social movements in this category.

Religious Communities and Congregations

Religious communities and congregations, including churches, mosques, temples, gurdwaras, and shrines, respond to social and development challenges and issues in their local contexts. Challenges of weak governance and infrastructure, and immediate humanitarian need and natural disasters, often motivate local religious institutions to intervene and provide services that the government or other development organizations cannot, or do not, provide. In South and Central Asia, local religious institutions are active in providing welfare services, including food distribution, clothing drives, mobile clinics, and orphan care. The support of local religious leaders is often a necessary aspect of successful program implementation in rural areas, given the trust and respect that religious leaders hold in their communities.

Local shrines in the region play a role in providing welfare services. Shrines in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh attract large numbers of pilgrims that engage in petitionary prayer, supplication, and worship. It is a common practice for local development organizations to collect money and food from wealthy neighborhoods and then donate the goods to local shrines for further distribution.

In Muslim countries, the emphasis on *zakat* or charitable alms is one interpretive lens to understand this level of engagement from local places of worship. Muslims are bound by the Quran to give generously for the well-being of their *ummah* or community and pay *zakat* by donating goods and food instead of money. Because the shrines are trusted by the community, they are often the most common recipients of this form of *zakat*. The shrines have volunteers to cook and serve the donated food to pilgrims and other poor people in the vicinity hence, providing a corporeal service as well as a spiritual one. It is difficult to document accurately how many people visit these shrines but it is clear that they benefit poor families in local communities.

Similarly in India where the majority religious tradition is Hinduism, local shrines also participate in welfare activities. Many shrines have food distribution programs and provide welfare for widows who are homeless.

Faith-Inspired Educational Institutions

Faith-inspired educational institutions in South and Central Asia include *madrasas*, missionary schools, value-based educational institutions and a range of other educational institutions inspired by theological commitments. These institutions provide a range of instruction to diverse populations, ranging from full religious curricula to government mandated, secular instruction. All major faiths in South and Central Asia have educational institutions. Faith-inspired educational institutions are present both in locations alongside and as alternatives to government institutions, and in remote areas where they are often the only option for education.

Madrasas are Islamic schools that focus primarily on Islamic teachings and Qur'anic instruction to varying degrees, in many cases also integrating aspects of secular education. *Madrasas* are found in all countries in South and Central Asia, both majority and non-majority Muslim states. Some *madrasas* have a contentious relationship with the state and engage in debates over differences in curricular opinion however; these schools fill a need in society for affordable Islamic education that in some instances is preferred to secular instruction. New research on *madrasas* suggests that Muslim women are drawn to the

Islamic education system and in some instances, prefer it to secular education.²⁰ Women from less affluent communities argue that secular education connects self-worth with economics and employability while *madrasas* integrate social and moral values into the curriculum. Female *madrasa* graduates claim they find self-worth from following their theological commitments instead of their economic potential which enables them to become a source of strength and support for families and their community.

Hindu-inspired schools are widespread across India, as well as present in other countries, notably Nepal. In India, Vidya Bharatiya Schools which are inspired by Hindutva ideology provide education in secular subjects, while integrating Hindutva philosophy into the curriculum.²¹ Some critique Vidya Bharatiya Schools and Hindutva as the effort to “saffronize” or, “Hinduize” the school curricula making the system exclusive and right-wing. However, these schools also provide a quality education to the poorest members of society including Dalits and members of the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Local temples and NGOs also run schools inspired by the Hindu faith.

Faith-inspired institutions, including Hindu and Sikh institutions, offer a system of values-based education. Values-based education integrates spiritual and moral values into the core curriculum and teaches students to become socially responsible adults in addition to well educated ones. The Hindu VidyaPeeth School (Hindu-inspired) in Nepal and the Kalgidhar Society (Sikh inspired) in India are examples of institutions that promote values-based education.

A further example of faith-inspired education institutions are Christian missionary schools (present to a lesser extent in Central Asia than in South Asia). Scattered in multiple countries and states all over South Asia is the strong presence of Catholic and Christian missionary schools. These educational institutions have been operative in the region since the British Raj and have secured the trust of the local people and governments. The Catholic and Christian schools in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India have the most prestigious reputation and the first choice for the elite members of society. These schools are a strong voice from a minority religious community and a prominent part of the South Asian educational system.

In addition to *madrasas*, Vidya Bharatiya Schools, and Christian missionary schools, there are a range of other faith-inspired education institutions. Buddhist temples provide education, particularly at the rural community level in countries including Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India. Faith-inspired run orphanages also serve as centers of education for the children in their care. Smaller religions, including the Baha’i, Zoroastrian, and Jain traditions also operate school in the region integrating spiritual values into the curriculum. Recently, the Turkish based Gülen Movement has expanded Gülen Schools, a unique system of a secular curriculum infused with Sufi inspired value based education throughout South and Central Asia. These schools provide an alternative to *madrasa* education while still instilling the students with Islamic values.

While not the entire educational landscape in the region, these institutions depict the vibrant religious diversity and complexity in the region and reveal the level of engagement of faith-inspired educational institutions and development work.

Faith-inspired political parties and organizations

Religiously-inspired political parties in South Asia are unique because they often have affiliated welfare wings that engage in development work and provide social services to the underserved. In India, the two

largest political parties that engage in multiple welfare and development services are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS). These political parties have unique characteristics that blur the line between political party, religious party, and/or religiously inspired welfare organizations. The RSS supports the Vidya Bharatiya Schools amongst other welfare services including poverty alleviation and healthcare. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Jama'at-i-Islami has welfare wings that are involved in a wide range of charitable, welfare, and development services including health care, education, emergency relief, and orphan support.²² The Al-Khidmat Foundation in Pakistan is associated with Jama'at-i-Islami and is engaged in poverty alleviation through various sectors including helping poor families to pay for weddings and other religious celebrations.

Sector Focus and Emerging Policy Questions

Conflict and Peacebuilding

Religion plays visible, complex, yet often poorly understood roles in the many and very different conflicts that face South and Central Asia today. Given religion's evident presence and social and political importance, the close links between building peace and development, and the significance of a range of complex conflicts in the regions, it is surprising how little systematic focus there has been on the links among religion, conflict, and peace. Thus a central focus of this review and consultation is the specific roles that are played by religious ideas, institutions, and leaders, to a degree in fomenting or exacerbating tensions, far more in resolving conflicts and working specifically to build sustainable peace.

While every conflict has distinct features, in some fashion religious elements can be seen as cross cutting, in part because religion has deep roots in communities as well as complex and cross-cutting national and transnational links. There is some irony in the broad picture that emerges: in these parts of the world, where people take particular pride in their deeply held religious values (and in several of these faiths peace is a core element), and in centuries long traditions of tolerance and successful plural societies, religion seems today quite often to be at least the spark for violent conflict. Hindu Buddhist, Hindu Muslim, intra Muslim, Hindu Sikh, and anti-Christian tensions, among others, have divided communities and led to violence and wars. Even traditionally pacific Buddhist communities were much engaged in conflict in Sri Lanka. Concern about the fundamentalist tendencies in several faiths, some (of course not all) prone to violence, put a new spotlight on religious roles in conflict. It is sad but telling that the earliest modern suicide bombings tied to religion are traced to South Asia. Several countries today are deeply split along religions and/or ethnic lines and religion divides some countries from others or exacerbates international relations. Whether it contributes to or is itself a central factor in conflicts, the role of religion is a growing focus of attention. And, in contrast, religious peacebuilding is increasingly seen as an important potential avenue for dispute resolution and building sustainable peace and reconciliation.

South and Central Asia are two very different but interlinked regions. Both face a range of different conflicts, though these conflicts do not fit neatly into any common pattern. They range from protracted internal armed insurgencies, terrorist threats and acts, and international border disputes, to inter-sectarian violence and ethnic conflicts with religious threads. The role that religious beliefs and actors play in each conflict is distinct, always complex, and often contested (some arguing that religion is central, others that it is not). Obviously, given the great diversity of religious beliefs and actors in the regions, religion's part in conflict situations varies widely. The key factor, religious identities and tensions, is often intertwined with ethnic and national roles. In situations as different as Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, ethnicity, tribal affiliations, culture, and religion are intertwined, with many implications for politics and economics. Religious justifications for conflicts often draw on deep historic roots (witness the protracted dispute centered on India's Ayodhya Temple and Babri Masjid, which goes back to ancient Hindu legends). There are many examples where religious identities have contributed to flaring disputes and violence, but also cases where religion has served a role of constraining tensions and brokering peace.

Religious elements in differing forms are highlighted as contributors to several South and Central Asian conflicts. Prime examples are Afghanistan, Kashmir, Pakistan (inter-sect and border region conflicts), Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, and tensions surrounding the resurgence of extremist religion and religious groups in post USSR Central Asia. Religiously-based nationalism is seen by many (though not all) analysts as a causal factor in the over two decade civil conflict in Sri Lanka; religion is a communal tag of identity in the Kashmiri conflict; and the rise of more fundamental interpretations within some Muslim communities

in Uzbekistan has fueled social tensions that erupted into violent conflict. Some well known instances of terrorism, notably the 2001 attacks on the Indian Parliament, and the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, give rise to mounting concern and have regional and global implications. Religious identity is closely tied to ethnic affiliation, and economic, social, and political status, in several countries, notably Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, and in parts of most countries across the two regions.²³

The degree to which religion is consciously part of policy reflections about conflict and peacebuilding in the region varies (as it does across the world). While religious actors and beliefs are commonly blamed for fueling conflict, and some disputes are expressly framed as falling along religious lines (for example communal violence involving Hindus and Muslims in India or inter-sect violence involving Ahmadiya Muslims in Pakistan), in most instances religion is clearly part of a complex mix, and policy makers tend to leave it to the side more often than they confront or engage religious bodies directly.²⁴ But there is growing appreciation of potential positive roles in peacebuilding, for example when religious leaders soothe communal tensions or serve as mediators.²⁵ Religious leaders tend to be well trusted and accepted by communities, including those facing conflict, and wield influence that can mobilize communities quickly. In South Asia specifically, religious communities have been renowned peacemakers and leaders of nonviolent social change over the past century. Most notable are the religiously inspired anticolonial nonviolent movements of Mahatma Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, often cited as inspiration for both faith-inspired and secular peacebuilding initiatives today.²⁶ In Central Asia, Muslim leaders from opposite sides of the borders in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are cooperating to foster peace between two ethnic groups that share a common faith tradition, yet have been engaged in violent conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010.

The understanding of faith-inspired roles in working for peace is evidently tied to the understanding of what is involved in that process. Definitions of peacebuilding vary quite widely. Some restrict their focus to direct negotiations and mediation and post conflict recovery. Others, including former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, academic Scott Appleby, and Ela Bhatt view peacebuilding far more expansively, for example as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”²⁷ For South and Central Asia, the latter definition offers a richer scope for understanding the complex factors that lead to conflict, and the various sectors where faith-inspired actors work to contribute to building sustainable peace. Thus peacebuilding activities can include a myriad of development sectors, including, but not limited to, education, poverty alleviation, shelter, dispute resolution, governance, gender rights, human rights and advocacy, livelihoods, humanitarian assistance, and trauma relief, inter alia. Also, the manner in which the array of peacebuilding activities are related and overlap can be sensitive and complex; education can be perceived as related to advocacy and proselytizing; gender-specific initiatives may push traditional boundaries dictated in part by religious belief; and the involvement of certain faith groups in mediation and reconciliation may create a perceived threat to other faith groups involved.

A related and significant issue (currently the focus of a Berkley Center/WFDD study) is the role that women play in religious peacebuilding. Several of the richest examples are from South Asia, notably Ela Bhatt’s work with self-employed women and Ashima Kaul’s peace work in Kashmir. The roles of women are often invisible because of traditions of male leadership of religious institutions, and when work for peace is defined more narrowly as linked to direct conflict resolution work, as opposed to the broader understandings of what peacebuilding entails.

We have identified no comprehensive survey of the peacebuilding work by faith-inspired actors in South or Central Asia. In South Asia, in particular, a wide array of scholars undertake research about religion and about conflict, but the two are not often linked. Those working “on the ground” generally have limited exposure to the literature. There is considerable scope for enriching our understanding of the complex and diverse roles that faith actors play in conflict environments, and their capacity to engage

constructively in peacebuilding. Another area that merits investigation is the training and network of those working for peace, with, again, a more explicit focus on their religious dimensions.

Recent events including the 2010 flood and internal displacement in Pakistan, ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan, conflict/internal displacement in Sri Lanka, and peace jirgas in Afghanistan, illustrate how effective faith actors can be in responding to vulnerable populations, well before government and international organizations arrive.

Several organizations are taking a special interest in the roles of religion in peacebuilding, often focusing specifically on South and Central Asia. These include the Asia Foundation, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), and several United Nations agencies. Civil society initiatives in the region are also active. The programs involve training and sensitizing religious leaders and faith communities to peacebuilding techniques, and research, focused especially on preparing case studies. "Training of trainer" approaches are common, so as to build an expanded network of faith-inspired actors. Fragmentary evidence suggests promise in this work but a rather decentralized approach. Knowledge gaps are still substantial.

The major international interfaith or faith-inspired organizations are active in working for peace in the major conflict zones (on local and regional initiatives) in South and Central Asia. These include Religions for Peace (WCRP), the Parliament of the World's Religions, United Religions Initiative, Initiatives for Change, and the community of Sant' Egidio. Transnational faith-inspired development organizations, notably World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, and American Jewish World Service also seek to ensure that their development work is well attuned to conflict issues and contributes to building peace. This appears to be a growing trend. Further, and in many ways specific to the South and Central Asian context, transnational religious movements active in peacebuilding include the Art of Living movement, Arya Samaj, the Brama Kumaris, and Tablighi Jama'at. Their programs vary widely across the broad range of activities under the peacebuilding "umbrella"; examples include short relief and rehabilitation courses, and longer term reconciliation and reconstruction programs.

Local/national religious leaders and faith-inspired organizations, often initiate programming, drawing on local expertise and understanding of sensitivities and nuance. Some work independently and locally, while others engage in national/region wide initiatives with international organizations, both faith-inspired and secular. In Sri Lanka, Sarvodaya works at the national and local levels on indigenous peacebuilding efforts, coordinating and collaborating with government and civil society leaders, as well as armed actors from all sides of the conflict. Individual religious leaders are often inspired by their immediate surroundings to leverage their influence to promote peace. Examples can be found in countries including Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and India, and from all major faith traditions. Some efforts are inspirational and successful, but others fall short. Religious leaders may lack the necessary skills and knowledge.

Outcomes and success are difficult to measure, and the picture on faith-inspired roles is further clouded by ambiguities in defining and pinpointing how faith affects individual and community behavior. The general picture, however, suggests rising interest in the potential for positive action, as well as an urgent need to address or combat the negative and divisive influences of fundamentalist tendencies and movements.

This review highlights the historical and present importance of faith-inspired actors in conflict environments in South and Central Asia, highlighting some specific examples and avenues for potential engagement. Dialogue on the opportunities and pitfalls of faith engagement in peacebuilding offers real promise in helping to dispel misconceptions and create opportunities in sensitive environments and contexts.

Gender

Nearly every institution with international development as its focus pays tribute to the importance of women and their efforts; most faith-inspired organizations also highlight the importance they give to women and gender relations, but the nuances of their differing approaches can have considerable significance.²⁸ Gender and women's issues are key components in achieving sustainable development in virtually all sectors in South and Central Asia. Some issues are cross cutting, presenting similar challenges throughout the regions, while others are more distinctive to particular countries, regions, or communities. In short, there are some important common themes but also important differences. As religion is introduced into the picture, the landscape becomes more complicated. Religious and traditional understandings of women's roles in society are widely perceived as hindering women's ability to exercise their basic human rights, including basic education, health, and human security. Exploring the approaches of faith-inspired organizations to gender relations offers new insights both for barriers to equality and possible novel approaches to engage women on often sensitive development topics. Faith-inspired organizations can play particularly important roles confronting gender inequities that have religious dimensions.

Gender inequality creates barriers to access to jobs, assets, political influence, justice, and nutrition and health services for many women in both South and Central Asia. Legally, women have equal rights under the law of most countries, and there have been female prime ministers in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, and (as of 2010) in Kyrgyzstan. However, in practice there is still far to go to see true gender equality. Culture based institutions, for example the dowry system, which is illegal in India, still persist. They contribute to a harsh reality that girls are often seen as a burden by poor families. The goal – to shift the the paradigm so that girls are seen as an asset - is coming closer in many cases, but data on gender relations from many sources demonstrate clearly that the continuing challenges..

Perhaps the most fundamental evidence of the challenge is the persistence and even increase in boy preference, leading to a range of practices that are evident in gender imbalances – more boys are born or survive. Aside from selective abortion of female fetuses, girl children may receive less nutrition and health care so mortality is higher. Female infanticide still occurs. The 2001 census in India reported 927 girls per 1,000 boys, a decline from 1961 when that number was 976. In parts of India, there are now fewer than 800 girls for every 1,000 boys. Culture and tradition, with religion part of the mix, help perpetuate boy favoritism; in some areas in India, for example, the prevailing belief is that only sons can perform last rites for parents.²⁹ Amartya Sen in his influential article, *More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing*, highlighted how traditional practices and roles of women contribute to an aversion to the girl child, with profound effects on demographic balances. These distorted gender ratios have nefarious effects beyond their obvious human rights dimension: for example they contribute to human trafficking for sexual exploitation, to fill the dearth of girls.

Another distinctive and damaging gender issue is early marriage (especially for girls), as South Asia is a region where it is most commonly practiced. The negative effects are well known: young married girls rarely continue their education and they (and their children) face higher mortality and health risks. Child marriage is, once again, encouraged by a combination of traditions, economic forces, and religious beliefs. The hope is that religious leaders can be more centrally part of efforts to bring the practice to an end.

MDG 3(gender parity in education; the share of women in wage employment; and the proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures) and 5(maternal mortality and universal access to reproductive health) address gender issues explicitly, and thus progress is quite closely monitored. While some

countries are making notable progress, particularly on education (Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and countries in Central Asia), as regions as a whole, trends have shown decreasing gender equity.³⁰

Key development issues at the intersection of faith, gender, and development in South and Central Asia include, but are not limited to: human trafficking; domestic violence; cultural barriers to participation in society or politics; early and forced marriage; family planning; female genital cutting; sexual and domestic violence; maternal health; and disparities in education and health care. The issues are complex in themselves but they also tend to overlap. For example, early or forced marriage often leads to domestic violence, which can include sexual violence, which can evolve into maternal and child health challenges. All of these issues pose significant challenges to overall development in the region, given that women's progress is so critical for sustainable development.

Religion's role in this complex array of relationships is multifaceted, complex, and often controversial. Individuals and organizations that contest women's rights often cite religious traditions or religiously inspired laws as justification for gender exclusion. Yet a number of leading individuals and organizations working to overcome gender-based challenges derive their inspiration from faith. Constructive engagement by faith actors by opening the doors of educational facilities, providing adequate healthcare, and empowerment through dialogue has yielded positive results in supporting gender equality and enhancing sustainable development.

One area where the links between gender and faith has been too little explore is women's roles in conflict and how religious beliefs and institutions affect them. This is the subject of an ongoing USIP/Berkley Center/WFDD review which highlights the phenomenon of invisibility of women in many conflict situations. Women play important and varying roles in conflict environments – they can perpetuate violence, and they are commonly victims, carrying many if not most of the burdens of conflict. In Sri Lanka, women have played the role of suicide members, while those in IDP camps suffer from insecurity, poor health, and economic distress, and war widows face tremendous societal adversities. Yet women are by no means only victims or perpetrators, Their peacebuilding work is often inspirational, motivating communities and drawing on religious teachings. ³¹ Many global networks of women peacebuilders directly support UN Resolution 1325, calling for greater gender perspective in conflict environments. NGOs including the Association of War Affected Women in Sri Lanka work with women victims of conflict, both at the local level with individual women from all sides and faith tradition, and at the international level, advocating for universal policies to protect women in conflict.

Educating girls is often seen as the most critical development challenge, and in parts of the regions there are still wide disparities, at many levels, from primary through university. Women's literacy figures in several countries reflect the historic lag, even when (as in Bangladesh) remarkable progress has been made in recent years. Central Asia has greater gender equality in education than South Asia, largely a legacy of Soviet policies, though the resurgence of traditional practices has seen a trend towards increasing inequalities.³² In South Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India have the greatest gender inequalities in education.

Again, faith plays an often complicated role. In countries including Pakistan and Afghanistan, faith-inspired groups holding extreme fundamentalist viewpoints may actively prevent girls from attending school, sharply curtailing their lack of opportunity. More commonly, local religious leaders may reinforce parents' hesitations to send girls to school or the priority they give to sons. Religious leaders can temper or help change attitudes and the do so more and more. This is difficult in religiously and politically charged environments, as it takes courage to advocate for the social change that gender equality represents. How to engage religious actors more actively and effectively in such environments is a policy challenge but it is also has great practical significance, as faith-inspired organizations tend to be sensitive to local faith contexts and thus can help map promising strategies and communications

approaches.. There is considerable positive experience to build on. As an example, , in Pakistan, nearly 250,000 girls are pursuing education in over 3000 madrasas.

Health raises a host of gender issues. Gender stereotypes and overall neglect are perpetuated by cultural/religious traditions and girls' health can be neglected in favor of boys. Traditional understandings of sexual health affects maternal health practices and family planning, while human trafficking and the commercial sex trade put women at heightened risk of HIV/AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Faith-inspired organizations from all major faiths and movements generally have specialized gender programming, as well as gender sensitive approaches mainstreamed in their organizational strategies. Large international organizations, including World Vision, Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, and Catholic Relief Services, among many others, all have gender focused programs in both South and Central Asia. Many local/national level faith-inspired organizations are organized by and for women, and are led by women leaders. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, development coordination bodies have been established with a specific focus on women's organizations, and include faith-inspired members. Transnational religious movements and interfaith organizations (national and international) also have gender focused approaches and programming.

The experience, approach, hesitations, and insights of faith-inspired organizations deserve careful research and purposeful attention and dialogue. Religion has both positive and negative dimensions; long-standing traditions contribute to unequal treatment of women, while powerful and moderate voices can initiate change, overcome adversities, and move ideas into practice. Though South and Central Asia face challenges, with them come opportunities for constructive engagement by faith-inspired actors.

Education

Faith-inspired organizations play a variety of quite different roles in education in South and Central Asia. Faith run schools are an accepted part of education systems (for the most part), but there is no overall, systematic mapping, far less an analysis of quality which, from partial evidence, varies from superb to poor. Thus quantities and impact are hard to assess. Constructive dialogue about how faith and faith schools fit within overall approaches to education can be clouded by controversy.

MDG 2 grew out of a global consensus to assure 'Education for all,' and it has particular relevance in this region, with large populations, significant parts of which are underserved by education. Thus the role of faith institutions deserves more systematic attention than it has received.³³ Some elements of faith-inspired systems focus particularly on poor and marginalized communities.

Faith institutions are significant in at least five dimensions of education and development, including as advocates to achieve social justice, as providers of a large share of education options, contributing to or defining what is taught about religion, shaping perspectives and affecting knowledge levels on issues of social change and development (i.e. health and peacebuilding/reconciliation), and informing and educating today's youth.

Faith-inspired actors make contributions to education through a variety of institutions. Historically, religious institutions were key centers of education in countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Bhutan. Institutions including madrasas, missionary schools, Buddhist *privena*, faith-inspired universities, and unofficial community gatherings, *inter alia*, are all present in South and Central Asia. Students at these institutions range from the elite (as is the case with Catholic missionary schools in India

and Pakistan), to poor and marginalized girls (in Afghanistan and also Pakistan), for whom rural madrasas are often the only option for an education.

There are situations in which faith-inspired educational institutions are ‘part of problem,’ stalling the push for universal education (a notable case being for girls), while at the same time often ‘part of the solution,’ offering education to the underserved and instilling in students morals and ethics for a peaceful society.

Curricula of study in faith-inspired institutions vary widely, for example in how religious subjects are taught and how “other” traditions are presented. Many outstanding schools run by faith communities (for example Jesuit schools) have largely secular curricula, teaching the full range of subjects. This cannot be said of others, especially those with few resources. The most widely discussed are the widely ranging madrasa, some of which offer a limited religious curriculum. Reform of these Muslim run schools is a widely discussed policy challenge. Madrasa reform is an issue of contention between madrasas and the state in many countries, notably in Pakistan; madrasa leaders fear increasing trends towards secularization, while concerns over religious extremism and a lack of marketable skills in madrasa graduates drives reform agendas.

A common topic in discussions about the role of faith-inspired education is how values and *values-based* education are approached. Sikh and Hindu inspired schools in India and Nepal have notable examples of consciously framed values-based institutions.

Quality of instruction and teacher training are common issues. Religious leaders teaching in faith-inspired schools may lack a high level of education, religious or secular. In Central Asia, years of suppression of religion during the Soviet Union era created a dearth in general religious knowledge; Lack of education among instructors can contribute to misinformed interpretations of religious texts, which are then passed along to students.

Another topic of discussion is the practical, job preparedness effectiveness of faith-inspired institutions. The argument is made that unemployed youth without a broad-based education can be more susceptible to religious extremism.

The specific country context largely determines both the roles and the debates around faith-inspired schools. In Sri Lanka and Nepal, traditional religious schools are seeing increased support from the state, and in some cases being further integrated into the official education system (though with specific mandates on curricula and instruction). Elsewhere, especially in Central Asia, many types of faith-inspired schools are highly restricted, and may be banned or shut down if discovered. In Tajikistan for example, only government approved madrasas can operate, though many “unofficial” madrasas operate in secret, providing education in rural areas, and at the same time contributing to growing tensions between religious institutions and state.

In countries including India and Sri Lanka, among others, faith and education are perceived by many to have taken on political dimensions. In India, the concept of *Hindutva* combines nationalism and what many say are Hindu inspired philosophies to promote a homogenous nation; many minority groups fear they threaten diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural identities. Vidya Bharati schools are one of the largest school systems in India, and *Hindutva* is a core component of their curriculum. In Central Asia as well,

registered Islamic schools teach a government approved curriculum, in many cases blending religious instruction with state and political ideologies.

Concerns about proselytization enter into discussions about education also. In Pakistan, Christian schools have been the target of violence, and in Afghanistan, some Christian schools have been permanently shut down under charges of proselytizing. Most practitioners agree that being clear and transparent can dispel concerns, and contribute to trust among and between faith communities.

Two organizations with Muslim inspiration aspire to educational excellence and are major players in the education sectors in much of the region. The Aga Khan Development Network of Islamic-inspired schools and universities offers outstanding education in often state of the art facilities to student bodies of all faiths. The schools of the Gulen Movement have expanded across Central Asia, again with broad based curricula.. Another dimension of this education picture is students who seek education abroad, in some instances specifically religious training. Again, some is of outstanding quality, but not all. There are much-discussed examples of students trained in Pakistan, Egypt, and the Middle East who return with what may be considered subversive ideas. Turkmenistan has recalled students out of fear they will contribute to social discord.³⁴

In sum, the faith and education landscape is complex, with myriad actors of quite diverse style, form, and quality. A dearth of poor data contributes to misunderstanding and tensions between and among faith and secular actors; it is an area that deserves more research and dialogue.

Cross cutting sectors

This report focuses on three specific sectors (peacebuilding, gender, and education), but each is related to a myriad development issues and sectors. Other sectors where faith-inspired actors play active roles include, but are not limited to: health, migration, human trafficking, environment and climate change, and governance.

One of the largest concentrations of faith-inspired work is in the health sector. Work includes *inter alia* mobile health clinics, hospitals, HIV awareness and prevention, tuberculosis prevention, malaria prevention, maternal care, and care for the elderly. Faith-inspired actors are particularly drawn to health work for many reasons, including a faith motivation to help those in need, and because their position in communities gives them a capacity to convey often sensitive health messages couched in traditional language. Health can be an entry point for faith-inspired actors to enter into broader social development work; health is a common challenge for everyone and an obvious need. Thus faith-inspired actors may be skilled at building consensus for common action around health initiatives. Conversely, faith-inspired actors can be part of the problem; stigmatizing HIV/AIDS is the classic example, but another was the advice or instructions some religious leaders gave to followers during the height of Pakistan's recent floods to fast during disaster conditions, not taking into account the exceptions set out in the Quran.

Organizations like the Edhi Foundation and Caritas operate mobile clinics in Pakistan that reach remote underserved populations, and assist in humanitarian responses in disaster prone areas. In India, the Brahma Kumaris operate state of the art hospitals that offer fee free care to the poor, attending to both spiritual and physical needs. In Central Asia, local imams are active in HIV education and advocacy; they have proved effective in crossing cultural and religious barriers to engage in open dialogue. Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka works to strengthen Sri Lanka's tuberculosis control program, partnering with the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. An array of other organizations is active in South and Central Asia on a wide range of other health related issues.

Migration, both within countries from rural to urban settings, and across borders, shapes contemporary society in South and Central Asia. In 2005, Asia hosted 53 million out of the world's 191 million migrant, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.³⁵ Migrants move for a host of reasons, notably economic migration to urban centers, and forced migration because of conflict, natural disasters, or climate change. Migration often exacerbates poverty and can contribute to conflict; women and children are particularly vulnerable and at risk.

Faith-inspired actors respond to the many challenges facing migrants, including education, livelihoods, health, humanitarian assistance, and poverty alleviation. In urban areas, international and local faith actors work in the sprawling slums with primarily economic migrants providing education and providing livelihoods training. In cases of forced migration, faith-inspired actors are often the first to respond; large international organizations including Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid respond to forced migration in South and Central Asia, often focusing on immediate humanitarian assistance. Muslim Aid responded to cyclones in Bangladesh as well, from which widespread flooding in low lying delta regions forced migration to higher land.

Related to migration is human trafficking. Human trafficking has a strong gender component, is related to poverty, and has consequences for health, largely in the form of communicative diseases and women's health. Human trafficking is a transnational issue, linking countries in South and Central Asia, and happens for many reasons, including sexual exploitation or bonded/forced labor. Faith-inspired organizations both work with the victims of trafficking, as well as implement programs to address root causes, drawing on their faith inspiration to help the victims. The Christian inspired International Justice Mission has four offices in India, and uses its global faith linkages and networks to bring attention to and rescue women and children victims of forced prostitution.³⁶ Other organizations, including World Vision and Catholic Relief Services, as well as a range of local organizations, have programs in countries including Nepal that provide livelihoods training and education to trafficking victims. In some cases, extremist faith-inspired groups have themselves engaged in human trafficking, the Taliban and kidnapping and trafficking of girls for sexual exploitation as an example, though these cases are not representative of faith-inspired actors as a whole.

The effects of climate change have particular significance for South Asia. In Maldives and Bangladesh, highly populated low lying coastlines are at risk of flooding and may disappear. In both South and Central Asia, changing weather patterns affect farming seasons and water supplies, decreasing food security and increasing the potential for resource conflicts. Globally, faith-inspired actors have been quite marginally engaged in the climate change debate but that is changing. The Maldives is an example of a government that is seeking actively to bring faith-inspired actors into dialogue, sending a high level government representative to participate in the October 2009 ARC Windsor Castle meeting with over 100 religious leaders. Muslim Aid is working in Bangladesh on disaster preparedness.

Some South and Central Asian countries are among the world's most corrupt. Only two countries are more corrupt than Afghanistan (ranked 176/178, with 1 being the least corrupt) on the 2010 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. Bhutan is the "cleanest" country in the region, ranked 36/178. Faith-inspired actors play diverse roles on this sensitive issue. They can promote positive values and both through advocacy and education. In Bangladesh, government officials, including the Prime Minister, have called on religious leaders to wage a social movement against corruption. The Asia Foundation has for many years worked with imams to that end.

Text Box 1: Corruption challenges in Bangladesh

Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Bangladesh 134th on its annual review of corruption, suggesting that it is one of world's most corrupt countries. Citizens of Bangladesh also point to corruption as a common phenomenon and a social evil; a recent survey by the Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad found that 95 percent of people polled believed that the police were the most corrupt department in the country, followed by customs, taxation, the bureaucracy, and the judiciary. Scholars tend to agree that corruption penetrates almost every part of the infrastructure and is a serious obstacle to Bangladesh's socio-economic development. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Bangladesh was formed to counteract various forms of institutional corruption, including bribery in business, education, and branches of government; it campaigns to create a social stigma around corrupt behavior.

Faith-inspired actors play increasing roles in combating corruption, and often invoke faith perspectives and teachings as their motivation. More than 80 percent of Bangladeshi citizens say that religious leaders should play a role in national development goals (survey conducted by The Asia Foundation with USAID support). The Leaders of Influence (LOI) program includes training on public advocacy and corruption. The program has provided communities with skills to establish enterprises that transparently fund mosque-based activities to raise awareness of critical development issues, including anti-corruption. *Imams* discuss these issues during Friday sermons and other discussions and religious meetings.

Government leaders recognize the respect that *imams* have in their communities and their potential influence in addressing development issues, particularly corruption. Addressing the National Convention of *Imams* trained on Human Resource in 2009, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged *imams*, *ulema*, *mashaikhs* and other religious leader to wage a social movement against corruption in order to build a prosperous and peaceful society. Chief adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed also called on *imams* to be vigilant on crime and corruption. He urged *imams* to use Friday sermons to preach against social evils and corruption and encouraged them to teach moral duties including honesty, sincerity, and integrity.

Chart 1: The 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index – South and Central Asia

Rank	Country	Rating
176	Afghanistan	1.4
134	Bangladesh	2.4
36	Bhutan	5.7
87	India	3.3
143	Maldives	2.3
146	Nepal	2.2
143	Pakistan	2.3
91	Sri Lanka	3.2
105	Kazakhstan	2.9
164	Kyrgyzstan	2
154	Tajikistan	2.1
172	Turkmenistan	1.6
172	Uzbekistan	1.6

Ranking is countries (1

least corrupt). Rating is on a scale from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt).

out of 178 being the

Source: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results

South and Central Asia: Religion and Development Roles

Religious institutions and faith-inspired organizations have a strong physical and spiritual presence across most South and Central Asian communities. Even the most remote and inaccessible locations are likely to have a vibrant religious center or centers that often function as a social and economic hub, beside more classic spiritual roles. Faith-inspired institutions are involved in a range of social and public services at the community level, including prominently but not exclusively education, peacebuilding, and health, as well as influencing complex social relations, including class and gender.

Religious demography, relations between state and faith, and the main where faith institutions are active vary widely across the region. Each country presents a quite different profile, sometimes mirrored also in wide differences among regions of a single country. This diversity gives rise to widely different arrangements and focus in terms of types of development programs and sector concentration as well as the way they relate to public services and local authorities. The respective roles of local versus regional and international organizations also differs markedly by country. Transnational religious movements have a special importance and character in South Asia, and actively participate in many facets of development (though it is not always so named). The capacity and disposition of the state also shape the approach to faith-inspired organizations, as well as to civil society more broadly. Thus, India, for example, with a vibrant and established democracy and rich cultural and religious diversity, has a large and dynamic civil society with many thousand different organizations working in virtually every imaginable sector, while in Turkmenistan, nongovernmental organizations, including those with a faith character, work under tight government restrictions.

This section briefly introduces the region's major religious traditions and their social engagement in development.

Hinduism

Hinduism is an oversimplified label coined during the British Raj to represent the very diverse practices of the native religious traditions in India. The classification “Hindu” tried to unify often conflicting beliefs that had no single founder, no clearly established beginning, no singular authoritative text, and millions of variegated local, communal, or individual gods.³⁷ Many object that for these reasons it is not a “religion” or even a “faith tradition”. However, there are important common threads, a host of leaders, places, and organizations, and beliefs that fall under the general rubric.

Hinduism is practiced by hundreds of millions of people in many countries across South Asia. It is the majority tradition in India and Nepal, and there are significant minorities in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Prominent Hindu beliefs and practices such as *dharma* (duty), *karma* (action), and *samsara* (rebirth) influence the formulation and implementation of the development agenda in India and Nepal, and the shape and direction of the widely ranging Hindu inspired development organizations. Temples, individuals, faith-inspired political parties, social movements, NGOs, and community groups draw inspiration from the basic Hindu principles. In India in particular, many Hindus engage in social welfare activities through membership in secular organizations, though their faith traditions still play a role in development activities.³⁸ Many organizations refer to Gandhian teachings and practices in their work, linking these, on occasion and in some settings, to Hindu spiritual traditions. Others reflect the teachings of the other many well known religious leaders.

There is a broad spectrum of Hindu Diaspora communities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada; more affluent communities, particularly, donate to Hindu organizations such as Hindu Aid, and the Hindu American Foundation to support development projects in the subcontinent.³⁹ The Hindu Tamil Diaspora community has been influential in shaping political and development agendas in Sri Lanka – both fueling conflict, and supporting humanitarian aid. Hindu inspired religious movements, often with an international presence are also active in development; their faith inspiration is clear but often complex. As an example the Art of Living Foundation, founded and led by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, describes itself as spiritual, with Hindu tradition as one thread. It is one of the largest volunteer-based NGOs accredited to the UN.⁴⁰

Islam

Muslim tradition is evident in development approaches and programs in various ways in South and Central Asia, including individual mosque and *imam* run charitable organizations, local Islamic FIOs, *zakat* focused institutions, local and international religious movements, and international Islamic organizations. The diversity and number of organizations involved in development reflect the importance of faith and its importance for approaches to social welfare to Muslims across the region. Muslim organizations trace their base-line concept for “redistributive justice”, or charity, to tenets of the Qur’an, particularly *zakat* (alms-giving), *sadaqah* (voluntary charity), and *waqfs* (pious endowments) which engage the construction of religious buildings, shelters, orphanages, refugee camps, and hospitals.⁴¹

The South Asian countries with Muslim majorities belong to Islamic international organizations including the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Large international Muslim organizations including Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid work in development across the region and partner with local Islamic humanitarian organizations, religious leaders, organizations of other faith inspiration, and secular development organizations and governments. Muslim religious movements are also active in development in South Asia. The pietistic group the Tablighi Jam’aat work through apolitical channels in the subcontinent to promote grassroots missionary revival and a return to faithful Islamic practices.

Sufi- Islamic charities operate in South Asia, focusing on education, counseling, and disaster relief. South Asian Sufi organizations include the Miran Saiyed Ali, Dargah Kabrastan and Masjid Committee Trust, and the Miran Saiyed Ali Spiritual Treatment Centre and Educational Welfare Trust. Traditionally, Sufi shrines and mausoleums are sites for almsgiving and food provision for the poor, and in modern times have expanded to cover education, healthcare, and other welfare activities.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Central Asia witnessed an Islamic resurgence of traditional beliefs and traditions.⁴² Today Islam plays important roles in everyday life in all Central Asian countries. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), established by Prince Abdul Karim, is perhaps the largest development organization inspired by the Muslim faith working in Central Asia. AKDN works in most Central Asian countries, and in several countries in South Asia, to promote economic development, education, government transparency, and the rebuilding of social bonds, among other development sectors. For Central Asia’s Sufi population, the Muslim pillar of *zakat*, or charity, is a central focus for charitable giving.⁴³ the movement inspired Fethullah Gülen, runs schools throughout Central Asia.

Buddhism

Buddhism is the majority religion in Sri Lanka and Bhutan, and has significant minorities in Nepal; it is practiced in smaller pockets in most other countries in both regions. The Buddhist faith forms an intrinsic part of everyday life in countries where it is the majority religion, and well-established and trusted networks of religious leaders and monasteries are engaged in social development work. Besides its obvious and influential spiritual realm, Buddhism has been used by political leaders to derive power and support and as a force of national cohesion. In Bhutan and Sri Lanka, national development policies draw strong inspiration from Buddhist texts and traditions, as do political ethos. Historically, Buddhist temples were central in providing education. *Socially Engaged Buddhism*, the worldwide movement that works to transform society through active compassion and engagement of *dharmic* principles, has strong roots in Sri Lanka. Perhaps the best known such organization is the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. It works in over 15000 communities in Sri Lanka, and has projects in other countries in South Asia.

Diaspora Buddhist groups are influential in shaping political and development agendas. The Buddhist Sinhalese Diaspora supports development initiatives in Sri Lanka; during the civil war, some segments also participated in fueling the conflict. International Buddhist inspired NGOs include the US-located Buddhist Peace Fellowship which works on peacebuilding in Bangladesh and India, Buddhist Global Relief, also based in the US, and The Buddhist Leadership Initiative, that educates monks on HIV/AIDS prevention and other health issues.

Sikhism

Sikh communities are found throughout South and Central Asia, with greatest numbers in India and Pakistan. The Sikh tradition employs a strong emphasis on man's salvation, on hard honest work, individualism, rationality, and shared earnings.⁴⁴ Sikhism follows the teachings of a group of gurus from different faiths; Sikh communities are particularly inclined to show compassion to and engage in interfaith initiatives. Sikh activities are sometimes affected by Sikh' minority status and the social issues that arise. Since the 1960s, a wealthy Sikh Diaspora has emerged in the US, Canada, and the UK; these communities provide substantial funds to international and local Sikh inspired organizations.

Private charitable organizations often operate around *gurdwaras* (temples), providing space for the provision of clothes, food, and first-aid for the destitute, disabled, or orphaned. Some organizations are also engaged in promoting values-based education. Noteworthy Sikh inspired organizations include: The Kalgidhar Trust/Society, the Chief Khalsa Diwan (CKD), the Kali Vein Environment Project, and the Shiromani Gudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

Zoroastrian (Parsi)

The Parsis in South Asia are originally Zoroastrian migrants from Iran and represent a wealthy and prominent religious minority in India and Pakistan; there are also small minority communities in Central Asia. Since the eighteenth century in Bombay (Mumbai), developmental assistance has been provided through Parsi "gifting" which matured into today's Parsi trusts and charitable foundations.⁴⁵ These organizations continue to play an important part in development, particularly in metropolitan areas with Parsi communities. The Bombay Parsi Panchayat, the largest Zoroastrian institution, was founded in the seventeenth century to encourage charity work in rural areas of Gujarat and support local hospitals,

schools, and temples and in support of poor Parsis.⁴⁶ Well known for their emphasis on education, The Parsi Benevolent Institution is a notable school open to all Indians irrespective of caste, gender, or religion.⁴⁷

Jainism

The essence of the Jain tradition is a concern for the welfare of all beings, peacebuilding, and non-violence.⁴⁸ Although small in number, most Jains live in India and emphasize philanthropy.⁴⁹ Jain developmental organizations are commonly charitable trusts and foundations which draw on donations to assist Jains and non-Jains in various development projects. The Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust works with volunteer doctors in assisting nearly 25,000 Indians with physical disabilities.⁵⁰ Other Jain trusts, such as the Institute of Jainology in Ahmedabad, India promote interfaith dialogue and encourage coordination between Jain communities and development organizations.⁵¹

Christianity

There are small communities of Christians throughout South and Central Asia. Despite their small size, the community is active in most development sectors including education, healthcare, and orphanages, as well as campaigning for human rights for marginalized groups and advocating for the poor.⁵² Churches and local Christian inspired organizations provide varying degrees of assistance to the poor, including running local schools and engaging in peacebuilding work. The role of Christianity as a minority religion involved in social outreach has contributed to tensions with other faith groups – difficulties can arise when groups are not open and transparent about their intentions in evangelizing. Christian development organizations work actively with minority groups, particularly Dalit groups in Hindu societies. Christian, and particularly Catholic schools, are often among the elite schools in South Asia.

Several international Christian organizations work in South Asia; Caritas, World Vision, and Lutheran World Federation are active in refugee rehabilitation and disaster relief. In Central Asia, The ACT Alliance, which includes Christian Aid and DaChurchAid, among others, works in most Central Asian countries and engages local religious leaders and promotes gender rights.

Post Soviet Transition – Central Asia

Under the USSR, religious leaders and members of the Islamic *ulema* lost their positions of influence in the community and were relegated to the sidelines.⁵³ Since 1989,, religion, and particularly Islam has experienced a vivid resurgence. Central Asian countries, all of which had a rich Islamic heritage before Soviet rule, are rediscovering their religious and cultural traditions. The resurgence of religion has been met with growing pains in most Central Asian countries; secular governments tend to restrict religious freedom and engagement in social spheres, and promote a government approved version of Islamic practice (which varies by country). There is a rise of religious extremism in some parts, and government policies towards religion are largely shaped through that lens. Despite challenges, faith-inspired actors are playing an increasing role in development in Central Asia.

As Central Asians reclaim their religious traditions and heritage, Islam is emerging as major source of new identity and inspiration. Mosques are reopening and becoming vibrant centers of community; Sufi teachers are making their way back into mainstream society; and religious education and *madradas* are

made available for the general public.⁵⁴ In practice, the reintegration of religion into the public sphere has elicited an overall positive response from a people who desire to practice their faith openly.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have among the most active faith involvement in development; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan have more restrictive environments, though some engagement is taking place.

COUNTRY CHAPTERS

Bangladesh

Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country with significant Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian minorities, stands out for the variety of faith-inspired organizations working on different aspects of development. Bangladesh has a vibrant civil society, with some of the world's best known organizations (notably BRAC and the Grameen Bank). Since religion plays a particularly important role in people's lives, it is not surprising that faith-inspired organizations are active across development fields. One of the world's least developed nations, Bangladesh offers many examples of constructive engagement between faith and secular organizations and between these organizations and the government. Tensions can, however, arise given the complex history and contemporary politics surrounding state religion relationships and, to a lesser extent, interfaith relations. There is no organization or network that has an overall picture of the work that faith-inspired organizations do, nor has there been extensive research on their impact and reach into the poorest communities.

Culture and religion

The vibrant Bengali culture is a legacy of Bangladesh's history, as is a mingling of cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions that are distinctive to the nation. Some 98 percent of the population are ethnic Bengali and speak Bangla, the remainder made up of Urdu-speaking, non-Bengali Muslims of Indian origin and various other tribal groups, including Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Mongol/Mughul, Arab, Persian, and Turkic groups. Islam is the dominant religion in Bangladesh, between 80 and 85 percent of the total population. Most are Sunni Muslims, but there is a significant Shi'a community as well as Ahmadis. Bangladesh's Hindu population is estimated at between 10 and 16 percent, and has declined since independence (in 1971). Buddhism is most common among the non-Bengali populations of the Chittagong Hill. There are quite small communities of Christians, Sikhs, Baha'is, and animists.⁵⁵

When Bangladesh became independent after the bitter struggle with Pakistan, it declared itself a secular state, enshrined in the Constitution. However, the central role of religion and specifically Islam lay behind subsequent changes in how religion and state relate, and a series of constitutional amendments between 1977 and 1988 established Islam as the national religion. Thus, at present the constitution establishes Islam as the state religion, providing for the right to profess, practice, or propagate all religions, subject to law, public order, and morality. However, in February 2010 the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court ruled that the amendments establishing Islam as the national religion were unconstitutional. One practical implication was legal revival of the constitutional ban on Islamic political parties. The issue remains in flux and currently officials state that the ban will not be strictly enforced.⁵⁶

Bangladesh: brief development portrait

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest and most densely populated countries. Bangladesh's 2010 population, estimated at 164 million, is growing at about 1.4 percent a year (that is, far more slowly than in the recent past).⁵⁷ Bangladesh is a heavily rural country, with 80 percent of the population still rural. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy (22 percent contribution to GDP). Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries account for 63 percent of the economy. Manufactured goods account for 11 percent; quarrying is roughly 0.2 percent of the overall economy.⁵⁸ Bangladesh, by tradition and contemporary reality, is a rice

producing nation, depending on its flood enriched soils and abundant water resources. Tea is important in the northeast.

Recent economic performance has been quite robust, and economic growth is in the 6 percent range. And Bangladesh aspires to rapid economic growth and middle income status. However, the long term constraints are severe. Even slower population growth presents a continued challenge given population densities. Much of the population is malnourished. The erratic monsoon cycle, always subject to severe flooding, is already showing signs of the effects of global warming. Infrastructure is still quite poorly developed. Though Bangladesh has received generous international aid (some US\$30 billion in grant aid and loan commitments from foreign donors over recent decades), the unfinished development agenda looms large. As much as 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, on less than \$1.25 a day, with 84 percent surviving on less than \$2 a day.⁵⁹

Maternal mortality is a particularly serious problem in Bangladesh, and an estimated 12,000 women die each year from pregnancy or childbirth related complications, or 300 deaths per 100,000 live births. Some 85 percent of women give birth at home with no formal health care; only 18 percent are assisted by skilled health personnel. Women in rural areas tend to prefer the home-birthing system with the village midwife as the delivery assistant.

Other poverty issues are high malnutrition, especially in rural areas and for children and inadequate clean water and sanitation. About 22 percent of infants have low birth weights and 46 per cent of children under-five are underweight. Acute respiratory infections (ARIs) are the leading cause of child illness and death in Bangladesh.⁶⁰ Child labor is common, and an estimated 7.4 million children work in various sectors. Bangladesh's Labor Law sets the minimum legal age for employment at 14,⁶¹ but 93 percent of child laborers work informally, in small farms or shops that are difficult to regulate. Children are vulnerable to mistreatment; young girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Because many families depend on their children's income, it is difficult to convince parents to enroll the children in school.

Bangladesh has made great strides on education but still faces significant challenges. Only 47 per cent of enrolled primary school students complete primary school and barely 36 percent of boys and 41 percent of girls attend secondary school.⁶²

Bangladesh has the highest incidence of child-marriage in the world. An estimated 64 per cent of women in the 20 to 24 age bracket were married before they were 18. Child marriage and child motherhood increase health risks and perpetuate the pattern of low school enrollment for girls. Trafficking of small boys to the Middle East to work as camel racing jockeys is a growing industry. UNICEF reports suggest that boys between the ages of 4 and 10 are deliberately starved to prevent weight gain that would make them less successful as camel jockeys. These boys are also subject to sexual and physical abuse.⁶³

Bangladesh faces a complex and long-standing refugee crisis with the Rohingya community. In 1992, some 250,000 people fled Burma into Bangladesh because of ethnic persecution. Since 1993, the Bangladeshi government has denied 200,000 subsequent Rohingya arrivals official refugee status, so that they are ineligible for UN aid and protection.⁶⁴ About 18,000 Rohingya refugee children now live in two government refugee camps in Bangladesh; over 70 percent of heads of households have no formal education, while only 18 percent received any primary education. UNICEF estimates that barely 3 percent

of Rohingya refugee children attended school during the first years that they were living in Bangladesh. UNICEF now operates 21 primary schools, with a number of refugees as teachers. Almost 9,000 Rohingya children are enrolled in school, almost 50 percent of them girls.⁶⁵

Disasters and climate change

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, including cyclones, floods, landslides, droughts, and earthquakes. It is one of the world's countries most vulnerable to climate change, both because so much land is low-lying and the devastating impact of cyclones. Under normal conditions, some 30-70 percent of the country is flooded each year and this stands to increase in the future.⁶⁶ A 1970 cyclone resulted in close to 300,000 deaths and in 1991 another 138,000. Bangladesh has experienced eight major floods in the last 50 years and the three most recent (1988, 1998, and 2004) were the most damaging.

Bangladesh often faces severe natural calamities; one estimate puts their average cost at US\$4 billion per year.⁶⁷ Major investments (including by USAID and the World Bank) aim at disaster readiness and food security. Planning for climate change is underway. A substantial part of the roughly one billion dollars of Official Development Assistance (ODA) that Bangladesh receives annually is focused on sectors potentially affected by climatic risks and changes.⁶⁸

Changes in climate are aggravating health challenges. Infectious diseases, including malaria, have increased in Bangladesh over the last 30 years, and are now a major public health problem; some 14.7 million people in Bangladesh are classified as at high risk for malaria. Similar increases in risk are associated with other diseases such as dysentery, diarrhea, and dengue fever. Floods make water supply and sanitation still more difficult.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Religion is a significant part of daily life in Bangladesh. Religious institutions are generally respected, as are most religious leaders. Recent Gallup and Pew polls and studies of Muslim attitudes in the South Asian region underscore religion's central role. This high religiosity affects the work of FIOs and how they approach development and welfare work. Nonetheless Bangladeshi Islam is far from monolithic and there are important variations by region and between urban and rural areas. Similar comments apply for other faiths.

Informed practitioners suggest that Muslim NGOs working in Muslim communities bring advantages because of their appreciation of community values and culture. Because of shared faith, they find it easier to persuade people to participate and to motivate communities to engage. The advantages include shared values, communicated through language, customary greetings, and other cultural connections. There is also wide agreement that engaging religious leaders can make a major difference in a program's success or failure (see boxes x and xx).

Zakat and social welfare

Zakat is based in the Islamic tradition; it is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. *Zakat* requires that Muslims tithe a portion of their income, as a form of alms-giving in order to help the poor. In Bangladesh, the

Islamic Foundation Bangladesh is an autonomous organization that works to disseminate Islamic ideals and values in society. It was formed in March 1975, with the integration of the Baitul Mukarram Society and the Islamic Academy. Initially coming under the Education and Cultural Ministry, with the formation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs was formed, the Foundation operates as an autonomous body under this ministry. It implements programs and activities in two main areas: revenue and development.⁶⁹

Social programs are implemented through 13 departments, four divisional and 64 district-level offices, seven training academies for *imams*, 29 Islamic Mission Centers and eight development projects. Some of the departments carry out either revenue or development programs, while others do both. The Foundation's thirteen departments include administration, co-ordination, finance and accounts, planning, Islamic mission, publication, research, translation and compilation, Islamic encyclopedia compilation and publication, *Dwini Dawat* (invitation to religion) and culture, Islamic Foundation Library, Islamic Foundation Press and the *Zakat* Board.⁷⁰

The seven academies have trained 46,000 Imams to date. The Foundation is active in promoting access to education and increasing the number of libraries. The Foundation's library is now housed on the premises of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque and has over 100,000 books. The mission has service-oriented programs and provides medical treatment, assistance to orphans and destitute women, vocational training and training to unemployed youth, extending interest-free loans, supplying equipment for livelihood trades, organizing literacy programs, and imparting knowledge on the fundamentals of the Islamic way of life.

The Foundation formed the *Zakat* Board on 5 January 1982 to collect *zakat* and distribute the money among the poor in an organized way. This *zakat* money is collected and disbursed in different ways to help members of the community. With the *zakat* Fund, the Foundation runs programs for the destitute, including a free hospital in the Tongi region especially for children; 25 sewing training centers for the unemployed; distributing educational materials to poor students; rehabilitating the unemployed; and providing financial assistance to widows. There is a distinct communitarian aspect to the collection and dissemination of this fund and it operates to assist underserved populations based on Islamic ideals.

Besides the Islamic Foundation, other faith-inspired organizations are active in development and welfare services through the collection of *zakat* funds. The Centre For Zakat Management (CZM) is expanding its *zakat* disbursement projects rapidly in different regions across Bangladesh. CZM, a pro-poor social enterprise supported by Rahimafrooz Bangladesh Ltd, is working to institutionalize the collection and disbursement of *zakat*. Islamic Aid Bangladesh collects *zakat-ul-fitr* funds and distributes it among the needy people in the form of food and clothes to enable poor families to participate in Eid celebration. Zakat Foundation of America is an international organization that encourages and promotes self-reliance for the poorest people around the world with *zakat* and *sadaqa* money that they collect.

Education

Bangladesh's government currently spends 14 percent of its total budget on education, thus about 2.3 percent of GDP. Bangladesh has made significant progress in increasing primary-school enrollment rates to 87 percent of boys and 91 percent of girls. However, access to education remains a challenge for certain groups, particularly disabled children, indigenous children, Rohingya refugee children and those that reside in remote areas. Drop-out rates for school are high; only 47 percent of enrolled students complete grade five.⁷¹ In government schools, 10 percent of primary school teaching posts are vacant and

Text Box 2: Working with Imams to combat HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, a local organization, the Masjid Council for Community Advancement, works through religious networks on HIV/AIDS prevention. The goal is to reach 50 percent of the adult population over the next three years with messages about abstinence, faithfulness and partner reduction. PEPFAR (the US President's Emergency Program for HIV/AIDS) supports the program.

The Masjid Council is working with Family Health International (FHI) to develop a training curriculum aimed at about 600 imams in 2010. The long term goal is to reach approximately 550,000 people through their Friday sermons. Because the imams occupy positions of respect in Bangladeshi communities, messages about HIV/AIDS prevention can be more effective when they preach them than the communications of a secular NGO.

The Masjid Council also works with religious leaders to produce satellite television talk shows, and has aired 40 episodes of Islamic-based television programs discussing HIV/AIDS and related issues. Some two million people are expected to be exposed to HIV/AIDS messages through Islamic television programs over the next year, thus hopefully reducing the spread of the disease.

The Imam Training Academy, established by the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh, has introduced reproductive health and HIV/AIDS-related topics in its training curriculum for *imams*. Through a Training of Trainers (TOT) approach, the Academy has trained over 40,000 *imams* to deliver HIV/AIDS messages emphasizing HIV/AIDS prevention.¹ Training also includes human rights, legal rights of women, dowry, and child marriage issues. The aim is to encourage gender empowerment and equality. The Islamic Research Cell (IRC), a section of the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB), an NGO affiliated to the International Planned Parenthood Federation, is also engaged in imam training. With the support of more than 750 professionals and 3,000 volunteers, the IRC has since 1993 trained *imams* in reproductive health. The training includes equal rights for wives and the importance of condom use.

one third of the teachers teach without a Certificate in Education. It currently takes an average of 8.5 years for a child to complete grades one through five.⁷²

Beside the government schools is the madrasa system, Islamic schools that focus on an Islamic education. State-*madrasa* relations in Bangladesh are rather complex. In the late 1980s, efforts were made to modernize the *madrasa* system and to introduce secular subjects in their curriculum, under the oversight of the Bangladesh *Madrasa* Education Board. In 1986 there were 4,118 *madrasas* and 638,926 students under the government-supervised system. There are about 40 *madrasas* for female students.⁷³ Despite some limitations in *madrasa* curricula, many rural families prefer this mode of education to government schools. The understanding is that while secular subjects allow children to find viable jobs, *madrasas* teach children about Islamic values that enable them to be morally and ethically committed.

Madrasas in Bangladesh fall into two categories: the Aliya *Madrasa* and the Qomi *madrasas*. The Aliya *madrasas* were encouraged by the government to engage in a reform program and have successfully integrated secular subjects into their curriculum. The Qomi *madrasas* remain more traditional and provide only a Qur'anic based education and other forms of Islamic instruction. Tensions between the two groups

are causing some tensions; while graduates from the *Aliya Madrasas* are competing for jobs in the open market, graduates from the *Qomi madrasas* are limited to fulfilling religious positions in mosques.⁷⁴ This also suggests that while graduates from the *Aliya madrasas* are accepted into civilian positions, they are not found competent in religious institutions. Education provided at *Qomi madrasas* does not allow graduates to make an easy transition into the secular job market.

There are concerns both around quality and around possible links to fundamentalist tendencies. A World Bank report noted that 82 percent of math teachers in the *madrassa* system are untrained; 80 percent of English teachers in *Qomi madrasas* are untrained, compared to 44 percent in *Aliya madrasas*. In tests in madrasas across Bangladesh, the average student answered only 35 percent math questions correctly and the success rate was barely 33 percent for English.⁷⁵ However, the students correctly answered 75 percent of the questions related to Islam. The study found that *Qomi madrasas* account for only 2.2 percent of the total enrolment in the secondary level while *Aliya madrasas* account for 18.5 percent.⁷⁶ In sum, while *madrassas* are improving access to education for children from poor families that cannot pay for private schools, there is much room for improvement in the quality and standards of education achieved in these schools.

Other faith communities are also active in education. The College of Christian Theology Bangladesh (CCTB) located in Savar Dhaka, trains men and women in theology and Christian ministry to serve their home communities through several social empowerment and welfare programs. The CTB pay special attention to the Aboriginal Tribals (Garo) of Madhupur Jungle in the Tangail District that are now primarily Christians. The Pargacha Parish, a large organization based on the Parish Plan for Integral Human Development, addresses the educational needs of the poor Christian community in the Madhupur Jungle region. CRWM missionaries assist CRWRC-Bangladesh/India in developing value-based formation materials and facilitate leadership training workshops for tribal peoples.

Holy Cross, a Christian organization, promotes human development for people of all faith traditions and ethnic backgrounds. Holy Cross educators and institutions serve children and adults from Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian and indigenous tribal traditions, in programs that integrate value-based education into the school curriculum; dignity and respect for people of all cultures are important themes. It serves over 1500 students, offering a literacy program for more than 400 street children in Dhaka. The Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), founded in 1973, works with local imams to integrate disaster preparedness. It has also trained 30,000 practicing Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) through an eleven-day basic training course.

The Association of Baptists was established in 1957 to assist in the physical, spiritual, social and educational development of the people of Bangladesh. It works through two projects: the Malumghat Hospital Project and the Human Resources Development Project which train people in rural areas in financial independence and a values-based education system concentrating on ethical and moral development. The Malumghat Hospital Project offers medical services to underserved rural populations.

Gender

Child marriage is a central issue for Bangladesh. Legally, the marriage age is 21 for boys and 18 for girls but 74 per cent of girls are married before they are 18 and over a third of girls are married before they turn 15. Although it is illegal, the practice of dowry – requiring a bride's family to pay significant sums to the

groom – encourages marriage of young girls because younger brides typically require smaller dowries. Further, dowry demands can create friction between families and result in violence when families are unable to pay what they promised to the potential groom. New brides are expected to work in their husbands' households, and if they married young, they have little opportunity to attend school. Only 45 percent of adolescent girls are enrolled in secondary school and even fewer attend regularly. Young brides are often pregnant within the first year of marriage; a third of teenage girls aged 15 to 19 are mothers or are already pregnant. Poor education also affects the rate and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. Only 16 per cent of adolescent girls in Bangladesh understand how HIV is transmitted and how to prevent it;⁷⁷ 73 percent of adolescent girls know that HIV can be transmitted from mother to child, but only 55 percent know about the risks during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding.⁷⁸ Young mothers in rural and remote regions are at particularly high risk for HIV/AIDS.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is extensive within Bangladesh. Children living in extreme poverty are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and reports suggest that both boys and girls experience sexual exploitation including sexual violence or rape. Rates of sexually transmitted infections are high among victims of sexual exploitation as access to condoms is limited.

A large group of faith-inspired organizations work in several sectors to decrease gender inequality and provide welfare services to underserved populations. International faith-inspired organizations often focus on gender issues. DanChurch Aid is active in several areas but gives special focus to child marriage. Caritas Bangladesh uses the popular form of Gambhira folk music to teach villagers who are illiterate to educate women on issues of child marriage, the dowry system, and sexually transmitted diseases. The Caritas Regional Cultural Team (RCT) has performed Gambhira in 1000 villages across the region. Catholic Relief Services is also active in the prevention of child marriage, trafficking, and child labor practices in rural areas.

Local faith-inspired organizations are also active in gender empowerment. The Women's Small Local Organization Program (WSLO) program, part of the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), has since 1989 helped women to develop management skills through small local organizations. WSLO representatives participated in training, workshops and orientations on a variety of subjects including human trafficking, human rights, entrepreneurship, HIV/AIDS, arsenic mitigation, legal services, safe water and sanitation, adolescent reproductive health and the birth registration among other issues. The WSLO program also created 14 preschools that serve 2400 underprivileged children.

The Islami Bank Foundation has various welfare activities that serve destitute and distressed people, particularly women, as well as for the socio-economic development of the country. Believers of Christ (BC) and Friends of Word (FW) are two popular lay groups of Catholic women, known as "consecrated virgins," who are dedicated to serving the Church by working in rural populations with oppressed women. Christian Life Bangladesh (CLB) works for gender empowerment, educating women about health, promoting education, and raising women's rights awareness.

Some organizations that are not directly faith-inspired work with women to increase gender empowerment and address faith dimensions. A fair number of challenges in communities are linked to religious beliefs. In rural areas, women are restricted by religious traditions and practices that block participation. Gonoshasthaya Kendra, a women's development organization, works with women in rural areas who are oppressed by religious fundamentalists. One issue they discovered through research is that

in some areas, it is considered a social crime for women to consult doctors. In 1974, the organization established the Gono Pathshala, a school to provide education for children and women. Grameen Bank (GB) founded by Muhammed Yunus in 1976 makes loans to the neediest people, particularly women. Some of these women are limited by the particular religious ethic and culture of their communities which creates difficulties in asserting financial and economic independence. Through Grameen Bank (GB) programs, women can start small businesses without collateral through a creative banking system based on mutual trust, accountability, and participation. In 2010, Grameen Bank had 8.33 million borrowers, 97 percent of whom are women. It operates 2565 branches and provides services in 81,373 villages, covering more than 97 percent of the total villages in Bangladesh.

Peacebuilding

Faith-inspired organizations across religious traditions work for interreligious harmony, conflict mediation between ethnic and religious communities, and peacebuilding. An Asian Foundation survey found that more than 80 per cent of people in Bangladesh believe that religious leaders of all faiths should have a role in national development. Over 64 percent of ordinary citizens believe religious leaders have a major role to play in guiding the community thought through social issues, and over 70 percent would request the involvement or opinion of a religious or community leader at a *shalish*, in conflict mediation or resolution process.

The Bangladesh Inter-religious Council for Peace and Justice (BICPAJ), a religious non-profit NGO, founded in 1983, was established by a group of Muslims and Christians committed to promoting a peacebuilding agenda. It holds monthly meetings to discuss issues of justice and peace and operates projects for youth and children to encourage them to think conscientiously about peace and harmony. BICPAJ's peace education center has staff trained in conflict resolution, education, and research. Training programs focus on young people, women and ethnic tribal people of Bangladesh.

FAITH, a Bangladeshi faith-inspired organization, works to promote peace by providing underprivileged people with health and education services as well as clothing and finance. SUFI (Spiritual Union for Institution) is a faith based organization founded on the principle of Maizbhandari spiritualism and philosophy of universal love. It works in rural areas to discourage dowry practices. Hotline (Human Rights) Bangladesh is a human rights organization active since February 1981 and works to promote awareness of human rights violations. The organization is involved in trying to mediate interreligious and ethnic conflict in various communities across the country. The Commission for Justice and Peace (CJP) is one of the many Commissions of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) that works in rural areas to promote peace between multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities.

ActionAid Bangladesh, along with 50 local and foreign NGOs, organized a forum to strengthen the efforts to establish economic justice in the world.

Islamic Relief (IR) began working in Bangladesh in 1991 across development sectors but also concentrates on peacebuilding efforts. Today, more than 425,000 people benefit from IR's relief and development projects. The United Nations Development fund for Women (UNIFEM) recently collaborated with inter-faith religious leaders to reduce vulnerability of women and children to trafficking and violence. This unique program was a first institutionalized program on such an issue. It includes religious leaders/teachers from the four major religions of the country – Islam, Hinduism, Christian and

Buddhism. Muslim Aid in Bangladesh has a staff of 900 people in 75 offices around the country. The organization works across sectors including microcredit, small and medium enterprise (SME) development, and livelihood recovery from disasters. However, one main area of concentration is the economic empowerment of both rural and urban women to encourage financial independence.

Text Box 3: Leaders of Influence

An Asia Foundation survey (supported by USAID) highlighted the development significance of Bangladesh's religiosity: over 80 percent of Bangladeshi citizens agreed that religious leaders should have a role in advancing national development goals and democratic principles in Bangladesh. Over 64 percent of citizens agreed that religious leaders have a major role to play in guiding community thought on social issues, and over 70 percent would ask for the involvement or opinion of a religious or community leader at a *shalish*, or local mediation forum.

With this in mind, The Asia Foundation, with support from USAID/Bangladesh, initiated the *Leaders of Influence* program in 2004. In a partnership with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), the program supplements the 45 day imam training program that the Islamic Foundation/MORA has run since 1981 to train imams on theological and social issues. It has reached over 60,000 imams since it began.

Now in its second cycle (2007-2011), *Leaders of Influence* works specifically to strengthen the capacity of religious leaders to engage more actively in development efforts. The core objectives are to: 1) engage imams and other religious leaders in dialogue and practical exposure in development practice and values supporting democracy, human rights, economic development, and human/social development; 2) facilitate dialogue and sharing of experience between Bangladeshi religious leaders and their counterparts in other South and Southeast Asia countries; 3) promote understanding of key development practices, and the role of religious leaders in advancing them; and 4) better understand, monitor, and analyze the perspectives of religious leaders and their communities on issues of national development and the societal values that underlie development.

To date the program has reached more than 20,000 leaders, addressing a range of issues that include anti-corruption, health concerns (including HIV/AIDS – Box x), anti trafficking, social forestry, and early childhood education. The leaders take what they have learned back to their home communities; imams in particular, during Friday sermons and in other religious meetings at the Mosques, pass on the ideas to community members. Program outreach also includes exchanges with other religious leaders from South and Southeast Asia, print and broadcast media, and monitoring and evaluation of program impact and reach.

Sri Lanka

Socio Economic Background and Development Challenges

Sri Lanka, an island nation located off the southern coast of India, has a population of approximately 20.5 million (2009). Noted for its ethnic and religious differences, the population includes about 74 percent Sinhalese, 13 percent Sri Lankan Tamils, 5 percent Indian Tamils, 7 percent Sri Lankan Moor, and some 1 percent of other ethnic minorities, including Malay and Burghers (1989 census). Sri Lanka has made notable progress in long-standing efforts to address poverty and ensure equitable development. A central focus today is the aftermath of nearly three decades of civil war; peace opens new opportunities for reconciliation and development but also leaves scars and unaddressed tensions.

Sri Lanka is a middle income country, with a 2009 per capita income of US\$4700 (World Bank). The poverty rate is the lowest reported in South Asia. Poverty is largely concentrated outside the capital city of Colombo; geographical isolation, especially distance to the nearest market or city, is highly correlated with poverty incidence.⁷⁹

Sri Lanka's are among South Asia's best social development indicators. Literacy is near universal, with equality between both girls and boys in a region where girls consistently lag behind in development indicators. Overall enrollment of school aged children in primary school is near 100 percent (that number drops for secondary school, at 87 percent), though government expenditure on education is just under 3 percent of GDP, relatively low compared to other countries of similar economic status.

Sri Lanka has maintained GDP growth averaging 5 percent annually for the past ten years. With the end to conflict, Sri Lanka's projected economic growth is expected to rise.⁸⁰ The structure of the economy differs from other South Asian countries, with a small agricultural sector (13 percent of GDP), industry at 30 percent and an important services sector: 60 percent. The economic mainstays are: rubber processing, Ceylon tea, textiles, and petroleum refining. Sri Lanka benefits from remittances, with about 1.5 million citizens working abroad (90 percent of them in the Middle East). Recent cases of abuse highlight dangers that women, especially, face in going abroad to work, particularly in domestic service positions in the Middle East.⁸¹ Lack of economic opportunity at home pushes women abroad and exposes them to such abuse.

While peace has largely been restored, after a fierce campaign and government military victory in May 2009, displacement remains a challenge. With displacement numbers that reached near 320,000 immediately following the conflict, the number of displaced has decreased; according to UNHCR, 195,000 people had returned to their homes by August 2010, and increased returns are expected to continue in 2011. There are also IDPs around the country who fled their homes prior to April 2008, and who still need sustained support. UNHCR reports that there are in total 202,500 people that remain displaced in Sri Lanka.⁸² Prolonged displacement has had implications for health, education, and economic development for both displaced and home communities.⁸³ Conflict affected regions generally lag behind other provinces in terms of development, evident in both in social development indicators and physical infrastructure. For example, access to safe drinking water was only 46 percent in the north and east before the conflict ended, compared to 62 percent for the rest of the country, while 46 percent of children 3 months to 5 years were underweight, compared to 18 percent and 29 percent respectively. The government has initiated infrastructure and sanitation development projects to address the nation's large regional inequities. Long-term poverty challenges not directly attributed to conflict also contribute to overall poverty and development levels, and are compounded by direct effects of conflict.

There is broad concern within international institutions that Sri Lanka's government has yet to address the legacy of distrust among different ethnic and religious groups and the bitter aftermath of conflict.

National and local NGOs and religious leaders are working towards reconciliation, but the process is moving slowly. Differing perceptions of development organization sympathies during the war also shade how some groups view international development organizations and their involvement in post-conflict issues, at times adding tensions to an already complex environment.

The Asian Development Bank completed in 2008 a Country Gender Assessment that provides an overview of these issues and includes proposals as to how to incorporate gender dimensions into development assistance planning. Sri Lankan women are generally relatively well situated, but that they have yet to achieve full gender equality or empowerment. Unequal rights and widespread discrimination against women remain significant. Specific gender challenges are found across many sectors: domestic and family law, political participation, health, education, and employment. Women from minority groups, including the Muslim and ethnic Tamil populations and displaced populations, face greater inequalities due to social marginalization and discrimination.⁸⁴

Religious profile

Sri Lanka's population is about 70 percent Theravada Buddhist, corresponding roughly with the Sinhalese majority ethnic group (74 percent of the population). Islam is practiced by about 7.5 percent of the population; largely from the Sri Lankan Moor ethnic group (approximately 7 percent of the Sri Lankan population), Muslim Indian Tamils, and a relatively small number of Malays. About 15 percent of the population identify as Hindu, almost all from ethnic Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils. Christianity represents about 7.5 percent of the population, consisting of Sinhalese and Tamils, as well as the Burghers (an ethnic group of mainly European colonist descent).^{85,86} Sri Lankans of all faiths tend to hold religious leaders in high regard, and religious leaders have historically offered guidance on social and political issues, with influence at multiple levels of society.⁸⁷ As a result of this tradition of social activism, religious leaders have worn multiple hats, both supporting conflict, and working towards relief and reconciliation. This has left a legacy of societal fragmentation along religious and ethnic lines in many regions.

The Sri Lankan constitution guarantees universal freedom of religion, though it grants Buddhism a "foremost place" and commits the government to protecting it, while not recognizing it as the state religion.⁸⁸ In recent years, some parliamentarians have been pushing for passage of an Anti-Conversion Bill. This is in direct response to cases of proselytizing, often tied to economic incentives, by foreign and indigenous evangelical Christian groups, particularly following the tsunami.⁸⁹

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development: Diverse Actors and Coordination

Sri Lanka is marked by a large number and diversity of international, national, and local organizations working for development. Many have links to faith institutions and communities. Activities include a wide range of post-conflict/peacebuilding and development work, addressing, *inter alia*, education, gender, child soldier reintegration, demining, health, human rights, infrastructure development, poverty reduction, displaced person assistance and repatriation, livelihoods, sustainable development, governance, and disaster relief.

Activism of faith actors in development has well established historical roots. Religious institutions were at the center of many community welfare services, drawing on Buddhist doctrines of compassion and equality. Traditionally, development was measured by the village water supply and the temple, representing both the economic and spiritual realms, with religious leaders often taking leadership positions in their communities.⁹⁰ International groups working in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) date to 1802, with the establishment of the Baptist Mission. Other well established organizations that still work there include the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (1857), Buddhist Theosophical Society (1880), Young Men's

Christian Associations (1882), Young Women's Christian Associations (1882), Salvation Army (1883), Mahabodhi Society (1891), Young Men's Buddhist Association (1897), Vivekananda Society (1902), Ramakrishna Mission (1929), and Sarvodaya (1958).

Today, faith-inspired organizations from all the major traditions are engaged in development and peacebuilding work. Sri Lanka's government does not distinguish or specifically monitor faith-inspired organizations in its reporting on civil society. A 2005 study on the tsunami relief response found that out of 165 NGOS (largely international NGOS) listed on ReliefWeb (a website devoted to humanitarian relief and development professionals) working in the country, 51, or 31 percent had faith links (1 Jewish, 1 Buddhist, 4 Muslim and 43 Christian).⁹¹ Some 40 percent of faith-inspired NGOs cited in the study had programs in education; similarly, most faith-inspired organizations cited in this chapter have specific peacebuilding, gender, and education focused programming.

Secular development partners, including think tanks, universities, and international organizations have considerable experience in engaging with faith leaders and communities in peacebuilding and development training and programming. Sri Lanka's multi-faith character of Sri Lanka has inspired interfaith cooperation, at the grassroots and national levels. Diaspora temples and communities have played an influential role in Sri Lankan affairs, especially linked to the conflict and tsunami relief efforts; they continue to play active roles.

Development Coordination Bodies

Sri Lanka has taken development coordination seriously and the several coordination bodies, both general and thematic, include members coming from both secular and faith-inspired institutions. The National Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organizations, the government agency responsible for coordinating and regulating the NGO sector, works to ensure that NGOs operate within the national policy framework. As of September 2010, there were 1324 NGOs registered, including both secular and faith-inspired organizations (international, national, and local). The government Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs maintains comprehensive lists of mosques, Arabic colleges, Koranic madrasas (for which there are specific registration guidelines), Islamic Associations, and Muslim orphanages (nine are registered, though the actual number is much higher).⁹²

Conversations with development practitioners have noted some concern at new Government registration requirements and oversight for NGOs.⁹³ Already in the North former zones of conflict, NGOs cannot operate without strict Army of Sri Lanka oversight. They must register and work with the Ministry of Defense (although religious groups have greater freedom of operation in general, this does not necessarily extend to faith-inspired organizations, rather individual churches, sometimes denominational groups, among other religious groups and institutions.).

There are also independent voluntary member-based and United Nations coordination bodies. The Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies consists of 89 local and international humanitarian development organizations, and works to streamline often overlapping development programs; a particular focus is post-conflict development imperatives. Members include many faith-inspired organizations, including Islamic Relief, ADRA Sri Lanka, All Ceylon Hindu Congress (ACHC), American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Caritas Sri Lanka, Christian Aid, Christian Children's Fund of Canada, Cordaid, Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka, Methodist Church, Muslim Aid Sri Lanka, National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR - Sri Lanka), World Vision Lanka, and the Islamic Relief Committee.

Smaller local coordination bodies focus on region specific issues, and they too include both faith-inspired and secular organizations. Local coordinating bodies and NGO consortiums include: Ampara District

NGO Consortium; Consortium of NGO - Trincomalee District; Consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations – Mannar District; NGO Consortium Vavuniya (Vavuniya Consortium); Puttalam District NGO Consortium (PDNGOC), among other local groups.

Some practitioners have cited concerns about coordination, saying that many bodies exist, though overlap of mandate is common.

Aid Partners

Eleven United Nations agencies have offices in Sri Lanka, all of which work with and/or coordinate with faith-inspired organizations in different ways. They include the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA, and UNAIDS. Large development partners, including the World Bank and USAID, convene coordination meetings which include faith-inspired organizations. The Donor Peace Support Group⁹⁴, consults with other development partners, which has included faith-inspired organizations, on conflict-sensitive approaches to development assistance.⁹⁵

International Faith-inspired Organizations and Religious Movements

International NGOs

International faith-inspired organizations have a large and long-term presence in Sri Lanka. Many focused particularly on addressing the civil conflict, and were particularly active after the tsunami, and since 2009, on post-conflict relief, reconstruction, and peacebuilding. Christian organizations comprise the largest group; however organizations from all major faith traditions have a presence. International faith-inspired organizations tend to have quite multi-faceted programs. Some examples are highlighted briefly below.

Catholic Relief Services, along with Caritas Sri Lanka, the Catholic National Commission for Migrants, and local Catholic organizations, runs a protection program working with poor women, who because of lack of education and opportunity, are forced to go abroad, primarily to the Middle East, for work. The partnership works in rural villages to educate local women on the dangers of such work (including domestic and sexual violence, involuntary servitude, and abuse), collaborating with local Buddhist temples, mosques, and local government offices. An estimated 200,000 women annually seek domestic work abroad, Muslim Aid works with all faith and ethnic communities, focusing on emergency relief, infrastructure, livelihoods and microfinance, food security, orphan care, and women's and community empowerment. In 2008, Muslim Aid created the Women's Resource Centre, along with a local partner, the Young Muslim Women's League, focused on economic opportunity, education, and maternal health and nutrition caused by conflict. In 2006, Muslim Aid collaborated with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), in the northeastern town of Muttur in response to violent conflict between the government and the LTTE. The partnership provided humanitarian relief to hard to reach displaced populations. The partnership resulted in a worldwide strategic agreement between the two organizations, which was expanded to Indonesia.⁹⁶

Other international faith-inspired organizations working in the country include: World Vision, ADRA, Cordaid, Christian Aid, Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC (Social and Economic Development Center), Lutheran World Relief, American Jewish World Service, Buddhist Global Relief, Islamic Relief, SEWA International UK, DanChurchAid, The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and Muslim Aid.

Text Box 4: Insights from the Sarvodaya Movement

The Sarvodaya Movement is widely known and admired as a bold and far-ranging institution and approach to development that has a long track record in Sri Lanka. Its distinctive Buddhist inspired philosophy underpins its commitment to community development and empowerment as well as its focus on peace and conflict resolution.

The Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya Movement, or Sarvodaya (which in Sanskrit means “awakening of all”) began in 1958, when a group of teachers in Colombo, Sri Lanka, including the founder Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, created *shramadana* (meaning “sharing work, knowledge, talents, and time”) work camps to encourage their students to mobilize poor communities around basic development projects. It has grown to be the largest and one of the most active grassroots civil society movements in Sri Lanka (described by some scholars as the world's largest peoples' participatory development movement), with a staff of 3000 in its network of organizations, invited to work in over 1500, or roughly one-third of the villages in Sri Lanka (it grew from 100 villages in 1967), on issues related to: peacebuilding, education, capacity building, health, emergency relief and rehabilitation, village infrastructure, environment and biodiversity, communication and participation, and youth. With its large experience and reach into so many villages, the Sarvodaya movement has achieved a “critical mass “in Sri Lankan society that allows it to influence social change through social and political participation. Its goal is a society in which there is neither poverty nor excessive affluence. The movement’s website claims that it, has influenced national policy strategy in health and education; Sarvodaya has been a resonant and influential voice urging reconciliation throughout the long Sri Lankan conflict, and into the present post-conflict period.

Sarvodaya works to achieve its development goals through what it emphasizes is a holistic approach that is based on Buddhist principles (including goodness, sympathy, and tranquility) and on the Gandhian values of truthfulness, nonviolence, and self-sacrifice. The movement’s 2005-2010 Strategic Plan translates these principles in programmatic terms, highlighting the goal of empowerment through what it describes as three spheres of transformation: Consciousness, Economics, and Power. Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne explains his philosophy that “economic development is a fragment of life and living” that “cannot be separated from his total life and living” (drawn from 1999 Shumacher lectures on Buddhist Economics). The Sarvodaya interpretation of Buddhism and Buddhist thought adheres strictly to a view that Buddhist principles should be applied to social problems for all people, regardless of faith or ethnicity.

So what does the movement do? Its peace and community building activities follow a range of approaches that include work in internal displacement camps, meditations for peace, the Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena (Peace Brigade) youth group, a Child Education Center at Sarvodaya headquarters, the Vishva Niketan Peace Center, and the Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena north-south youth peace dialogue, among other initiatives. The Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena north-south peace dialogue was held in June and July, 2010 in Mannar and Jaffna with Sri Lankan youth from the Northern and Southern parts of the country to begin the recovery and reconciliation process after 30 years of bitter and violent conflict. Young people met peers from formerly warring regions of the country for the first time; youth from both groups came together in *sharmadana* work camps to repair and beautify the Maradamadu Church, and the Tellipalei hospital in Jaffna, both which had been neglected through years of war. The groups earned the admiration of their communities.

Sarvodaya was an instrumental actor following the 2004 tsunami and was recognized internationally for its capacity to mobilize relief swiftly through its extensive local networks. It built upon on the ground experience with qualitative assessments in settlements camps, and distributed practical information to relief organizations, including the UN, the World Bank, and local and international NGOs; the Sarvodaya website became a central information source during the post-tsunami relief efforts. It had conducted disaster management briefings with local disaster coordinators weeks before the tsunami as well, so Sarvodaya was prepared to respond with immediate disaster relief within hours of the tsunami, receiving donations from international private sector donors, Sarvodaya branches in the US, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, and the Arigato Foundation in Japan.

Sarvodaya shares its development model abroad as well. The founder often speaks at international conferences, and the movement is well connected to international interfaith and development networks. Sarvodaya USA, with its headquarters in the state of Wisconsin, aims to promote Sarvodaya worldwide, while also furthering its view of holistic development in communities in the United States. A new Sarvodaya chapter in Japan was established in 2009.

Information from:

Herath, Anuradha K., "A.T. Ariyaratne: Leading Sri Lanka's Largest Civil Society Movement for 50 Years" from the Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anuradha-herath/at-ariyaratne-leading-sri_b_254537.html (accessed 15 November 2010).

Marshall, Katherine. "Grassroots Matter: Sarvodaya, the Tsunami, and Development in Sri Lanka" in *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together*. World Bank Publications, 2007

<http://www.sarvodaya.org>

Religious Movements

Several religious or spiritual movements from the greater South Asian region and abroad also engage in social development activities. Ramakrishna, a worldwide Hindu inspired religious movement, originally from India, has been active in Sri Lanka since 1930, with programs ranging from education to free health clinics. One such clinic is The Colombo Medical Camp, which provides free care to over 2000 patients in the slums around Colombo, as well as making visits to rural visits at the request of the government or NGOs. The Art of Living has been active since 2005 in assisting displaced communities and facilitating trauma relief workshops. Other religious movements active in Sri Lanka include: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, the Brahma Kumaris, and Soka Gakkai

National and Local Faith-Inspired Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations

Sri Lanka has a large and well developed network of national faith-inspired organizations. Sarvodaya is a long-standing and well respected organization. Established in 1958, today it is Sri Lanka's the largest civil society organization. It does not proclaim an explicit faith affiliation, but is very much inspired by Buddhist principles. Sarvodaya works in some 15,000 villages of all ethnic and faith groups, with particular focus on gender issues, displaced person assistance, peacebuilding, and tsunami reconstruction. In June-July 2010, Sarvodaya convened a north-south peace dialogue with youth from different ethnic/faith groups, working towards productive cooperation irrespective of historical difference. The Sarvodaya Women's Movement, founded in 1982, responds to the need for greater gender focus throughout its programming. (See Box #)

The strong focus on gender issues is in part a legacy of the years of conflict, when many institutions sought to respond to widespread atrocities and violence that often disproportionately affected women. Families were often displaced and split, leaving women as head of household, responsible for economic and family care. There is much to learn from these women's organizations and programs.

The Suriya Women's Development Organization, for example, is a Tamil civil society organization, established in the early 1990s, that works with displaced women on economic development, advocacy, and legal protection. Suriya has partnered with international organizations and become active politically advocating for women's rights.

The Sinhala-Tamil-Muslim Rural Women's Network (STMRAWN), based in Trincomalee, works with women from different ethnic and religious communities, promoting political involvement, woman's empowerment, and human rights through poverty alleviation, micro credit, health, education, environment, and peacebuilding programs. STMRAWN was among the first women's groups to contest provincial council elections in 1999.⁹⁷

The Association of War Affected Women, though not faith-inspired itself, works with women of Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities directly affected by the war (their sons, husbands missing, killed, or disabled due to the war) to achieve socio-economic development through equitable and inclusive participation.

Text Box 5: Jansila Majeed of the Community Trust Fund in Puttalam, Sri Lanka

In March 2010, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented the Women of Courage Award to Jansila Majeed, Managing Trustee of Community Trust Fund in Puttalam province. Ms. Majeed was one of ten recipients to receive the United States Government award to “women who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for human rights and women’s equality.”

Ms. Majeed, herself displaced for nearly twenty years, became active working within her community, particularly with Muslim and Tamil populations, on grassroots programs on livelihoods, health, peacebuilding, and women’s empowerment. She had to overcome hardships and marginalization, being both displaced, and from the minority Muslim community, often working against established community structures and within a highly politicized environment.

The Community Trust Fund was established in 1993 with a group of five people, and today has 160 full time team members and 350 volunteers working with the poor, war affected, and Tsunami affected communities.

Following the 2004 tsunami, the Community Trust Fund helped protect women’s rights. The tsunami windowed thousands of women, particularly acute among the Muslim community. Muslim tradition requires that widows mourn for four months and ten days in private following the loss of their husband. The Community Trust fund worked to ensure that these got emergency relief and educational materials, while respecting their religious customs and traditions.¹

As part of its peacebuilding efforts and advocacy, in January 2010, along with 35 Muslim civil society and religious organizations, the Community Trust Fund was a signatory to a motion to make 2010 the year of return for expelled northern Muslims. In addition, the organization has a separate women’s group, engaging local displaced communities to address issues of particular concern to local women, including health, women’s rights, violence and abuse, and women and peacebuilding.

As of 2008, the Community Trust Fund has been supported by 59 separate donors; among the donors include multiple faith-inspired organizations, including: Cordaid, Neelan Thrichelvam Trust, Asian Muslim Action Network, Global Peace Mission, and Muslim Aid. The organization is a member of multiple NGO coordinating bodies, including: Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies, District NGO Consortium, and National NGO Council of Sri Lanka.

Other examples of local and national level faith-inspired organizations, and organizations that work with religious communities include: the Muslim Women’s Research and Action Forum, Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust, Widaloka Cultural Foundation, Sithumina, the Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Foundation, Sewalanka, Young Muslim Women’s League, and the Dharmavijaya Foundation. This list is not exhaustive; other organizations are members of, or linked informally by the numerous local and regional NGO coordination bodies.

Religious Leaders

Local religious leaders (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian) play active roles at the local, regional, and national levels in peacebuilding and conflict resolution work. When conflict arises at the village level, people generally do not call upon international organizations or local government officials; rather they tend to turn to local religious leaders for support and guidance; local religious leaders have been a source of information on conflict and its societal effects.⁹⁸ There are, however, sensitivities around the involvement of religious leaders in development work given their varied historical involvement and

perceived sympathies towards particular ethnic/religious groups. NGOs and civil society groups are involved in programming to alleviate such tensions and legacies of the conflict.

There are however, as some development practitioners in Sri Lanka have noted, many religious leaders that do not want to work with NGOs because they are perceived to be tools of foreign imperialism, or as having Christianizing agendas (due to the fact that there are many international Christian organizations working on development/peace work, NGO work in general is becoming associated with, and sometimes being seen as Christian work/proselytizing). Some religious leaders that collaborate with NGOs lose some credibility amongst community members (mainly Southern Sinhala populations) who distrust NGOs.

Many conferences, training exercises and workshops, often with an interfaith character, have been organized to support local religious leaders in peacebuilding and development initiatives. In May 2009, the United States Institute of Peace launched a program to work with local religious leaders from the four main religious communities, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian, to train over 100 clergy in peacemaking principles and strategies as defined by their religious tradition and conflict transformation theory, and then work with clergy within and between their faith beliefs and communities to implement inter-religious reconciliation projects.⁹⁹

The World Conference Religious for Peace established an interreligious council (20 members), including prominent Buddhist monks, and Hindu, Muslim, and Christian leaders, from both the Sinhalese and Tamil sides of the conflict. In June 2008, the council met with President Mahinda Rajapaksa to call for good governance and human rights in the midst of the government's then intensifying military campaign against the LTTE; the impact though minimal, has resulted in a continuing network of religious leaders working for peace. In October 2009, the Inter-religious Council of Sri Lanka, along with a parallel group from Thailand, organized an inter-religious conference of 150 religious leaders from Sri Lanka and Thailand to exchange experiences and opinions on the roles of religious leaders in conflict transformation and peace building. Other examples of organizations working with local religious leaders include The Asia Foundation, the Inter-Religious Alliance for National Unity, and the European Council of Religious Leaders.

Education

Sri Lanka's education history has roots in religion. Traditionally, Buddhist monks would educate village member at the *pirivena* (temple school), and in Tamil communities, village schools were located near temples, and run by Brahmans educated Vellalas. In colonial Sri Lanka, English medium missionary schools flourished. Pirivena are a formal component of the government recognized education system; according to 2006 government statistics, there were 659 Pirivena in the country.

In October 2010, Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa announced that Buddhist temple school (Pirivena) education should be enhanced with information technology infrastructure, promising that pirivenas in Sri Lanka would be provided with computer laboratories with internet facilities. To promoting educational exchange with pirivenas, several international educational exchange organizations offer volunteer opportunities to teach English in rural villages.

During the colonial period, the Buddhist Theosophical Society established Buddhist schools in provincial capitals; the language of education was English. The schools are now a mix of private and government run schools. Examples of schools that continue in operation today are: Ananda College in Colombo; Dharmaraja College in Kandy, Maliyadeva College in Kurunegala; Mahinda College in Galle, Musaeus College in Colombo; and Visakha Balika Maha Vidyalaya, a Buddhist college for girls in Colombo; Nalanda Maha Vidyalaya in Colombo;; and Mahamaya Vidyalaya in Kandy.

Sri Lanka has many Catholic schools, examples include St. Joseph's College, St Bridget's Convent, St Peter's College, St. Benedict's College in Colombo, and St Anthony's College in Kandy. Islamic madrasas are required to register with the Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs; there are 104 madrasas registered in 17 districts.

Diaspora Communities

During the civil war, the Sri Lankan Diaspora played active and varied roles in both supporting the conflict, and aiding in peace and relief initiatives. Tamil and Sinhalese Diaspora communities continue to influence the peace, conflict, and development dynamics (The Tamil diaspora number at near 1 million). Diaspora temples, often at the center of the Diaspora communities, have supported development initiatives, particularly in raising financial resources and collecting in-kind contributions.¹⁰⁰

Many Sri Lankan Diaspora organizations and networks organize relief and development work for programs including: tsunami relief, assistance to internally displaced people, and post-conflict peacebuilding and development assistance. The Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America is an umbrella organization of local Tamil organizations in the US; the New Jersey chapter for example, has been active in tsunami relief, as well as sponsoring orphans in Sri Lanka. In New Zealand, the United Sri Lanka Association, working with Sri Lankans of all faiths in the New Zealand Diaspora community, in November 2009 made a donation of prosthetic limbs to soldiers who had been disabled due to the conflict. Other Diaspora community groups in North America, Europe, and Canada are engaged in development work and support.

Sri Lankan temples and churches organize development support initiatives independently, as well as working with other Diaspora community organizations. In January 2010, Hindu Temples and Tamil churches in London collaborated with the Tamil Health Organization in the UK to organize a clothing drive for those in displaced person camps in Sri Lanka. In the United States, Hindu and Buddhist temples and Sri Lankan religious organizations mobilize communities to provide material and financial assistance to those affected by conflict and natural disasters; examples include Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara in Los Angeles, which raised \$2000 for the internally displaced in Sri Lanka and the Dharmapala Institute in Milpitas, California which collected donations for tsunami victims.

Faith-inspired organizations from Sri Lanka have advocated for an increased role of Diaspora communities in development. On April 24th, 2010 for example, Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, founder of Sarvodaya, gave a presentation at American University in Washington, DC, on “Role of the Sri Lankan Diaspora in Rural Development & Reconciliation”, urging the Sri Lankan Diaspora to support rural development & reconciliation.

There are some remaining sensitivities around diaspora engagement however. Diaspora communities funded different groups during the conflict. The challenge is to work with all ethnic groups in the country to promote peaceful coexistence, especially between the Tamil and Sinhala communities; interfaith groups are contributing towards this end.

Nepal

Many faith-inspired organizations, of many kinds, work in Nepal across various sectors on sustainable development and peace. They are truly an integral part of the development process there. Nepal transitioned into a secular state in 2007, but religious communities play important roles related to the development agenda; education, health, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms all have significant involvement of faith actors. Nepal also stands out in South Asia for the array of locally developed interfaith organizations and initiatives. Sustainable development depends on keeping and building peace, and faith leaders and institutions offer unique perspectives and experience.

Socio-Economic Overview

After nearly 240 years of monastic rule, Nepal elected its first president in 2008. Nepal is working to overcome long term poverty and inequality, and reconcile the effects years of conflict has had on society and social cohesion.

Nepal's population of approximately 27.6 million is growing at just under 2 percent a year; in 2005, about 24 percent of the population was living on less than US \$1 per day.¹⁰¹ Roughly 48 percent of the total population is literate, (62 percent of men and 33 percent of women), and access to education is very unequal between the rich and poor; only 51 percent of children from the lowest income-quintile attend primary school, compared to 87 percent from the richest income-quintile.¹⁰² Nepal is landlocked and susceptible to natural disasters. Variable weather including severe droughts and unreliable rains contribute to food shortages and at times widespread hunger.¹⁰³ Nepal's main industries in Nepal are agricultural, and include production of pulses, jute, sugarcane, tobacco, and grain.

Nepal has a significant refugee population, most people of Nepali origin who were living in Bhutan; 800,000 are still in camps.¹⁰⁴ UNHCR and other organizations involved with refugee camp administration are working for solutions to the crisis.

Religious Landscape

Nepal has an ancient culture with a vibrant religious and spiritual landscape. The land is sacred for both Hindu and Buddhist cultures and is commonly believed to be the birthplace of the Buddha. Today, more than 80 percent of the population is Hindu.¹⁰⁵ Some 10 percent of the population identify as Buddhist, and Islam, Kirant Mundhum (an indigenous belief), and Christianity are followed by approximately 4 percent, 3.5 percent and 0.5 percent respectively. There are small communities of Jains, Sikhs, and Baha'is.¹⁰⁶

Hindus are traditionally divided into Shaivite and Vaishnavite divisions. Nepalese Buddhists are grouped into those that practice Hinayana, Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism. Muslims are divided into Sunni and Shia sects while Christians include both Catholics and Protestants. Religious discrimination is a concern in some areas of Nepal. Although the majority of religious communities are well integrated into society, there are reports of caste-based discrimination towards Dalits, particularly Dalit women (See Text Box 6). In 2002, the government established a National Dalit Commission to protect Dalits from discrimination and encourage their integration into civil society.¹⁰⁷

Text Box 6: Nepal's Dalit Women

Nepal is approximately 80 percent Hindu. Although the caste system was officially abolished by the government and caste discrimination is prohibited under the Constitution, caste dynamics still wield a strong influence in Nepalese society. Dalits or “untouchables” are the lowest group in the Hindu caste system. “Dalit” means oppressed, downtrodden, and exploited, and Dalits claim that their caste position has led to the denial of social, political, religious, and economic rights. Some 22 percent of Nepal’s population is Dalit and 80 percent of the Dalit population lives below the poverty line.

Dalit women face particular discrimination, and comprise of the majority of manual and agricultural labor in rural and remote regions of the country. The literacy rate amongst Dalits is reported as 23 percent, compared to the national average of 54 percent (a marked improvement nonetheless since the 1991 census indicated that Dalit female literacy rate was barely 12 percent).¹ The Jagaran Media Center, a Nepali organization working for Dalit rights, reports that Dalit women in rural villages must wait for hours before they can have access to water wells, or until high-caste women grant them permission to drink water. Dalit women are also the victims of dowry and bride price systems practiced in some parts of the country.

A group of organizations, both international and Nepali, are working together to empower Nepal’s Dalit communities and particularly women.. Lutheran World Federation Nepal (LWF) partners with the Dalit Support Coordination Forum, an alliance of donor communities supporting Dalit rights in Nepal, as well as The International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN), an international network of Dalit focused civil society organizations (headquartered in Denmark), to implement programs that encourage and support marginalized voices and fight the social exclusion created by the caste system. LWF established the Dalit Empowerment Program to encourage Dalit participation in the political process. Caritas International works with local Dalit empowerment groups on education programs for Dalit women.

Several local organizations work for Dalit rights with a focus on women. Empower Dalit Women of Nepal (EDWON) works to address domestic violence, caste and gender discrimination and poverty in rural Dalit communities. The Feminist Dalit Organizations (FEDO) advocates for Dalit women’s rights and works to uplift their economic status through small micro-finance loans and improving maternal health . The Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO) partners with LWF, and advocates for Dalit women through local and international media and promotes education.

Development Challenges

Development projects account for almost 80 percent of Nepal’s regular government expenses. International NGOs and local NGOs, including faith-inspired organizations, spend an average of NRs 100 billion (almost \$1.5 billion USD) a year on poverty reduction and peacebuilding programs. An ambitious government initiative to combat poverty involves cash transfers to individual families in the poorest and

most remote parts of the country of approximately NRs 150,000 (\$2000 USD) to each household. Some 44 percent of the total budget is specifically allocated to poverty reduction projects.

Nepal ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1991. Nonetheless, women are discriminated against in many sectors, including their rights to nationality and citizenship, property, trafficking and sexual abuse, education, employment, health manincluding reproductive rights, marriage and family and legal and court proceedings.¹⁰⁸ Forced marriage is still fairly common, as are early marriage, dowry violations, and lack of autonomy over their body and health.¹⁰⁹ Women rarely participate in public life, barred by caste, language, and religion. Hindu women also lack autonomy within the private sphere.¹¹⁰ Muslim women also face exclusion and dominance because of religious and cultural values.

The health-care delivery network in Nepal is poorly developed. Government spending on health care is relatively low, at 3.7 percent of total expenditure and 0.7 percent of GDP.¹¹¹ Access to safe and affordable healthcare is difficult in many parts of Nepal, as is access to family-planning options; Health-care practices include popular folk medical care that relies on *jhankri* (shaman), Ayurvedic treatment, and allopathic medicine. The infant mortality rate is 41 deaths for every 1000 live births, with wide regional disparities¹¹². In the Dalit community for example, there are almost 90 deaths per 1000 live births.¹¹³ Dalit groups generally face challenges in Nepal, having implications on development, despite the fact that caste-based discrimination was abolished in 1963; within Dalit groups there are also distinctions contributing to further discrimination. These distinctions are not widely understood by development organizations.¹¹⁴

Girls' school enrollment is lower than boys; in the 15 – 49 year age group more than one out of two women did not attend school compared to one out of five men.¹¹⁵ In cities, over 95 percent of men are literate but only 91 percent of women but much lower in rural areas (literacy for women in the age group between the ages of 15 to 24 is 76 percent and for men in the same age group it is 91 percent).¹¹⁶ The majority of women work in unskilled or unpaid labor and earn lower salaries than men.¹¹⁷

Years of conflict have accentuated development challenges; poor infrastructure, poor social services, insecurity, and continuing social tensions are barriers to sustained development Addressing the legacies of conflict is a priority issue. High risk groups include former combatants, war widows and orphans, elderly, youth, and disabled.¹¹⁸ USAID highlights three topics essential for long-term sustainable peace: “(i) ending discrimination of all kinds; (ii) state restructuring and enhancing the state’s accountability to citizens, people’s empowerment, provision of fundamental rights, and access to basic services; and (iii) better governance, including economic and social rights, transparency and anti-corruption.” The USAID strategy emphasizes that engaging diverse religious communities in civil society is important to promote transparency and help set the overall agenda for peacebuilding and development.¹¹⁹

Text Box 7: Farmer Suicides in India

The Indian National Crime Records Bureau reports that over 16,000 farmers a year have committed suicide driven by debts they cannot repay. A government estimate puts the number of Indian farmers who have taken their own lives over the past 13 years at about 200,000.¹ Between 2001 and 2007 over 4,500 farmer suicides were officially reported in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra; suicides in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Kerala are also on the rise. Farmers who commit suicide leave behind destitute families; uneducated wives, and young children unable to support themselves, deepening cycles of rural poverty.

Many of the organizations working with farmers and their families in rural India have faith links. A special focus is high interest on loans and unethical business practices. The Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has a large social welfare wing and coordinates with various NGOs including Islamic Relief Committee (IRC), the Tamil Nadu Relief Committee (TNRC), and the Ideal Relief Wing (IRW). The Jamaat has been outspoken about the need for economic reforms affecting agriculture, highlighting lending practices as the underlying cause of despair and rising debt among farmers. The Jamaat has suggested integrating Islamic interest free loans into micro-finance as a potential avenue to prevent farmer suicides.¹ The Hindu-inspired organization Sarvodaya in India advocates for farmer's rights and operates workshops in villages that facilitate discussion about the ethics of international seed manufacture and sale.

Several international organizations also work on farmer indebtedness and agricultural development. Among them are UK based Christian Aid, which has been prominent in raising awareness about farmer suicides in India and the need for international action.¹ Caritas India works with 350 partner NGOs and 250,000-self-help and micro-credit groups to help farmers in the southern state of Kerala. Church sources indicate that none of the 2000 farmers who joined their self-help groups committed suicide. Caritas highlights three short-term measures to help farmers: informing farmers about the worth of their land, helping them to get a fair price for their land if they need to sell, and assisting them to invest their money well. World Vision International manages the Vidharbha Livelihood Promotion Project that works with 520 families in 15 villages in Yavatammal District in Amravati District. Lutheran World Service which began operations in India in 1974, supports families of farmers who have committed suicide to ensure that their basic needs are met. The Art of Living also has special programs to raise self-confidence for farmers and educate them in organic farming methods.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Faith-inspired development organizations from all major faiths operate in Nepal. Organizations vary in size and scope. Some are local, focusing on a particular community or part of the country, while large international faith organizations work across sectors. Coordination between organizations has been cited by development practitioners working in Nepal as a challenge, with some instances of competition among different organizations.

International Faith-inspired Organizations

Caritas (Catholic) has a large presence in Nepal, focusing particularly on gender equality for Nepalese women. Caritas Nepal partners with local and international NGOs including Asia Partnership for Human Development (APHD) and other Caritas/Catholic agencies including Missio, Secours Catholique (Caritas France), Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Austria, Caritas Australia and Caritas Japan. One project works to increase awareness about gender violence through dramatic performances, using street plays to highlight human trafficking and domestic violence to raise community sensitivity to the issue.

Other international Christian faith-inspired organizations include World Vision, Lutheran Services, Jesuit Service, and members of the ACT Alliance - Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Lutheran World Federation, United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India. These organizations focus on the rehabilitation of Bhutanese refugees, (See Text Box #_____) anti-trafficking projects, health, disaster relief, and education initiatives in rural and remote areas. LWF, as an example, partners with South Asia Gender Alliance (SAGA) to address gender empowerment, the Dalit Support Coordination Forum to support marginalized communities, and the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN). Through its partnerships, LWS developed twelve community driven development projects with 72 Village Development Committees and many local NGOs. Each of these organizations also partner with international development organizations including UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and CARE.

An international Jewish organization the Tevel b'Tzedek (The Earth- In Justice) based in Israel works in Nepal in impoverished rural villagers and urban slums on health, sustainable agriculture, education, environment and women's empowerment. The organization partners with local Nepali groups including the Chandra-Jyoti Integrated Rural Development Society (CIRDS), and the Dhulikel Hospital Community Health Program for gender empowerment and healthcare. The approach of Tevel b'Tzedek is unique in that it relies on youth volunteers to implement projects (largely Israeli youth taking an academic gap year, or those that have recently completed mandatory military service).

Fewer international Muslim inspired organizations; they include the Turkish organizations IHH and Muslim Hands.

National and Local Faith-inspired organizations

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a leading, urgent issue for Nepal. Many secular peacebuilding agencies are at work, and, religious communities, temples, churches, religious leaders, also play vital roles. Many faith traditions are involved, as are interfaith organizations. There are increasing examples of collaboration among them.

The National Council on Churches in Nepal (NCCN) is working to develop civil-society organizations and raise cooperation and understanding among various religious communities. It has established a program, Christian Efforts for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation (CEPJAR), to encourage interfaith dialogue, and formed the Inter-Religious Council Nepal to facilitate peacebuilding between religious communities. Promot-Nepal, a Christian organization, trains people in conflict management and offers courses related to conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and governance. Promot-Nepal uses games, role plays, discussion groups and real life stories to initiate trust and mediation between groups.

CM Yogi, the founder of Hindu Vidyapeeth-Nepal (HVP) schools, is a Hindu spiritual leader committed to peacebuilding; he chairs or serves on several organizations that focus on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The Youth Society for Peace (YSP) engages youth from indigenous communities in regional conflict prevention. One YSP program, Arms Down, coordinates with different communities to construct a participatory peacebuilding agenda. National Inter-faith Coordination Movement (NICM) focuses on interfaith harmony among different communities; the organization engages Hindu, Buddhist Muslim, Christian, Bahai, Jain, and Sikh communities.

Many organizations focus specifically on Dalit communities and victims of conflict. The Dalit Development Society (DDS) works to address the needs of marginalized people, especially those from Dalit (untouchable) caste groups. DDS focuses on Dalit victims of conflict, promoting basic human rights for marginalized societal groups. The Dalit Welfare Organization, Sindhuli (DWO-S) was founded to work for the Dalit community; current programs address conflict transformation and peace-building more generally. It promotes peaceful methods of dispute resolution and campaigns for children “as a zone of peace.” Siddhartha Social Development Centre (SSDC) works with Dalit community children who have been exploited by Maoists and other armed groups, to help reintegrate them with their families; SDC has reintegrated 124 children back into their families.

A Bahá'í founded Education, Curriculum, and Training Associates (ECTA), in 1997 to promote rural development strategies and educational programs focused on peacebuilding.

Some international organizations work with faith actors on peace and conflict resolution training and capacity building programs, notably the Asia Foundation, through the Leaders of Influence Program, and USIP. The Asia Foundation has introduced a unique method of negotiating conflict through a community mediation program. The program brings groups with caste hierarchies or tribal affiliations together to solve community problem; the focus is on improved relationships between different religious, ethnic, and tribal groups.

Gender

National and local development organizations are responding to the many gender specific challenges facing Nepal. While some issues facing women's empowerment are due to culture, others have more specifically religious dimensions. The following organizations work with communities that face challenges related to religious commitments or beliefs.

The Fatima Foundation, a Muslim organization, works for downtrodden and oppressed Muslim women, to build participation levels in civil society. It seeks to empower women by teaching Islamic values, and viable skills to encourage financial independence. Bhutanese Women and Youth Empowerment Program (BWYEP) founded by a group of Bhutanese refugee women in 2001, addresses problems faced by Bhutanese women, particularly girl trafficking, domestic violence and cultural norms of male domination.

Other local women focused organizations include: The Feminist Dalit Organization, ABC/Nepal, Empowering Women of Nepal, Jagaran Nepal, The Janaki Women Awareness Society, and Nari Chetna Kendra Nepal (Women's Awareness Center Nepal).

In a collaboration project between international development organizations and different faith communities, UNICEF marked the November 2010 World Day of Prayer and Action for Children by

asking representatives of various religious faiths to collaborate in advocating better lives for children around the globe. The observance began with an interreligious prayer event on the Day of Prayer and the 21st anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, organized by the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC). One aspect of the event focused on promoting maternal health, child survival and the benefits of breastfeeding for infants and young children. Religious leaders from various faith traditions spoke to their respective communities, encouraging women to breastfeed children, and couched their instruction in the theological language of their particular faith.

Education

There are three general categories of schools in the Nepali educational system: government schools, private schools, and religious schools. In the Nepal Government School Sector reform plan – 2009-2015, religious schools (also called traditional schools), including Gumbas/Vihars, Madarasas, Gurukuls are recognized as a choice of school within the formal education system; to be recognized however, religious schools must meet national standards of instruction and curricula, and use non-religious textbooks recommended by the government's Education Board.¹²⁰

All of the major faiths have educational institutions in Nepal. Christian Ministry schools are well respected, and many government and business elite graduated from Jesuit high schools. There are at least 3500 madrasas, which fill gaps in education where government schools are not present, particularly in Tarai and remote mountain districts, as noted by The Al-Hira Educational Society of Nepal. Hindu schools are found throughout Nepal, and although public schools do not teach religious beliefs, most have a statue of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning, on their grounds, and some begin the day with a Hindu prayer.

There are many examples of faith-inspired schools from different faiths. The Hindu Vidyapeeth-Nepal (HVP) is an educational institute administered by Matribhoomi Sevak Sangh (MSS) devoted to development of a peaceful society through education and selfless service.¹²¹ It focuses on the values of tolerance, harmony, and non-violence (ahimsa) to enable sustainable peace building in Nepal. Other faith-inspired educational systems include KHORUG, a network of Buddhist monasteries and centers based in the Himalayas that work together to educate people about the environment.¹²² The organization applies spiritual values of compassion and interdependence to provoke change in society through the individual. The organization draws on pariyatti education, Buddhist moral education to encourage students to develop into ethically conscious adults.

Nepal's Muslim community also focuses on education. The Al-Hira Educational Society manages 12 madrasas and schools with over 5000 students. The Islami Sangh Nepal is a large Muslim organization that works in education and provides scholarships for children from poor families. It is also active in other social welfare projects including micro-finance and construction of mosques in poor Muslim neighborhoods.¹²³

Some national/local level NGOs focus specifically on improving education. The Faith Foundation Nepal works to provide equal education opportunities, particularly in rural areas, including provision of school uniforms and supplies, and scholarships.

HIV/AIDS Awareness

HIV/AIDS was identified as a major issue in Nepal in 1988; faith-inspired organizations are working to raise public awareness about the disease. Many Nepalese faith-inspired organizations have advocacy, health, and awareness programming. The Nepal Christian Society (NCS), as an example, is comprised of different groups of Nepali Christians and organizes training seminars, camps, and conventions to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. The Millat-e-Islamiya, a Muslim organization, operates clinics in Kathmandu for both Muslims and non-Muslims. The Nepalese Baha'i community is a member of the Inter-religious Council of Nepal, and has met with Maoist leadership to consult on HIV/AIDS issues.

Various international organizations engage religious leaders on topics of HIV/AIDS. World Vision Nepal held a 3-day training session on HIV and AIDS awareness for 14 different religious leaders from Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Om Shanti (Hindu) traditions, and The World Bank organized a program that brought together religious leaders and policy makers to discuss the role of religious organizations in reducing stigma commonly associated with HIV/AIDS.

Maldives

The Maldives has seen rapid social and political change in recent years. The new Constitution, ratified on August 7th, 2008, reflects moves towards international norms and compacts, and set a legal framework for democratic institutions, including NGSs, to grow and develop. It also reflects the central role that Islamic tradition plays in everyday lives of Maldivians. Civil society engagement is increasing, especially following the 2008 democratic reforms. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has also been quite marked, especially on health indicators. Life expectancy, now estimated at 72 years, exemplifies a broad narrative of progress and openness to change. Yet significant challenges remain. Notably, the Maldives has come to prominence recently in international debates on climate change, as the prospect of rising sea levels is an imminent threat to the 80 percent of islands that are less than one meter above sea level.

Religion is an important and often sensitive subject, with significant links to the Maldives development agenda. The engagement of faith-inspired organizations is almost exclusively within a Muslim context. Notable is evidence of rising fundamentalism and its impact on the tourist industry. Concern about fundamentalism also colors broader engagement among religious communities in the civic arena, as civil engagement for the public good can be misconstrued as pointing towards extremism. As a result, faith-actors are less engaged on social development than elsewhere. Coordination within the NGO sector (as is the case elsewhere in the region) presents significant challenges, and despite the democratic opening tensions between public and private institutions are not insignificant. Some argue that Maldives is at a critical point in moving towards an established democratic society.

Society, economy, and politics

The Maldives, an archipelago of 1,200 islands, has a population of about 400,000 people, primarily of South Indian, Sinhalese, and Arab descent. A lower middle income country (World Bank classification), with per capita income around US \$4,130, recent annual economic growth rate has been quite robust (6 percent in 2008).¹²⁴ Tourism is the country's economic mainstay; tourists numbering nearly twice the country's population visit each year. Fishing is the second largest industry. Human development levels are high, and literacy is estimated at 98 percent, with near equality between men and women (over 99 percent of both male and female age 15-24 are literate). Life expectancy is 72 years, and the below 5 mortality rate is low, at 12.7/1,000. (World Bank)

While UN estimates indicate that extreme poverty and hunger have been widely eliminated, about 16 percent of Maldivians live below the national poverty level, concentrated in the more remote atolls, and among the rural population. In 2004 the Maldives reported a Gini index (that measures income disparities) ranking of 37.31, thus relatively equal by international standards.¹²⁵

Three decades of single party rule under President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom gave way in 2004 to a relatively peaceful transition to a liberal multiparty democracy. The president announced political and legal reforms, including an initiative to modernize the criminal system, within a framework of Islamic law.¹²⁶ The August 2008 constitution legalized mult party presidential competition, separation of powers, and a bill of rights. Former political activist Mohamed Nasheed defeated President Gayoom in a run-off poll in August 2010.

Religion, law, and society

Islam plays important and public roles in Maldivian society. Though Sri Lankan Buddhism came to the Maldives in the first few centuries BC, and was widely practiced for many years, in 1153 the Maldivian sultan converted to a Moroccan influenced Islam. Most Maldivians are Sunni Muslims, with some influence of local cultural adaptations in evidence.¹²⁷ Most islands have one or more mosques that serve as a place for community meetings and worship. Business and government offices close on Fridays at 11 am for weekend sermons. One result of the Islamic role is that foreign visitors are allowed only brief visits outside of the capital city of Malé, to limit foreign influence on local Maldivian traditions. Non-Muslim worship is permitted only in private, which applies to tourists and labor migrants.¹²⁸

The Maldives' legal code is based primarily on Islamic law, with strong influences from English civil law and common law.¹²⁹ The constitution refers explicitly to Islam. Chapter 1 declares Islam the state religion and establishes the faith as the basis of all Maldivian laws.¹³⁰ Qualifications for president – as well as Vice President and cabinet members - require that a candidate be a Sunni Muslim, while legislative authority, vested in the People's *Majlis*, requires that the body must pass laws consistent with Islamic tenets. The constitution guarantees non-discrimination based on a number of factors – including race, sex, color, national origin – but not religion. The law requires that citizens of the Maldives must be Muslim.

The Maldives is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Development challenges and progress

Despite significant progress on important development indicators, the Maldives faces challenges in sustaining the peaceful democratic transition. Capacity development, strengthening the newly formed institutions, decentralizing authority, establishing a culture of human rights, professionalizing the civil service, ensuring equity, and establishing and promoting good governance are recognized areas that need action.¹³¹

In 2008 the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), issued a national development plan, the *Aneeh Dhivehi Raajje* (Strategic Action Plan). It defines five pledges, to be achieved between 2009 and 2013, including: quality health care for all, prevention of narcotics trafficking, affordable housing, affordable living costs, and the establishment of a nationwide transportation system.¹³²

Overcoming challenges associated with climate change have been a top priority for the government, with 80 percent of the 1,200 islands are no more than 1 meter above sea level. Since government scientists predict a 0.9cm increase in water levels each year, global warming threatens the physical survival of the country.¹³³ While the government and Maldivian NGOs are working to alleviate the local symptoms of global warming, they challenge global leaders to adopt long-term solutions to man-made climate change, highlighting the special urgency for their nation. The Maldives was the first country to sign the Kyoto protocol. In 2009, after a highly-publicized underwater cabinet meeting, the President signed a declaration to cut global carbon emissions to be presented at the climate summit in Copenhagen that year.¹³⁴ The Maldives High Commissioner attended the October 2009 Alliance of Religions for Conservation (ARC) conference on faith and climate change at Windsor Castle, UK, sharing the experience of being at the front-line in the struggle against climate change with over 100 faith leaders from around the world.¹³⁵

Progress towards the MDGs has been noteworthy, with the Maldives reporting that the nation has achieved fully five of the eight MDGs, including eradication of poverty and extreme hunger, reduction of

infant mortality, attaining of universal primary education, improvement of maternal health, and substantially decreasing the incidence of malaria, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases.¹³⁶ Remaining challenges focus on quality of education and achieving gender equality.¹³⁷ Two-thirds of the population lack access to modern sanitation. The Maldives' size and location pose special and continuing challenges, as the population is dispersed over about 200 inhabited islands, over half with less than 1,000 people. Difficult access to many islands results in relatively high per unit service costs.¹³⁸

On gender, despite progress, particularly in education, encouraging women's participation in the workforce, education, and politics and the elimination of gender-based violence are still challenges. The percent of women in the labor force decreased by 17 percentage points over two decades and men still dominate in most decision-making and executive positions.¹³⁹ The World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index for 2010 ranked the Maldives 99th out of 134 countries¹⁴⁰. It highlights wage differentiation by gender - with men earning twice as much for the same work; a 20 percentage point separation in labor force participation; and, with only five women in the 77 member Parliament, substantial under-representation of women in political institutions.¹⁴¹ Men often leave their island in search of employment and 47 percent of homes have women headed households.¹⁴² A 2007 ministry report found that one in three women between 15 and 45 had experienced physical or sexual violence at least once, one and five of those at the hands of a partner; one in six girls under 15 years had suffered from some form of sexual violence¹⁴³. The government has extended broader legal protection to women, criminalizing gender-based discrimination, allowing women to run for all elected positions including head of state in the new constitution, and acknowledging all rights set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).¹⁴⁴ The Maldivian Red Cross is currently the only society in South Asia to be led by a female secretary general.

Although the Maldives has traditionally been known for a moderate interpretation of Islam, the presence of religious extremist groups is having a detrimental effect on the largely tourist based economy.¹⁴⁵ A first terrorist attack occurred in September 2007, when a bomb detonated in Malé's Sultan Park, wounding 12 foreigners. The terrorists announced that their aim was to disrupt the "outside influences" brought into the country by the tourist industry.¹⁴⁶

Faith-inspired organizations and development

NGO involvement in the Maldives, by international and national groups is limited. The 2010 Directory of Development Organizations in the Maldives includes no faith-inspired organizations. It does list many government agencies that engage in development work, as well as United Nations organizations. Transparency International is active in addressing corruption and governance issues.¹⁴⁷ Faith-inspired NGOs are not specifically excluded by law, but several reports indicate that the government turns away non-Islamic faith-inspired groups and individuals.^{148, 149}

There was a change after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, when some faith-inspired organizations were permitted to do disaster relief work. This included water and sanitation and displaced person care. The organizations included American Jewish World Service, World Vision, Caritas, Baptist World Aid, Church World Service, Muslim Aid, and Lutheran World Relief.¹⁵⁰ But their work was largely confined to immediate relief work, although Muslim Aid has some continuing programs.

Islamic finance is expanding in the Maldives. In October 2009, the Maldives entered into cooperation with the Islamic Cooperation for Development of the Private Sector (ICD), part of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), to provide Islamic banking services.¹⁵¹ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and IDB announced a joint initiative in June, 2009 to establish Asia's first major multi-country Islamic

infrastructure fund targeted at \$500 million,¹⁵² aimed to support investment in infrastructure and development of remote atolls.

The Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) (not strictly a faith-inspired organization but, in the Maldives, with faith links) was formed in August 2009 and has since worked towards international recognition from the ICRC and IFRC.¹⁵³ In 2010, MRC had six branches working with local partners to establish community health and first aid programs, women's empowerment projects, disaster risk reduction, and climate change programs. MRC's five-year strategy aims to open opportunities for youth and strengthen institutional capacity. The 2011 program focuses on disaster management and preparedness; its aim is to reach approximately 40,000 Maldivians over the year and to develop effective community response plans.

Individual mosques have traditionally been centers of community gathering and public space. A 2006 Asian Development Bank report on environmental management notes that mosques have historically been a location for communal wells and that "the role of mosques as communal water sites increases their potential in supporting environmental education by linking it to people's spiritual learning and their sense of relationship with the environment." The report observes, however, that while religion plays a major part in daily life in the Maldives, mosques or religious leaders are not explicitly involved in the environmental policy-making process.¹⁵⁴ A UN report highlighted the roles of mosques as centers of public information, with Friday sermons at mosques offering advice to people on social issues, "often calling for women and children to be treated correctly by society."¹⁵⁵

Coordination and development partners

NGOs are required to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs under the Clubs, Associations; approximately 1100 clubs and NGOs are registered, though most do not have office space or a paid staff.¹⁵⁶ There are several coordination bodies and networks, but participation of faith-inspired organizations seems limited to non-existent. The Maldives NGO Federation is a collection of 44 NGOs who organize to promote the growth of the NGO sector in civil society and fair government treatment.^{157,158} UN Inter-Agency Group meetings also help coordinate development activities, with the goal of eliminating unnecessary competition and avoiding duplication across agencies.¹⁵⁹

The government cooperates with international organizations, primarily from the UN system, that have partnerships with faith-inspired organizations, notably UNICEF and UNDP. The World Health Organization (WHO) is the Maldivian health department's largest developmental partner, providing technical support and serving as a coordination body for ministries, agencies, and NGOs.¹⁶⁰ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF, both of which actively engage faith-inspired actors in their international programs, initiated the "Third Country Program" to cooperate on national development programming. The Maldives' Ministry of Home Affairs works with UNDP to further civic engagement, particularly to strengthen the image and coordination of national NGOs.¹⁶¹ The effort stresses mobilization and organization of community groups, including Ward Committees, Atoll Development Committees (ADC), Island Women's Development Committees (IWC), and Island Development Committees (IDC). Local NGOs and the Government benefit from partnerships with bilateral development organizations and international NGOs, including CARE.¹⁶² The Canadian, Australian, and International Red Cross have assisted the MRC in disaster risk reduction and climate change initiatives.¹⁶³

Bhutan

“Bhutan’s economy of agriculture and monastic life remained self-sufficient, poor, and isolated until recent decades, when a series of remarkable monarchs began to guide the country toward technological modernization (roads, power, modern health care, and education), international trade (notably with neighboring India), and political democracy. What is incredible is the thoughtfulness with which Bhutan is approaching this process of change, and how Buddhist thinking guides that thoughtfulness. Bhutan is asking itself the question that everyone must ask: how can economic modernization be combined with cultural robustness and social well-being?” Jeffrey Sachs, August 2010

Summary

Bhutan, a remote, isolated, and landlocked nation of some 700,000 people lying between China and India, approaches modernization challenges in distinctive ways that reflect a conscious focus on religion, especially Bhutan’s Buddhist heritage. An absolute monarchy that isolated itself deliberately the outside world until the 1950s, Bhutan is looked to today as an interesting model as it traces its own paths to development and democracy. NGOs (faith or secular) play limited roles, but the Buddhist religious establishment is particularly significant in the education sector.

Socio-political setting

Bhutan’s opening to the outside world has involved political, social, and economic change. All have entailed extensive consultation with the people and walking a fine line between preserving traditions, protecting Bhutan’s unique ecology and cultural heritage, and taking advantage of the benefits of modernization. In politics, the absolute monarchy has given way to a constitutional monarchy, economic growth is promoted with government leadership, and education and health are a focus. Bhutan’s GDP per capita is one of the highest in South Asia (about US\$1900 in 2008), but its challenges include rural poverty, significant income inequality, and youth unemployment. The 10th Five Year Plan (2008-2013) aims to reduce poverty (now about 23 percent)¹⁶⁴ and strengthen democratic institutions. It supports women’s empowerment in the economy and decision-making; women in 2006 accounted for only 3 percent of National Assembly members and 4 percent of people’s representatives in the National Assembly¹⁶⁵.

Gross National Happiness (GNH), a uniquely Bhutanese measure that attracts considerable international attention, is enshrined in the constitution. The aim is to measure and guide national progress focusing on four pillars: equitable and sustainable economic development, cultural preservation, environmental conservation, and good governance. GNH is measured through surveys conducted twice a year which quantify 31 sets of indicators¹⁶⁶. Buddhist ideals underpin the GNH approach, though it is articulated as Bhutanese more than Buddhist, in respect to the significant Hindu minority. A distinctive aspect is the effort to measure spiritual welfare as part of GNH: thus the practice of meditation, prayer, commitment to nonviolence, and belief in a broader life purpose¹⁶⁷. The 10th Five Year Plan reflects both GNH parameters and the UN MDGs.

Religion and Government

Buddhism is highly visible and influential in Bhutan; perhaps 10 percent of Bhutan’s population belongs to the monastic system.¹⁶⁸ Bhutan was ruled from the 17th century under a dual system of governance (*Chhoe-sid-nyi*) with two branches representing the administrative and religious needs of the country.¹⁶⁹ Heading the religious branch and Central Monastic Body was the Supreme Abbot, or *Je Khenpo*, equal in

status to the King, who led the administrative apparatus. Under today's constitution, the Prime Minister comes under the King but she or he has power over the cabinet and other administrative issues. Bhutan's Monastic Body, consisting of both Central and District bodies, still has considerable influence, and it is still difficult today to distinguish between the social and religious¹⁷⁰. The government finances the Monastic Body through an annual grant, and 10 of the 150 seats in the National Assembly and 2 of the 11 on the Royal Advisory Council are reserved for Buddhist monks. But greater separation between religion and politics is part of Bhutan's modernization process. As of September 2010, Hindu and Buddhist clergy are both banned from voting in elections.

Two-thirds to three-quarters of Bhutan's population practices Drukpa Kagyupa or Nyingmapa Buddhism, both disciplines of Mahayana Buddhism (closely linked to the Buddhism practiced in Tibet). Between a quarter and a third of Bhutanese are ethnic Nepalese, most of them practicing Hindus. Christians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, and nonreligious groups comprise less than 1 percent of the population. Mahayana Buddhism is described in the constitution as Bhutan's "spiritual heritage". Article 7(4) guarantees freedom of religion. Bhutan's King, the Druk Gyalpo, is the "protector of all religions". The primary practical issue today around this religious freedom and Bhutan's distinctively Buddhist culture is integration of Bhutan's significant ethnically-Nepalese Hindu population. This involves a history of conflict and a refugee crisis that has remained virtually unchanged since the 1980s.

Development and faith: an intertwined response

Bhutan's development initiatives have yielded many positive political and social results. Multi-party parliamentary elections in 2008 were orderly and were deemed a fair manifestation of the new democracy. The Royal family continues to respect its new role and constraints. UN analyses indicate that Bhutan is on track to achieve most of its MDG targets by 2015, and progress towards controlling malaria, ensuring environmental sustainability, halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water, and promoting universal education is excellent¹⁷¹. However, substantial challenges lie ahead. Most urgent is addressing the needs and desires of Bhutan's large, increasingly educated young population. There is much to do to encourage private sector expansion and create jobs. Pockets of poverty and malnutrition and low female participation in tertiary level education also need attention.

Bhutan's development path has been largely government led, with limited grassroots participation. Resource constraints and the inaccessibility of much of the country provide part of the explanation. Constitutional restrictions on groups deemed "harmful to Bhutan's unity and peace"¹⁷² are another. Local NGOs are few and far between, and civil society is generally weak, its activities constrained. A growing number of gender, education, and environmental NGOs operate today than in the past, but there are very few political or human rights based organizations.¹⁷³ Even the Bhutan Foundation, established to support Bhutan's NGO and government-led development activities, was founded from the United States.¹⁷⁴ International NGOs, including several faith-inspired NGOs, have a limited but significant presence, both in Bhutan itself and working with Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.

Bhutan's well-established and trusted network of religious leaders has always been active in community work and charity. Monks, nuns, and religious communities play visible roles across the development spectrum, from HIV prevention and care to ensuring that poor children receive food, shelter, and an education.¹⁷⁵

Bhutan is on track to achieve the MDG target for *universal education* by 2015. Development of progressive education is considered one of the most dramatic changes as Bhutan has modernized.¹⁷⁶¹⁷⁷ Western style education was introduced only in the 1950s, but student numbers, schools, and teachers

have since expanded rapidly. Before 1961, Bhutan's modern education sector consisted of 400 students, 45 teachers, and 11 schools¹⁷⁸; today there are nearly 150,000 students, 5,000 trained-teachers, and 800 schools¹⁷⁹. Some students are also educated in monastic institutions. In 2009, Net Gross Primary Enrollment Ratio was 92 percent¹⁸⁰. The government has pledged to make basic education - the first 11 years in Bhutan - free and available for all children. Ratios of girls to boys almost even for lower education especially; indeed more girls than boys attend school in some areas. Continuing challenges include students living in remote areas and increasing girls' enrollment in tertiary institutions (they were only 54 percent in 2007).¹⁸¹ Community Primary Schools, with villages expected to help construct and support in return for their children's education, are part of the solution.

Buddhist monasteries have long played important roles in shaping Bhutan's culture and society and today offer an alternative path to education. Buddhist monks run a system of monastic education whose administration remains under the Central Monastic Body. Despite concerns that non-religious job prospects for Monastic graduates are limited, parents still send their children to *Lobdra* (schools for novices) and then to *Drubdeys* (meditation centers), *Dratshangs*, *Rabdeys*, *Aney Dratshangs* (nunneries), or *Shedras* (colleges)¹⁸²¹⁸³. Many children who attend monastic schools come from economically disadvantaged homes, especially in rural, inaccessible areas¹⁸⁴. Monasteries, however, have difficulties in meeting students' basic needs, including clothing and sustenance, with the government funding they receive. In some schools, less than half of students receive benefits, so that all have half rations in food, clothing, and sometimes shelter¹⁸⁵. The Sponsor a Monk Initiative, a program pioneered by the Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF), allows donors to sponsor benefits for young monks attending the Dechen Phodrang Monastic School. Launched in 1999 by Her Majesty Ashi Tsherig Pem Wangchuck, the Bhutan YDF targets disadvantaged youth. One project is the Dechen Phodrang Monastic School¹⁸⁶. The Bhutan Nuns Foundation, created in 2006, works to ensure that girls can go to school regardless of economic status or where they live.

Education is a national project, undertaken by government and non-government actors, to deliver universal education that is consistent with the country's values. It has wide support from the people and government support¹⁸⁷¹⁸⁸, and the aim is to "integrate the best of our cherished cultural and national values with the best modern knowledge and technological developments"¹⁸⁹. Dr. Karma Ura, leader of the center responsible for measuring GNH, observed in 2009 that "for the education system to pay attention to values is central to our cultural perspective that is influenced by Buddhism"¹⁹⁰. The 1999 Planning Commission's *Bhutan 2020* report highlighted that "quality education ensures awareness of cultural heritage"¹⁹¹. Bhutan's distinctive education system is capturing regional attention; a March 2010 Center for Bhutan Studies (CBS) and Seminar Foundation (India) dialogue in Thimpu included discussions on GNH and education.¹⁹²

Bhutan has also made significant strides on *health*. Once widespread, malaria and tuberculosis have declined significantly, with only two malaria related deaths reported in 2007, versus 63 in 1993; TB cases declined from 720 to 127 per 100,000 over a similar period¹⁹³. Under-five mortality rates have declined sharply (halved between 1990 and 2007) and the government is committed to further reductions. Maternal mortality still needs attention, with 255 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000, against the MDG goal of 100 per 100,000 by 2013. Increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS is a concern, given high infection levels among Bhutan's neighbors. Less than 0.01 percent of the population is currently infected, but recent reports suggest rising incidence, with 38 reported cases in 2000 rising to 144 in 2008¹⁹⁴. The Government acted quickly; a National HIV/AIDS and STI Control Program (NAP) began in 1988, out of the Ministry of Health, but manpower shortages and difficult terrain have delayed broad public understanding of the disease. Key areas of focus (which the World Bank supports) include prevention services to and

empowering those most at-risk, generating political and social support, reducing stigma, and improving HIV/AIDS education and policy decisions¹⁹⁵.

Bhutan's religious bodies and youth groups have provided some support for health programs. For example, in 1989, the Department of Health and the National Council for Religious Affairs formally endorsed the potential benefits in health education as promoted by religious practitioners¹⁹⁶.

Expanding into Bhutan from Southeast Asia, the *Regional Buddhist Leadership Initiative* has worked on HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Working with UNICEF, its aim is to build isolated groups of advocate Buddhist monks and nuns into a nationally connected network of well-rooted and locally trusted health educators¹⁹⁷. The program approaches HIV/AIDS through educating youth about prevention, caring for those infected, and destigmatizing the disease through discourse and teaching by example. The Initiative began work in Bhutan in 2001, with a first participatory workshop on religious community roles in health and development. Bhutanese monks travelled to Thailand to see development activities of monks there and the impact HIV/AIDS has on communities¹⁹⁸. A promising feature of the Initiative is its reliance on education; in the Mekong subregion, several temple schools have incorporated prevention education into their curricula. The potential for positive impact in Bhutan is substantial.

Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

Skilled laborers of Nepali origin settled southern Bhutan in the 19th century, becoming quite powerful politically and economically over the years. At the peak, Bhutanese of Nepali origin, or Lhotsampas, made up about 40-50 percent of the population. Around 1985, tensions emerged between the dominant Drupka Buddhist population and this substantial Hindu minority; various measures curtailed the latter's citizenship rights and freedom of expression, all under the King's "One Nation, One People" command, which obliged Lhotsampas to adopt the attire and language of the Drupka Buddhists¹⁹⁹. The government revoked the citizenship of Lhotsampa communities and 1991 saw the expulsion of some 90,000 Bhutanese across India into Nepal; more followed later. Over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees have since then lived in seven refugee camps administrated by the Nepalese Government and UNHCR. Refugees are not permitted to work in Nepal outside the camps, nor can they vote or own land²⁰⁰. Worrying reports highlight growing incidence of alcoholism, child marriage, prostitution, trafficking of women into India, and suicide²⁰¹. Yet the refugees have demonstrated profound self-reliance and adaptability in their situation²⁰². Refugee communities elect community members as an administrative camp management committee (CMC). It addresses the various needs of their constituency, from coordinating food distribution, birth and death registration, and health initiatives to developing conflict negotiation mechanisms for disputes within the community.

Four major NGOs have worked with the CMC since 2000: working alongside the Association for Medical Doctors for Asia (AMDA) and the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), Caritas Nepal helps to provide education and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) maintains camp infrastructure and supervises water delivery. Such cooperative health programs have led a reduction in birth rates, under-five mortality, and malnutrition frequency²⁰³. Education is provided in the camps, and literacy (75 percent) and school enrollment (nearly 100 percent) are both significantly higher than for both Nepal and Bhutan²⁰⁴.

Since 1994, Caritas Nepal has been the primary actor coordinating education through the Bhutanese Refugee Education Program (BREP)²⁰⁵. It plays a significant role in various aspects of Bhutan's education system, from helping teachers pursue training to assisting in basic education, helping children from all communities. It organizes childcare centers for students or adults undergoing BREP sponsored vocational training. Vocational or informal education teaches refugees marketable skills including:

tailoring, knitting, driving, computing, and garment production²⁰⁶. Caritas Nepal spends most of its Caritas international funding on such vocational education with help from partners, but also receives funding for other school classes from other international organizations. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) assists with class XI and XII studies. Other donors for higher education have included Catholic Relief Service, JRS USA, and the Jesuit Conference for South Asia. In 2007, through these donations, 4,200 students each received NRs 3,000 towards higher education. Besides to its education activities, Caritas Nepal leads other initiatives throughout Nepal; its activities in combating trafficking of women and improving food security are most relevant to the refugee population.

India

Some call India the world's most religious nation. They are pointing to history: several of the world's most significant faith traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism notably) emerged in India. They also allude to the vibrancy in India's contemporary faiths. An extraordinary diversity of religion marks many domains of Indian life. India also stands out for both religious harmony and significant communal tensions. Over many centuries, different faith communities lived harmoniously side by side in India and there is a pride in this heritage. India's constitution establishes a secular nation, that also accommodates religious dimensions of life. Yet India also faces major interreligious challenges. Most significant is the Muslim/Hindu rift that dominated much of the politics around independence, and still fuels conflicts over Kashmir and outbreaks of tension and violence. However, the broader picture should be kept in mind: a nation with extraordinary religious diversity and both pride and experience in interfaith harmony.

Against this backdrop, India's religious leaders, institutions, and ideas play active roles in most facets of development – that is, social change and approaches to social welfare. Religious leaders are influential in both spiritual and social realms and many are also involved in politics. Faith often motivates social and welfare work, in different parts of India and for most faiths, albeit in different ways. The organizations vary widely, and there is no coherent umbrella which groups them. Knowledge about their work is patchy, with some organizations thoroughly researched, others far less well known.

Socio-Economic Background

India, a federal republic with a secular government, is the world's largest democracy, the second largest nation (with its population of over 1 billion), and the fourth largest economy. Following economic reforms in the 1990s, economic growth has averaged around 7 percent a year. Even tempered by the global financial crisis, India had the second highest economic growth rate among major economies. India's diverse economy encompasses agriculture, handicrafts, textiles, and a growing service sector, with over half of output and almost one-third of the labor force related to the service industry. Agriculture contributes about 30 percent of GDP, producing rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, lentils, onions, potatoes, dairy products, sheep, goats, poultry, and fish; industry contributes 26 percent of GDP.²⁰⁷

Notwithstanding the economic growth of recent decades, poverty remains a significant challenge. The World Bank estimates that 37 percent of the population falls below the poverty line; given India's large population, almost one-third of the world's poorest people are in India.²⁰⁸ India has made marked progress in increasing literacy, but only 61 percent of Indians are literate. Women rank lower on most development indicators – on literacy 73 percent of adults males are literate, compared to 48 percent of adult females.²⁰⁹ Infant mortality rates are higher for females. Cultural practices traditionally favor boys over girls, though this varies in degree among regions.

Religious Demography and Society

India is one of the world's most religiously diverse nations. Four of the world's major religious traditions: Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, originated in India and Islam has long been a major social and cultural force. Hinduism is the largest religious tradition; some 80 percent of the population identifies as Hindu. Muslims represent more than 13 percent of the population (the world's second largest Muslim population). Christians comprise slightly over 2 percent and Sikhs slightly under 2 percent. Other

religious groups, totaling 1.8 percent of the population, include Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, Baha'is, and Jews. Ethnic cultural groups include Indo-Aryan tribes, comprising 72 percent of the population, Dravidian tribes (25 percent), and Mongoloid tribes and other indigenous cultures (3 percent).²¹⁰

Text Box 8: Child Marriages In India

In some parts of rural India, arranged child marriages is a common practice, affecting the welfare, security, and development potential of young girls. Despite legal efforts of the Indian Parliament to adopt the Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1978, setting 18 as the minimum age for women to get married, and 21 for men, the practice continues and in some cases is widespread. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) there has been an overall decline in the percentage of women aged 20-24 married before 18, from 54 percent in 1992-93 to 45 percent in 2005-06. Rates however, vary by region; A recent UNICEF report notes that 82 percent of girls in Rajasthan, where child marriage is a common practice, are married by 18; 15 percent of girls in rural areas across the country are married before 13; and 52 percent of girls have their first pregnancy between 15 and 19. In Madhya Pradesh almost 73 percent of girls are forced into a child marriage, as are 64 percent in Uttar Pradesh; and 67 percent in Bihar.

Religion plays a role in influencing norms and behaviors that contribute to child marriage. Combined with local customs, ethnic and tribal norms, in some regions of the country, women are seen as property and some fathers and husbands sell their wives and unmarried daughters to gain wealth. The annual festival of Akhai Teej is considered an auspicious day for marriage and local police raid child marriage ceremonies and arrest families trying to force children to marry. Child marriage places young girls at a high risk for domestic violence and sexual abuse and in some instances is supported by superstitions including the belief that having sex with a virgin can cure syphilis, gonorrhea and AIDS.

Many faith-inspired organizations are working in India to reduce child marriages. International NGOs such as World Vision operates children's clubs and self-help group throughout India that educate youth and women about the dangers of child marriage. World Vision also runs programs to educate children and women about their legal rights and has been successful in stopping several child marriages in Rajasthan.¹ Caritas India has education programs on gender justice and equality in rural areas that target women and young girls.

Indian faith-inspired organizations including the Hindu Women's Welfare Society Shradhanand Mahilashram, work in rural areas to provide education and counseling for women and young girls. The Deep Griha Society in Pune operates programs and seminars to raise awareness and combat child marriage.

International religious movements as well have programs to eliminate child marriage. The Brahma Kumaris organization is active in raising awareness about child marriage on a local and international level. The Art of Living runs a youth program where students are educated about the social problems of child marriage and work to find sustainable methods to end the practice.

Religious leaders often can perpetuate child marriage by condoning the practice. The 1995 United Nations conference in Beijing focused on rights of the girl child, including ways to combat child marriage. Conference outcomes noted that dialogue with traditional and religious leaders to identify practical ways to reduce early marriage was an important component to combating the practice.

Zoroastrianism has a strong presence; the religion originally emerged in Persia, but the largest Zoroastrian community today is in India.²¹¹ The Cochin Jews, the oldest Jewish community outside of the Middle East, is in the Southern state of Kerala. The Mar Toma sect of Eastern Orthodox Christianity also traces its roots to 52 C.E.²¹² Roman Catholicism came to the island of Goa with Portuguese explorers. Protestantism was introduced through missionaries in the 18th century; both are quite widely practiced.

Large global spiritual movements originating in India, most Hindu inspired, include the Hare Krishnas, the Brahma Kumaris, and the Art of Living.

The ancient Hindu caste system was officially abolished after Independence, but caste identities are still a part of the culture and contribute to many forms of discrimination. The lowest caste group, the “untouchables” (so named because a social and theological pollution was attributed to them by higher caste groups) still face employment and social barriers, including limited access to temples; affirmative action provisions and social activism aim to address inequalities. The untouchables have renamed themselves Dalit, a self-conscious title that means, “Down-trodden and Crushed.” Forms of intra-caste violence, social exclusion, and discrimination toward Dalits still challenge contemporary India and in recent years, caste related violence has become more frequent.²¹³

Development Challenges

A large part of India’s population is still very poor, seeing few gains from rapid growth. The poorest segments of the population include Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities and women; they lack access to the resources and opportunities they need to benefit from economic growth.²¹⁴ Seven states in India have the lowest incomes: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh; they account for over half of India’s population. International development organizations focus their poverty reduction programs in these states. Development priorities include power, transport, water, and urban development.²¹⁵ Healthcare presents serious challenges, especially in rural and remote areas, exacerbated by poor transportation infrastructure. Deaths from Tuberculosis (TB) and polio have decreased, but child malnutrition levels are among the worst in the world. Only half the population has access to safe drinking water, and less than a third to sanitation.

Cultural and religious traditions perpetuate gender inequality. Women and girls lag behind men on most development indicators, including education and health. The status of women varies by provincial, regional, ethnic, tribal, and religious affiliation. Particularly in rural areas, gender based discrimination, lack of education, child marriages, forced marriages, sexual exploitation, and violence challenge efforts to overcome gender inequality and advance women’s rights. Women’s status tends to be lowest in rural areas. Girl children often receive less nutrition, healthcare, and education.²¹⁶ More than 60 percent of women in India live below the poverty line and 18 percent more girls die before their fifth birthday.²¹⁷ Maternal mortality rates are high and 407 out of every 100,000 women die during childbirth.²¹⁸ Studies suggest that almost 95 percent of girls aged 6-14 in Calcutta; 67 percent in Hyderabad; 73 percent in New Delhi and 18 percent in Madras are anemic and malnourished.²¹⁹ Lack of education is directly connected to maternal care and infant mortality; 61 percent of young girls are not attending school in rural villages²²⁰.

The Indian Constitution guarantees gender equality and includes measures that favor women through legislation and policies; a constitutional convention for gender inequality was ratified in 1993²²¹ As a result, over one million women have been elected to local governments. The government also passed a Pre-natal Diagnostic Tech Act in 1994 aimed at banning sex-determination tests and female foeticide, and measures to prohibit dowry practices that reinforced discriminatory practices.²²² Despite these measures, gender inequality and discrimination are a long-term challenge in modern India

Indian economist and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen wrote an influential article in *The New York Review of Books*, “More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing”, highlighting gender inequality and discrimination in India. His article notes that worldwide, boys outnumber girls (there are about 105-106

boys per girl), and that India has one of the lowest ratios of girls to boys. Gender ratios vary regionally in India; the ratio of women to men in the states of Punjab and Haryana, which are also among the richest, is extremely low at 0.86, while the state of Kerala (which also has some of the highest development indicators in India) has a ratio higher than 1.03. Some poor families in India see the girl child as a burden, draining financial resources through high dowries and contributing few resources to the family. What results is the worst form of discrimination - sex selective abortions and female foeticide (though the practice was outlawed, it continues in practice), infanticide, as well as general neglect of girls in basic nutrition, health, and education, often resulting in death.²²³

Violence against women in rural regions is common. An ADB report notes that a woman is sexually molested every 26 minutes, a rape occurs every 34 minutes, and every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped.²²⁴ India is a destination and origin country for sexual trafficking. Girls from Nepal and Bangladesh are trafficked to India for commercial sexual exploitation, while Indian women are often trafficked to the Middle East. Child marriages (See Text Box #8) and forced marriages are still common, especially in rural India. Women in some areas are not considered autonomous, and the practice of selling women and young girls for a monetary sum occurs. Discrimination against widows is common, (See Text Box # 16) and is connected to religious, ethnic, and tribal customs.

Low literacy and unequal access to education are major long term challenges. Gender gaps in education are significant; the ratio of girls to boys in primary school is 96 percent, dropping to 86 percent at the secondary level. There are large gaps between rural and urban areas; the 2001 census figures indicate literacy of 60 percent in the rural population, compared to 80 percent in urban areas. Dalits, Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are particularly affected - statistics released by the International Dalit Conference state that 90 percent of the poor and 95 percent of illiterate Indians are Dalits,²²⁵

To address low education levels, India's government has ambitious projects, including the National Program for Universal Elementary Education (2001), and a constitutional amendment that makes elementary education a fundamental right of every child (2002). With support from the World Bank, EU, and other donors, in 2004 the Indian government implemented the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program that enabled 20 million children to attend school, and aims to narrow gender and social gaps and improve quality of education.²²⁶ Government instituted positive discrimination programs target Dalits, STs, and OBCs in higher education institution. Education programs by several faith-inspired educational institutions target poor demographic groups.

Ethnic and religious diversity has contributed to communal, religious, ethnic, and caste-related conflict. The conflict with Pakistan over the disputed territory of Kashmir is frozen, with a fragile ceasefire generally holding since 2004. Though largely a territorial dispute, the populations on each side are split between primarily Muslims and Hindus respectively (See Text Box # _____). The 2008 Mumbai bombings that attacked luxury hotels, a hospital and a Jewish center²²⁷ were traced to Islamic militant group from the Pakistani controlled region of Kashmir.

Interreligious violence between Muslims and Hindus has increased in recent years. In December 1992, violence linked to the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya (Hindus claim the mosque was built atop a temple believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama) resulting in the death of 2000 people.²²⁸ Residual animosities culminated with the 2002 massacre in Gujarat, where 2000 people died and hundreds of women were assaulted and raped.²²⁹ The event polarized Muslim and Hindu communities, compounding the environment of distrust and fear.

India is also challenged by caste based conflict. Although untouchability is banned (article 17 of the constitution – 1950), discrimination against Dalits is widespread. In 1989, the Indian government passed the Prevention of Atrocities Act to address escalating violence between Dalits and upper caste Hindu.²³⁰ Despite the legislation, in 2000, the India's National Crime Records Bureau indicated that 25,455 crimes targeted Dalits, including sexual assault, rape, murder, and destruction of farm lands and property.²³¹ Even with education and urban jobs, some Dalits suggest that the stigma of Dalit identity perpetuates societal exclusion.

Text Box 9: Gandhi's Wheel of Satyagraha

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the great political and Hindu inspired spiritual leader, spearheaded the Indian Independence Movement. Known as “Bapu ji” or “Father of the Nation,” also the Mahatma or “Great Soul” of India, left a body of ideas and principles that influence world leaders, social activists, scientists, and writers. Among those inspired by Gandhi are Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Albert Einstein, Henry David Thoreau, and Leo Tolstoy. The essence of Gandhian principles is his commitment to “*satya*” or truth, which he draws from the Hindu sacred text, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, the search of which led him to his unfaltering faith in *ahimsa* (non-violence) as well as equality, and justice.

As a young lawyer, Gandhi moved to South Africa in pursuit of a legal career. Living under apartheid, Gandhi experienced racism and discrimination personally and became a leader in the fight against Apartheid regime. After Gandhi returned to India, he radically changed his life. Seeing the colonial powers in a new light, he focused on regaining pride in his native culture and language. He stopped wearing western clothes, opting instead to wear clothes made with *khadi*, a traditional homespun cloth that he spun himself on his spinning wheel. He envisioned an India where people would be self-sufficient, eating only what they grew on their own lands and wearing what they spun with their own hands. Many of his ideas (like spinning *khadi*) became forms of political protest against the British. In almost every part of India, Gandhi’s teachings about simplicity and self-sufficiency found resonance with the Indian people, seen as contrasting with British tendencies towards materialism and excess.

In his widely read autobiography, “*My Experiments with Truth*”, Gandhi says that “God is Truth” and “Truth (*satya*) is God.” Today, in modern India, despite the effects of globalization and trade, Gandhian principles and ideology are a significant part of the landscape. In development and welfare work, many faith-based organizations and actors draw inspiration from Gandhian philosophy and ideals. Gandhi’s commitment to *ahimsa* (non-violence), his adherence to simplicity, and his promotion of *nai talim* (basic education) are lasting and relevant ideals for Indian society. Many faith actors working in India highlight these terms as the inspiration and also the path for peacebuilding work in communities. Gandhi’s teachings show the way to interreligious and intra-caste politics, to gender equality, and Dalit empowerment; to education that focuses on the moral development of the person; and to uphold the principles of *satya* economically, politically, and theologically.

Gandhi’s wheel of *satyagraha* continues to spin, affecting communities far beyond India’s borders, encouraging individuals engaged in development work to draw their inspiration from the forces of Truth and the Mahatma who taught them.

The continuing Maoist/Naxalite insurgency that began in 1967, was in 2006 cited by Prime Minister Singh as the biggest security threat to the country. Swami Agnivesh, leader of the Arya Samaj movement, is actively pursuing mediation efforts between the Maoists and the government.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Faith is integrated into India's culture and traditions. For most Indians, religion permeates most aspects of life, from family, to education, to politics. Faith-inspired organizations play a variety of roles in development, providing welfare services to underserved and marginalized populations. International, national, and local level faith-inspired organizations from all major faiths are active in India working on issues of health, gender, education, conflict and peacebuilding, as well as Dalit and Scheduled Tribe empowerment, and poverty alleviation, *inter alia*.

Complexities of Terminology in Modern India – Hindu Inspired Organizations

Religion in India is complex; the word “religion” has different connotations in the modern Indian context. The Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to all citizens of India while trying to uphold a secular, democratic government that does not privilege one religion over another. Religious affiliation and faith-inspiration among development organizations is often nuanced in meaning; “faith-based organization” in the commonly understood western definition cannot be equally applied in India, particularly related to Hindu inspired organizations. Many organizations that derive inspiration from Hindu beliefs self-identify as secular in the Indian context.

Some nationalist political parties in India expound an ideology called “Hindutva.” While scholars, theorists, and practitioners argue about the direct religious connotations of this term, it is widely accepted that it conveys an implicit *Hindu* nationalist worldview. The term, introduced in 1923, suggests that all people born in *Ma Bharat* (Mother India) regardless of their ethnic, tribal, and religious identities are bound together by their unique “Hinduness,” as derived from the cultural and civilizational understanding of “Hindu;” “Hindu, in this context, implies that all consider India as their motherland (*matrabhumi*), their fatherland, (*pitrubhumi*) or their holy land (*punyabhumi*).²³²

The Hindutva ideology has created some tensions vis-à-vis the idea of a secular democratic India, contributing to some episodes of interreligious conflict and intra-caste politics. Hindu-inspired organizations may be hesitant to identify as “Hindu” for fear that their organization is interpreted as “right-wing” or nationalist ideology. Thus many development organizations that are inspired by Hindu philosophy and ideology prefer to identify themselves as “secular.” Unlike the United States where the term secular implies a lack of religious conviction, in the Indian context, the term is understood differently, complicating the landscape in terms of categorizations.

Hindu Organizations

A wide variety of Hindu inspired organizations work in many sectors and different states. Some such organizations state explicitly that their inspiration is linked to Hindu heritage and beliefs, but others do not. Large, Hindu-inspired organizations work for Dalit empowerment, support for civil society, civic rights, education, health, gender equality, and poverty alleviation. Some have connections with Diaspora communities abroad.

An important category of development organizations trace their inspiration to the social teachings and actions of Gandhi, who was in many ways inspired by Hindu traditions (See Text Box 9); most such organizations however, identify themselves as secular. With hundreds, if not thousands of organizations

with a broad Hindu faith inspiration, this section focuses only on those where the faith link is clear and explicit.

Many Hindu inspired organizations work in education and provide poor families with basic necessities, particularly in rural areas, often within their respective states. Poverty alleviation programs, mobile clinics and gender empowerment are quite common. The All India Movement (AIM) for Seva, as an example, established by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, was formed as an initiative of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha. An apex body of Hindu religious heads of various “*sampradayas*” or traditions, it focuses heavily on education.²³³ The organization works in rural areas to reach underserved populations, seeing education as one of the best paths to empowerment. Anoopam Mission, established through the vision of Brahmawarup Param Puija Yogiji Maharaj, engages in humanitarian service of as a form of *bhakti* (devotion) to God. It runs several educational institutions and operates blood donation camps and cancer awareness programs in rural areas. The Bharat Sevashram Sangha, a Hindu charitable organization founded by Acharya Srimat Pranavananda ji Maharaj, focuses on education in Kolkata. It also operates Tribal Welfare projects in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, and Gujarat, with four mobile medical units at 64 locations under the Government of India’s Grant-in-Aid program.

A different category of organizations focuses on healthcare, infectious disease prevention, and adults and children with disabilities and special needs. One such organization is The Divine Life Society, a religious organization founded by Swami Sivananda Saraswati that integrates yoga into social welfare activities to promote the general well being of people, especially those suffering from trauma.

Besides formally constituted non-governmental and community organizations, many Hindu inspired social movements are organized, for example, around workers and civic rights. Perhaps the largest social movement in India, the Self Employed Women’s Association, or SEWA, was founded by Ela Bhatt (2010 recipient of the Niwano Peace Prize). SEWA is a trade union with over 1.2 million members, created to protect the rights of self-employed women who have few benefits and little support. Though SEWA is a secular organization, it highlights the inspiration it draws from Hindu values and those of Gandhi.

Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement founded in 1858, represents the interest of the poor and downtrodden, with 3-4 million followers worldwide. Araya Samaj teachings draw on Hindu principles set forth in the *Vedas*. The National Fishworkers’ Forum draws inspiration from both Hindu and Christian faiths, and represents fishers rights in the coastal communities of Kerala (See Text Box 10).

A large array of Hindu-inspired schools draw varying inspiration from Hindu teachings and ideologies. Vidhya Bharati Schools are inspired by Hindu philosophies and beliefs, and are present throughout India, forming an important component of the Indian education system.

Text Box 10: Kerala Independent Fish Workers Federation: Coastal Activists of Southern India

Many labor focused social movements have emerged in India, often with faith links or inspiration. A prominent example is The Kerala Swathanthra Malsya Thozhilali Federation, or the Kerala Independent Fishworkers Federation, a non-party trade union and community-based grassroots organization. Christians, Muslims and Hindus work together in a community of nearly 800,000 strong, helping to build the fisherfolk into an intimate and close knit community. Kerala State, in Southern India, has 222 coastal villages, 113 inland fishery villages and almost 1 million fishermen and families.¹ Kerala contributes 24 percent of India's export earnings from their marine fisheries. Some 35 percent of the fisherfolk are Christian, 25 percent are Muslim, and 40 percent are Hindu; each group draws on their faith as a source of inspiration for their work with the Fishworkers Union.¹ Over the past several years, the organization has engaged difficult environmental issues like resource conservation, protection of water bodies and coastal protection.¹ They also tackle challenges like gender inequality, seeking creative solutions through women's empowerment.

The Federation's objectives include working for the socio-economic and political welfare of all fish workers; providing legal aid to each working family; conservation of marine resources; and prevention of pollution in water bodies.¹ To this end, in 1991, the Federation organized a rally to support families that lost their livelihood when a fish disease called Episeutic Ulsurative Syndrome swept through the inlands of Kerala.¹ After a series of rallies and hunger strikes, the government relented and offered the affected families monetary compensation. The Fish workers organized a march to protest the death of Asha Niyogi, the wife of Sankar Guha Niyogi, an activist from Madhya Pradesh who was shot dead while advocating for tribal and indigenous people.¹

The Federation cooperates to solve gender inequality issues in the community. The Fish workers addressed the safety of fish working women who were engaged in selling fish which involved long travel, in addition to the pressure of child-caring and domestic responsibilities. The Federation demanded transportation for these women and launched a series of protests until the government sanctioned a special bus for women fish workers to facilitate their travel and ensure their safety. These efforts have made possible increased security for women from robbery and sexual assault and have served to raise their social status in the community. The fisherwomen have their own movement, Theeradesa Mahila Vedi. It focuses on economic security for fisherwomen as well as ecological protection of Kerala's marine resources.

Religious/spiritual Movements

The prominent role of religious/spiritual movements is a distinctive feature of South Asia's landscape. India is home to an extraordinary array of such movements, some local and small, others vast with members in many parts of the world. Many inspire members to focus on and support social development and welfare work. Spirituality is often an integral part or the leading dimension of their agendas. Large religious movements include, , *inter alia*, the Brahma Kumaris (See Text Box 11), the Sathya Sai Baba Organization, the Chinmaya Mission, the Art of Living, and the RamaKrishna Mission.

Art of Living, led by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, is active in many development sectors including education, spiritual development, raising HIV/AIDS awareness, and promoting interfaith cooperation. The Sathya Sai Baba Organization was established by Sathya Sai Baba, a charismatic leader promoting the messages

of encompassing love and service. The movement is an international phenomenon, operating 1,200 Sathya Sai Baba Centers in 114 countries that work on development issues, including education. It has several “Bal Vikas” (schools for children) that combine academic education with a Human Values Program focusing on moving from body consciousness and selfishness to God consciousness and selflessness.

The Chinmaya Mission was established under the guidance of Swami Dayananda Saraswati (Natarajan) in Tamil Nadu. It operates several centers around the world to expand knowledge of Vedic instruction. The Swami is also active in the All India Movement (AIM) for Seva, and convened the first World Congress for the Preservation of Religious Diversity and is a partner of the Women’s Global Peace Initiative. The RamaKrishna Mission, established by the eminent scholar and Hindu philosopher Sri Vivekananda based on the theology of his guru, Sri RamaKrishna, has 160 branches internationally. Two distinct wings - the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission - both engage in philanthropic work but the former emphasizes spiritual development. The organization operates 14 hospitals with 93 out-patient dispensaries and 30 mobile dispensaries in Bihar. It also supports gender empowerment and operates several training centers and maternity clinics for women, particularly in remote areas.

Christian Organizations

Although Christianity is a minority religious tradition in India, local Christian organizations, local, national, and international, are particularly active in development work.

Several Christian umbrella organizations include The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), serving both Protestant and Orthodox Churches. NCCI promotes and coordinates welfare and development services for India’s underserved populations. Organizations linked with NCCI include the National Council of YMCAs, the YWCA of India, the Henry Martyn Institute, the International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation, the Churches Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), the Student Christian Movement of India (SCMI), and the Bible Society of India (BSI). Associated organizations include the All India Association of Christian Higher Education (AIACHE), the Association of Theologically Trained Women of India (ATTWI), the Board of Theological Education of Senate of Serampore College, the Christian Union of India (CUI), Christian Endeavor in India, Ecumenical Council for Drought Action and Water Management (ECoDAWM), the Inter-Church Service Association, and the Leprosy Mission (LM). Other umbrella organizations include the Church of North India (CNI), the Church of South India (CSI), and international organizations including the World

Text Box # 11: Brahma Kumaris: Teachers for the Mind, Body, and Spirit

The Brahma Kumaris are a rare spiritual movement led by women. Based in India, Hindu-inspired, and dating from the colonial period, the Brahma Kumaris today are active in 100 countries. The movement's founder, Dada Lekhraj, established the World Spiritual University under the name "Om Mandali" in Hyderabad, Sindh. After partition, he witnessed the suffering of the population as the country split into two and decided to address it through education. Taking the name Brahma Baba, he integrated spiritual contemplation into a new model of education that would be accessible to everyone, regardless of faith or ethnicity. He sent female missionaries to Bombay and Delhi "on service"¹ to establish centers to teach Raja Yoga. Today, almost every town in India has a Brahma Kumari (BK) study center. The Brahma Kumari Academy for a Better World has three campuses including Gyan Sarovar (Lake of Knowledge) and Shantivan (Forest of Peace) and has welcomed over 2.5 million students and visitors of different faiths and cultures, teaching topics of peace and non-violence.

Since its beginnings, the Brahma Kumaris have focused on social service, with an emphasis on health. In Mumbai, opposite the Andheri Railway Station, the Brahma Kumaris run a modern hospital called the BSES M G Hospital. It combines spirituality and modern medicine, as the Brahma Kumaris believe that a healthy body is not possible without a sound mind or spirit; the hospital's vision is "Healing with a Spiritual Touch." It has 120 beds, 22 intensive in its intensive care facilities, and provides most modern hospital services. It offers free care for those who qualify – over 38 percent of all patients. In partnership with Cleft-Children International (CCI), the hospital offers a free clinic to those suffering from Cleft Lip and Palate deformities, and conducted more than 900 surgeries through 2007. They also offer free medicine, and run free medical camps providing services are poorer communities. The hospital responds to emergencies, providing care for victims of natural disasters, for example those injured in the Mumbai metro bomb blast of 2006.

The Brahma Kumaris have many sister organizations and partnerships that work on faith and development issues, including the Janki Foundation for Global Healthcare, a UK-based charity that promotes healthcare based on nurturing positive thoughts and attitudes, the Values in Healthcare program, which integrates a spiritual approach to disease for healthcare practitioners, and the Images and Voices of Hope, a global initiative to connect journalists, artists, and media professionals with a focus on hope and peace for the future. In 1992, the Brahma Kumaris, through the World Renewal Spiritual Trust (WRST) established a Department of Renewable Energy which promotes solar architecture, steam cooking systems, and hybrid energy. Since 1998, Dadi Janki, administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris, has organized a retreat attended by some 1000 people that focuses on incorporating spiritual growth into everyday work.

The Brahma Kumaris are active in interfaith work, and work closely with several international interfaith movements, including the World Congress of Faiths, Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, United Religions Initiative, the Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders, and the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

ouncil of Churches (WWC). The mission of the Church of India is committed to providing education to poor children from villages, empowering women, and working with Tribal communities.

Several organizations concentrate on welfare projects, building orphanages and helping people with special needs including the blind, deaf, and speech impaired. Gospel Divine Ministries, located in Andhra

Pradesh, runs a blind mission and social welfare projects, including feeding the impoverished and supporting orphanages in rural areas.²³⁴ Bethesda Ministries, also located in Andhra Pradesh, works in local villages, operating medical camps to provide healthcare for villagers and supporting local orphanages. Feed Ministries, in South India, purchased a small piece of land on which they have built an orphanage and a church school.²³⁵ A local grassroots Christian organization, El Shaddai, operates five homes and a school for poor children in Goa.

Several organizations support programs aimed at empowering Dalit and Scheduled Tribes (STs), with schools, clinics, and other cross-cutting welfare services in rural areas. Calvary Community Trust, a Christian organization in Tamil Nadu, works to educate Scheduled Tribes (STs) in South India.²³⁶ Hope Outreach Ministries runs schools for Scheduled Tribes (STs) and provides the community with basic necessities like gas lamps, cycles for transport, and medical supplies. Christian Outreach Uplifting New Tribes in Andhra Pradesh works with Tribal children and operates orphanages and schools. Also in Andhra Pradesh, The Society for the Reorganization and Enlightenment of the Village Ends (SERVE), operates two primary/secondary schools and a nursing school of rural girls in the slums on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The Living World Church in Amritsar operates a school for poor Christian children. Sharon Worship Centre in Hyderabad provides tuition reimbursement to 400 children from poor families.²³⁷ PRASHANT, a human right organization in Gujarat, works to alleviate discrimination and violence throughout the region, under the direction of Jesuit Priest, Father Cedric Prakash. The local organization, the India Christian Mission Centre (ICMS) serves the Indian widow population regardless of caste or creed. ICMC also operates one of India's largest orphanages.²³⁸

A 2008 study by the Oxford University Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the CDC Global AIDS Program (India) and the HIV Department of the World Health Organization in Geneva focused on the specific role of Christian faith-based organizations in HIV prevention and response.²³⁹

International Christian organizations including, World Vision, Catholic relief services, and Christian Aid, work across development sectors, supporting a wide array of social welfare projects throughout India. World Vision supports self-help groups that educate youth and women on their legal rights; these have helped to prevent several child marriages in Rajasthan.²⁴⁰ Caritas India is committed to gender justice and equality, working in rural areas to educate women and young girls.²⁴¹

Some organizations, both national and International, have a special focus on disability. Examples of organizations in this category include India Partners, a U.S. Christian development and relief organization committed to supporting self-help ministry projects in India,²⁴² and the Christian Foundation for the Blind in Chennai that preaches the gospel and provides support through outreach activities to the blind members of the community.²⁴³ Asian Aid USA, associated with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, supports a deaf school in Kollegal in Karnataka and the Australian Catholic Mission operates a school for the deaf and blind in Chennai.²⁴⁴ The International Lutheran Deaf Association has a mission project in India supporting the Ephphatha Lutheran Deaf School. Local Christian organizations involved in services for the deaf and blind include the Ebenezer Fellowship of the Deaf in Kerala and the Maharashtra Deaf Fellowship of India which is active in Aurangabad, Bombay, Nagpu, Nasik, and Pune.

One challenge facing Christian organizations is the issue of conversion. Recent years have seen rising Hindu-Christian conflict in rural areas that has been linked to aggressive Christian conversion efforts among Dalit and Tribal groups. In response, four states, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu have passed laws restricting or prohibiting religious conversions.

Muslim Organizations

A large array of Muslim-inspired organizations operate in India, both national and International.

Islamic Muslim Relief and Charities (IMRC), an umbrella organization, funds charitable projects and is part of a network of more than 100 Muslim organizations in India. The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) is an apex forum of Muslim organizations and institutions. It includes the All India Shia Conference, the Muslim Indians, the Indian National League and the UP Rabita Committee. AIMMM works to empower Muslim and to promote interfaith harmony and tolerance in states with high levels of interreligious violence. The state of Kerala, with its vibrant Muslim community, has several active Muslim development organizations. The Samastha Kerala Jam'eyyat ul-Ulama known as Samastha, the largest Muslim organization, was established in 1924 by Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham. It represents the traditional *ulema* that oppose to the 'Wahabi ideology' and operates *madrassa* education in the state. The Kerala Nadwathul Mujahideen movement runs several *madrassas* and Arabic Colleges; it was one of the first Muslim organizations to encourage women's education.

International Islamic organizations are active in peacebuilding, education, and empowerment. Muslim Hands focuses especially on education and disaster relief. Muslim Aid mobilized ambitious programs after the 2005 Kashmir earthquake. Islamic Relief (IR) has worked with local organizations since 1994 on various projects including orphan sponsorship, enhancing livelihoods, and seasonal Ramadhan and Qurbani food distributions. IR also supported flood relief in Gujarat, Bihar and Assam. Muslim Aid operates 53 projects in partnership with 26 different charitable organisations, including healthcare, education, water and sanitation, shelter, emergency relief, feeding the poor, and skills training. UK Islamic Mission (UKIM) works in India to respond to humanitarian crises like earthquakes, floods and other disasters as well as internally displaced people, health, and poverty reduction.

Local organizations like United Islamic Aid collect *zakat* money from the Muslim community to fund local development projects. The Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind, formed in pre-Partition India, is active in disaster relief efforts in Bihar and has helped to construct homes for flood victims. The Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) in Kerala runs several organizations including the Students Islamic Organisation, Girls Islamic Organization, and the Solidarity Youth Movement. The Jamaat publishes *Madhyamam*, a prominent daily newspaper in Malayalam, *Prabodhanam*, and a weekly magazine. The Mahbubnagar Muslim Front, a Muslim community welfare organization, works under the principle of *kalima*, the Islamic notion that all Muslims should work together. It supports empowerment, especially through education. Al Hidayah Organization is another local grassroots agency working to promote global peace and interfaith harmony in rural areas. It focuses also on human rights issues for India's Muslim community.

Bahá'í, Zoroastrian, Sikh, and Jain Organizations

India has the world's largest Bahá'í, Zoroastrian, Sikh, and Jain communities and, though they represent small minorities, they have significant cultural and social influence. Each of these traditions has a special spiritual focus that translates into active development and social welfare work. The Bahá'í community focuses particularly on interfaith activities, working actively to promote interreligious harmony. The ancient Zoroastrian tradition has strong commitment to truth and spirituality, and has had particular success in promoting value-based education. The Sikh community also has strong interfaith traditions and a long history of inclusivity, welcoming the saints, prophets, and gurus of all world faiths. Its pluralistic vision is an integral part of Sikh development approaches. The Jain community's dedication to the principle of *ahimsa* or non-violence gives the community a deep feeling for the sanctity of life.

The Vocational Institute for Rural Women in 1983 was established by the Bahá'í community with funding from local members, the Indian government and Council for Advancement of People's Action in Rural Technology (CAPART), an agency of the Ministry of Rural Development.²⁴⁵ It has provided vocational training and empowerment to more than 430 women. A Baha'i organization operates the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme (JYSEP) to empower the youth to integrate spiritual growth into secular education.²⁴⁶ They operate several schools, including the Rabbani School, that focuses on character building, teaching students how to build strong, peaceful communities.²⁴⁷

The Zoroastrian community, concentrated in Mumbai, has several development initiatives. The Zoroastrian College in the city of Sanjan is a spiritual and academic center that collaborates with the United Nations Peace University. India's Zoroastrian community works with Diaspora organizations including the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA), a non-profit religious and charitable trust and the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO).

The Sikh community in India collaborates with Sikh Diaspora organizations in the US and UK. The World Sikh Organization (WSO), a non-profit international umbrella organization founded in 1984 to promote and protect Sikh culture, campaigns for disaster relief, assists with adoption of orphaned children, and collaborates with the Red Cross. SCORE, a faith-based non-profit organization dedicated to creating awareness of the Sikh religion and culture and promoting justice, equality and brotherhood, supports various development projects. Local Sikh organizations like the Kalgidhar Society build education institutions for the poor in underprivileged rural areas of North India, teaching values-based education. It runs drug and alcohol rehabilitation and healthcare centers. The Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council works to protect the disadvantaged, including victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, violence, exploitation and those with disabilities.

The Jain community also is active in development. The Jain Group of Institutions (JGI) was established with the collaborative efforts of the Mahaveer Jain Group, and has 21 institutes in Bangalore including vocational and technological centers. The Seva Mandir works for rural and Tribal development in Udaipur and Rajsamand in 626 villages and 56 urban settlements; it reaches around 70,000 households, influencing the lives of some 360,000 people.²⁴⁸ Shri Jayantibhai Patel is a Jain trust for the well-being of the blind and disabled; 58 blind and disabled inmates live at their home.

Dalit Organizations

A wide range of Dalit organizations rally local and international support for the community, working in many sectors. Dalit networks include the Dalit Freedom Network (DFN), a human rights NGO, Operation Mercy India Foundation (OMIF), and the All-India Confederation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribe Organizations (SC-ST Confederation).²⁴⁹ The National Conference of Dalit Organizations (NCDOR) trains local Dalit leaders to fight for the Constitutional rights of their community. NACDO has over 300 member organisations in BIMARU (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal) and the non-BIMARU states of Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Pondicherry. The National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements (NFDLRM) is a nationwide mass movement was initiated in 2006 by more than 250 Dalit land rights movements/struggles/ networks/ organizations from 16 states, primarily to focus issues of land and livelihood of Dalit communities in India. It is part of the four national movements: All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), Dalit Aarthik Adhikar Abhijan (DAAA), National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ) and National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements (NFDLRM) promoted by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).²⁵⁰ It has a nationwide network of committed volunteers working.²⁵¹

Other groups work internationally to raise awareness of Dalit concerns. The International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) (founded in 2000) is a network of national solidarity networks, groups from affected countries and international organizations concerned about caste discrimination and similar forms of discrimination based on work and descent. The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), founded in 1998 by a group of activists, academics, human rights organizations, works to advance the rights of India's scheduled castes²⁵² and presents cases of human rights violations against *Dalits* to the National Human Rights Commission, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, and the National Commission for Women, and National Commission for *Safai Karamcharis* (night soil carriers).²⁵³

Christian organizations working on Dalit issues include the Nazareth Association for Social Awareness (NASA). The All India Christian Council (AICC) works to secure the rights of Christian Dalits and demands the restoration of Scheduled Caste status to Dalits who converted to any religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism.²⁵⁴ The AICC, a coalition of thousands of Indian denominations, organizations, and lay leaders, works with Confederation of SC/ST Organizations (India), the Dalit Freedom Network (USA), the Christian Solidarity Worldwide (UK) and Release International (UK).²⁵⁵ Grassroots Dalit organizations work in rural communities. Navsarjan is dedicated to eliminating discrimination based on untouchability practices²⁵⁶ and runs programs such as the Dalit *Shakti* Kendra that brings together Dalit women of Gujarat; hundreds of Dalit female *Panchayat* members provide Dalit women with positive role models to assert themselves to fight for Dalit issues.

Coordination Bodies and Partners

Several coordination bodies are active in India, with a focus education, disaster and emergency response, gender empowerment, Dalit empowerment, and healthcare.

The Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI) has significant relationships with several networks and alliances, helping it to influence the thinking and practices on health and development nationally and internationally. Partners include: World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Service, Christian Aid, Presbyterian Church US, GBGM of United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and The Methodist Church UK.

The Community Coordination Initiative (CCI), a federation of Muslim NGOs, aims to coordinate the efforts of Muslim NGOs in various areas of social, educational, scientific, cultural, economic and other endeavors. Partners include: Rural Muslim Welfare Organization, the Citizen Welfare Education Society, the Students Islamic Trust, Al-Khidmat, and Al Huda Children's Welfare Trust.

Text Box 12: Kashmir – Faith Dimensions of Peacebuilding

Kashmir, a mountainous region located between India and Pakistan, has seen conflict since 1947. India's position is that Kashmir is an integral part of India, while for Pakistan, Kashmir is a disputed territory whose final status must be determined by the people of Kashmir. Some groups within Kashmir want an independent state. India presently administers some 43 percent of Kashmir (Jammu, Kashmir Valley, Ladakh, and the Saichen Glacier); Pakistan controls Azad Kashmir, Gilgit, and Baltistan. Hinduism and Islam are the predominant religions; the main religions of Jammu are Hinduism in the east, and Islam in the west; Islam is the main religion in the Kashmir valley and the Pakistan-controlled regions. Since India and Pakistan signed a peace agreement at Tashkent (Uzbekistan) in 1966, occasional military confrontations and violent demonstrations have made for an insecure environment. Kashmir is a point of geopolitical contention between India and Pakistan and beyond. A succession of peace efforts have sought to resolve the Kashmir question. In 2000, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee declared a ceasefire in observance of Ramadan and in 2004, peace talks allowed a bus service connecting two of Sikhism's holiest sites on the Indo-Pakistani border to reopen in 2005. After Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was elected, he met several times with then Pakistani President Musharraf to discuss the Kashmir dispute. However, terrorist attacks on Mumbai in November 2008 strained relations between the two countries and slowed peace negotiations.

Religion and Conflict

Kashmir has a vibrant religious landscape. Muslims and Hindus have lived in relative harmony since the 13th century, when Islam first became the majority religion in Kashmir. The Sufi-Islamic way of the Muslims complemented the *rishi* tradition of Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus); leading to a syncretic culture where Hindus and Muslims revered the same saints and prayed at the same shrines. During this time in Kashmir's history, there was a vibrant pluralism in practice among the community. Sufi shrines were open to all and were shared and sacred to Muslims and Hindus. Men and women visited tombs of Muslim saints and Muslim and Hindu neighbors sought blessings from them.¹ Apart from the shrines, there was a system of local religious leaders with large followings who had the respect of the community. This was a shared culture between different religious communities shaped by the spiritual traditions of the land, primarily Sufi Islam and the Hindu *bhakti* tradition. In recent years, Kashmir has seen a rise in religious extremism and conflict. Kashmiri militant groups have targeted Kashmiri Hindus and Muslim extremists have persecuted the Hindu minority. Radicals have assassinated Muslim intellectuals and liberal Muslim leaders in Jammu and Kashmir; almost 50,000 Muslims have fled the region to seek safety in India. In early 1990, Islamic terrorism in Kashmir led Hindu Pandits to leave Kashmir Valley. These families planned to return to Kashmir when the conflict subsided, but the political situation in Kashmir is still volatile and Kashmiri Pandits are still displaced. Currently, 300,000 Kashmir Pandits from the Indian Administered Kashmir Valley are in the Jammu area in refugee camps at Udhampur and Jammu. Another 100,000 are displaced in India, in refugee camps in Delhi, established by the Indian Government.¹

Peacebuilding

Within Kashmir, several organizations engage faith communities in peacebuilding efforts. Given the deep cultural connections to the Islamic Sufi tradition and the Hindu *bhakti* tradition, these efforts focus on using the resources that these community leaders can offer. Sufi religious leaders have large networks and followings.

As scholars Daniel Philpot and Brian Cox note, faith-based diplomacy is underutilized in national and international conflict and has the potential to transform “the hearts of grassroots and civil society leaders.” Kashmir is a case in point.

Since 2001, Brian Cox with the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) has conducted eight seminars with more than 400 members of Kashmiri civil society on both sides of the LOC (Line of Control) to encourage dialogue and peacebuilding efforts. They facilitate a spirit of reconciliation among you

potential to work with religious leaders to engage religious communities in peacebuilding. The Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) established in 1993, organized a “Kashmir Conflict Transformation Workshop” in the Maldives with the Institute of Multi Track Diplomacy (USA) and USIP. In 2003, KIIR in collaboration with International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) initiated a faith-based reconciliation project bringing together *imams* and pundits to discuss issues and challenges facing their communities. Leaders like Swami Agnivesh are active in seeking to resolve conflicts; his immediate focus is on legal avenues at the Supreme Court level to assure accountability for human rights abuses.¹

The Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW) gathered Muslim Sufis, Hindu Yogis, Buddhist Monks, Humanitarians, and Peace practitioners at a Sufi –Yogi Dialogue in Kathmandu. Attendees recited the *sholaks* (verses) of Nund Rishi, Kashmir’s patron saint and other verses to reflect how all religions could work together to work for peace. This event brought together 30 Sufis and Vedantic practitioners from Kashmir Valley, Pakistan, India, Cambodia, Qatar USA and Nepal to share their faith traditions and direct experiences.¹ Women in Security, Conflict Management, and Peace (WISCOMP) has engaged with civil society in Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh to build constituencies of peace. WISCOMP held a two-day dialogue called ‘Symbol and Substance: Exploring Inter-community Relations in Ladakh’ which brought together community leaders, religious leaders, and women groups. The dialogue was centered on the dynamics of Buddhist –Muslim relations and work on establishing a cooperative ethos between the two communities.

Athwaas, an affiliated organization of WISCOMP, is an alliance of women in Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. Athwaas has established *Samanbals*– centers for women of all communities and operates projects for Hindu and Muslim women widowed by conflict. The program encourages women to work together spinning raw cotton in the hope that working together will enable them to overcome hostility. The workshops also included training for capacity building and psycho-social healing for the attendees. The program focuses on the role of women as peacebuilders because they can have transformative effects in their communities by teaching their children and family members respect and interreligious cooperation on a micro-level. These women’s groups are able to transmit messages of peace and mutual cooperation through narrative, songs, and other discursive methods.

Athwaas also founded Yakjah Reconciliation and Development Network. “Yakjah” means “Togetherness” and represents a network that works with youth, women and spiritual leaders from Islamic or Hindu backgrounds. The organization uses visual media and multi-media to create activities that transform attitudes, change perceptions and help to rebuild relationships in communities that are torn by conflict. In addition, the organization is training Sufi religious leaders and women to participate more fully in the political sphere and reclaim the space of community respect that they once held before the conflict in Kashmir devastated their participation in civil society.

Press for Peace (PFP), a humanitarian organization established in 1999 in Muzaffarabad-the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, (Azad Jammu), partners with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, ASR Women Resource Centre, Action Aid, and the United Religions Initiative. It works on human rights, addressing issues of interreligious violence and engaging faith leaders in the peace process.

It held a Kashmir Peace Conference (KPC) urging India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute according to wishes of Kashmiris to foster peace and prosperity. The Institute of Peace and Development (INSPAD), a think-tank and peacebuilding organization in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan, also works with religious communities.

Pakistan

Pakistan has faced successive challenges since it became an independent nation, and a federal republic, in 1947. Complex relations with its neighbors and turbulent domestic politics have hindered development progress; conflicts with India in Kashmir, violence along the border with Afghanistan, and a bloody war with Bangladesh displaced millions; sustained peace has been elusive. Pakistan's external relations have been shaped by regional geopolitical dynamics, brokered by a succession of political transitions between military and civilian regimes. Successive earthquakes and devastating 2010 floods highlight Pakistan's vulnerability to natural disasters.

Pakistan's development indicators are low by international standards. Pakistan ranks 125 out of 169 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index. Women lag behind men on most indicators. An important feature is wide variations by region.

Founded as an Islamic nation, religion plays a large role in shaping societal norms and relations, its role intertwined with tribal and traditional cultural relationships. Interpretations of Islam as a factor in governance and social and personal behaviors vary by region; access to education for girls is an example. Faith-inspired actors are active across most sectors of development, their roles diverse and at times controversial. Political realities and perceptions shape interactions between faith actors, the government, and international donors.

Socio-Economic Background and Politics

Pakistan, with a total population of approximately 184 million (growing at 2.2 percent a year), is one of the world's largest Muslim nations. Development has disappointing, and a turbulent political history explains low tourism and foreign investment. About a third of the population lives below the poverty line, almost 60 percent on less than US\$2 per day, and unemployment is estimated at 15 percent. Between 2004–2007 the service and the industrial sectors saw highest economic growth. GDP growth was between 5 to 8 percent. Inflation, running at about 11 percent in early 2010, has been a continuing challenge.²⁵⁷ The 2010 floods (See Text Box # ___) affected most of Pakistan's crop land; almost 22 percent of the economy is directly or indirectly related to agriculture.²⁵⁸ Pakistan's second export is textiles, also much affected by the 2010 floods. The north-west region of Pakistan faces longstanding and significant IDP problems. The government is undertaking a post-crisis needs assessment exercise, supported by the World Bank, the UN, the Asian Development Bank and the European Commission.²⁵⁹

Low literacy is a major long term challenge; in 2009, 63 percent of men and 36 percent of women were considered literate; UNESCO reports that only 34 percent of women and 47 percent of men have access to basic education.²⁶⁰ Just over half of the 19 million children reported to be of primary school age are actually attending school²⁶¹ and less than 48 percent of girls.

Health challenges include infectious disease, high infant mortality rates, and high maternal mortality rates. Pakistan's maternal mortality ratio is estimated between 350 and 600 per 100,000 live births (compared to 17 per 100,000 live births in the United States).²⁶² One in ten children does not survive to their fifth birthday; the majority of child deaths are due to diarrhea, pneumonia, or vaccine-preventable diseases. Some 30 percent of children are chronically malnourished and lack safe water and household sanitation, especially in rural areas.²⁶³ Proper sanitation and access to clean drinking water are sadly the norm especially in remote regions. In rural Pakistan, only 40 percent of the population use an improved system of sanitation; 87 percent have improved drinking water systems, but these are rudimentary. Other

development challenges include limited efficiency of electricity production; high dependence on foreign financial assistance; and poor infrastructure.

Turbulent politics has involved successive transitions from military to civilian rule. In 2007, General Pervez Musharraf stepped down and the democratic Pakistan People's Party (PPP) came into power. However, Pakistan still faces challenges in establishing solid systems of democratic governance; ethnic, tribal, and linguistic cleavages are important factors.²⁶⁴ Barriers to political and civic participation for the majority of the population are also a factor in deep and persistent poverty.

Pakistan has a key actor in the "War against Terror" post-9/11, primarily in the frontier areas, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Swat Valley and Waziristan, and Baluchistan. Conflicts involving the army and Islamic militants have, however, spread throughout the northern regions; more than two million people have fled to Peshawar to escape the conflict.²⁶⁵ In 2010, almost 2.1 million IDPs were registered with the government and an estimated 450,000 people are still displaced in FATA where sectarian violence and lack of financial resources are preventing people from leaving areas of conflict.²⁶⁶ At least 290,000 people remained displaced in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank districts. The conflict has also destroyed 77 hospitals; healthcare for displaced populations is inadequate.

Religious Demography and Society

Pakistan is a parliamentary based federal republic, with Islam as the official state religion, established in the constitution. Between 95 and 97 percent of Pakistanis are Muslim (estimates vary but one source puts the proportion of Shias at 10-15 percent; others as high as 20 percent^{267,268}). Most Shia Muslims belong to the Ithna Asharia branch, with some members from the Ismaili and Ahmadiya traditions. Religious minorities including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians comprise between 3 to 5 percent of the overall population.²⁶⁹ The Christian population is the largest religious minority, with significant numbers of Roman Catholics in the Sind Province and smaller Protestant communities in the Punjab.²⁷⁰ Zoroastrian and Sikh communities comprise less than 1 percent of the total population.²⁷¹

Pakistan's religious history is complex. While the Pakistan Constitution recognizes Islam as the official state religion and only a Muslim can serve as president or prime minister, non-Muslims have held high positions in the military and in Parliament. But non-Muslims are restricted from serving in official *sharia* courts and are not bound by *sharia* law and may appeal to civil law courts for adjudication in legal matters. Religious minorities in India including Sikhs, Zoroastrians, and Christians were encouraged to migrate to Pakistan during Partition in 1947 and churches and Sikh gurdwaras are part of the religious landscape. Nonetheless, relationships between the government and religious minorities is varied. Although alcohol is prohibited in Islam, the government offers an accommodation to the Christian community by permitting the production, sale and consumption of wine for the religious ritual of Communion. Religious minorities have cited concern over national identification cards that include religious membership. Identification cards first began printing religious affiliation in an effort to identify and protect religious minorities, but it has in reality increased interreligious tensions and in some instances exacerbated religious violence in rural regions of the country.

Development Challenges

Despite significant development progress in recent years, Pakistan faces many challenges, particularly on gender, health, and education. These challenges are exacerbated by conflict and natural disasters. The status of women in Pakistan is much affected by Pakistan's wide provincial, regional, ethnic, tribal, and religious diversity. Female literacy rates are generally low (adult literacy is 55 percent with 80

percent for men and 60 percent for women).²⁷² About 28 percent of females are enrolled in secondary school compared to 37 percent for males.²⁷³ Low education levels contribute to child marriage, forced

Text Box 13: Pakistan's Female Madrasas

Over 3000 madrasas serve girls in Pakistan; of these, 1,900 are officially registered with the government. Madrasas are increasingly popular with young women and their families, in part because of dissatisfaction with the government school system. A The Pakistani government allocates less than 3 percent of its annual budget for education, and government schools struggle with lack of school supplies, and a shortage of teachers. Some may prefer madrasa education because of an “increased appetite in the lower middle class for traditional Islamic values”¹

There are fewer female madrasas than government schools, but they have been instrumental in increasing Pakistan's female literacy rates. Approximately 236,000 young girls are pursuing an education at madrasas. Parents who did not send their girls to school, are willing to allow their daughters to pursue an education as long as familial needs are also met. The madrasas may be closer to home so that travel cost and time is reduced; the emphasis on Islamic education instills values important to many families. Some scholars suggest that women feel empowered by attending madrasas in comparison with receiving a “secular” education. The perception in the community, as well the family, is that madrasas increase piety and family-oriented values, thus increasing the social status of girls in local communities.

Some madrasa educated girls claim they do not face the same material temptations as their colleagues from secular institutions; while peers from secular institutions desire jewelry and clothes, madrasa girls say that Islam and the stories of the Prophet teach them to avoid materialism. Madrasa educated girls note that they have more freedom than their peers and find empowerment in their duties as wives, mothers, and students, not through material wealth.

marriages, and high fertility. About 23 percent of females between the ages of 15 and 19 are married, compared with 5 percent of the male population in the same age group.²⁷⁴ One estimate highlights the pattern of marriage within families and communities, indicating that only 37 percent of married women are not related to their spouses and 63 percent have arranged marriages to a family member such as a second cousin. This increases the difficulty of divorce because of the close family ties and social stigma.²⁷⁵

Pakistan's overall health indicators are low, particularly for vulnerable populations in rural areas, including woman and those affected by conflict. Vaccination levels for preventable diseases are low; only 30 percent of women are immunized against tetanus toxoid.²⁷⁶

Class, socio-economic divisions, as well as tribal and feudal customs impede gender equality and empowerment. Tribal or feudal domestic traditions often discriminate against females even in eating patterns, contributing to nutritional deficiencies for women and female children.²⁷⁷ Muslim Family Law which is operative in many parts of the country is often interpreted unequally for women with reference to inheritance, divorce, age of marriage, and natural guardianship of children. In addition, during the late 1970s, a series of discriminatory laws were introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq, including the Hudood Ordinances.²⁷⁸

Education levels in Pakistan are low, and are linked to unemployment. UNESCO reports that only 34 percent of women and 47 percent of men have access to a basic education.²⁷⁹ Pakistan is prone to natural disasters; the 2005 earthquake destroyed nearly 8000 schools in the region.²⁸⁰ In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan in particular, extreme poverty precludes many children from attending school; UNICEF estimates that approximately 18 percent of Pakistani children in those regions are working to support their families.²⁸¹

Peacebuilding is closely tied to development, for some obvious reasons (resources allocated to military purposes, constant disruption) and others that link to deeper, complex social tensions. Pakistan has a long history of sectarian violence, tribal and ethnic violence, concentrated in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa region and near the Afghan border. Since 2002 conflict between the Pakistan army and the Taliban has escalated. An estimated three million people have fled the north-west region to escape the fighting between insurgents and Pakistani armed forces and at least 1.2 million are still displaced.²⁸² Pakistan's contentious relationship with India is exemplified in three wars over the contested region of Kashmir since Partition. In November 2008, two militant groups, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed connected with the Pakistan controlled parts of Kashmir were involved in the 2008 Mumbai bombings, which increased tensions between India and Pakistan.²⁸³ The 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods created millions of internally IDPs, in some cases sparking religious, ethnic, tribal, and feudal violence.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Faith plays a prominent role in Pakistani life and society. One development practitioner suggested that faith is so deeply integrated within Pakistani culture that it is difficult to draw a clear line between the "faith" and "secular" realms.

NGOs have existed in Pakistan since Independence in 1947; a recent survey by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concluded that between 8000 and 16000 non-profit organizations operate in Pakistan. It is difficult to ascertain the exact number. An Asian Development Bank study noted that NGOs register under five different ordinances and updating and reporting is not systematic;²⁸⁴ the five laws are: The Societies Registration Act, which pertains to professional, cultural, and educational bodies; The Trust Act for private acts of public charity; The Cooperative Society Act; The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Ordinance of 1961; and the companies Ordinance of 1984.²⁸⁵

Coordination and oversight of NGOs by government ministries, particularly for disaster relief, is problematic, and registration procedure is often marked by red tape and bureaucratic procedure; the ADB study concluded that NGOs in Pakistan lack adequate governance and transparency.²⁸⁶

International Faith-inspired Organizations

Many international faith-inspired organizations, from all major faith traditions, work in Pakistan on health, gender, education, peacebuilding, and other welfare related issues. Their activities have stepped up following flood and humanitarian efforts following 2010 floods.

International Islamic organizations including, for example, Islamic Relief, work on disaster relief, notably following the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods. Muslim Aid, a UK based relief and development agency, is active in providing education and initiated the Economic Empowerment Programme in 2007²⁸⁷ to encourage development projects and financial investments in rural areas. Muslim Hands United for the Needy is involved in flood relief, and has distributed over 33,000 food parcels with flour, sugar, rice, tea and pulse; its current focus is long-term shelter for flood victims.²⁸⁸ The

Aga Kahn Development Network is active in Pakistan, with particular focus on education and rural development, among other programs in a range of development sectors. Other international Islamic-inspired organizations working in Pakistan include: Helping Hand for Relief and Development, Qatar Charity, Islamic Help, and IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation.

Christian international NGOs have a significant presence, active in all sectors, particularly on relief efforts. Christian organizations face specific challenges; some have been accused of proselytization or conversion efforts. Conversations with practitioners note, however, that if an organization is clear in communicating its humanitarian purposes, they can gain the trust of local communities and are able to work with vulnerable populations. Good, sustained communication is important.

As an example, Caritas Pakistan, an affiliate of Caritas Internationalis, raised \$8 million to provide emergency response, temporary winter shelters and basic items such as hygiene kits and health care assistance for relief efforts for the Pakistan flood.²⁸⁹ Caritas Switzerland staff worked closely with Caritas Pakistan on earthquake response, and 18,000 people received earthquake-proof shelters through a partnership including CAFOD (Catholic aid agency for England and Wales), Catholic Relief Services – United States, and Caritas France, Secours Catholique.²⁹⁰ Other International Christian organizations working in Pakistan include: Church World Service Pakistan, Shelter for Life, World Vision, UMCOR, Christian Aid, DanChurchAid, Norwegian Church Aid, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, Global Peace Pioneers, Food for the Hungry, ADRA, and Catholic Social Services.

American Jewish World Service has supported emergency relief projects following the 2005 earthquake, and the Joint Jewish Distribution Center was active in the flood relief efforts in 2010.

National and Local Faith-Inspired organizations

National and local level faith-inspired organizations work in most social sectors, including emergency relief, healthcare, education, microfinance, poverty reduction, food security, and maternal and child health. Faith-inspired organizations have been particularly active recently in flood and humanitarian relief efforts. Reports about their roles tended to center on complex motivations, politically inspired. However, interviews with practitioners on ground present a more complex picture, with most work inspired by concern for the welfare of the populations concerned. One representative from an international Islamic NGO stressed that faith-inspired organizations are among the first and most active responders to UN requests for data and on-the-ground conditions. An August 2010 session of the Upper

Text Box 14: Pakistan Floods

In July 2010, heavy monsoon rain caused flooding in Pakistan, affecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan. With almost one-fifth of the country underwater, many link bridges collapsed leaving victims stranded and difficult to reach. Almost 1600 people are reported to have died and another 20 million were internally displaced. Water which collected in the plains and valleys had still not fully receded as of December 2010. Flood victims lost homes and family members, and in some areas, entire villages are washed away. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that Pakistan could face major food shortages because farmers will miss a planting season, and because of the loss of 1.2 million livestock.¹ The Pakistani government estimates that the country has suffered close to \$43 billion in damage.¹ Infectious disease including cholera, typhoid, and tuberculosis, lack of hygiene, sanitation and access to clean water are serious health concerns.

Faith-inspired organizations were active in responding to the catastrophe. International FIO's including Islamic Relief, World Vision, Tearfund Caritas, Catholic Relief Services, Norwegian Church Aid, Church World Service, Muslim Aid, American Jewish World Service, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe were among the first on the ground.

According to the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, more than 4 million people were displaced in the north western regions. Islamic Relief worked with internally displaced persons (IDPs) providing rehabilitation support for almost 2 million people in the District of Mardan, where the majority of displaced persons were relocated. It provided psychological support services and access to safe play areas for children suffering trauma. Caritas International responded with medical treatment and vaccinations, and World Vision provided emergency items such as tents, hygiene kits, and mosquito nets and distributed more than 6000 metric tons of food in the three flood affected provinces. There were some challenges; American Jewish World Services, for example does not publish the list of local Pakistan grantees to ensure the safety of their community-based partners. Some groups, reportedly with Taliban links, accused Christian groups of proselytizing, affecting the overall security of all Christian-inspired organizations.

Apart from initial relief efforts, faith-inspired organizations are engaged in longer term efforts at rehabilitation. Operation Blessing International, a non-denominational organization, has established a medical clinic in Peshawar-Charsadda. Three religious organizations from Singapore, Jamiyah Singapore, the Buddhist Lodge, and Taoist Federation, have joined the relief efforts in Pakistan, raising \$140,000.

House of Parliament reported that 1102 local NGOs received funding from the government for relief work in rural areas that lacked government infrastructure. ADB highlights that a variety of organizations work on women's empowerment and advocacy, policy research, and minority rights.

Many national/local faith-inspired organizations focus on health care. Edhi Foundation, a large development organization with over 250 centers throughout the country, provides medical care, emergency relief, ambulances, offers burial services and operates mental safe houses and shelters for abused women.²⁹¹ It also operates orphanages and offers rehabilitation for drug addicts in rural areas. The Pakistani Red Crescent Society partners with national and international bodies including UNICEF for Polio Eradication campaigns and HIV/AIDS Education Drives.²⁹² It has developed 161 health facilities throughout the country, of which 61 are specifically dedicated to maternal health and childcare.²⁹³ A local Christian organization, Dar-ul-Sukun, runs a home for mentally challenged or handicapped children and adults.²⁹⁴ The Alamgir Welfare Trust is a local organization that supports poor patients and provides free

burial costs for poor families. It also enables economically disadvantaged people to travel for Hajj.²⁹⁵ A similar organization, Al-Mustafa Welfare Society active throughout Pakistan provides healthcare services. The organization has ambulances and cardiac emergency vans in the service of the poor.²⁹⁶

Organizations working more generally to combat poverty include Islamic microfinance institutions, food distribution programs, and vocational training. Akhuwat, an Islamic micro-finance organization based in Lahore, utilizes mosques and churches for community outreach projects and social empowerment. After a few years of operation, Akhuwat has opened branches in other cities including Bahawalpur, Multan, Gujrat, Dera Ghazi Khan and Karachi.²⁹⁷ The Center for Islamic Economics has as a main objective to spread an Islamic based economic system without usury to promote financial equity in society.²⁹⁸ The Al-Khidmat Foundation is engaged in poverty alleviation through various sectors, including helping poor families cover the cost for weddings and religious celebrations. The Christian Development Organization operates a food program for poor people in rural villages, providing two meals a day for poor families.²⁹⁹

Zakat and Social Welfare

In 1980, as a part of the Islamization program, President Zia-ul-Haq introduced a welfare system, known as the *Zakat* and *Ushr* Ordinance. Based on the Islamic obligation of *zakat*, or alms-giving, the aim was to forge a national system to help the underserved population, especially, widows and orphans, as the Holy Prophet was particularly sensitive to these vulnerable groups. The *Zakat* and *Ushr* Ordinance combined elements of Islamic welfare and integrated them with a modern public welfare system. The moral imperative of *zakat* is based on the Quran and one's personal commitment to faith. The *zakat* and *ushr* system is organized in Pakistan through the Central *Zakat* Administration (CZA).³⁰⁰ There is currently a Central *Zakat* Administration at the federal level, one Provincial *Zakat* Council in each province, a District *Zakat* Committee in each district, a *Tehsil Zakat* Committee in each *tehsil* (or sub-division) and a Local *Zakat* Committee (LZC) in each locality.

Zakat is collected at the rate of 2.5 percent on eleven assets contained in the First Schedule of the *Zakat* and *Ushr* Ordinance of 1980. *Ushr* is collected on a compulsory basis at the rate of 5 percent of the produce from every land-owner, grantee, lessee, lease-holder or land-holder.³⁰¹ The collected funds are used for *zakat* programs including providing educational stipends to deserving students at schools, colleges, and universities. The second program determined by the local *zakat* committee is healthcare; the *zakat* fund will cover medical treatment for individual patients up to Rs. 3000 for inpatient procedures and Rs. 2000 for outpatient procedures. The third program covers marriage assistance to unmarried women. A onetime payment of Rs. 10,000 is paid to the bride to cover expenses.

Besides programs officially registered by the *zakat* committee, several local organizations collect *zakat* for welfare projects. The Edhi Foundation collects *zakat* money for several of their programs and other smaller organizations including Alamgir Welfare Trust and the Al-Mustafa Welfare Society use *zakat* donations to assist poor families with marriages, travel for the Hajj pilgrimage, as well as burial and funeral costs. Some Pakistanis choose to pay *zakat* in the form of in-kind donations, and local organizations collect *zakat* donations in the form of food, clothes, and raw materials. The food is usually taken to local shrines where it is cooked and distributed to the poor; the clothes and raw materials are usually donated to larger organizations that can oversee the distribution.

Post-9/11, collection of *zakat* and the programs donations fund have raised some concerns. For example, Diaspora communities are uneasy about contributing *zakat* funds even for major crises, including the 2010 floods, because of fears (real or perceived) that the funds may be used by extremist groups. On occasion unsuspecting people donate money to charities without being aware that they are associated with

radicalism, dampening willingness to donate;³⁰² organizations doing good work are affected, as decreased donations impact the entire institution of *zakat*.

Pakistan's *zakat* system in Pakistan is also critiqued as disorganized and corrupt. One practitioner noted that it is common practice for people to withdraw large sums of money from personal accounts just before the government officially charges *zakat* payments. It is reported that people misreport their assets and hence pay less *zakat* than they should. Another contention is that *zakat* funds are misused by the government, creating distrust and antagonism among communities that need help. Despite these issues, the *zakat* system, a revered institution grounded in deep religious principles and practice, does benefit large segments of the population.

Education

Faith-inspired institutions are significant in Pakistan's education system. This system in Pakistan is comprised of three types of schools: private schools (which include some schools run by faith communities), government schools, and the schools known as madrasas, which are explicitly religious. According to 2007-2008 government statistics, there are some 256,088 educational institutions in all categories in Pakistan, with a total enrollment of 37,462,884 students.³⁰³ There are 182,477 (roughly 71 percent) education institutions in the public sector and 73,611 (29 percent) in private sector. Some 156,592 are primary schools, of which, 89 percent are in the public sector and 11 percent are in the private sector. There are in total 23,964 high schools, of which 49 percent are public, and 1,202 degree colleges of which 69 percent are public.³⁰⁴

Interviews stress that a critical issue is the very limited integration among these systems. Students rarely interact and cannot move from one to another, contributing to fragmentation in the society.

Religious minorities have a strong presence in the education system since Independence. The Catholic board of education oversees 62 schools, with 52,000 students.³⁰⁵ The Convent of Jesus and Mary for girls and St. Anthony's school for boys integrate theological instruction into their course curriculum engaging the spiritual as well as the intellectual training of the individual. Catholic schools are often the preferred choice for the elite, but there are efforts to accommodate low income families by providing scholarships funded and supported by the church diocese.

Other Christian schools are run by Protestant communities. The Christian Fellowship of Pakistan is the largest Christian organization in Pakistan and operates a school with 300 children and an orphanage with over 40 children.³⁰⁶ The Murree Christian School is operated by the World Mission Prayer League, under the Church of Pakistan; the school believes the Bible and Christian experience are essential for the fullest well-being of students and integrate this ethos into their education. Forman Christian College in Lahore and Gordon College in Rawalpindi are operated by the Presbyterian Church. Kinnard College for Women in Lahore and Karachi Grammar School are both operated by the Church of Pakistan and accommodate children from poor families. There are also Christian theological seminaries including the Northwestern Theological Seminary of Pakistan, and the Open Theological Seminary in Lahore. Both seminaries enable students from poor families to participate in the educational institution.

Christian schools are part of Pakistani culture, but there have been instances of violence against Christian schools during period of interreligious conflict. Christian schools are sometimes associated with the "west" and perceived as "anti-Muslim", and have become the target of violence by fringe actors. Murree Christian School was shut down after attacks by religious militants in 2008. It reopened but was recently attacked by gunmen who killed the principal and a few others.³⁰⁷ Other schools in rural areas have been threatened.

Local Zoroastrian schools such as the Mama Parsi School for girls and the Bai Azerbaijan Soparivala Parsi High School aim to bridge the gap between their faith tradition and Pakistani culture. These schools incorporate religious instruction in their curriculum and are open to children from all religious communities, offering scholarships to poor families. These religious minority schools are accessible to lower income families, and often appeal as an option that integrates spirituality with secular education. The Aga Khan Development Network operates 192 schools (primary, secondary, and university levels) that educate over 36,000 students and employ over 1600 teachers. Within the Aga Khan University, the Institute for Educational Development focuses on research and training to develop developing nation educational systems, including Pakistan.

Traditional Islamic education is primarily concentrated around *madrassa* education. *Madrassas* are active throughout Pakistan and appeal to rural families because they are inexpensive and provide religious instruction; *madrassas* often provide two meals a day, of particular importance to poor families that cannot afford to provide regular nutritious meals. Estimates of the numbers of Pakistani *madrassa* vary widely. One estimate puts the total at 28,000 *madrassas*³⁰⁸, of which only 6700 are registered with the government. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) 2002 report noted about 600,000 students in 6,000 registered *madrassas*, with more than 250,000 students in Punjab Province alone.³⁰⁹ Some 1900 registered female *madrassas* in Pakistan are growing more popular among young girls in rural communities (See Text Box 13).

Madrassa educational reform is a serious challenge. It can contribute to a contentious relationship between the Islamic *ulema* and the local government; the government is working to incorporate greater “secular education” into the predominantly religious curricula of *madrassas*, while “reform” is often perceived as “western” education by the *madrassas*. Nonetheless, *madrassas* remain an affordable and accessible means of education to many Pakistanis in rural areas with few or no alternative choices. (See text Box 15)

An alternative to *madrassas* for Islamic education are the Turkish Fethullah Gulen schools. There are now Gulen Schools in seven cities in Pakistan that offer Islamic inspired education that is more integrated than traditional *madrassa* education.³¹⁰

There are NGOs that support faith-inspired education as well: Isra Islamic Foundation, an organization of Muslim professionals, serves the underprivileged population in Sindh and opened the Usra University, the Isra Blind Control Program and the Isra Qur’an Academy, where students can pursue both a secular and religious education.³¹¹

Peacebuilding

Different categories of organizations do peacebuilding work. Several international development organizations partner with faith groups, or collaborate with religious leaders in peacebuilding efforts. These initiatives include projects to build interfaith harmony and peace between religious communities, and efforts to partner with local religious leaders to enhance conflict resolution capacity at the community

Text Box 15: Madrasa Reform in Pakistan

In recent years, especially post-9/11, international concern about potential links between *madrasa* education and Islamic radicalism has grown. The Pakistani government has had a *madrasa* reform agenda since the 1960s, and has engaged in a tug-of-war with the Islamic *ulema* to introduce secular subjects into the curriculum and to modernize *madrasas*. There are two main reasons why *madrasas* are able to resist reform. First, as Islam is the official state religion, to “secularize” *madrasa* curriculum is sensitive, as some see it as going against the religious foundations of the state. Second, there is a strong support base for the senior *ulema* from conservative members of society.

Madrasa teachers and the *ulema* feel it is their duty, and in some cases, their right to determine the religious vision for the country. As an Islamic country, the government also has the responsibility of providing citizens with Islamic education. Therefore, a key element in the *madrasa* reform process is securing the trust of the senior *ulema*. The *ulema* are suspicious of any “top-down” approach to *madrasa* reform; some fear that foreign governments and development organizations exercise undue influence on government efforts to secularize curricula. For the *ulema*, changing traditional *madrasa* education can be interpreted as a method to “secularize” the Islamic way of life.

The Washington based International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) has worked over several years to support *madrasa* reform in Pakistan. The ICRD has engaged a number of *madrasas*, including more than 2200 *madrasa* leaders and senior faculty from 1450 *madrasas*.¹ Douglas M. Johnston, the president and founder of ICRD, notes that reform is a significant method to reduce the potential for radicalism. He suggests that when religious scripture is selectively interpreted, it becomes a tool “for justifying the unjustifiable.”¹ As *madrasa* leaders command respect from their students and their community, ICRD believes that improving their education will counter extremism; promote authentic religious values; contribute to the stability of their country; and integrate the *madrasa* leaders and students more fully into civil society.

level. Roles of religious leaders in peacebuilding are complex; practitioner interviews suggests that the role of local religious leaders, particularly *imams*, is still fairly limited, hopefully at a nascent stage; low education levels among some religious leaders can hamper effective collaboration. However, there are examples of successful engagement, and religious leaders are often the most influential voices within communities, working for peace (or, on occasion, exacerbating tensions).

USIP supports dialogue between communities along the Pakistan and Afghanistan border where the majority of the conflict between the Pakistan army and the Taliban is unfolding.³¹² The dialogue participants receive conflict-resolution and mediation training, in Kabul and Islamabad, to encourage engagement between different ethnic and religious communities.³¹³ The programs particularly address intra-religious conflict between the Sunni and Shi’a communities. USIP’s Religion and Peacemaking Program is collaborating with Al-Noor, a local partner and with Sunni and Shi’i scholars to produce an Islamic textbook, in Urdu, for use in *madrasas*, that promotes peace and understanding.³¹⁴ The program hopes to use the textbook to teach courses on Islamic peacemaking at local seminaries and encourage dialogue between the Sunni and Shi’a communities.

In November 2007, Actionaid, an international NGO active in 42 countries, partnered with the Citizen's Peace Committee to organize the "Karwaan-e-Aman", a rally for peace to promote religious tolerance and interfaith harmony in the community.³¹⁵ The rally brought together human rights activists and religious leaders from different faith traditions.

Subcontinent wide religious movements are active in Pakistan, particularly in interfaith initiatives. The Hindu inspired religious movement, Art of Living, is implementing programs to promote peace between India and Pakistan. The World Alliance for Youth Empowerment (WAYE), the youth component of Art of Living, works in Pakistan under the label of "Indo-Pakistan Youth Peace Initiatives." The program attracted Muslims, Christians, Hindus to youth empowerment seminars to encourage interreligious understanding between these communities.³¹⁶

In addition to international organizations and NGOs, local faith-inspired organizations and organizations that engage faith actors are implementing peacebuilding projects. Local faith-inspired organizations have the advantage of being both culturally and religiously connected to the community, having particular knowledge of religious, sectarian, ethnic, and tribal conflict and violence.

The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI-Pakistan) works exclusively on peace and development in Pakistan.³¹⁷ CPDI-Pakistan's projects focus on peace and tolerance; religious and sectarian violence; inter-provincial conflicts; and improved understanding across cultures, sects and religions.³¹⁸ Cavish Development Foundation (CDF) works on peacebuilding initiatives promoting interfaith harmony between the Muslim majority and religious minorities in Pakistan.³¹⁹ In 2010, CDF trained two groups of 15 students each in Islamabad, Pakistan and presented a puppet show employing dramatic performances to focus in issues of religious tension and ways to create interfaith harmony. CDF also created District Peace Committees (DPCs) comprising of social activists, academics and religious leaders from all major religions to promote interfaith dialogue in districts with religious tension.³²⁰ Amn Tehrik comprises individuals and organizations from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that are collaborating to promote peace by opposing pro-terrorism clerics and their influence in mosques and in *madrasas*.³²¹

Aware Girls, a women-led organization, works to alleviate what they consider the exploitation of Islamic militant groups to incite the youth to commit religiously inspired violence.³²² They initiated the "Seeds of Peace" program with 20 women and men to promote tolerance, non-violence and peace against religious extremism.³²³ Another example, BARGAD, established in 1997 by a group of students from Lahore, focuses on students in secular colleges and religious seminaries to promote peacebuilding. In 2003, the organization launched a "youth track" peacebuilding initiative in South Asia; so far, 35 universities in Pakistan, three in India and two in Afghanistan have collaborated with BARGAD's peacebuilding program.³²⁴ The Ujala Christian Organization (UCO) works in Christian neighborhoods to enhance peacebuilding activities where interreligious tensions are high.³²⁵

Coordination Bodies and Partners

Several coordination bodies work on flood relief, disaster and emergency response, and humanitarian aid. The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum, as an example, comprises 29 international NGOs that address the IDP crisis in the north-west region. Faith-inspired members include Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service Pakistan, Helping Hand for Relief and Development, Islamic Relief, Muslim Hands International, Qatar Charity, Shelter for Life, and World Vision.

A coordination body for health active in all four provinces is the Pakistan Health Cluster, working to decrease acute malnutrition, cholera, malaria, and other infectious disease. Faith-inspired members include Church World Service, Helping Hand for Relief and Development, Islamic Help Pakistan, World Vision. A food cluster working in flood relief comprises of the following faith-inspired organizations: Global Peace Pioneers, Food for the Hungry, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Islamic Relief, Khubaib Foundation, Muslim Hands UK and Qatar Charity.

The ACT Alliance, a coordinating body of Christian development organizations, runs relief and development work, and members working in Pakistan include Norwegian Church Aid, Church World Service, and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe.

Other national coordination bodies that include local and community based and/or faith-inspired NGOS are: All Pakistan Women's Association and Pakistan Voluntary Health & Nutrition Association (PAVHNA).

Several international organizations active in Pakistan coordinate with local faith-inspired organizations or agencies that run faith related programs. United Nations agencies support programs that focus on education, health, water, nutrition, safe motherhood, and reproductive health and children's health education.³²⁶ Canada, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom support the programs.³²⁷ Some embassy-based programs support NGO work with faith-inspired actors, including Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.³²⁸

Text Box 16 : The plight of South Asia's many widows

Widows, sadly, are a common reality in South Asia; the share of widows in the female population is among the highest in the world. Estimates put the number of widows in India at almost 40 million, or ten percent of the female population.¹ The Indian city of Vrindavan is nicknamed the City of Widows because nearly 15,000 women have migrated there to escape the marginalization and stigmatism they face in their homes and villages.¹ Many widows live on the streets or in group shelters and most survive by singing in Hindu bhajan ashrams, where they receive a little rice and pay in exchange for hymns.¹ In Nepal and Sri Lanka, internal conflict has produced many war widows, who face social ostracism, though generally not to the same degree as non-war widows. One Sri Lankan minister told an audience recently that the civil war had left 89,000 widows in the Tamil concentrated regions of the north and east - 30,000 of them under 30 years old.¹ Data for Nepal is poor, but ten years of armed conflict has produced similarly high numbers, particularly among young women (Nepal has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world); 67 percent of Nepalese widows are under 35 years old.¹

The region's widows face far ranging obstacles, with the result that many are deprived of even the most basic human security and dignity. Because widows are commonly thought to bring bad luck, custom forbids them from attending weddings and social functions. They may be blamed for the death of their husbands.¹ Social pressures discourage remarriage, and dictates that they forgo traditional colorful clothing and jewelry, wearing simple white saris and sometimes shaven heads. Some leave their husband's family's home voluntarily due to maltreatment by in-laws, but many are thrown out because they are considered both a bad omen and a financial drain. Though perhaps 28 percent of Indian widows are eligible for pensions, less than 11 percent actually receive payments.¹ With no access to a family or means of economic support, many widows are forced into begging and prostitution. While the practice of suttee, or a widow's self-immolation, was banned in 1829, occasional instances are still reported; the murder of widows by in-laws is a more common occurrence.

Especially in Hindu communities of India, Nepal, and the Sri Lankan Tamils, development agencies focus on widows as an especially vulnerable group. Faith-inspired organizations, Hindu and other, as well as individual activists play especially important roles in protecting and sheltering South Asian widows. Beginning in the nineteenth-century, Hindu activists, like Ram Mohan Roy and his mission to end suttee, and Kamala Ghosh, principal of Vrindavan's Vivekananda School, have worked actively to end widow abuse. Hindu temples frequently house and employ widows, while temple societies, like the Vrindavan Shri Bhagwan Bhajan Ashram society, provide food and shelter.¹ Socio-spiritual guilds are also active in Hindu centers, two examples being the Swaminarayan Anoopam Mission in Gujarat which helps with widow rehabilitation and the Christian Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission, which provides a home and vocational training for widows.^{1,1} Organizations including Caritas, World Vision, and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society have recognized the need to single-out widows in disaster relief distribution and development schemes, and in Sri Lanka, the Association of War Affected Women, though not faith-inspired in its mission, works closely with faith communities to empower women windowed by conflict.

Afghanistan

Located at the crossroads of South and Central Asia, Afghanistan has endured successive conflicts involving clear, yet complex religious dimensions. Conflict has held Afghanistan's development hostage, and casts a shadow on peace, stability, and prospects for the region and beyond. Some observers point to progress but others are less optimistic. A central question is how religious leaders and institutions, very much part of the "problem", can be more effectively engaged in efforts to build peace.

Religious and Social Demography

Of Afghanistan's population of about 30 million, almost 80 percent are Sunni Muslim,, and 19 percent Shi'as, with other religious groups comprising less than 1 percent (about 4900 Sikhs, 1000 Hindus and almost 400 Baha'is, and a small Christian community).³²⁹ Sunni Muslim Pashtuns dominate the southern and eastern regions, while most of the Shi'a community are in the Hazarajat, in the central highlands. Ethnic communities include the Pashtuns (42 percent), Tajiks (27 percent), Hazara (9 percent), Uzbeks (9 percent), Aimak (4 percent), Turkmen (3 percent) and the Baloch (2 percent).³³⁰ Afghan Persian or Dari is the official language.

The UNDP Human Poverty Index ranks Afghanistan at the bottom of 135 countries in terms of human deprivation. Short life (44 year life expectancy) and weak education are marked characteristics.³³¹ GDP per capita is US\$1321, and 42 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Regional differences are important.³³²

There are large health challenges. Infant and under five mortality are high.³³³ Only about 15 per cent of births are attended by trained health workers; over 90 percent of births occur at home and UNICEF reports that about 15,000 women die each year from pregnancy-related causes.³³⁴ Only 23 percent of the population has access to safe water, and only 12 percent have access to adequate sanitation, increasing the incidence of infectious disease. Almost 15,000 Afghans die of tuberculosis every year, of which 64 per cent are women. Almost 4 percent of the population is disabled; landmine accidents account for a significant part of the problem.³³⁵

Despite laws prohibiting gender violence and discrimination, domestic abuse and sexual violence are pervasive. During the Taliban regime, women were excluded from most parts of social and political life. Poor health conditions and malnutrition made pregnancy and childbirth exceptionally dangerous.³³⁶ Women and girls still fact severe restrictions in their access to education, health care facilities, and employment. Child marriage, forced marriage, and female trafficking are common in the region. Almost 54 percent of girls under the age of 18 are married, most marriages arranged by parents without the girl's consent; during the Taliban regime, families were forced to marry their daughters to the Taliban or buy their freedom with large sums of money which was not a viable option for most families.³³⁷ Families also married girls at a young age, using the dowry or bride price as financial aid.³³⁸ Precise numbers are unknown, as families are hesitant to report cases for fear of the social stigma attached to a daughter or sister kidnapped or sold for sex. Conflict has also increased levels of abductions of young girls and women by Taliban fighters.

Improvements in education have been made; since 2001, enrollment in grades 1-12 increased from 3.9 million in 2004 to 6.2 million in 2008. Girls' enrollment increased from 839,000 to more than 2.2 million.³³⁹ Literacy rates are low; in urban settings 26 percent (36 percent male; 15 percent female) of the

population are literate, but in rural areas the literate population is only some nine percent (of that, less than one percent are women). The ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary and secondary school in 2007 was .58. In 2005, only 21 percent of girls enrolled in primary school completed their studies.³⁴⁰

The ability to achieve MDGs in Afghanistan is closely tied to building effective governance structures. (UNDP)³⁴¹ Years of conflict has also destroyed critical infrastructure, including roads and electricity; partnerships with international development organizations are working on widespread reconstruction efforts.

Faith-inspired Organizations and Development

International Faith-inspired Organizations

Muslim organizations often face fewer barriers than other faith-inspired and secular organizations in entering communities because of their cultural and spiritual affinity. Transnational organizations include Muslim Peace Fellowship/Ansâr as-Salâm, founded in 1994, devoted to the theory and practice of Islamic nonviolence. Ummah Welfare Trust, a UK based organization, works in Afghanistan on a variety of projects including sponsoring widows and orphans and providing Eid gifts for the poor. Women Living Under Muslim Laws, an international solidarity network, provides information, support and a collective space for women whose lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by laws and customs said to derive from Islam. Helping Hands works in education, orphan support, and rehabilitation for children disabled by land mines. Islamic Relief (IR) has worked in Afghanistan since 1992 on many projects including drought relief and food assistance. Current projects include education, water and sanitation, livelihoods support and rebuilding community infrastructure. Muslim Aid provides disaster relief and orphan care.

USAID finances a number of Christian groups, and from 2001-2005 spent US\$57 million (out of a total of US \$390 million to nongovernmental agencies) to fund projects run by faith-based organizations in Pakistan, Indonesia, and Afghanistan.³⁴² Christian groups operate healthcare, education, and disaster relief projects under the grants.

The numbers of Christian inspired organizations working in Afghanistan is significant. Catholic Relief Services helps to rebuild homes, farms, and war-damaged streets and buildings. Key areas include agriculture, water and sanitation, education and emergency response. Christian Children's Fund Child operates several Well Being Committees, designed to involve the community in the protection of children from sexual abuse, child labor, and child marriage. Committees train parents, community members and government staff on basic child protection issues and deinstitutionalizing services for orphanages and family preservation programs. The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) operates in rural areas to help families suffering from poverty, hunger, disaster, and injustice. Church World Service works to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice in local communities.

Along with these examples of successful work, however, some Christian-affiliated aid groups have met difficulties. The Christian faith-inspired development organization, International Assistance Mission, met violence as a result of proselytizing activity, resulting in the deaths of ten of its staff.³⁴³ Church World Service and Norwegian Church Aid, also accused of proselytizing, have been cleared of wrong doing by the Karzai government and allowed to resume aid work.³⁴⁴ While these events have created hesitations among some Christian communities to work in Afghanistan, organizations that are open and transparent about their work have been successful in implementing projects in partnership with local communities.

National/Local Organizations

Education

Over 20 years of war have destroyed education infrastructure. The Ministry of Education reports that 673 schools have been closed because of violence; however, 220 have recently reopened, providing access to over 180,000 students and 3000 teachers.³⁴⁵ In 2005, 5.2 million students were enrolled in grades one through twelve. An additional 55,500-57,000 people were enrolled in vocational, Islamic, and teacher education programs, and 1.24 million people were enrolled in non-formal education programs.³⁴⁶

In response to the education crisis, the Afghan Ministry of Education proposes to develop the Islamic education system by raising standards and training teachers.³⁴⁷ To do this, the Ministry plans to build a *madrasa* in each of the 364 districts in Afghanistan. The Ministry also plans to establish a National Islamic Education Council to update and review the Islamic education system. They will implement a Technical Working Group (TWG) which will include members of the National *Ulema* Council and Islamic Education staff to develop the religious education curriculum.³⁴⁸

The Department of Islamic Education will also start the registration of private *madrasas* in Afghanistan. These *madrasas* will be encouraged to adopt the national curriculum for Islamic education. These schools will accommodate up to 50,000 children and offer a curriculum consisting of 40 percent religious education, 40 percent general education, and 20 percent computer science and foreign languages.³⁴⁹ The new curriculum aims to enable students to have an Islamic education along with secular subjects, preparing them to enter the workforce upon graduation.

Greg Mortenson, the author of the prize winning book on Afghanistan, *Three Cups of Tea*, founded the Central Asia Institute (CAI) in 1996 which promotes education; Mortenson believes that education is the key to curb religious extremism in the country. To that end, his organization has established 131 schools, educating more than 58,000 students, including 44,000 girls who were restricted from education during the Taliban government.³⁵⁰ Mortenson notes that CAI schools were built with strong support from the community and local leaders and have therefore managed to survive despite instances of insurgency and violence.

Gender

During the conflict and civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, women were a target of armed violence, rape and sexual assault. Violence against women was both commonplace and employed as a method of dishonoring families and communities.³⁵¹ Violence was exacerbated by the Taliban regime's rules regarding the visibility of women in the public sphere. Women were told to stay at home under the observation and control of husbands and male members of the family.

After the fall of the Taliban government, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) was established by the Bonn Agreement as the government ministry in charge of women's issues, and tasked by the transitional government of Afghanistan to advance the role of women.³⁵² MoWA collaborates with religious leaders in its mandate.

A faith-inspired education initiative launched by the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Asia Foundation focuses on lowering maternal and infant mortality. Involving religious leaders was a key project component, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs was brought into the campaign.³⁵³ Following the education of religious leaders, some *mullahs* began

distributing condoms while others used the Quran to support a method of birth control through prolonged breaks between births.³⁵⁴

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) works to help women who are denied rights because of fundamentalist religious practices. The Taliban issued an edict that RAWA members would be executed if caught; today RAWA works underground to combat the women's oppression. RAWA runs orphanages and has established schools, income-generating projects, and medical treatment facilities for women.³⁵⁵ Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is engaged in advocacy with the government, parliament, foreign mission and the UN to work for gender empowerment and reinstate women's rights that were restricted during the strict Islamic interpretations of the Taliban government.³⁵⁶

Peacebuilding

Faith-inspired actors are important in the Afghan peacebuilding context. Given the security realities, NGOs are unable to operate in many parts of the country. Religious leaders are already on the ground and can be effective partners.

Informal justice mechanisms already exist in almost all communities. These local conflict mediators are generally called *Jirga* or *Shura*, meaning 'council.' In the councils, community representatives, including the elders and religious leaders, hear the details of a conflict and arrive at a verdict, which may involve a payment of a loan, an allocation of land, or other agreeable terms for mediating the conflict. *Jirgas* and *shuras* are not engaged by development organizations on a large scale but there are examples of constructive engagement. Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) is one example of an organization that has been able to engage *Jirgas* and *shuras* in conflict resolution and peacebuilding programs.³⁵⁷

The USIP Mediation and Peacebuilding Training for Afghan Religious Leaders has supported two programs to involve religious leaders in the peace process. The Institute convened 50 Afghan *ulema* and religious scholars for two workshops on conflict resolution. Religious leaders were taught mediation skills using Islamic principles of nonviolence, and methods to help communities confront histories of violence. An international summit on reconciliation in Kabul in 2010 with religious scholars from Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan worked on peacebuilding in the Muslim tradition and the responsibilities of religious leaders in the process.³⁵⁸ Peacebuilding Across Borders, the second USIP project, aims to build a dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan. USIP initiated a series of dialogues from both sides of the border to generate trust and a common agenda for peace. The dialogue group participants were trained in conflict resolution and mediation by USIP experts.

The Afghan Society for Social Reforms and Development (ASSRD), a Muslim organization, works for the spiritual and physical rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Its aim is to propagate Islamic moral values in communities to encourage peacebuilding.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan, a predominantly Muslim country with significant Christian minorities, stands out in Central Asia for the significant level of involvement of faith-inspired actors in development activities. Kyrgyzstan has perhaps the most liberal environment within the Central Asia context for engagement of religious actors, faith-inspired development organizations, and leaders are involved in many sectors, including health, humanitarian relief, education, and advocacy, involving local, national, and international partners. Kyrgyzstan struggles nonetheless to balance the secular and religious spheres, and consolidate Central Asia's first parliamentary democracy. The government seeks to combat religious extremist groups, some with transnational links, while creating an enabling environment allowing the majority of moderate religious communities to contribute to a peaceful society that embraces the nation's rich religious heritage. To date, government policies have sent mixed messages, on paper calling for freedoms and participation, but in practice restricting activities through bureaucratic barriers. After the June 2010 ethnic violence between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations, religion is looked to as a common thread to help heal and reconcile past wounds and sustain development.

Socio-economic background and Development Challenges

Kyrgyzstan, with a population of approximately 5.5 million, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia borders Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China. The population is 65 percent Kyrgyz, 14 percent Uzbek, 13 percent Russian, with other ethnic minorities, including Dungan, Ukrainian, Polish, and Uighur.

Kyrgyzstan is classified as a low income country, with a GNI per capita of \$870 (World Bank); 43 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line, and poverty is most acute in rural areas. Extreme poverty however, has been reduced to 6.6 percent of the population lived in extreme poverty (2007 UNDP data). Recent unemployment is about 18 percent; as in other Central Asian countries, a significant part of Kyrgyzstan's educated workforce migrates in search of employment, largely to Russia. Between 2004 and 2008, 800,000 Kyrgyz migrated to Russia.

Before last year's political and social unrest, the Kyrgyz economy was on a path to recovery following the global economic crisis, with GDP growth of nearly 8 percent in 2008, led largely by investments in private sector growth and energy. With the government transition and episodes of ethnic violence, economic growth prospects have dimmed. The economic downturn generated demands for humanitarian assistance, social services, and shelter.

On social indicators, Kyrgyzstan's record is varied; resource limitations today put in question their sustainability. Kyrgyzstan has a 99 percent literacy rate, with near equality between boys and girls; secondary school enrollment is at 85 percent, with a slightly higher enrollment rate for girls than boys. However, challenges include insufficient resources to ensure adequate teacher training, to retain qualified staff, and to modernize management of educational institutions (UNDP).

Kyrgyzstan is making slow improvements in health, though long-term challenges remain. Kyrgyzstan seems unlikely to meet health related MDGs. Child mortality is relatively high; 41/1000 children die before the age of 5, and the number of newborn deaths is increasing due to low quality of care and lack of adequate facilities. Though women have a significantly greater life expectancy than men (70 and 63 years respectively), maternal mortality is quite high and has slightly increased since 2005, from 78 to 81/100,000 births in 2008. HIV/AIDs and communicative disease rates have increased since 2000, particularly in the south; increased migration has been cited as one cause. Reported cases of HIV have

increased from under 500 in 2003 to more than 2300 in 2009, and Tuberculosis is at epidemic level at over 100 cases per 100,000 (UNDP).

Increasing gender inequality has characterized Kyrgyzstan in the post-Soviet period. Deteriorating social infrastructure including the closure of kindergartens and child-care facilities and the worsening medical services, have shifted responsibility for the care of children and families to women; this fortifies traditional understandings that women's roles lie primarily in the domestic/familial spheres. Women are increasingly active in political and public spaces, though many obstacles to full participation remain. Rosa Otunbayeva is the first female head of state in Central Asia, and as a result of an updated Election Code in 2007, women constitute about one quarter of the Parliament; though there is only 4 percent female representation in local government bodies (UNDP).

Religion and the State

Religion has played a growing role in Kyrgyz society since the dissolution of the Soviet Union; the collapse of the atheist philosophy of the Soviet Union and the ideological vacuum it created was filled in part by religion.³⁵⁹ Islam is the most widely practiced faith; 75 percent of the population identifies as Sunni Muslim (there are 1619 officially registered mosques). Some 20 percent of the population identify as Russian Orthodox. Other religious groups account for five percent, including Protestants, Roman Catholics, and smaller groups of Jewish, Jehovah Witness, and Baha'i. Ethnicity is largely correlated with religious belief; ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks tend to indentify as Muslim, and ethnic Russians as Russian Orthodox or Protestant, though a growing number of Kyrgyz are converting to Christianity, largely to Protestant Churches. Overall, religious practice in the south is more traditional and devout than in other regions.³⁶⁰

Kyrgyzstan has among the most liberal spheres for religious actors out of the Central Asian republics, and the new constitution ratified in June 2010 guarantees freedom of religion and separation of religion and state. In practice however, many activities remain restricted, and complicated government requirements for registration and obtaining permission for activities prevent many religious leaders and other faith-inspired actors from engaging in social welfare activities. Many religious leaders engage in social welfare activities on an unofficial and needs basis.

The government restricts the social activities of Muslim groups it categorizes as "extremist," and communities face restrictions and barriers to establishing new mosques and madrasas, contributing to tense relations between the government and Muslim communities. Proselytizing by Christian groups has contributed to tensions both in local Muslim communities and between Christian churches and the government. While numbers are not well known, there may be up to 50,000 evangelical Christians in Kyrgyzstan.³⁶¹

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Faith-inspired actors have a limited, though growing role in Kyrgyzstan. Civil society and NGOs, including faith-inspired actors, are increasingly active in social welfare and development activities, focused in several sectors, including: health and HIV/AIDS, gender, human trafficking, programs for the elderly, and increasingly, since the events of 2010, peacebuilding. A 2008 law allows the government to contract NGOs to carry out social programs on its behalf. Faith-inspired organizations engaged in development include international NGOs, local faith-inspired NGOS, public associations, local religious

leaders/congregations, and informal community movements engaging in social welfare and humanitarian work.

The State Agency for Religious Affairs is the government ministry responsible for the general oversight and registration of religious activity in the country. Specifically designated to oversee the Muslim community is the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic (SBM) and the Muftiyat (spiritual board of believers headed by the supreme clergyman, Mufti of all Muslims in Kyrgyzstan). Seven *kazyys*, or regional department of the SBM, operate at the regional level.

The Muftiyat itself cooperates with international development agencies, including USAID and Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia, among other international organizations, on programs related to education, HIV/AIDS prevention; it has participated in international symposiums and conferences. The SBM regularly provides charitable assistance to low-income citizens, distributing money, clothes and food to social groups including pensioners, orphans, and young unemployed parents.

The SBM is responsible for collecting *Sadaqa Al-Fitr*, (religious duty of believers to donate money to the poor at the end of fasting) is distributed to the poor; funds are disbursed in the following percentages: 40-50 percent to the Muftiyat, 10 percent to regional *kazyys*, and the remaining 40-50 percent to mosques for discretionary distribution, including for public charitable assistance. In practice, mosques have very limited funds available for social charity, as traditional sources of funding only cover salaries of SBM clergy and Muftiyat staff; corruption and misuse of funds is also a concern complaint.³⁶²

National/Local Faith-inspired Organizations

NGOs and civil society groups, also referred to as Public Organizations, are growing in numbers in Kyrgyzstan. Some organizations have a explicit faith inspiration.

A 2010 study, *Muslim Community in Kyrgyzstan: Social Activity at the Present Stage*, provides a comprehensive study of the social activities of Muslim communities in Kyrgyzstan. The community, the report underscores, is not homogeneous. “the level and forms of their social activity depend primarily on the ideological orientation and values of the jamaat (group).” The report notes four categories of organizations : formal clergy from regional *kazyys* (regional government religious ministry offices) and mosques; educational institutions (madrasas, institutes, Departments of Theology at public universities and other religious schools and centers); public associations, foreign and local charitable and humanitarian organizations (including registered NGOs whose activities are based on the values of Islam; and informal community movements.

Some of the most active organizations are Adep Bashaty, Mutakallim, Sumayya, Dil myurok, Waqf al Islami, Sunnot, Assalyam, and Muassasah Shabab aalyami al Islami (World Islamic Youth Foundation).

Adep Bashaty was established by graduates of the University of Cairo and Al Azhar University and is working on projects including: academic scholarships for poor families, humanitarian assistance for the elderly, charity concerts, and fund-raising for secular schools, and for rural water supply systems.

Some organizations focus specifically on issues related to women and girls. UN OCHA noted in its June 2010 – 2011 flash appeal for support, that faith-inspired organizations can be important partners in combating gender based violence, though they need support to build capacity and knowledge.³⁶³

Mutakallim, a UN implementing partner, was established in 1999 by 12 female activists, and implements programs on issues including women’s rights and family issues; it collaborates with UN agencies on

domestic violence, family issues, and HIV/AIDS. Mutakallim has branches in Toktogul, Balykchy, Karakol, Osh and Aravan. It has cooperated with the Red Crescent Society, and is funded by international donors, including UNFPA. Another organization, The Women's Community Foundation "Sumayya," established in 2004, focuses on girls' education, and is working to open an elementary school in Bishkek's twelfth district. The Public Foundation for Women "Ak Jooluk Ajary" was established in Bishkek in 2008 and is comprised mostly of young girls; it works with orphans, large families, the sick, and local schools. Yyman Bakyt (80 percent of its members are women), established in 2000, has programs to collect and distribute clothes to the poor, organizes *subbotniks* (voluntary cleaning of common spaces on Saturdays); they are financed in part by the UNFPA, and coordinate with government ministries and universities.

Other Muslim organizations include Hadisi, which works on HIV prevention and other health issues in Bishkek, and Arysh, which focuses on internal migrants in Bishkek. Both organizations partner with the international Christian NGO, DanChurchAid.

Local religious leaders contribute to development initiatives, though involvement is very much localized and ad hoc; some leaders partner with international NGOs on specific projects. International NGO representatives operating in southern Kyrgyzstan noted that government bureaucracy limits the official charity work local religious mosques and leaders can do, and waiting for official authorization significantly delays projects. As a result, work that mosques and local religious leaders do is mostly unofficial, particularly in peacebuilding and humanitarian work. Secular NGOs are increasingly looking to local religious leaders, as they hold the trust of local communities, and can quickly mobilize local support.

The French development NGO, ACTED (active in Kyrgyzstan since 1999), engages local religious leaders in border areas in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to implement peacebuilding projects, to collect and distribute humanitarian aid following the 2010 violence, and to organize communities around ACTED shelter programs.

Orthodox Christian communities face similar difficulties as Muslim leaders and are difficult to partner with on an official basis, as they have to obtain permission from the central authorities in Moscow. Other primarily Protestant Churches do work on an ad hoc basis. The Mormon Church in Bishkek has implemented small scale aid programs, and some Korean Baptist Churches provided humanitarian assistance on an unofficial basis following the ethnic violence in Osh.

International Faith-inspired NGOs

Following the ethnic violence of 2010, organizations in Central Asia that did not have Kyrgyzstan specific programs offered humanitarian assistance through partnerships with local and international NGOs.

The ACT Alliance (an umbrella organization of Christian NGOs with over 100 members worldwide), has three organizations with a permanent presence in Kyrgyzstan - DanChurchAid, ICCO, and Kerk in Actie, and three organizations fund programs in Kyrgyzstan – Christian Aid, Church of Sweden, and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH). As of December 2010, ACT Alliance members are continuing reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in southern Kyrgyzstan. Long-term programming aims specifically at easing tensions and promoting reconciliation between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations, focusing in part on their common Muslim heritage and culture. The member organizations are also involved in shelter reconstruction, education, among other activities. ACT Alliance was an important source of humanitarian

information during the June 2010 violence; its situation reports were circulated throughout humanitarian community. DanChurchAid and ICCO collaborated with World Vision in Uzbekistan on cross border/refugee response.

Other Christian international NGOs include: Catholic Relief Services/Caritas, Christian Aid, ADRA, DCCA, and Habitat for Humanity.

Some International Islamic-inspired NGOs are active in Kyrgyzstan. The Aga Khan Development Network has both long term development and short term relief projects in areas including health, economic development, rural development, civil society technical assistance, microcredit, financial services, and cultural development. AKDN works with its local partner, the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP KG), to implement socio-economic development programs in rural mountainous communities in Osh and Naryn. AKDN also partners with government authorities, community organizations, and local civil society groups.

Muslim aid organizations without a permanent presence in Kyrgyzstan provided humanitarian relief following the 2010 ethnic violence through local partner organizations. Muslim Aid launched an appeal for food, medicine, and emergency supply donations to assist displaced populations, working through local partners to distribute aid. Islamic Relief France launched an appeal, operating through local partner organizations Mehr Shavkat and Resource Center for Elderly People, to distribute food, hygiene kits, and plastic sheeting for temporary shelter.

Education

Government regulated Muslim-inspired education centers around: *hujra* (traditional religious teaching, tending to be conservative and narrow in scope), madrasa, an Islamic University, and Islamic centers, foundations, and associations. The SBM officially includes 45 madrasas and Koran study classes (for which the curricula are mandated by the Ministry of Education), six institutes, one university, and 26 Islamic centers, foundations and associations.³⁶⁴ There are also many non-official mosques throughout the country that offer unofficial education; in December 2008, there were 1,325 mosques and madrasas in Osh, Batken, Jalalabad oblasts, according to the Central Asian News Service. Some unregistered madrasas operate in secret; their activity is restricted by the government, and they can be closed down if discovered.

The AKDN operates several schools in Kyrgyzstan. In 2002, AKDN opened a school in Osh, including an academic center with 22 classrooms and seminar rooms, a Learning Resource Center, a multipurpose gymnasium and a 200-seat cafeteria. The Aga Khan Early Childhood Development Program works in rural communities in Osh and Naryn oblasts to build capacity in existing kindergartens and improve academic curricula. The program supports 48 kindergartens and trained 80 kindergarten staff. AKDN is establishing a branch of the University of Central Asia (an internationally chartered university with branches in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan, focusing on education to support economic and social development in the region.

The Gulen Movement also has schools, under the Sebat International Education Institute (Sebat), officially registered as an NGO in Kyrgyzstan. Since 1992, Sebat has opened 4 high schools, 4 university dormitories, the International Ataturk Alatoo University, the International Silk Road School, and the Secom Center for language and computer studies. The schools enroll more than 4600 students.

Several Christian schools in Kyrgyzstan are operated by foreign registered NGOs. The Association of Christian Schools of Central Asia, as an example, operates five schools in northern Kyrgyzstan for nearly

550 students, and provides secular education, as well as education on Christian morals and ethics. The Central Asia Sharing Aid (CASA), a USA registered NGO, operates and supports schools and orphanages in Kyrgyzstan, and is seeking to establish a university. CASA partners with the Mercy Charitable Christian Foundation (MCCF), a Kyrgyz national faith-inspired organization operating schools in of Tokmok, Ivanovka, Kemin, Belovodsk, and Kara-Balta.

Partners and Coordinating Bodies

An increasing number of coordination bodies exist in Kyrgyzstan, particularly following the international aid response to the 2010 ethnic violence.

United Nations coordination and cluster groups meet regularly. In Osh, ACTED, Catholic Relief Services, and Christian Aid are regular members of weekly coordination meetings.

The ACT Alliance coordinates with local NGOS (secular and faith-inspired), other international NGOS, the UN, and government bodies.

Faith inspired organizations are part of several coordination groups The Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan unites more than 85 NGOs that focus on women's participation in regional, local, and national political structures. The AgeNetnetwork in Osh consists of civil society members and authorities working with older people in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia. DanChurchAid coordinates with AgeNetnetwork members. The Harm Reduction Network Kyrgyzstan (HRNK) is a network of five NGOs that works on issues including HIV/AIDS, Human Trafficking, GLBT issues, and advocacy, and is active since January 2004.

In direct response to the humanitarian need in 2010, approximately 10 local NGOs, under the leadership of Resource Center for Elderly (based in Bishkek) established the Mobile Group (MG) to engage relief efforts in Osh and Jalalabad. The group's focus is to receive requests and complaints on aid distribution and humanitarian efforts, check information, compile and deliver lists of those in need to the government aid organizations, and monitor and document cases. The MG is organized into four clusters: 1) documentation cluster; 2) distribution cluster; 3) information cluster; 4) human resource/coordination of volunteers cluster.

Kazakhstan

While Kazakhstan is one of the most highly developed countries in Central Asia, with rich oil-based resources and impressive achievements in education and food security, it faces development challenges, some remnants of Soviet era tight media controls and low civic participation. A struggling medical system is a more recent problem. Kazakhstan is a predominantly Muslim country; While Kazakhstan has been relatively peaceful during the past two decades and sees itself as a beacon of harmonious inter-faith and inter-ethnic cooperation, critics qualify the peace as a veneer for “quiet repression.”³⁶⁵ Religious communities report strict legal restrictions, uneven enforcement of regulations, and intrusive government oversight of their activities; as a result, engagement of faith-inspired actors in development seems to be limited, and accurate information is scarce.

Socio-economic Background and Development Challenges

With 2.7 million sq. km, Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world, but has a population of only 15 million. At the time of the 1999 census, the population was 53 percent ethnic Kazakh, 30 percent Russian, with tiny minorities of Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Germans, Tatars, and Uighurs. During the Soviet Virgin Lands Program of the 1950's and 1960's, Soviet citizens were encouraged to farm uncultivated northern Kazakh land, and the resulting influx of immigrants – both Slavs and other deported nationalities – left ethnic Kazakhs in the minority for decades. Independence in 1991 led to a wave of emigration, and the ethnic balance readjusted to a slight ethnic Kazakh majority.

Boasting the largest economy of central Asia, Kazakhstan has a GDP per capita of \$11,800 and enjoys increasing wealth due to major deposits of petroleum, natural gas, and coal. At the 1999 census, 12 percent of Kazakhstanis lived below the poverty line, with average life expectancy 68 years. Maternal and child mortality are quite high. The fertility rate is 1.87 children born per woman, and the infant mortality is 24.93 deaths per 1,000 live births.³⁶⁶ Though HIV/AIDS incidence is mainly limited to intravenous drug users, it is an important health issue, as is multi-drug resistant TB.

Kazakhstan has already achieved several MDG targets, such as poverty reduction, access to primary education and promotion of women's rights; the government adopted an MDG+ agenda in 2007. For example, Kazakhstan has moved on from general hunger and food security to “hidden hunger” or micronutrient deficiencies in women of productive age and children.

Education is one sector where Kazakhstan has seen impressive results. Kazakhstan reports a 99.5 percent literacy rate, and both men and women average 15 years of education. In 2009, it was ranked as high human development by UNDP, in large part to its educational accomplishments;³⁶⁷ it achieved the number one ranking on the International Education for All Development Index (EDI).³⁶⁸ As of 2007, the government spends 3 percent of GDP on education,³⁶⁹ and 12.5 percent of registered Kazakhstani NGOs work in education.³⁷⁰

Since independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has undertaken deep market reforms and created oil-based wealth. While the wealth has supported the expansion and development of urban centers, rural areas are under-served, and Kazakhstan is seeing growing socio-economic stratification and an undiversified, oil-based economy. Agriculture makes up just 6 percent of the total GDP and 31.5 percent of the labor force, while industry makes up 43 percent of the GDP, employing just 18 percent of the labor force; the 51 percent of GDP earned in the service sector touches 50 percent of the labor force. While these figures suggest certain levels of inequality for an oil-based economy its inequality levels are not notably severe; the Gini Coefficient in Kazakhstan is 29. Recognizing the risks of an undiversified oil-based economy,

the government aims to develop the industrial sector further, and the new strategic development outlook shifted corporate tax code to promote domestic industry.

Religion

Though Kazakhstan has long been predominantly Muslim, between the 1999 and the 2009 census the percentage of the population self-identifying as Muslim increased sharply, from 47 to 70 percent.³⁷¹ Kazakh Muslims belong to a Sunni branch of Islam, the Hanafi school, infused with Sufi elements.

In 2010 there were 2,369 registered mosques, all but 70 of which operate under the auspices of the Spiritual Association of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK), which oversees imam-education and placement. Muslim communities that do not meet registration requirements at the level of a mosque may qualify as a house of prayer. They have permission to meet and teach but cannot build structures with minarets or hold prayer meetings on Fridays.

The largest non-Muslim religious group in Kazakhstan is the Russian Orthodox, comprising one-third of the total population and served by 299 registered churches. There are 83 registered Roman Catholic churches and affiliated organizations; the Roman Catholic archdioceses account for just one percent of the population. While Protestant churches outnumber Russian Orthodox or Roman Catholic congregations, their individual congregation size appears to be quite small: 1,267 registered Protestant organizations with 543 places of worship.³⁷² Registered synagogues serve Jewish populations in Almaty, Astana, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kostanai, and Pavlodar.

As Kazakhstan has made efforts to establish an independent identity in the post-Soviet years, many citizens have reinvested in religion as a means of self-definition. Some say that folk Islam, or Islamic doctrine enmeshed with traditional folk practices, defines what it means to be Kazakh.³⁷³ In SAMK mosques, prayers are conducted in Arabic and Kazakh; minority ethnic groups have struggled in the past to register or secure imams who speak their native language.³⁷⁴

Religion and the State

Religious organizations are subject to the same strict registration rules as any other public association or NGO. Registration must take place both at the national level and in any province where the group carries out activities. Most religious communities do choose to register and are approved, though sometimes after long delays.³⁷⁵ Once approved, the government reserves the right to suspend activities by court order if the group undertakes work outside the original, approved charter or operates outside the approved jurisdiction.

Religious instruction is not permitted in schools. Local and foreign missionaries must register annually with the Ministry of Justice. As with registration as a religious NGO, missionaries must provide all literature and other material for official review: unapproved material is illegal for distribution in the country. Any foreigner entering the country and participating in religious activity may be subject to observation, questioning and expulsion.

In 2008, the legislature approved a draft law that would create a two-tier system, differentiating religious “groups” from religious “associations.” Association status would require a minimum of 50 members to register in a region and thereby earn the right to meet in public spaces and rent buildings for worship – activities which would be forbidden to smaller religious “groups.” The law would have further complicated the process by which religious communities could achieve recognition as a national group

and have outlawed most all public religious activity, effectively reducing religious practice to a private, government-sanctioned act. The law was ruled unconstitutional just before Kazakhstan assumed the chair of the Organization for Security and Change in Europe (OSCE), but human rights advocates worry that the legislation could be re-proposed once Kazakhstan's term as OSCE chair ends.³⁷⁶

Civil Society and Law

In the early years of transition from communist rule, hundreds of NGOs were established, primarily focused on human rights and democracy issues.³⁷⁷ Today, the number of NGOs is debated: there may be as many as 31,201 NGOs registered in the country; however as few as 1,000 of those are active.³⁷⁸ In recent years, NGOs' missions have branched out from human rights and democracy to address service delivery gaps and a broad array of human development challenges. These NGOs are based in and primarily serve urban areas fueled by a new middle class; rural NGOs are rare, compounding rural development challenges.

Law governing NGOs does not differentiate institutions, public associations, joint stock companies, consumer cooperatives, foundations, religious associations, or types of unions: all qualify as "noncommercial organizations" under Kazakhstani law. Any public association must have at least 10 members, the majority of whom must be Kazakhstani; this includes religious entities, which may be founded by foreigners if the majority of members are citizens. Unregistered associations are subject to administrative and criminal liability. Courts have defended registered NGO's right to exist when brought to trial but law enforcement has enforced legislation unevenly.³⁷⁹

Recent legislation from May 2007 allows the Kazakhstani government to fund NGOs directly through government service provision tenders. Prior to this legislation, select NGOs enjoyed close relationships with the government through the patronage of high-ranking officials. It is unclear if the new legislation has opened opportunities for smaller, local, unconnected, service-providing NGOs.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Knowledge of faith actors in Kazakhstan is quite limited, and it is difficult to determine to what extent faith-inspired organizations are working in the country. Faith-inspired organizations and communities are subject to the same regulations as NGOs and religious associations. There is, however, some concern that authorities have restricted or placed pressure on religiously-inspired charitable activity, including the closing of a Protestant-run drug-rehabilitation center. There are also reports of minority religious leaders being barred from visiting prisons and psychiatric homes.³⁸⁰

Among the major international faith-inspired organizations active in Kazakhstan are the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Caritas, and the Gulen Movement. AKDN is currently building in Tekeli, Kazakhstan one of the three campuses of the University of Central Asia. Caritas Kazakhstan, which has an operating budget of US\$100,000 and a staff of 10, was founded in 1998 to help alleviate both the effects and causes of poverty. Many of Caritas Kazakhstan's projects focus on improving Kazakh health systems; in the twelve years of its operation it has helped set up 28 Centers of Medical Help for those unable to afford full health care. It has also provided humanitarian assistance in the wake of emergencies and disasters.

DanChurchAid, ICCO, and Kerk in Actie all support projects in Kazakhstan through local partners under the auspices of the ACT Alliance. The World Bank lists Food for the Hungry and Northwest Medical

Teams International as faith-inspired groups active in Kazakhstan; however, the groups' respective websites make no mention of their activity there.³⁸¹

The Gulen Movement now operates 28 schools; a recent *Time* article reported that a Gulen education is in incredibly high demand.³⁸²

Partners and Coordinating Bodies

The only coordinating body with a specific focus on faith-inspired organizations is the ACT Central Asia Forum, which evolved from a pilot 'ACT Development Forum' established in Central Asia in 2007, (itself a successor to the Ecumenical Consortium for Central Asia). Current members of the forum are Christian Aid, DanChurchAid, ICCO and Kerk in Actie. The forum works with over 40 local partners to ensure secure livelihoods and access to basic services.

Kazakhstan also has a number of broad NGO coordinating bodies. There are two national NGO associations in Kazakhstan: the Almaty-based Association of Non-Governmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (ANOK), and the Astana-based Confederation of Non-Governmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (CNOK). Several oblasts and regions support more local NGO networks.

The Association of Non-Commercial Legal Entities, Jalgas-Counterpart, supports and unites Civil Society Support Centers (CSSC) in nine different provincial locations.³⁸³ The CSSCs, which provide legal advisory services, are part of the Civil Society Support Initiative led by Counterpart International. This initiative is one of several serving NGOs in Kazakhstan: similar resource networks are funded by groups like Soros Foundation, National Democratic Institute, and the UNDP.

Other networking resources include Decenta Public Association in Pavlodar, the Almaty-based NGOs Central Asian Sustainable Development Information Network (CASDIN), and the Institute for Development Cooperation. The International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) is also active in Kazakhstan providing capacity building training programs. Eurasia Foundation's Kazakhstan Open Budget Initiative works to increase civic engagement in the process of budget development and monitoring to better meet the needs of local constituencies.

Tajikistan

Islam plays a growing and influential role in social, political, and development spheres in Tajikistan. The Tajik context is unique within Central Asia; faith-inspired organizations and religious leaders are important and active participants in social development, working independently and in partnership with national and international development organizations; at the same time, the government is seeking increasingly to monitor and direct all activities. Overall, the religious environment is restrictive; only those actors in line with government priorities are able to operate freely and engage socially.

Government policies to combat religious extremism help shape the environment in which religious actors operate, creating many barriers. Religious persecution and bureaucratic red tape are significant. Long term development challenges include rebuilding education and health systems where institutional capacity and financial resources are limited. Tajik religious leaders are influential in their communities, and many argue that their involvement is crucial for sustainable development. Opportunities Increased engagement with faith-inspired organizations on development issues is seen by observers as desirable and possible.

Socio-economic Background

Tajikistan, the poorest of the former Soviet republics, has over 47 percent of its population living below the national poverty line (GDP 2009 per capita (PPP) \$1900). There has been progress (Tajikistan's 2010 Human Development Ranking is 112/182, up from 127 in 2009), but Tajikistan is not on track to meet MDG targets for health, education, and poverty alleviation. Reasons include inequitable access to public services, poor infrastructure, a poor investment environment, and uneven implementation of economic reforms.³⁸⁴

The global economic crisis affected Tajikistan, and GDP growth declined from rapid rates (averaging nine percent 2000-2008) to 3.4 percent (2009). Declining remittances and recession in the Russian economy, to which Tajikistan is tightly connected, were the major factors.³⁸⁵ GDP growth is expected to pick up in 2010 as exports are increasing and remittances have rebounded. The State Statistics Agency reports that 11.5 percent of the working age population is unemployed, and a substantial 40 percent remain underemployed.³⁸⁶

The government reports a literacy rate of near 100 percent, though Tajikistan's education system has suffered greatly since independence, largely due to large scale emigration of professors and the educated population, and insufficient government funding. International development organizations, including the World Bank and ADB, are supporting the modernization of education and improvements in quality. School attendance, especially for girls, has declined; gross school enrollment is near 96 percent for primary school, but levels drop to 84 percent for secondary school; the ratio of girls to boys in school is lower than other Central Asia countries at .96 and .87 respectively. Demographically, nearly half of Tajikistan's population of over 7.5 million is under 14 years of age.³⁸⁷

Life expectancy in Tajikistan is the second lowest in the WHO European Region, at 61 years, and decreasing (WHO estimate); the official national figure is 72 years. Several factors explain the decline, including poor nutrition, polluted water, and increased incidence of diseases (malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, typhoid and cholera, and cardiovascular diseases).³⁸⁸ Infant mortality is high, 60 per 1,000 live births, as is child mortality; under five mortality rates are approximately 61/1000, significantly higher than the average for Europe and Central Asia, of 21.³⁸⁹

Gender inequity has increased significantly since the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the five year civil war. Women have had to take on most responsibilities of the household as a weak state does not have the resources to sustain Soviet era social services; traditional cultural patriarchal attitudes have reinforced traditional gender roles. Women also face discrimination in the workplace, and are rarely promoted to management positions. Women are vulnerable to trafficking (largely to Russia and the Middle East), and to gender based violence.³⁹⁰

The government retains many Soviet governance structures, contributing to bureaucratic inefficiencies, and has insufficient resources to sustain equitable development. Corruption is a serious problem, inhibiting economic and social development in areas including health and education, and discouraging foreign investment.³⁹¹

Religion and Society

Islam has taken on a prominent role in Tajik society since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Tajikistan is 98 percent Sunni Muslim, with a small Shia minority. The remaining two percent include Russian Orthodox, Catholic, Buddhist, and Jewish faiths. There are also small Parsi and Ismaili (Muslim) communities. There is no state religion, but the government recognized the “special status” of Hanafi Islam in 2009; Tajikistan is the only former Soviet republic to officially endorse a religion.

Tajikistan’s government currently only recognizes three religions, Sunni Islam, Shia/Ahmediyya/Ismaili branches of Islam, and Russian Orthodox. The Salafi and Wahabi schools of Islam are currently illegal, and the government conducts military campaigns to combat extremist groups, concentrated in the Rasht Valley. All religious communities are required to register with the State Committee on Religious Affairs (SCRA) and with local authorities.³⁹²

Failure to register with the SCRA can result in both fines and forced closure of religious institutions. The law on religion restricts the number of mosques that can be registered within a given population, and many mosques have been shut down by government authorities. The government regulates religious education; 19 religious madrasas and one which teaches secular and religious education are registered. The only higher education Islamic institution in the country is the Islamic Institute of Tajikistan; all faculty and curricula must be approved by the government ministry.

Religious interpretations in Tajikistan affect women’s rights and freedoms. A 2006 Council of Ulema fatwa against women attending mosque remained in effect as of November 2010. Female students must follow tradition Tajik dress while attending school.³⁹³

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

The role of faith-inspired actors is complex. On the one hand, it is restricted by strict government controls over religious activities; in contrast faith-inspired actors do play active and growing roles in development, and several development organizations are engaging religious leaders.³⁹⁴ International faith-inspired organizations, local NGOs, and local *imam khatibs* are active in areas including HIV/AIDS, health, peacebuilding, and humanitarian relief, among other activities.

Tajikistan joined the Organization for the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1992, and receives Islamic law-compliant loans from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). IDB financing supported construction of the Murgab-Kulma Pass Highway, and the IDB provided baby food and supplies to support the nearly five

thousand Tajiks affected by severe floods in May 2010, in partnership with the Regional Committee of the Red Crescent Society (Tajikistan).

Some international Muslim inspired development organizations have offices in Tajikistan. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has been in Tajikistan since 1992; AKDN employs almost 3000 people. Sectors of focus include institutional strengthening, rural development, financial services, tourism, and education. AKDN coordinates a network of development organizations and companies, including the Pamir Energy Company (created in collaboration with the IFC following the civil war to rebuild electric infrastructure), Indigo Tajikistan (the second largest by subscriber, and largest by revenue mobile phone company in Tajikistan), and is constructing a five star *Serena* Hotel in Dushanbe (AKDN already runs the Serena Inn in Khorog) to further develop the tourist industry. AKDN runs education institutions, including a private school (Aga Khan Lycée – grades 1 -11), the University of Central Asia, and scholarship programs funded by the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Educational Services; AKDN also partners with the government to support existing government schools.

The Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation (IKRF), an Iranian humanitarian and relief NGO based on Islamic values, began working in Tajikistan during the civil war in 1995. It has two primary focus groups: widows and orphans, both important tenets of Islamic charity; they also work with poor female head of households. As of spring 2007 IKRF had five offices in the country, with plans to establish two more.³⁹⁵

The Turkish Islamic inspired NGO, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation also works in Tajikistan on programs for orphans, disaster relief, and assistance to families during Muslim holidays.

Several international Christian organizations work in Tajikistan. The ACT coalition Six organizations that are part of the ACT coalition work there. Christian Aid has a permanent office, focusing on women and youth, health, and disaster relief programming. Five ACT member organizations fund work in Tajikistan through local partners: Bread for the World, DanChurchAid, ICCO, Kerk In Actie, and Lutheran World Relief. The consortium supports different programs, including the creation of Self Help Groups, known as SHGs, which mobilize communities to engage NGOs, religious organizations and local authorities to solve community problems.

Other Christian inspired organizations in Tajikistan include: Caritas and Catholic Relief Services.

Faith-inspired organizations and religious leaders are particularly active in HIV prevention. (Text Box to be included in final publication) In May/June 2009, DanChurchAid, ICCO, and Christian Aid conducted a study in the border regions between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It surveyed attitudes of religious leaders towards HIV/AIDS, with an aim to increase cooperation with local religious institutions in Central Asia. Some 80 percent of *imams* in Tajikistan thought that mosques should be concerned about the spread of HIV epidemic in Central Asia.³⁹⁶

The local Muslim inspired Tajik NGO, Center on Mental Health and HIV/AIDS runs a training program for *imams* on HIV prevention. The seminars are taught by other influential imams, and train participants to teach about HIV prevention during sermons in their mosques. Imams also hold separate community groups in the mosques to discuss social issues, including HIV prevention.³⁹⁷ Starting in 2011, all sermons will have to be approved by the appropriate government ministry; it is yet to be determined what, if any, the effects will be on program implementation.³⁹⁸

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, along with CAPP (Central Asia Prevention Program), seeks to engage religious leaders in its programming. The UNDP Program on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria Control (the principal recipient of the Global Fund in Tajikistan) signed an agreement with Islamic Institute of Tajikistan for a project on “Islam and Healthy Life Style/Prevention of the HIV/AIDS from Islam’s Point of View;” the first training was held in September 2010.³⁹⁹

Religious leaders also have a role in local peacebuilding. Local populations often approach religious leaders to resolve disputes before exploring other avenues of resolution.⁴⁰⁰ Past initiatives, such as the Tajik Dialogue Program (2003 – 2009) of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, focused on confidence building between secular and religious actors to find peaceful solutions to conflicts with religious dimensions.⁴⁰¹

In education, in addition to the AKDN schools, the Gulen movement operates several schools. Unofficial private schools/madrassa and hujras are widespread; as they are illegal, they tend to operate in secret, and exact numbers and range of curricula are not available.⁴⁰² Development practitioners in Tajikistan have expressed concern that a general lack of education on Islam among many *imam khatibs* is a barrier to quality education, especially in unofficial schools. Caritas and some Baptist organizations also support education.

Partners and Coordinating Bodies

UNDP is the principal coordinating body for NGOs and development organizations, and works with over 80 partner organizations; faith-inspired partners organizations include: AKDN, Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, Christian Aid, and Caritas.⁴⁰³

The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the Tajik Aid Coordination Unit within the government also organize coordination meetings among donors and development organizations.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan's transition from a Soviet Republic to independent nation in 1991 has been marked by challenges especially for human development and governance. Under Saparmurat Niyazov, president from 1990 until his death in 2006, Turkmenistan followed isolationist, authoritarian, and deeply centralized economic and social policies, in addition to imposing what many have termed a cult of personality, whereby months of the year, common vocabulary words, and even cities were re-named after himself or his family members. Notwithstanding substantial income from oil and gas exports (Turkmenistan has the fifth largest gas reserves in the world), human development indicators suffered greatly during the Niyazov period, and freedoms of expression and association (including religious) were highly restricted.

Since he took office in 2007, President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov has pledged to build “a harmonious, inspired, humane, and developed society” in Turkmenistan.⁴⁰⁴ In the social sectors, especially health and education, the government has pledged reforms to bring Turkmenistan to par with international standards.⁴⁰⁵ Turkmenistan is also a signatory to the Millennium Declaration and is working to achieve the MDGs. Progress, however, is elusive and data on development indicators is especially poor. Rural infrastructure projects are a top priority for the government, as is improvement of agricultural production, which accounts for 22 percent of GDP. However, still higher priority goes to expanding oil and gas markets outside of Russia, its main trading partner to date, and improving its foreign relations. Activities of faith actors, in both the religious and development contexts, are severely restricted; apart from officially approved religious institutions and officials, faith actors play negligible roles in civil society and social development.

Socio-economic Background

Turkmenistan's population of almost 5 million is about 89 percent ethnic Turkmen, with minorities of Uzbeks and Russians of 5 and 4 percent respectively and 2009 GDP per capita in 2009 was estimated at \$6700. After an uncertain period following independence, Turkmenistan has seen rapid economic growth (official figures put annual growth at 12 percent), fueled by large oil and gas exports to Russia and Ukraine. Growth declined in 2007, as a result of a gas pricing dispute with Russia, which halted all exports for nine months.⁴⁰⁶ This partly explains recent efforts (new pipelines) to diversify hydrocarbon exports to include China and Iran.⁴⁰⁷

The majority of Turkmenistan's population has benefited little from this rapid growth, and their welfare is stymied by endemic corruption, a poor educational system, and a highly centralized economy.⁴⁰⁸ Some 30 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (2004), and unemployment stood at 60 percent. Close to half of Turkmenistan's workforce is engaged in the agriculture sector, but productivity is limited due to poor growing conditions (Turkmenistan has a desert/arid climate), with poor irrigation techniques, and a quota system that offers limited incentives for increased productivity.

Turkmenistan defines itself as a secular democracy and the first elections were held in 2007, after the death of President Niyazov. However, opposition political parties are banned from the public sphere and many continue to regard the government as strictly authoritarian. The government is currently transitioning to a civil law system with influences from Islamic law tradition.⁴⁰⁹

Religion, Law, and Society

Turkmenistan's contemporary religious history, like many of its Central Asian neighbors, was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. Islam is the predominant religion; about 89 percent of the population is

Sunni Muslim. Nine percent of the population identify as Eastern Orthodox (Christian). Under Soviet rule (1924 to 1991), religious practice was banned and criminally prosecuted and many mosques were shut down or used for other purposes. After independence, President Niyazov declared Turkmen cultural (including religious) revival one of his key priorities, and ordered public schools to teach basic Islamic principles.⁴¹⁰ The revival, however, was very much along the lines of his personal ideology, which was later published in the *Ruhnama*, a collection of his writings that was mandatory reading material for all Turkmen citizens. Prayers were followed by an obligatory oath to Turkmenbashi, or leader of Turkmen, as Niyazov frequently referred to himself.

Although President Berdymukhammedov has dismantled his predecessor's personality cult, religious organizations remain tightly controlled by the state authorities. In 1994, Niyasov created the Council on Religious Activities (*Gengenshi*) which, together with the Cabinet of Ministers, remains in charge of training and appointing all clergymen, and monitors their activities. All religious institutions, including madrasas, must be licensed by the Justice Ministry.⁴¹¹ Religious political parties are banned, and clergymen must be trained in Turkmenistan to be approved and promoted by the authorities.⁴¹² The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and separation between church and state. However, the government monitors all forms of religious expression and unregistered religious activity is banned. The government limits the activities of unregistered religious groups, prohibiting them from holding public gatherings, proselytizing, or disseminating religious materials.⁴¹³ Few religious groups are allowed to register; as of August 2010, only eleven religious groups (aside from Muslims and Russian Orthodox Christians) were successfully registered.⁴¹⁴ "With significant barriers to registration, some groups choose to forgo the bureaucratic process and operate covertly, although the penalties for unregistered activity can be severe."⁴¹⁵ Amnesty International reports that since the mid-1990s, hundreds of foreign members of minority religious groups have been deported.

Development challenges and progress

Turkmenistan's health and education sectors were particularly neglected during the Niyazov era. The current government has announced strategies to improve outcomes in both sectors, highlighted in the National Socio-Economic Development Program for 2011-30, released in May 2010. Turkmenistan signed the UN Millennium Declaration, but data on progress on the MDGs is unreliable. Government sources claim that 100 percent of Turkmen citizens are literate but reforms are needed. These include extending the mandatory years of schooling (reduced under Niyazov) from 9 to 10, reducing teacher workloads and increasing salaries, and teaching Russian and English, previously banned.⁴¹⁶ The government has reinstated the standard 5-6 year period for obtaining a university degree (it had been reduced to two years, even for medical school). University enrolment declined from 40,000 in the 1990s to 3,000 in 2004.⁴¹⁷ The government plans to invest further to modernize infrastructure in the education and health sectors.⁴¹⁸

Poor data in the health sector makes it difficult to assess quality and access to healthcare and priority areas for intervention. By 2006, it is believed that all rural healthcare facilities had been closed and access to facilities in the capital, Ashgabat, was extremely limited.⁴¹⁹ The government has begun to report some data to the WHO, but only for some indicators; mortality rates for different age groups, for example, are not reported. Much data that is reported is believed to be unreliable, especially data on HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality, probably severely under-reported (the government denies that there are any HIV cases in the country).⁴²⁰ Though the government has pledged support for hospitals and health facilities, there are serious concerns about the quality of healthcare personnel and accessibility of these facilities. The government's commitment to improvements in the healthcare system has been questioned by many

external organizations, such as Doctors without Borders; their offer to assist the government on an MDR-TB strategy was refused.⁴²¹

Collapse of the social security system during the Niyazov presidency increased levels of poverty. The current government has restored pension payments for women over 57 and men over 62 (they were cancelled in 2006.⁴²²) Internal travel restrictions have been relaxed; previously, Turkmen citizens were required to carry internal passports and needed express permission from the authorities to travel within the country. In rural areas, where most poverty is concentrated, a National Rural Development Program (2008-2020) emphasized improving rural infrastructure such as water, electricity, health facilities, schools and roads. As agriculture (mainly wheat and cotton) is a source of livelihood for over half of Turkmenistan's population, the government has raised internal prices under the state-controlled system and provided access to soft lines of credit.

Women are treated equally under the law, guaranteed full political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms. Although Islam is the religion of the majority, women do not usually wear the veil nor do they practice strict seclusion, although most women work in the home.⁴²³ Many women, both in urban and rural settings, have begun to work outside of the home out of economic necessity, and are a significant part of the workforce, particularly in the health and education sectors. Most NGOs are led by women, predominantly Turkmen, as many Russian speaking people left.

Women do not represent a powerful political force, but some do hold high-ranking government positions. The Union of Women of Turkmenistan, the most important women's organization, "promotes the role of women in social, political and cultural life". Its leaders are members of the People's Council (or Khalk Maslakhat, the 2,507-member executive branch of Government⁴²⁴ Turkmenistan still faces challenges on gender. Wages and marriage laws (women are allowed to marry at the age of 16) weigh against women and many existing anti-discrimination laws are not strictly enforced.⁴²⁵

Development Organizations and Faith-inspired Actors

Given legal restrictions, few faith-inspired NGOs can operate in Turkmenistan. An NGO law adopted in 2003 severely restricted operations of civil society groups, religious or otherwise.⁴²⁶ Many NGOs cut back their activities or stopped their operations altogether. Gradually, some space is opening for secular NGOs, with some initiatives to develop civil society capacity, but these initiatives are limited and activities are restricted. A few organizations have found creative ways to work, as commercial entities or other such fronts, but none with a known religious affiliation. The Catholic Church and a few other churches have been permitted to register with the Ministry of Justice, but the nature and extent of their activities beyond traditional ecumenical functions, is not known. Even the groups that have been allowed to register face numerous obstacles in finding places to worship.

Education is a sector where some faith-inspired organizations operate, among them the Gulen Movement, from Turkey, operates 14 high schools and one university for 3,294 pupils and 353 teachers.⁴²⁷ (See Text Box # on Gulen Schools). Madrasas do exist, but are under state jurisdiction both operationally and regarding curricula.

The Baha'i community in Turkmenistan promotes community development as a pillar of their faith beliefs. Their reported activities include community meetings and communal worship and classes for children and youth emphasizing moral education. Local Baha'i communities are establishing projects aimed at social and economic development.⁴²⁸

USAID supports a three-year program through Counterpart International, the “Community Empowerment Program” (TCEP), focused on building the capacity of civil society groups who seek greater participation in local governance at the community level.⁴²⁹ The project has not engaged faith-inspired actors, though indirectly, Islam is an important factor in society and cultural traditions.

Coordinating Bodies and Development Partners

There are no coordinating bodies for development partners, and no umbrella organizations for NGO coordination. Turkmenistan is a member of the World Bank and IMF, as well as the United Nations, but is not an aid recipient. UNDP and UNICEF operate in the country with a limited mandate.

Text Box 17: Gulen Movement in Central Asia

Fethullah Gulen, founder of the Gulen Movement is deeply influenced by the Sufi heritage, especially influenced by the teachings of Said Nursi.¹ Beginning in Turkey in the 1970s, the Gülen Movement places particular emphasis on education. Its learning centers, called “lighthouses” (*isik evler*), synthesize secular and scientific subjects with the religious values of the Qur’an. The goal is to encourage students to “internalize values of responsibility and self-sacrifice through collective prayers”¹ and thus promote an economic and moral transformation of society. Today, the Gulen Movement has schools worldwide, with educational facilities from Central Asia to Europe and North America. Over the past 30 years, Gulen has opened over 1000 educational institutions in more than 100 countries.

After the collapse of the USSR, the movement began to work in Central Asia. The first Gulen schools appeared in 1992–93; and there are now schools in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Kazakhstan has 30 high schools with over 5,600 students¹ and there are 11 high schools and one university in Kyrgyzstan with more than 3,100 students. For a short period in 2000, Gulen schools were banned in Uzbekistan because of fears of Islamic fundamentalism but now 17 high schools operate there, with over 3,300 students. The schools are managed by both local and Turkish administrators who are familiar with the needs of the particular community. The curriculum incorporates scientific subjects with the social sciences; Russian is the primary language of instruction. These modern day Gulen lighthouses present themselves as a safe haven from “drugs and alcohol use, premarital sex and violence.” Through the schools, the Gulen movement aims to reach vulnerable youth populations that lack other educational options. Gulen schools have high expectations of their teachers and students, which includes accepting the tenet of *hizmet insani* or “being in service to others.” Because of the emphasis on character development, the schools seek to mold students into respectful citizens that engage in moral and ethical behavior.

Through his educational project in Central Asia, Fethullah Gulen claims that he building “cultural bridges” between Turkey and Central Asia¹ and between the Muslim world and the West. The Gulen movement has wide support from the Turkish Diaspora community and is also committed to dialogue with religious and secular leaders about democracy, human rights, and pluralism.”

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is faces a range of development challenges; the government's choice of development strategy will help shape what direction development in the country takes. Double landlocked, Uzbekistan confronts economic stagnation, social discontent, rising unemployment, and emigration of educated youth. Yet Uzbekistan has rich natural resources and impressive human development indicators. Tight political and social controls are epitomized in its president, Islom Karimov, in power since independence in 1991. While Uzbekistan has held several elections, they are not seen as allowing free and fair participation. Public space for civil society is limited, social protest has been met by violent suppression, and respect for human rights is an international concern.

Few international development organizations, including NGOs, operate in Uzbekistan and those that do are subject to strict government regulation that severely limits the scope of their activities. Religious activities in this heavily Muslim country also are highly restricted, with the government tending to equate social activity by faith-inspired with religious extremism. Some faith-inspired development work does take place at the community level.

Socio-economic Background and Development Challenges

Uzbekistan has a population of about 28 million, about half that of Central Asia. After independence in 1991 (with the breakup of the former USSR), Uzbekistan saw a decade of rapid economic growth, followed by economic stagnation, accompanied by rising unemployment, declining living standards, social discontent, and large scale emigration, particularly of the young educated workforce. Today, an estimated 30 percent of Uzbeks live below the poverty line, with nine percent in extreme poverty.⁴³⁰ 2009, GDP per capita PPP was estimated at \$2800. Uzbekistan's Gini coefficient (36.8) indicates an average-to-inequitable income distribution, but income inequality has increased since the mid 1990s due to policies that favored capital-intensive urban enterprises.⁴³¹

Uzbekistan's economy is structured around industries developed during the Soviet Union period. The world's second largest cotton exporter, its rich natural resources include oil, gas, and gold. It was the only former Soviet Republic that surpassed its estimated 1989 level of GDP by 2001.⁴³²

Uzbekistan's record on social indicators is mixed. There is gender equality at primary and secondary school levels, and nearly universal access to quality education.⁴³³ The 2009 literacy rate was 99 percent and Uzbek adults have received on average ten years of schooling.⁴³⁴ Ironically, Uzbekistan's highly educated and skilled labor force, in the face of limited economic opportunity, faces close to 20 percent underemployment. Life expectancy at birth is just over 68 years, though health care quality has declined since the breakup of the Soviet Union.⁴³⁵

Since independence, and despite gender equality in education, there has been a trend to return to traditional gender roles (from relative gender equality during the Soviet Union), with women more commonly seen as homemakers, subordinate to men in the household. Some 45 percent of students at the post-graduate level are women, 37 percent at the Doctoral level. Women in leadership positions in the government rose from 6 percent in 1994 to 16 percent in 2005. Women's health indicators have shown some improvement. The maternal mortality rate dropped to 30 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008 (compared to 53 in 1990), although there is significant variation in rates across Uzbekistan's provinces. Women's participation in the labor force (58 percent) is lower than that of men (70.2 percent).⁴³⁶

Uzbekistan has seen rather tense relationships with Western countries, in large measure due to its human rights record. Ties have improved somewhat in recent years, in part as the US has sought military bases, and Europeans alternative energy sources. Uzbekistan's public/civic sphere is limited. Political opposition is tightly restricted, the media is censored, and the president holds most decision making power, (despite constitutional provisions for separation of powers).⁴³⁷ Religious extremism and terrorism tend to dominate the political agenda, though American presence in the region and government clampdowns on religious activity have limited terrorist incidents. A commonly held view holds that labeling political opponents as religious extremists is motivated or at least colored by a desire to limit political competition.

Religion and the State

Islam plays important, though often complex, roles in Uzbek society. Uzbekistan has the largest Muslim population in Central Asia; approximately twenty-six million, or 96 percent of the country are identified as Sunni Muslim. About five percent are Russian Orthodox. Sufism has witnessed a strong revival in Central Asia, particularly with the Sufi Naqshbandi order in Uzbekistan, and is often portrayed as an alternative to more extremist Islamism.⁴³⁸ The government has reached out to the Sufi-led Islamic Supreme Council of America (ISCA), and asked representatives to observe the presidential elections in 2000.⁴³⁹

Since independence, Uzbekistan has witnessed an Islamic revival, and the government is concerned with a rise in religious fundamentalism. Although the constitution mandates freedom of religion, the government bans all non-approved religious activities, while promoting a state-sponsored Islam.⁴⁴⁰ Unregistered organizations and those who practice outside state control are subject to persecution; some 6,500 Uzbeks are in prison because of religious extremism or political beliefs.⁴⁴¹ The Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Uzbekistan is in practice a state controlled agency which oversees mosque functioning and religious sermons.⁴⁴² The government has responded forcefully to civic protests believed to have extremist elements. A 2005 government crackdown on a civilian protest (said by the government to have been organized by Islamist extremists who aimed to overthrow the government) resulted in hundreds of casualties.

Faith-Inspired Organizations and Development

Civil society has a limited role in social and development work in Uzbekistan, and relatively few NGOs, secular and faith-inspired, have a presence in the country. The government has, since 2005, required the re-registration of NGOs, sharply restricting NGO activities. Government (November 2010) reports that over 5,100 NGOs operate in Uzbekistan, more than double the 2000 number.⁴⁴³ However, outside reports suggest a far smaller number (415), with tight control exercised on foreign and domestic NGOs through controlling their funds, closing operations, or denying registration.⁴⁴⁴ The mandatory registration process for NGOs is detailed and bureaucratic, and registered NGOs must ensure that the government has access to all program details. Even so, a few NGOs and other development organizations, including faith-inspired organizations, do implement diverse development programs in the country.

Uzbekistan joined the Organization for the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1995 and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in 2003. In 2009, IDB in conjunction with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), established the \$500 million Islamic Infrastructure Fund, to make Islamic law compliant equity investments accessible to twelve member countries, including Uzbekistan.⁴⁴⁵ IDB has supported various sector projects, including supplying regional health care branches with technical equipment and reconstruction of major roads.⁴⁴⁶

Few international Muslim organizations operate in Uzbekistan. The Aga Khan Development Network runs programs to provide villages with solar power. Mosques are involved in charity at the local level through the Islamic practices of zakat, waqf, and sadaqah. Shrines serve as vehicles for channeling government funding into welfare services, and development of these shrines is one of the few areas where the government promotes independent Islamic development. The Oltin Meros Foundation, with the support of UNESCO, develops shrines around specific activities to promote economic development, including tourism and folk handicrafts.⁴⁴⁷

Several international, primarily Christian, faith-inspired organizations operate in Central Asia, and some implement projects in Uzbekistan. However, their limited portfolios focus on specific interventions, and largely avoid areas including human rights and advocacy.

Caritas International has branches in five areas of Uzbekistan, including the capital. Services include soup kitchens targeting the elderly and homeless, an after-school children's club, a medicine distribution project, and sports and computer literacy initiatives for children.⁴⁴⁸ World Vision, in Uzbekistan since 2001, currently operates eleven community development programs that assist homeless children, support HIV/AIDS prevention, and provide health care for people with disabilities. Habitat for Humanity currently provides water filters to villages.⁴⁴⁹

Refugee support is another area where some Christian groups are active. The 2010 ethnic-linked violence in Kyrgyzstan left many ethnic Uzbeks dead or displaced. The ACT Central Asia Forum's members: Christian Aid, DanChurchAid and the Inter church organization for development (ICCO) maintained contact with partners in the border region to identify the urgent needs, working with World Vision Uzbekistan.⁴⁵⁰ DanChurchAid is scoping possibilities for further engagement in Uzbekistan itself.

The government strictly regulates religious schools and all religious education centers must be officially sanctioned and staffed by state-approved instructors. There are ten madrassas, including two for women; students who wish to become imams generally pursue university-level education at the Islamic Institute in Tashkent. The government does not permit Shia inspired schools or private religious instruction. Many imams do, however, offer informal religious education, albeit illegally.⁴⁵¹ Gulen Movement schools were banned in 2000.⁴⁵²

Imams belonging to registered mosques visit prisoners convicted of religious extremism, to persuade them to follow a more moderate religious practice.

The US Government has reached out to Islamic leaders in Uzbekistan to promote religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence; in 2004 deputy mufti and head imams from Samarqand and Surkhondarya traveled to the United States to study religious diversity in the US. A three year Comparative Religious Studies Program, funded by the US Embassy in Uzbekistan, encouraged the development of school curricula teaching religious tolerance.⁴⁵³

Women from local communities hold traditional regularly scheduled social or religious gatherings, called *gap*. *Gap* in Uzbek, means a gathering of women who adopt strategies for pooling their money, and take turns using it in an effort to redistribute that wealth. *Gap* networks tend to have limited financial or material resources, and they do not have formal relationships with development donors.⁴⁵⁴ *Gap* networks can promote development using traditional cultural practices, and encourage women to engage in development planning.⁴⁵⁵

Partners and Coordinating Bodies

UNDP is the primary body working to coordinate the work of the government and other organizations involved in poverty reduction and development work.⁴⁵⁶ World Vision Uzbekistan has worked to establish a development network with government institutions.⁴⁵⁷ USAID, ADB, UN Agencies, and the IMF also report some contact with faith-inspired groups. ADB and the UN work alongside the GOU on a Living Standards Strategy based on MDG targets.⁴⁵⁸ The Government produced a first MDG progress report in 2006.⁴⁵⁹

Appendix 1: Map – South and Central Asia



Appendix 2: University of Birmingham Religion and Development Reports: Annotated Bibliography

The following articles were written as working papers and policy briefs through the Religions and Development Research Programme, undertaken by the University of Birmingham and funded by the UK Department for International Development. All articles can be accessed at <http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org>.

MAPPING THE TERRAIN

Muhammad Asif Iqbal, Saima Siddiqui, “Mapping the Terrain: The Activities of Faith-based Organisations in Development in Pakistan,” 2008.

This article maps faith-based activities in Pakistan, highlighting the key role they play in development. The study begins with a contextual historical study delineating the political history and religious demography of Pakistan. The growth of the faith-based development sector in Pakistan is discussed with reference to the colonial period, during which several of these organizations were formed. This article describes the religious terrain in Pakistan as pluralist and religiously vibrant. Despite the political reputation of the country as an Islamic Republic, there are vibrant non-Muslim religious communities, including Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and Zoroastrian (Parsi). Several members of these communities are active in the welfare and development arena, providing healthcare, education, and alleviating poverty. The article examines the emerging trends in the FBO sector, discusses the role of international FBOs in Pakistan, and analyses how the development sector is changing.

The authors argue that FBOs in Pakistan are emerging as important members on key social and political issues. One area, however, where Islamic FBOs are not as engaged as their Christian colleagues is in interfaith dialogue. The authors suggest that while multiple FBOs are active in Pakistan – largely dealing with the same health, gender, and welfare issues – they do not often find consensus on how to approach particular issues. The largest FBOs involved in HIV/AIDS are local or international Christian agencies, while most Islamic FBOs in the country do not focus on this particular health issue.

In a similar trend, Islamic FBOs are not as involved with drug rehabilitation as Christian development agencies, according to the authors’ findings. However, the Muslim FBOs are more likely (perhaps because of their majority religious status) to participate in some controversial political debates. For example, the authors assert that it was primarily Muslim FBOs that fought against the implementation of the Hudood Ordinance, a regressive aspect of *Sharia* Law that blurred the lines between rape and extra-marital sex. The authors use this example to discuss the role of FBOs in shaping the political and religious discourse of the country.

The authors also note that while Christian and Muslim FBOs are still active in Pakistan, the Hindu and Parsi FBOs are losing momentum and are closing down operations. Some of this decline is explained through the size of these minority communities, though the authors hint that interreligious and communal violence may also be another cause, particularly for the Hindu FBOs. For further areas of research, the authors highlight Sufi shrines as an unexplored potential development area. In addition, they note an

emerging trend of urban FBOs providing religious and modern education, thereby presenting competition to the traditional *madrassa* system that only provides theological education. Because of the relative similarity in size, the authors suggest that a comparative study of Christian and Hindu FBOs in Pakistan would yield interesting analysis of minority religious traditions and their faith-inspired activities.

Masooda Bano, Padmaja Nair, “Faith-Based Organizations in South Asia: Historical Evolution, Current Status and Nature of Interaction with the State,” 2007.

This article maps the historical development of faith-inspired organizations in South Asia and their responses to colonial rule, revealing the complex relationship of faith-inspired organizations in South Asia to the state. For some organizations involved in welfare work, the government is a complementary partner; for others, like *madrasas*, the state often questions the role of religious education within a modern worldview. Further, the report highlights, as a feature of development work that is unique to South Asia, the relationship between political parties and the faith-inspired welfare organizations that they fund.

In the first section of the article, the authors discuss the unique features of some of the largest religious traditions in South Asia, such as Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. They briefly describe passages in the sacred texts of each of these traditions that emphasize charity, almsgiving, and philanthropy.

After discussing the religions’ common on charity, the authors describe their differences in approach. In Hinduism, for example, there is an emphasis on temple worship, and many organizations are focused on constructing new temples or repairing old ones for the benefit of the public. In Islam, there is an emphasis on *waqf*, movable or immovable property that is used for Islamic religious purposes as a means of providing social services to the poor. Christianity, in contrast, has long held a clear focus on education and health, resulting in Christian mission hospitals and schools operating throughout the South Asian region. The authors suggest that not all religions are equally active in all sectors of welfare and development service provision. Health-based FBOs are weaker in Islam compared to Christianity, religious education FBOs (such as *madrasas*) are much stronger in Islam than in any other religion, while Hindu organizations tend to offer the widest range of social services. And despite many FBOs seemingly overt religiosity, there are also a number of development organizations that are faith-inspired and yet choose not to identify as religious organizations.

The authors also take a historical approach, highlighting the development of FBOs from the colonial period into the modern era. During the colonial era, there was family prestige associated with philanthropy; the authors suggest that this is why such a large number of educational institutes and hospitals were established during that period. Other influences that contributed to the growth of FBOs include the rise of an educated middle class and local reactions to Christian missionary work (such as the emergence of several Hindu reform movements that also had a development focus).

The post-Partition and post-Independence era has ushered in more complex forms of FBOs in the region, including political parties that also engage in social welfare activities. As migration to the US, Canada, and Britain increase, what were once local religiously inspired organizations are now growing into transnational or international movements and/or organizations. Donations are collected from diaspora communities overseas to build educational facilities, hospitals, and rehabilitation centres in local

neighbourhoods in South Asia. This growing trend has changed the dynamic between the state and FBOs. While some governments are happy to work with FBOs because of their international recognition and increased funding, other governments prefer to keep them at bay. The authors conclude that the future of FBOs in South Asia, a religiously pluralist region, is particularly strong and that their range of activities will continue to grow wider and deeper.

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Sarah C. White, “Domains of Contestation: Women’s Empowerment and Islam in Bangladesh,” 2009.

This article analyzes Islam’s ability to empower women in the context of development in Bangladesh, a country where gender inequality appears to be on the decrease at the same time that Islam is more engaged in development and civil society. Bangladesh is an odd mix of the secular and the spiritual, making it a particularly interesting site to research the intersection of gender, religion, and development. The author argues that although the state was founded on largely secular grounds, it has become more and more identified with Islam, through the rise of *madrasas* and more public displays of religious observance. At the same time, women’s participation in politics has also increased along with a rise in literacy levels.

In order to delve more deeply into the complex forms of female empowerment in Bangladesh, the author focuses her ethnographic research on two women: a lower-middle-class woman, who is also a member in the reformist missionary group Tablighi-Jama’at, and a wealthy urban woman with some informal religious roles. Both women value their faith and believe that it teaches respect and engagement in society; however, both are also part of a patriarchal society that places women in the center of the home with family.

The author finds a complex and diverse picture: The influence of Tablighi Jama’at motivates some women to pray and adhere more strictly to their religious obligations, while the Islamic political party Jama’at-i-Islami encourages women to stay with the family and abstain from political participation. The author asserts that both situations can be interpreted as methods of empowerment for these particular women in their specific contexts. She concludes that western academics must expand their current models of empowerment models beyond a focus on sexual freedoms toward a framework that engages the complexity of Islam, development, and gender in Bangladesh.

EDUCATION (*MADRASAS*)

Masooda Bano, “Allowing for Diversity: State-Madrasa Relations in Bangladesh,” 2007.

In this article, Bano examines *madrasa* reform in Bangladesh as a potential model for other South Asian countries. After tracing the history of the *madrasa* system in Bangladesh from the colonial period into the post-Independence era, Bano argues that there is a real divergence between the objectives of reform for the traditional *ulema* and the educational standards of the modern government. At the same time, Bano notes the efforts and interests of the *ulema* themselves in improving the *madrasa* curriculum; one example is the development of the Deoband schools as a reform movement from within the Islamic

tradition, one that was met with resistance from more conservative groups. The *ulema* in Bangladesh and Pakistan are also committed to reviewing their texts so they can improve the level of education they provide for the *madrasa* students.

Yet Bano highlights the discordance between the type of reform the *ulema* is willing to engage and the government's interest in moving the *madrasa* curriculum more in line with modernity. The majority of the *ulema* sees this kind of reform – such as introducing secular and scientific subjects into the curriculum – as a betrayal of Islam and is hesitant to let the government control the dissemination of religion. This leads to a contentious relationship with governing bodies and an increased government suspicion that *madrasas* have a radical agenda.

The reform efforts have led to two *madrasa* systems in Bangladesh: the state-funded *Aliya Madrasa*, which have integrated secular subjects along with Islamic education, and the traditionally structured *Qomi madrasas*. While the state-funded *Aliya madrasa* system has expanded over the years, the *Qomi madrasa* system has the strongest leadership and the most unity. And while graduates from the *Aliya Madrasas* are competing for jobs in the open market, graduates from the *Qomi* system are fulfilling religious positions in mosques, leaving control of religious authority and interpretation in the hands of the *Qomi madrasas*. Hence, the Bangladeshi reform program is not the best model for integrating *madrasas* in a liberal society but is a viable means of providing education in conservative societies. Anon concludes that any reform agenda, whether sponsored by the government or introduced by the *ulema*, will take time and a deeper understanding of the how the system works and its public appeal.

Masooda Bano, “Contesting Ideologies and the Struggle for Authority: State-Madrasa Engagement in Pakistan,” 2007.

In the post-9/11 environment there has been considerable international attention on the *madrasa* system in South Asia, particularly in majority-Muslim nations like Bangladesh and Pakistan. Thus, the *ulema* and the *madrasa* leaders in Pakistan consider any government reform agenda to be associated with U.S. policy, and are resistant to the changes. However, Bano suggests that the Pakistani government has itself had a *madrasa* reform agenda since the 1960s; it has been engaged in a tug-of-war with the *ulema* since that time to introduce modern subjects into the school curriculum and thereby integrate the *madrasa* students into mainstream society.

Bano contends that the *madrasas* have been able to resist reform because of the strong links between political agents and Islam and because of the strong support base between the more conservative elements of society and the senior *ulema*. Bano also suggests that one of the major areas of contention is that the government tries to secularize the curriculum using a top-down approach, essentially telling the *madrasa* leadership to introduce secular subjects into the schools in addition to teaching Islamic subjects.

However, what the government fails to fully realize is that the *madrasas* are the main disseminators of Islamic education. Although the general population of Pakistan is a mix of socially liberal and conservative, there are a fair amount of parents that would like their children to be well-versed in Qur'anic studies and find the *madrasas* a viable and inexpensive option. Bano suggests that the government resist the temptation to integrate modern subjects into the curriculum, and instead push for modernization through allowing new interpretations of Islamic texts to be taught. This method would

ensure that the students were engaging modern methods of interpretation and learning about the diversity within their own religious tradition. This type of education, although based in the traditional *madrassa* system, enables the students to integrate more fully into society and compete with graduates from elite private schools.

Bano notes the complexity of the situation in Pakistan where the government tends to be mostly secular although the avowed ethos of the nation is Islamic., and concludes that until the governments of Islamic nations solidify their own identity as either religious or secular, *madrassa* reform coming from the government will be difficult to produce and sustain.

Padmaja Nair, “The State and *Madrasas* in India”, 2009.

Madrasas in India, where Islam is a minority religion, are in a unique position. They have the dual duty of providing education while maintaining the religious and cultural identity of their community. In India, the relationship between the state and the *madrasas* is immediately different because the government is both secular and democratic, and while it promises freedom of religion for all it is still overwhelmingly Hindu.

The report notes that roughly 15% of India’s population is Muslim; by far India’s largest religious minority. But, Nair asserts, despite these large numbers Muslims are not fully or equally integrated into the social fabric and in some cases are heavily disadvantaged. One of the main areas of inequality that Nair describes is in the educational arena, where most Muslim communities are not as educated as that of Hindus and have less access to schools. The Muslim community, anxious to improve educational access for their youth, consider *madrasas* a viable option; however, the socio-political context of Muslims in India and the fear of radicalism mean that the *madrassa* system has met political resistance.

The first part of the article describes the historical evolution of *madrasas* in India, focusing on the period just before British rule. Nair goes on to address the post-Independence agenda of the secular state and its relationship to minority rights for the Muslim community. Employing a review of policy and program documents as well as interviews with leaders of national Muslim parties like Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind, Nair depicts the complex relationship between modernization, the *madrassa* system, and the Muslim minority. The report reveals that there has always been a strong relationship between the state and the *madrasas*, though this relationship has recently grown more complicated because of international politics and the increased fear of alleged terrorism linked to *madrassa* education. The Indian government legitimizes its interventions into *madrasas* because of their constitutional commitment to education for children between the ages of 6 and 14. In turn, the *madrasas* invoke their constitutional right to provide an Islamic education for their children. The report finds that – whether for political reasons or not – government intervention of *madrasas* in India has managed to dilute the religious content of the curriculum. Further, the report makes argues that the low numbers of Muslim children attending *madrasas* suggests that support for *madrasas* is influenced more by political and populist agendas than by a genuine interest in raising literacy levels.

The report suggests that the relationship between the state and *madrasas* in India is intimately linked to financial support. If the *madrasas* are receiving generous financial aid, they are willing to be more flexible with their curriculum, adding secular and vocational subjects to replace strictly Islamic ones. But

the financial support varies from state to state and is often determined by partisan politics, thus creating further electoral tensions in areas with smaller Muslim communities. The constitutional obligations to minority communities also influence the government reform agenda, which differs from urban to rural settings. Nair notes that this study is limited to two particular Indian states with a specific historical relationship to the Muslim community, and suggests more extensive research in the region.

Masooda Bano, “Female *Madrasas* in Pakistan: A Response to Modernity,” 2010.

This paper addresses the recent demand for female educational facilities in Pakistan. Bano traces the historical developments of female *madrasas* in Pakistan since the 1970s. The demand for Islamic education among young women who have already received secular education is on the rise. Bano argues that globalization, mass media, and increasingly exposing women from middle income families to western notions of gender equality and independence create anxiety for educated women. Because they are educated, they want to find jobs and have careers that match their aspirations. Bano argues that research reveals that female *madrasas* are regarded as complementary to secular education rather than a substitute. The perception of family members is that *madrasas* increase piety and family-oriented values and provide knowledge and contacts for girls from rural areas. Further, most families believe that *madrasas* increases the social status of female graduates in their local community.

Bano argues that the periods in the 1960s and 1970s which introduced new levels of liberalization within the country are responsible for the increase in female *madrasas*. In the 1960s, Ayub Khan, the country’s first martial law administrator, tried to emulate aspects of the west that he found progressive. He introduced Family Law Ordinances that discouraged polygamy by making it difficult to have a second wife without the permission of the first. In addition, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto encouraged women to participate in politics at the grass roots level and in senior positions.

These enhanced and more publically visible opportunities for women in politics and society caused the *ulema* to question whether they were doing enough to ensure that the women in their communities were not seduced by the liberal values of the west. Female *madrasas* emerged as a method to protect the traditional family unit and the family from what was considered pervasive western liberalism. Bano asserts that the notions of western feminism cannot accurately gauge the types of female empowerment that exist in Islamic contexts. Many Muslim women consider their engagement at female *madrasas* as a type of empowerment and compare their own role as the source of the Islamic family foundation with western feminism. They argue the latter has resulted in high divorce rates, the breakdown of the family, and putting the elderly in nursing homes, all behavior that is reprehensible in Islam.

Bano argues that while secular education fills the youth with a sense of self worth that is tied to economics and employability, the *madrasa* system goes beyond that. The female graduates from *madrasas* function to fulfill the girls’ desires as well as the practical aspects of their lives. The *madrasa* education makes them feel like they are more than just numbers in a capitalist market. Further, the girls note that their peers in secular institutions are filled with material desires for good clothes and jewelry. However, the girls from the *madrasas* claim they have enough knowledge of the Prophet’s life to guide them through this life without getting attached to materialism. Therefore, they have more freedom than their peers and find pride in their duties as wives and mothers as well as students and teachers. Bano

suggests that the main reason for the popularity of female *madrasas* is the value put on divine rewards over material success.

FAITH-INSPIRED POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE STATE

Masooda Bano, “Markers of Identity: Religious Political Parties and Welfare Work- The Case of the Jama’at-i-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh,” 2009.

This paper addresses the reasons that so many political parties in South Asia also have substantial welfare programs that they organize, fund, and manage. Is it possible that welfare work is merely a way to win votes or is there more substance to their behavior? If indeed the political parties only offer welfare services as a means of securing votes, it is worth asking why some very successful welfare organizations have little success in the polls.

An investigation of the welfare work of the Jama’at-i-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh reveals that this political organization is involved in a wide range of charitable, welfare, and development services, including health care, education, emergency relief, and orphan support. The organizations also charge a lower fee than the market rate for every service they provide.

Bano observes that the Jama’at-i-Islami is organized very differently in Pakistan than in Bangladesh because of historical, political, and practical reasons. Whereas the Jama’at in Pakistan has a strong network of welfare services, in Bangladesh the Jama’at members play key roles in a number of independent organizations that reflect their religious ideology and their commitment to social justice. While the Jama’at is a registered political party in Pakistan, it is periodically restricted and banned in some parts of Bangladesh. The study also reveals that although religious political parties are complex organizations and have difficult, often contentious relationships with the state, they do provide a number of welfare services to a large base of people and have strong networks with voluntary organizations.

Bano questions how the Jama’at decides to get involved in different projects and how, as an organization, it determines where its focus will lie. Bano suggests that the Jama’at’s inspiration lies at the intersection of their religious commitments and the needs of the community. Therefore, education is a large concern for the Jama’at organization because it is an important emphasis of the Prophet and because it is critical for the economic and social development of the community. In addition, Bano argues that the Jama’at in Bangladesh and Pakistan are always seeking opportunities to help their community while remaining true to the tenets of Islam.

Bano concludes this article by noting that western political theorists have not accurately understood the phenomena of the religiously inspired political parties in the South Asian contexts. While these parties might reap some material benefits during the course of their work, the primary motivation is the welfare of the *ummah* and the promulgation of their religious ideology. Yet, they are competing for membership, citizen loyalty, and resources. This makes their relationship with the state and with other political organizations and actors particularly tricky because although they have a spiritual agenda, it is enacted in the political sphere. Bano also suggests that organizations in South Asia undertake welfare work because they consider it an integral part of their religious identity. The importance of welfare work also motivates

party members and followers and provides them with tangible evidence of their work and of God's approval in this world.

Padmaja Nair, "Religious Political Parties and their Welfare Work: Relations between the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata Party and Vidya Bharatiya Schools in India," 2009.

This article addresses the distinctions between two of the largest political parties engaged in welfare and development services in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) have unique characteristics that blur the line between political party, religious party, and/or religiously inspired welfare organizations. The BJP which has held power at the national level multiple times would not self-identify as a religious political party, although, arguably, their behavior is in part motivated by some religious commitments. In contrast, the RSS actively pursues a *Hindutva* agenda, while having strong ties in the political and welfare context with the BJP.

This study is based on ethnographic research in multiple states, particularly Madhya Pradesh, the key state for BJP power, and Uttar Pradesh, where the group lost their political standing. The author relies on interviews with key informants in several states. Further, the study tries to analyze the popularity of the Vidya Bharatiya Schools, their relationship to the RSS, and their role in education as well as increasing the RSS's *Hindutva* agenda.

After completing this research project, the author found that the RSS promotes the idea of an idealized Hindu nation and the doctrine of *Hindutva*, which argues that Indian culture and identity is defined by Hindu culture. In many areas, especially where there are large numbers of Muslims, Sikhs, or other religious minorities, there has been criticism that *Hindutva* is a Hindu religious agenda. However, the RSS would argue that *Hindutva* is beyond religious identity, that it is a type of nationalism that encompasses other religious identities. Therefore, if one is an Indian, regardless of whether s/he is a Muslim, Christian, or Sikh, one is automatically also a cultural Hindu and should believe in the promotion of *Hindutva*. The leaders of the RSS have also been heavily criticized for promoting the interests of the upper castes and using welfare services as a method to invite conversions to Hinduism or to stop conversion out of Hinduism (a pertinent issue in the subaltern or Dalit community).

The author asserts that the BJP was formed to further the political aspirations of the RSS, while the concept of the Vidya Bharatiya Schools arose from the desire to groom young minds to desire *Hindutva* for the future of their nation. Whereas the BJP is willing to dilute the *Hindutva* ideology to secure more votes and hence, keep them in power, the RSS is unyielding in the missionizing of their message. The secular ideology of the Indian government is also facing some complexities because of the Vidya Bharatiya Schools, as there is pressure from the state ministries to "saffronize" or in other words, "Hinduize" the school curricula. Some of these changes include rewriting Indian history to reflect a very particular Hindu perspective. As the Vidya Bharatiya Schools are state-funded, this causes issues for the secular government.

The article describes the difficulties in drawing sharp lines between the activities and ideologies of these three organizations. Despite its *Hindutva* agenda, the RSS is a welfare organization not a religious group, while the BJP is a political party that is hesitant to address its religious inspirations. Further, the links between the three organizations are tenuous and, depending on the nature of the political environment,

can run the spectrum. Sometimes, the BJP supports the RSS; yet at other times, the two organizations claim they have no ideological connection. The Vidya Bharatiya Schools, while promoting an active *Hindutva* agenda, are also providing good education to the poorest members of society as a welfare service and do consider their activities as a form of missionizing. To conclude, the authors argue that the boundaries between religious organizations and political organizations with *Hindutva* agendas in India are difficult to define, and the borders between these organizations are also in constant flux.

Gurpreet Mahajan and Surinder S. Jodhka, “Religions, Democracy, and Governance: Spaces for the Marginalized in Contemporary India,” 2009.

The authors discuss the role of the constitutional commitment to freedom of religion as the backdrop for the role of marginalized communities in India. The authors recognize that the diversity of India often means that organized religious parties do not always succeed in addressing the needs of the majority members of their community. On the contrary, not all members of the community choose to align themselves with one single party, but rather choose political representation due to affiliations such as caste, tribe, and clan. In this article, the authors engage case studies from Punjab and Maharashtra to discuss the political engagements of three religious communities: the Muslims, the Sikhs, and the Hindus. The authors suggest that despite globalizations and western influences, religious identity continues to be the most important determining factor of life in India. In addition, religion has both moral and social dimensions and hence, affects both the social and political decisions of religious individuals.

The authors consider the elements of communitarian discord and empathy in these three distinct religious communities. The Muslims in Maharashtra are the largest religious minority and yet politically they have been on the periphery. Communal violence and internal caste politics have further divided the Muslims in India and keep them from being a united political force. Similar to the subalterns, the Hindu Dalits or Scheduled Castes of India, the Muslim population is internally divided and has not articulated a single, unified agenda. Further, there is a new trend of OBC or “Other Backward Classes” movements in which the marginalized Muslim community actively participates. This causes tensions within the Muslim community, as the OBCs are not comprised of the poor Muslims while, they claim, the wealthy elite Muslims largely ignore their complaints. Further, the formation of new OBC groups create complications with Hindu subaltern or Dalit communities who argue that the newly formed OBC groups are in the position to steal government benefits that should rightfully be theirs.

Other complications have arisen from the creation of OBC groups. Although the original census by the Mandal Commission did not consider religious distinctions to be a factor in determining the disadvantaged position of social groups, other communities have argued that religion is indeed a factor. While Muslims and Sikhs and other minorities have formed OBC groups and are seeking government benefits and welfare services, some Hindu groups argue that the OBC category is limited to those with caste discrimination and prejudice. This places non-Hindu communities in the unique position of bearing the burden of proof to prove to the government that the discrimination they face is due to caste pollution and politics as opposed to any other type of prejudice.

The article discusses similar issues in the marginalized Sikh community, describing the ex-Hindu community in Maharashtra that converted en masse to Buddhism post-Independence, as well as hinting at potential issues in the Christian population as well. The authors argue that while religious beliefs and

commitments can enhance a community's struggle for inclusion and political power, it can also hinder equal access to opportunities. In addition, as the diversity of their case studies reveal, it is not helpful to think of religious communities as monolithic groups that all agree on the same agenda. While religion is a part of an individual's identity, it is simply one of many identity markers, and for marginalized groups, this particular identity can take a back seat to their identity as marginalized peoples. In conclusion, the authors assert that personal religious freedom and religious expression and freedom in the political sphere are distinct and can often create contradictory and problematic responses.

Mohammed Waseem and Mariam Mufti, "Religion, Politics, and Governance in Pakistan", 2009.

The authors discuss the role of Islam in Pakistan, and the relationship between Muslim organizations and development of welfare policy by government bodies. The authors argue that the traditional role of Islam in the Pakistani political sphere has been functionalist. The state has employed Islamic language and pursued an Islamic agenda for the benefit of the country's long-term political goal. It has also tried at various points to control the religious message by co-opting the religious leaders, trying to change the curriculum at *madrastas*, influencing the *ulema*, and levying heavy taxation policies on religious shrines.

The ideology of Pakistan was pulled in multiple directions since its formation in 1947. There is certainly one dominant ideology in Pakistan that wanted the state to have a secular constitution after the Westminster model with a healthy dose of western, liberal character. However, the authors assert that the country, its leaders and its citizens have also struggled to define religion in the context of the country and in its political discourse. Further, the *ulema* have struggled to introduce religion into the political sphere through implementing *sharia*, while the elites have generally resisted and fought for a western-style legal system with a few *sharia* accommodations. The tug-of-war between the complete implementation of *sharia* and maintaining the more liberal legal system has been a major factor in political discourse for the past 50 years. To complicate matters further, the country has experienced period of internal strife with violent attacks on the Christian and Hindu minorities as well as the Ahmediyya and Shia Muslim minorities.

This study traces the roots of Islamism in the political arena in Pakistan beginning with the Pakistan movement through the post-Partition era and into the development of religiously-inspired or influenced political parties. The authors then examine the special case of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and a specific study of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), a unique alliance of religious political parties with a dynamic role in government. The study addresses the ways in which religiously-inspired political parties have multiple layers of commitment and action. The authors try to depict the complexity of the relationship that religiously-inspired political parties, in this case Islamic ones, have with other political parties, with donor agencies abroad, with the central or federal government, and with other Islamist parties that stand in opposition to their own. Therefore, the authors also note the voices of dissent within the Islamic context and highlight the fact that religious actors and adherents are not a monolithic group but exist in contexts that are replete with disagreements and discord.

The authors pay close attention to the political situation in NWFP as a pertinent case study for Islamist politics. The case study reveals that Islamism thrives on elite politics and intra-communitarian conflict. The conflicts were used to further their appeal at the polls and research also showed that Islamist groups were willing to sacrifice ideology for future electoral wins that guaranteed power. In addition, the

military has often turned to these religious political parties to garner support and help them control the citizens in times of need, thereby establishing a firm relationship between the two groups. Further, the growth of *madrasas* have allowed religiously inspired political organizations more control and allowed the ideology of Islamization to become more integrated into the mainstream. The authors conclude by suggesting that the analysis of the MMA as an example of an Islamist political party is inconclusive. In many ways, the organization engages in providing good development services for issues related to gender, health, and education. These parties are also adroit at securing donor parties from overseas and getting local news the attention it deserves; however, the overall long term goals of the organization and whether they will be good for the country remains to be seen.

Annotated Bibliography

Books

Chary, Manish. *India: Nation on the Move: An Overview of India's People, Culture, History, Economy, IT Industry and More*. Bloomington: University Press, 2009.

In this book, the author argues that India has emerged as an economic powerhouse post-Independence. The author describes India's culture, ancient and contemporary history, vibrant religious communities across the country, and the social and political challenges facing the Asian and Indian community. The author also provides an in-depth look into the fascinating aspects of Indian life including caste, marriage, social problems and economic production.

Heitzman, James and Robert Worden, eds. *Bangladesh: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989.

This country study addresses the major political moments in Bangladeshi history. The study includes well researched sections on society, economy, the affects of climate change, gender related issues, and the role of religion in Bangladeshi culture and society.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

The author describes the complex situation between the secular Indian government the role of religion and caste, including the issues facing the Dalit community. The author traces the role of B.R. Ambedkar in the drafting of the Indian Constitution and the guarantee of religious freedom it declared. The author also addresses the role of caste politics and inter-caste violence that is pervasive in many parts of the country.

Jaffrelot, Christophe, ed. *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*. New York: Princeton University Press, 2007.

This is an edited volume with a diverse number of contributors that address the rise of Hindu Nationalism and *Hindutva* ideology from different perspectives. The book addresses Hindu reform movements and the development of the BJP and the RSS as political parties and the rise of interreligious violence in India post-Independence.

Das, Veena. *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

This book describes the critical events in the history of contemporary India within an anthropological framework. The author addresses the major political events including Partition and pertinent social issues such as minority rights and the abolishment of *sati*. The author also analyzes the rise of communal violence, the development of militant politics, and the recent empowerment of women's groups.

Esposito John L. and M. Hakan Yavuz, eds., *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003.

This edited volume examines the successful Islamic modernist Fethullah Gülen movement. Combining a devotion to Islam with love for modern learning, especially modern science, the Fethullah Gülen movement has gained a substantial following since 1991 has achieved great influence in Central Asia through the establishment of schools. Contributors explore the origins and establishment of the Gülen movement, its religious formation and spread across Turkey and Central Asia.

Hussain, Zahid. *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Pakistani author and journalist describes the complexities of political power in Pakistan and the internal struggle against militant Islam and *jihadism*. The author addresses the role of *madrasas* in present day Pakistan and their connection to militant Islam as well as the struggle for government control over religious educational institutions. With keen attention to the religious landscape of the country, the author also describes the role of civil society and sectarian politics in Pakistan's struggle for stability.

Gülen ,M. Fethullah and Mehmet Unal, Naglihan Haliloglu, Mustafa Mencutekin, Korkut Altay, and Hakan Yessilova, trans., *Toward a Global Civilization of Love & Tolerance*. Third Impression Press, 2004.

This book is written by Fethullah Gülen and aims to awaken Muslims across the world to a greater awareness of Islam as a religion that teaches love and tolerance. With narratives from his own life and study of Islam, Gülen expounds his own pluralistic beliefs and calls upon Muslims to be witnesses to God's universal mercy and work in devotion to his service through dialogue and interreligious cooperation the world.

Khan, Yasmin. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

The author examines the context, and aftermath of Partition, weaving together local politics and ordinary lives with the larger political forces including the role of the British in fostering the Independence movement. She notes that poor planning and lack of long-term thinking played a large factor in the division of India along religious lines and contends that the aftershocks are still in effect today economically, politically, and socially.

Marshall, Katherine Marisa Van Saanen, *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications, 2007.

This book assesses the intersection of faith and development and the individuals who are inspired by their faith work for social change and social welfare. The book highlights that some of the most devoted people in the development field are faith leaders who live and work with poor communities. The authors hope to build partnerships between development practitioners and faith-inspired actors and organizations.

Fair, Christine and Ali Riaz, eds., *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*. New York: Routledge Press, 2010.

This is an edited volume bringing together journalists and academics with different backgrounds and field experiences to assess the present situation in Bangladesh. The articles include discussion on the political environment of Bangladesh, Islamist ideology, and Islamic organizations that are part of the society and affect the political and social arena through their particular ideology.

Shankar, Sri Sri Ravi, and James Larsen. *Wisdom for the New Millennium*. Washington, DC: The Art of Living Foundation Press, 1999.

This book is written by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the co-founder of the International Association for Human Values, a non-profit organization with an immense following and international recognition and praise. The book addresses the importance of incorporating spirituality as a necessary part of human development and the role of meditation for personal healing.

Sharma, Jyotirmay. *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism*. Delhi: Penguin Global Press, 2004.

This book addresses the complexity of the term *Hindutva* in the modern Indian context and its connection to Indian politics. The book traces the historical development of the term, its contested usage in the political context and the various philosophers, idealists, and reformists that have focused on the reinterpretation of Hinduism that has, in some way, affected the evolution and emergence of this term.

Srinivas, Tulasi. *Winged Faith: Rethinking Globalization and Religious Pluralism through the Sathya Sai Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

In this book, the author explores the emergence of the Sathya Sai Movement and the implications for religious pluralism in the global context. The Sathya Sai global civil religious movement incorporates Hindu and Muslim practices, Buddhist, Christian, and Zoroastrian influences, and New Age rituals and beliefs. The author analyzes this movement and suggests new methods for studying the role of religion in light of new global developments including international religious movements.

Sikand, Yogindar. *Origins and Development of the Tablighi-Jama'at (1920-2000): A Cross-Country Comparative Study*. Delhi: Sangam Books Ltd, 2002.

The author traces the history and development of the Tablighi-Jama'at from a small pietistic movement in India before Partition into the largest Islamic religious movement in the world. Sikand describes the political changes that helped the Jama'at in *dawa* (missionary) activities and the role that politics have played in the growth of this pietistic movement and in their development from India, to Pakistan, Bangladesh, and eventually into the international community.

Sugirtharajah, R. S. ed., *Towards a Dalit Theology*. Delhi: Delhi Press, 1990.

This is an edited volume of articles from Dalit Christians who describe the various forms of inter-caste and intra-caste discrimination towards Dalits in modern India. The authors describe caste violence in rural areas and the debates surrounding the inability for Christian Dalits to acquire affirmative action or Scheduled Caste benefits from the Indian government.

Articles

Bano, Masooda. "Contesting Ideologies and the Struggle for Authority: State-Madrasa Engagement in Pakistan." *Religions and Development Research Programme*. Working Paper 14 (2007) University of Birmingham.

This article argues that the relationship between *madrasas* and the government in Pakistan is contentious and rife with difficulties. In the post 9/11 environment the *ulema* and the *madrasa* leaders in Pakistan consider government reform agenda as part of US policy and are resistant to changes. However, the author contends that the Pakistani government has had a *madrasa* reform agenda for many years and has engaged in a tug-of-war with the *ulema* to modernize the curriculum.

Bano, Masooda. "Female Madrasas in Pakistan: A Response to Modernity." *Religions and Development Research Programme*. Working Paper 45 (2010) University of Birmingham.

This paper addresses the recent demand for female *madrasas* in Pakistan. The author traces the historical development of female *madrasas* in Pakistan since the 1970s and argues that globalization, mass media, and western notions of gender equality create anxiety for educated women. Research reveals that female *madrasas* are preferred to secular education in some areas. The perception of family members is that *madrasas* increase piety and family-oriented values.

Bano, Masooda. "Allowing for Diversity: State-Madrasa Relations in Bangladesh." *Religions and Development Research Programme*. Working Paper 13 (2007). University of Birmingham.

State-*madrasa* relations in South Asia are a complex issue. In this article, the author examines *madrasa* reform in Bangladesh as a model for other South Asian countries. The Aliya *madrasa* system in Bangladesh was able to integrate secular subjects along with Islamic education, while the Qomi *madrasas* remained more traditionally structured. While graduates from the Aliya *madrasas* are competing for jobs in the open market, graduates from the Qomi *madrasas* are fulfilling religious positions in mosques.

Bano, Masooda and Padmaja Nair. "Faith-Based Organizations in South Asia: Historical Evolution, Current Status and Nature of Interaction with the State." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 12 (2007). University of Birmingham.*

This article maps the historical development of faith inspired organizations in South Asia and their response to colonial rule. The authors describe the diversity of religious traditions in South Asia including, Sikhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism. Each religion is unique with different rituals and practices however: one common element between them is a shared love of humanity and the desire to engage in welfare/development work.

Corley, Felix. "Turkmenistan: New Religion Law Defies International Human Rights Agreements." *Worldwide Religious News. Forum 18, November 11, 2003 (2003).*

This article discusses the new religious law in Turkmenistan which declares all unregistered religious activity illegal. It also discusses how the role of religious education is severely restricted creating strife among the religious communities who would like their children to have access to traditional Islamic education. For further information see: <http://wwrn.org/articles/8604/>

Hayward, Susan. *Religious Contributions to Conflict Prevention and Transformation. Catholic Peacebuilding Network Conference, Kroc Institute, Notre Dame University, (2008).*

Hayward addresses the need to engage religious actors and institutions in conflict prevention, and peacebuilding. She describes how religious leaders and organizations have the capacity and resources to reach communities torn by conflict and empower them to move towards reconciliation. For further information see: <http://cpn.nd.edu/assets/14644/hayward.pdf>

Mahajan, Gurpreet and Surinder S. Jodhka. "Religions, Democracy, and Governance: Spaces for the Marginalized in Contemporary India." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 26 (2009). University of Birmingham.*

The authors discuss the role of the Indian Constitutional commitment to freedom of religion, equal treatment and liberty for all peoples as the backdrop for the role of marginalized communities. Communal violence and internal caste politics have further divided India. Conflict exists between Hindu Dalits or Scheduled Castes and the Muslim creating interreligious conflict and strife.

Nair, Padmaja, "The State and *Madrasas* in India." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 15 (2009). University of Birmingham.*

Madrasas in India are in a unique position in South Asia because in the post-Partition era, Islam is a minority religious tradition in India. *Madrasas* in India have the dual duty of providing education and also maintaining the religious and cultural identity for their community. This article addresses some of the tensions for *madrasas* and the Muslim community in modern India.

Nair, Padmaja. "Religious Political Parties and their Welfare Work: Relations between the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata Party and Vidya Bharatiya Schools in India." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 37 (2009). University of Birmingham.*

This article addresses the distinctions between two of the largest political parties Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) that also engage in welfare and development work in India. The authors also address the concept of *Hindutva* and its role in the Hindu reform and development agenda.

Nolan, Tricia D., "Perceptions and Portrayals of Faith-Based Organizations in Education in Emergencies: A Case Study from Sri Lanka" in *Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Situations: 71 Problems, Responses and Possibilities, Vol. 2, Spring (2005).*

This article discusses the role of FBOs and development and questions how, and if, these organizations differ from secular development agencies. The author examines different countries to analyze the need for faith engagement. Further, she questions the dangers of neo-religious imperialism with the US sending FBOs to countries for development projects. For further information see:

http://www.tc.columbia.edu/students/sie/journal/Volume_2/Nolan.pdf

Siddiqui, Saima and Muhammad Asif Iqbal. "Mapping the Terrain: The Activities of Faith-based Organizations in Development in Pakistan." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 24 (2008). University of Birmingham.*

This article maps faith-based activities in Pakistan highlighting the key role of faith-inspired organizations. The article describes the religious terrain in Pakistan as pluralistic and religiously vibrant. Despite the political reputation of the country as an "Islamic Republic" there are vibrant non-Muslim religious communities including Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and Zoroastrian (Parsi). Several communities are active in welfare and development providing healthcare, education, and alleviating poverty.

Tyson, David. "Shrine Pilgrimage in Turkmenistan as a Means to Understand Islam Among the Turkmen." *Central Asia Monitor. No. 1 (1997).*

This article provides a glimpse into Islam in Central Asia and highlights the fundamental traits and aspects of shrine-centered religious practice in Turkmenistan. The author tried to underscore the importance of these religious structures to the well being of society and for the faith of the Muslim community. For further information see:

<http://www.uga.edu/islam/turkmen.html>

White, Sarah C. "Domains of Contestation: Women's Empowerment and Islam in Bangladesh." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 36 (2009). University of Birmingham.*

This article addresses the intersection of religion, gender, and development and discusses how women's roles are evolving in the largely Islamic society of Bangladesh. The author describes how gender inequality is decreasing in Bangladesh while Islam is correspondingly more engaged in development and civil society and there is evidence that women are becoming more religiously committed while gaining empowerment.

White, Sarah C. and Joe Devine. "Religion, Politics, and the Everyday Moral Order In Bangladesh." *Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 40 (2009). University of Birmingham.*

The authors argue that most of the contemporary analysis between religion and development tend to focus on the role of religion in the political sphere and how it affects governance. In the past, Bangladesh has been largely ignored as a site for potential research on the role of religion and development. Although it is a "secular" country, religion is far more integrated and integral than in most western secular societies.

Reports

American University of Central Asia Social Research Center Report (Kyrgyzstan)

This report assesses civil society organizations and participation in Kyrgyzstan. The report analyzes Islamic educational institutions, public organizations, and local Muslim groups. The report also discusses the interaction between government bodies and Muslim communities. For further information see:

http://elibrary.auca.kg:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/466/1/SRC_Muslim%20community%20in%20Kyrgyzstan_Social%20activity%20at%20the%20present%20stage_eng.pdf

Asia Development Bank Report on Poverty (India)

This report by the Asia Development Bank describes poverty rates and alleviation strategies for India. The report also discusses gender discrimination in rural areas, including the socio-economic and cultural difficulties faced by

the girl child, infant mortality rates and gender violence. For further information see:

http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Defining_Agenda_Poverty_Reduction/Vol_1/chapter_23.pdf

Asia Development Bank Report on Women (Pakistan)

This report by the Asia Development Bank addresses the status of women in Pakistan and argues that it is connected with other forms of societal exclusion. The report describes that there is diversity regarding the status of women across social classes, regions, and the rural/urban areas due to the impact of tribal, feudal, and cultural differences. Included are statistics on education, training, health, nutrition, and legal status and the affects of the Hudood Ordinances. For further information see:

http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Pakistan/chap01.pdf

The Asia Development Bank Country Report (Afghanistan, Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka)

Country reports by the Asia Development Bank describe the development challenges in each of the focus countries named. The reports provide statistical information for a variety of development sectors including the rate of gender discrimination, infant mortality, and violence. The reports also describe the ADB projects in the area to raise economic growth. For further information see: <http://www.adb.org/Countries/default.asp>

Asia Development Bank Reports on NGOs (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Turkmenistan)

These three reports describe NGOs working in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan their origin and growth, their sectoral focus, and coordination and networking. The reports also analyze the relationship between the government and NGOs including the legal framework, policy regarding registration, and the tensions between them. For further information see: <http://www.adb.org/NGOs/docs/NGOSriLanka.pdf>;

<http://www.adb.org/ngos/docs/NGOPakistan.pdf>; : <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Civil-Society-Briefs/TKM/CSB-TKM.pdf>

The Asia Foundation (Nepal)

This report outlines the community mediation program in Nepal pioneered by The Asia Foundation. The program, now in its eighth year has provided a platform for local people to respond to conflicts and address their underlying causes through mediation. The program enables people from different communities to come together and solve conflict using mediation strategies. For further information see: <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2010/06/25/local-mediation-a-transformative-approach-to-conflict-in-nepal/#more-5398>

AusAID Report (Pakistan)

This report addresses Australia's strategic approach to aid in Pakistan including the development agenda after the flood. The report provides a country overview, a brief outline of the economy and development challenges as well as the current aid projects that are implemented across the country. For further information see:

<http://www.aisaid.gov.au/country/country.cfm?CountryId=11>

Caritas International Report on AIDS (India)

This report addresses the leadership role exercised by the Catholic bishops of India, particularly through the national Episcopal conference in the prevention HIV/AIDS in India. The report notes the interaction between the government, faith communities, non-governmental organizations, and the impact of their work on persons living with and affected by HIV. For further information see: <http://www.caritas.org/includes/pdf/bestpracticereport.pdf>

Center for Constitutional Dialogue CCD (Nepal)

This CCD report addresses the interaction between the new secular government of Nepal and the role of religion in Nepali culture and society. The report reveals that while the constitution of Nepal is secular, religion plays a distinct role in Nepali society. The report also addresses the attempts by the government to be more inclusive of minority religious traditions. For further information see:

<http://www.ccd.org.np/new/publications/State%20and%20Religion%20English.pdf>

Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) Report (Afghanistan)

The report analyzes the extent to which Afghan religious leaders been involved in the post-2001 efforts to foster development and engage in peacebuilding. The authors highlight the role of religious leaders in the community and addresses ways to better engage them to work for stability and long term peace in the area. For further information see: <http://www.cpau.org.af/docs/ReligiousCivilSocietyinAfghanistan.pdf>

European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Report (Turkmenistan)

This report authored by Martin McKee, Bernd Rechel and Inga Sikorskaya provides an assessment of the state of health in Turkmenistan after the change in the country's leadership and the death of President Niyazov. The report includes information on infant mortality, life expectancy rates, maternal health, HIV, viral Hepatitis For further information see:

http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/centres/ecohost/public_health/niyazov/health_in_turkmenistan_after_niyazov.pdf

Freedom House, Nations in Transit Report (Turkmenistan)

This report addresses the development challenges in Turkmenistan including national democratic governance, the electoral process, civil society, and the role of independent media. The authors provide statistical information on poverty, crime, and corruption and analyze the factors that are slowing the rate of economic growth in the country. For further information see: <http://www.freedomhouse.eu/images/Reports/NIT-2010-Turkmenistan-final.pdf>

Gross National Happiness Commission Report on Education (Bhutan)

This report is a proposal for the integration of Gross National Happiness (GNH) into the school curriculum including teacher training, classroom teaching, and textbooks. The value-based education suggested in the proposal hopes to integrate good governance, psychological well-being, and a moral values system in the current education system. For further information see: <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/PowerPoints/value-education.pdf>

Hunger Project Report on Women (India)

The Hunger Project delineates the issues facing women in rural India including malnutrition, poor health, lack of education, and overwork. The report links female mortality and infant mortality rates to cultural norms that enable gender inequality to persist particularly in rural areas. For further information see:

http://www.thp.org/where_we_work/south_asia/india/research_reports/chronic_hunger_and_status_of_women

IPCS Issue Brief on the Role of *Madrasas* in Society (Pakistan)

This report analyzes the role of *madrasas* in Pakistan from the 1970s into present day. It includes statistics on the number of *madrasas* in the country, the relationship to the government and a brief description of curriculum. The report describes the difficulty of governmental control over the school curriculum and the role of the religious leaders in the in the reform process. For further information see:

http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/2032153432IB11-SubaChandran-MadrassasInPak.pdf

Institute of Policy Studies, Pakistan (Afghanistan)

This report draws attention to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran as a protracted problem that still awaits resolution. The report analyzes long term affects of refugees living in Pakistan and how this will create issues with relations between the two countries. The report also makes suggestions for long term rehabilitation solutions for refugees. For further information see: <http://www.ips.org.pk/international-relation/the-muslim-world/988.html>

Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program Report (Central Asia)

This report analyzes the role of Islam in Central Asia and notes that most of the available information is based on anecdotal evidence of religious activity. The evidence ranks Muslim populations in terms of their religiosity and addresses the role of the government as a repressive force toward religious behavior. Next, the author discusses the

nature and depth of the Islamic revival and the future of political stability in the region. For further information see: <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/1003Abramson.pdf>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Maldives)

This report addresses the development projects of the Red Cross in the Maldives. Projects include health indicators, communicable disease, climate change, and disaster relief efforts. The report also describes the work they engage with their partner organizations. For further information see: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual11/MAAMV00111plan.pdf

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education Report (Afghanistan)

This report outlines the plans for *madrassa* and education reform for Afghanistan in order to improve educational access and standards. The report describes various projects that will be implemented by the government to introduce secular subjects into *madrassa* curriculum, train teachers, and engage other Islamic nations to improve education in Afghanistan. For further information see: http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/News_And_Events/pdf/2010/Afghanistan_NESP.pdf

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of Maldives (Maldives)

This is a government report on the Maldives issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The report includes a description of the legal system, the level of political participation, the status of human rights, and government mechanisms for long term development in the country. For further information see: <http://www.foreign.gov.mv/v3/pdf/Maldives%20UPR%20National%20Report%20-%20submitted%20Aug%202010.pdf>

National Report on the Development of Education (Bhutan)

This report provides an overview of the challenges facing the educational system in Bhutan in the 21st century. It discusses the organization and management structure of the Ministry of Education, the curricular policies, educational content, and teaching and learning strategies in the schools. For further information see: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/bhutan_NR08.pdf

OECD Development and Climate Change Report (Bangladesh)

This report addresses the impact of climate change on development in Bangladesh. The report is from the OECD Development and Climate Change project, an activity being jointly overseen by the Working Party on Global and Structural Policies (WPGSP) of the Environment Directorate, and the Network on Environment and Development Co-operation of the Development Cooperation Directorate. For further information see: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/55/21055658.pdf>

Socio-Economic Implications for Climate Change in Bangladesh (Bangladesh)

This report addresses the impact of climate change on the Bangladesh economy as well as the social and cultural impact of natural disasters in the country. The report provides statistical information on the rise of disease, loss of agriculture, and issues of food security as a result of floods and cyclones in the country. For further information see: <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/igci/downloads/BriefingDoc4.pdf>

United Nations Report (Afghanistan)

This is an in depth country strategy report that discusses the main development challenges facing women in Afghanistan. The report addresses the issues for women during the Taliban regime and strategic methods to improve the way forward including viable projects to raise education and gender empowerment, and peacebuilding. For further information see: <http://www.un.org/events/women/2002/sit.htm>

UNDP Reports (Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan)

The UNDP produces country reports that serve as operations profiles of UN agencies. The country report for Bhutan describes how UN support focuses on five priority areas as derived from the UNDAF namely, Poverty Reduction, Health, Education, Governance, Environment, Disaster Management and the achievement of MDGs. For Nepal, the report includes the MDGs and progress reports including sections on education, extreme hunger, and poverty. In Afghanistan, report focuses on the importance of securing governance in the country. To access UNDP reports and country office sites, see: <http://www.undp.org/mdg/countries.shtml>

UNICEF Reports, Country Overviews (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan)

These UNICEF reports delineate the challenges facing children in Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively. The reports describe literacy levels, health factors, and country-specific natural and political crises that impact education. Reports provide information on various UNICEF projects in the countries that are working to raise education and improve health for children. For further information see:

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan_39946.html;

<http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/bangladesh.html>; <http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/overview.html>

UNICEF Report on the Role of Faith Leaders (Bangladesh)

This UNICEF report describes the role of religious leaders in HIV/AIDS prevention with sections on the activity of *imams* in Bangladesh. The report analyzes the role of the government in training imams in HIV/AIDS prevention and the impact their involvement has on the community. For further information see:

<http://www.unicef.org/rosa/Faith.pdf>

UNESCO Report on Forms and Patterns of Social Discrimination (Nepal)

This report draws attention to the various forms of gender and caste based social discrimination that is operative in various parts of the country. The report addresses the caste related tensions in different regions of Nepal with a special focus on Dalit groups and Dalit women paying attention to the multiple ethnic and tribal conflicts that affect relationships in the country. For further information see:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146086e.pdf>

UNHCR Report (Nepal)

This report outlines the country operations profile for Nepal. The report discusses the Maoist conflict and the ensuing refugee crisis that is a drain on the resources of the country. The report discusses the current conditions in camps and analyzes the need for Nepal to follow refugee conventions to successfully rehabilitate the refugees into civil society and improve socio-economic conditions. For further information see:

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e487856.html>

USAID Report (Pakistan)

This report analyzes Pakistan's development challenges. The country has widespread poverty and weak governance structures, and now faces additional burdens related to the war on terror in neighboring Afghanistan, religious militancy, and insurgency. The report addresses the issues facing the country in education, healthcare, and governance. For further information see: http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2004/asia_near_east/Pakistan.pdf

USIP Reports (Afghanistan; Pakistan)

These reports describe two ongoing projects per country to promote peace-building by engaging local religious leaders in conflict mediation and *madrassa* reform. The Afghanistan report also discusses a dialogue project between Afghanistan and Pakistan to aid the conflict at the border. For further information see:

http://www.usip.org/files/regions/faqs/PIP%20Afghanistan%202-2010_0.pdf; :

<http://www.usip.org/religionpeace/index.html>

World Health Organization Reports: Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives

These reports by the World Health Organization outlines the major health factors in the focus countries. The reports include statistical information on communicable disease, malnutrition, maternal health, and infant mortality rates.

The World Bank Country Reports (India, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Nepal)

These World Bank country reports describe population statistics, poverty, and health care concerns in the named focus countries. The report outlines World Bank programs working for poverty alleviation, peace-building, and agricultural and rural development across the each of countries. Some reports include case studies. For further information see:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/0,,menuPK:115635~pagePK:64020917~piPK:64021009~theSitePK:40941,00.html#CountryReports>

The World Bank Report on HIV (Bhutan)

This report analyzes HIV/AIDS rates in Bhutan and then discusses the factors that could increase infection including the cross-border migration, international travel, behavioral risk factors, and sexually transmitted infections. For further information see:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/Resources/223546-1192413140459/4281804-1231540815570/5730961-1235157256443/HIVAIDSbriefBT.pdf>

The World Bank Report on Women (Afghanistan)

This World Bank country report describes population statistics, poverty, and health care concerns in Afghanistan. The report focuses primarily on the role of women in Afghan society after the end of the Taliban regime and offers strategies to reduce gender discrimination and empower women from rural and urban parts of the country. For further information see:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/Resources/223546-1151200256097/chap1.pdf>

Endnotes

¹Tomalin, Emma, (2009) *Hinduism and International Development: Religions and Development Background Paper*, University of Birmingham – Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 19 – 2009, http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1245229037_working_paper_19.pdf . p. 48.

² Ibid.

³Ibid

⁴ <http://us.artofliving.org/content-about-us?center=usa>

⁵ Kroessin, Mohammed Ralf, *Concepts of Development in 'Islam': A Review of Contemporary Literature and Practice*, University of Birmingham – Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 20 – 2008,

http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1229939956_working_paper_20__web_file.pdf

⁶ http://www.economist.com/node/1787408?story_id=1787408

⁷ <http://www.islamicpluralism.org/1169/sufism-and-the-future-of-islam>

⁸ Most information for this section comes from: Tatla, Darshan, S., *Sikhism and Development: A Review*, University of Birmingham – Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 21 – 2008,

http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1226574653_working_paper_21__web_version.pdf

⁹ White, David L. “From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy.” *Modern Asian Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 2 (May, 1991), pp. 303-320. URL:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/312514>

¹⁰ <http://www.iranica.com/articles/bombay-parsi-panchayat-the-largest-zoroastrian-institution-in-modern-history>

¹¹ <http://www.iranica.com/articles/jejeebhoy-jamsetjee>

¹² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/ataglance/glance.shtml>

¹³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8448290.stm>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ <http://www.jainology.org/projects/>

¹⁶ Ibid

http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1202734590_WP16.pdf

¹⁷ <http://merln.ndu.edu/archive/icg/centralasiaislamandthestate.pdf>

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ <http://www.muslimummah.net/php/articles/articles.php?itemno=153&&category=Women>

²⁰ Masooda Bano, “Female *Madrasas* in Pakistan: A Response to Modernity”, 2010.

²¹ Padmaja Nair, “Religious Political Parties and their Welfare Work: Relations between the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata Party and Vidya Bharatiya Schools in India”, 2009.

²² Muhammad Asif Iqbal, Saima Siddiqui, “[Mapping the Terrain: The Activities of Faith-based Organisations in Development in Pakistan](#)”, 2008

²³ The Berkley Center series of case studies on religion in conflict includes several from South and Central Asia: Sri Lanka and Kashmir among them.

²⁴ *Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, USAID, September 2009, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/Religion_Conflict_and_Peacebuilding_Toolkit.pdf (assessed 27 December 2010).

²⁵ Appleby, Scott R., “Building Sustainable Peace: The Roles of Local and Transnational Religious Actors,” in *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

²⁶ Sampson, Cynthia, “Religion and Peacebuilding” in Zartman, William I. et al, *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, revised edition, United States Institute of Peace, 2007.

²⁷ Biersteker, Thomas, J, *Prospects for the UN Peacebuilding Commission*, 2007, <http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2630.pdf> (accessed 27 December 2010).

- ²⁸ Marshall, Katherine, "Development, Religion, and Women's Roles in Contemporary Society" in *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*, Winter 2010.
- ²⁹ Pandya, Sunil K., "Yearning For Baby Boys," *British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Edition)*, Vol. 296, No. 6632 (May 7, 1988), p. 1312 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29530651> (accessed 31 December 2010)
- ³⁰ ODI Briefing Paper 42 – *Gender and the MDGs*, September 2008, <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2386.pdf> (accessed 30 December 2010).
- ³¹ Hayward, Susan, and Marshall Katherine, *Women, Religion, and Peace: Exploring an Invisible Force – Conference Report*, World Faiths Development Dialogue Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and The United States Institute for Peace, December 2010.
- ³² DeYoung, Alan, J. and Constantine, Elizabeth A., "Regendered Education and Society in the Newly Independent States (NIS) of Central Asia," in Baker, David P. and Wisemen, Alexander W., *Gender, Equality and Education from International and Comparative Perspectives*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2009, UK
- ³³ Marshall, Katherine, "Education for All: Where does religion come in?" in *Comparative Education*, Vol. 46, No. 3, August 2010, 2733-287
- ³⁴ Abramson, David, M., *Foreign Religious Education and the Central Asian Islamic Revival: Impact and Prospects for Stability*. Silk Road Paper, Central Asia – Caucasus Institute – Silk Road Studies Program, March 2010
- ³⁵ Castles, Stephen, and Miller, Mark, J., *Migration in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Migration Policy Institute, July 2009, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=733>
- ³⁶ For further information see: Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., New York, 2004
- ³⁷ Tomalin, Emma, (2009) *Hinduism and International Development: Religions and Development Background Paper*, University of Birmingham – Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 19 – 2009, http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1245229037_working_paper_19.pdf . p. 48.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid
- ⁴⁰ <http://us.artofliving.org/content-about-us?center=usa>
- ⁴¹ Kroessin, Mohammed Ralf, *Concepts of Development in 'Islam': A Review of Contemporary Literature and Practice*, University of Birmingham – Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 20 – 2008, http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1229939956_working_paper_20_web_file.pdf
- ⁴² http://www.economist.com/node/1787408?story_id=1787408
- ⁴³ <http://www.islamicpluralism.org/1169/sufism-and-the-future-of-islam>
- ⁴⁴ Most information for this section comes from: Tatla, Darshan, S., *Sikhism and Development: A Review*, University of Birmingham – Religions and Development Research Programme. Working Paper 21 – 2008, http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1226574653_working_paper_21_web_version.pdf
- ⁴⁵ White, David L. "From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy." *Modern Asian Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 2 (May, 1991), pp. 303-320. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/312514>
- ⁴⁶ <http://www.iranica.com/articles/bombay-parsi-panchayat-the-largest-zoroastrian-institution-in-modern-history>
- ⁴⁷ <http://www.iranica.com/articles/jejeebhoy-jamsetjee>
- ⁴⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/ataglance/g glance.shtml>
- ⁴⁹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8448290.stm>
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ <http://www.jainology.org/projects/>
- ⁵² Ibid
- ⁵³ http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/files/resourcesmodule/@random454f80f60b3f4/1202734590_WP16.pdf
- ⁵⁴ Ibid
- ⁵⁵ <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51616.htm>

-
- ⁵⁶ See US State Department 2010 report on religious freedom, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148789.htm>
- ⁵⁷ World Bank data: <http://www.worldbank.org.bd/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/BANGLADESHEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20195502~menuPK:295767~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:295760,00.html>
- ⁵⁸ Ibid
- ⁵⁹ http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/children_4856.htm
- ⁶⁰ Ibid
- ⁶¹ Ibid
- ⁶² Ibid
- ⁶³ Ibid
- ⁶⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,RFA,,BGD,,4c05091526,0.html>
- ⁶⁵ Ibid
- ⁶⁶ Ibid
- ⁶⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/55/21055658.pdf>
- ⁶⁸ Ibid
- ⁶⁹ http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/I_0116.HTM
- ⁷⁰ Ibid
- ⁷¹ Ibid
- ⁷² Ibid
- ⁷³ <http://countrystudies.us/bangladesh/45.htm>
- ⁷⁴ Masooda Bano, “Allowing for Diversity: State-Madrasa Relations in Bangladesh”, 2007.
- ⁷⁵ <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=150309>
- ⁷⁶ Ibid
- ⁷⁷ http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/children_4866.htm
- ⁷⁸ Ibid
- ⁷⁹ Vishwanath, Tara and Yoshido, Nobuo, “Poverty Maps in Sri Lanka: Policy Impacts and Lessons” in *More than a Pretty Picture: Using Poverty Maps to Design Better Policies and Interventions*, The World Bank, 2007, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPGI/Resources/342674-1092157888460/493860-1192739384563/10412-00_pi-xviii.pdf (accessed 23 November 2010).
- ⁸⁰ Sri Lanka Factsheet. *Asian Development Bank*. http://www.adb.org/Documents/Fact_Sheets/SRI.pdf
- ⁸¹ Central Intelligence Agency. *CIA World Factbook: Sri Lanka*.
- ⁸² 2011 UNHCR Country Operations Profile- Sri Lanka, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4878e6.html>
- ⁸³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. [http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/7E8CFF727BBFB54DC12576B3002DEBD9?OpenDocument#44.2.1](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/7E8CFF727BBFB54DC12576B3002DEBD9?OpenDocument#44.2.1)
- ⁸⁴ Asian Development Bank Country Gender Assessment: Sri Lanka, December 2008, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/CGA-SRI/default.asp>
- ⁸⁵ “Population Characteristics.” *Department of Census and Statistics – Sri Lanka Webpage*. Web. http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/Pop_Chra.asp. Accessed 21 Jul 2010
- ⁸⁶ These figures are derived from the 1981 census and the 2001 census, the latter of which was only carried out in 18 out of Sri Lanka’s 25 districts.
- ⁸⁷ Hayward, Susan, “In the Field: Polonnoruwa, Sri Lanka,” United States Institute for Peace, <http://www.usip.org/in-the-field/polonnoruwa-sri-lanka> (accessed 1 September 2010).
- ⁸⁸ “International Religious Freedom Report 2009 – Sri Lanka,” U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 26 October 2009, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127371.htm> (accessed 1 September 2010).
- ⁸⁹ *U.S. Congress Pressures Sri Lanka on Anti-Conversion Law*, February 5, 2009, The Becket Fund for Religious Freedom, <http://www.becketfund.org/index.php/article/946.html> (Accessed 6 January, 2011)
- ⁹⁰ Asian Development Bank, *A study of NGOs, Sri Lanka*. Asian Development Bank, 1999, <http://www.adb.org/NGOs/docs/NGOSriLanka.pdf> (Accessed 3 September 2010).
- ⁹¹ Nolan, Tricia D., “Perceptions and Portrayals of Faith-Based Organizations in Education in Emergencies: A Case Study from Sri Lanka” in *Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Situations: 71 Problems, Responses and*

Possibilities, Vol. 2, Spring 2005 http://www.tc.columbia.edu/students/sie/journal/Volume_2/Nolan.pdf (accessed 10 November 2010).

⁹² For more information, see Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs Muslim Orphanages website:

<http://www.muslimaffairs.gov.lk/siteview.php?pid=172&title=Muslim%20Orphanages>

⁹³ *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, USAID, Volume 12, Issue 3, May 2010
http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijn/vol12iss3/special_5.htm

⁹⁴ The Donor Peace Support Group was created following the June 2003 Tokyo conference on Sri Lanka, when the international donor community pledged US\$4.3 Billion for rehabilitation and reconstruction to jointly monitor the overall situation and effective use of the pledged funds. DPSG looks at how the root causes of the armed conflict are being addressed, including devolution/decentralization of power. It also looks at how donors adopt the principles of conflict sensitivity in their work.

⁹⁵ World Bank Country Assistance Strategy for Sri Lanka.

⁹⁶ For more information on the Muslim Aid/UMCOR partnership, see:

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR30/66-67.pdf>

⁹⁷ Information drawn from <http://www.groundviews.org/>

⁹⁸ Remarks by Susan Hayward, *Religious Contributions to Conflict Prevention and Transformation*, Catholic Peacebuilding Network Conference, Kroc Institute, Notre Dame University, April 14, 2008.

<http://cpn.nd.edu/assets/14644/hayward.pdf> (Accessed 8 November 2010).

⁹⁹ For further information, see USIP website: *Local Interreligious Peacemaking in Sri Lanka* -

<http://www.usip.org/programs/projects/local-interreligious-peacemaking-sri-lanka>

¹⁰⁰ Bandarage, Asoka, *Diasporas and Post-Conflict Development in Sri Lanka*, *Harvard International Review*, 19 April 2010. <http://hir.harvard.edu/diasporas-and-post-conflict-development-in-sri-lanka> (accessed 10 November 2010).

¹⁰¹ <http://www.undp.org.np/pdf/MDG-Layout-Final.pdf>

¹⁰² World Bank Nepal

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e487856.html>

¹⁰⁵ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146086e.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127369.htm>

¹⁰⁸ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146086e.pdf>

¹⁰⁹ http://www.unescap.org/ESID/hds/development_account/mtg/EGM_Bg_doc/Nepal%20020909.pdf

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ <http://www.unescap.org/aphen/nepal.html>

¹¹² <http://www.undp.org.np/pdf/MDG-Layout-Final.pdf>

¹¹³ Ibid

¹¹⁴ For more information see December 2010 article on Dalit discrimination in Nepal,

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportID=91437>

¹¹⁵ http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Nepal/chap_01.pdf

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ World Bank Nepal

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Government-to-recognise-Muslim-and-Buddhist-religious-schools-11545.html>

¹²¹ <http://www.cmyogi.org/Organizations.html>

¹²² <http://www.khoryug.com/vision/>

-
- ¹²³ <http://islaminnepal.wordpress.com/organizations/>
- ¹²⁴ <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?cname=Maldives>
- ¹²⁵ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/maldives/gini-index-wb-data.html>
- ¹²⁶ ¹²⁶ Baxter, Craig. *Government and Politics in South Asia*. Boulder, Col.: Westview, 2002. p. 403-404.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁸ <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127368.htm>
- ¹²⁹ <http://www.foreign.gov.mv/v3/pdf/Maldives%20UPR%20National%20Report%20-%20submitted%20Aug%202010.pdf>
- ¹³⁰ <http://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/publications/constitution.pdf>
- ¹³¹ United Nations Development Programme: Maldives. <http://undp.org.mv/v2/?lid=130> (accessed 29 November 2010).
- ¹³² http://www.adb.org/Documents/Fact_Sheets/MLD.pdf
- ¹³³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3930765.stm
- ¹³⁴ http://articles.cnn.com/2009-10-17/world/maldives.underwater.meeting_1_maldives-climate-change-sea-levels?_s=PM:WORLD
- ¹³⁵ <http://www.soetendorpinstitute.org/faith-and-climate-change-conference-held-in-london.html> (accessed 2 December 2010).
- ¹³⁶ http://www.planning.gov.mv/en/images/stories/publications/mdg/mdgs_maldives_country_report_2007.pdf
- ¹³⁷ <http://undp.org.mv/v2/?lid=133>
- ¹³⁸ http://www.maldivesmission.ch/fileadmin/Pdf/Development/Achievements_Challenges.pdf
- ¹³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁰ <http://minivannews.com/politics/women-earn-half-as-much-as-men-in-the-maldives-finds-wef-report-12339/print/>
- ¹⁴¹ <http://www.mulabi.org/equ/9th%20round/Maldives.pdf>
- ¹⁴² Terms of Reference for Technical Assistance to Operationalize a Shelter for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in the Maldives,
<http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/maldives/drive/TORforInternationalConsultant-ShelterOperationalization.pdf>
(accessed 29 November 2010).
- ¹⁴³ <http://www.foreign.gov.mv/v3/pdf/Maldives%20UPR%20National%20Report%20-%20submitted%20Aug%202010.pdf>
- ¹⁴⁴ <http://minivannews.com/politics/maldives-to-withdraw-reservations-on-womens-rights-treaty-3831>
- ¹⁴⁵ <http://www.foreign.gov.mv/v3/pdf/Maldives%20UPR%20National%20Report%20-%20submitted%20Aug%202010.pdf>
- ¹⁴⁶ http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36036&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=f218d5b027
- ¹⁴⁷ <http://www.devdir.org/files/Maldives.PDF>
- ¹⁴⁸ <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/resources/documents/WorldWatchList.pdf>
- ¹⁴⁹ http://www.dhivehiobserver.com/FOM/maldivesaid/Press_Conf_0805206621828.htm
- ¹⁵⁰ http://nees.oregonstate.edu/killer_wave/Asia/pdf/mald.pdf
- ¹⁵¹ <http://www.sukuk.me/news/articles/28/ICD-signs-deal-with-Maldives.html>
- ¹⁵² <http://www.adb.org/media/Articles/2009/12902-asian-infrastructures-funds/joint-NR.pdf>
- ¹⁵³ http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual11/MAAMV00111plan.pdf
- ¹⁵⁴ <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Produced-Under-TA/39129/39129-04-MAL-DPTA.pdf> p. 25/48
- ¹⁵⁵ REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (A/52/231), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/responses/maldives.htm>
- ¹⁵⁶ <http://minivannews.com/society/comment-can-the-maldives-institute-a-vibrant-ngo-sector-12136>
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁸ http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/29516/Major_issues_in_NGO_Law:_NGO_Federation
- ¹⁵⁹ http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/WHO_Country_Cooperation_Strategy_-_Maldives_development_assistance.pdf

-
- ¹⁶⁰ http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/WHO_Country_Cooperation_Strategy_-_Maldives_development_assistance.pdf
- ¹⁶¹ <http://www.mv.undp.org/v2/?lid=105&dcid=187>
- ¹⁶² http://www.crin.org/docs/Maldives_HJ_NGO_Report.pdf
- ¹⁶³ http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/WHO_Country_Cooperation_Strategy_-_Maldives_development_assistance.pdf
- ¹⁶⁴ Percent of population living below the national poverty line
http://www.adb.org/Documents/Fact_Sheets/BHU.pdf
- ¹⁶⁵ <http://www.undp.org.bt/assets/files/Governance/Project%20Document%20gender.pdf>
- ¹⁶⁶ Marshall, Katherine. "Georgetown/On Faith: Measuring Happiness in Bhutan - Katherine Marshall." *Georgetown on Faith*. The Washington Post, 22 Aug. 2008. Web.
<http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/georgetown/2008/08/measuring_happiness.html>
- ¹⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁸ <http://bhutanyouth.org/our-work/sponsor-a-monk/>
- ¹⁶⁹ <http://pewforum.org/Religion-News/RNS-Buddhist-Bhutan-bans-clergy-from-voting-in-elections.aspx>
- ¹⁷⁰ Dukpa, Lyonpo Zangley. *India-Bhutan GNH Dialogue Organized by CBS and Seminar Foundation (India): GNH and Education*. Rep. 10-12 Mar. 2010. Web. <<http://www.health.gov.bt/pressReleases/EducationGNH.pdf>>.
- ¹⁷¹ <http://www.undp.org.bt/mdg.htm>
- ¹⁷² <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/country-profiles/good-governance.dot?id=376a6b73-f42a-49eb-b76a-98c99b66e25>
- ¹⁷³ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁴ <http://bhutanfound.org/?cat=19>
- ¹⁷⁵ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/Resources/223546-1192413140459/4281804-1231540815570/5730961-1235157256443/HIVAIDSbriefBT.pdf>
- ¹⁷⁶ Phuntsho, Karma. *On the Two Ways of Learning in Bhutan*. Written Version of Presentation during the Conference of South Asian Studies, Edinburgh, 2000. 2000.
- ¹⁷⁷ Denman, Brian D., and Singye Namgyel. "Convergence of Monastic and Modern Education in Bhutan?" *International Review of Education* 54 (2008): 475-91. Print.
- ¹⁷⁸ Powdyel, T. S. "The Bhutanese Education Assessment Experience: Some Reflections." *Prospects* XXXV.1 (Mar2005). Print.
- ¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸⁰ UNDP Bhutan: http://204.200.211.211/mdg_two.htm
- ¹⁸¹ National Report on the Development of Education (Bhutan). ICE Report. UNESCO, 2004. Web.
<<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE47/English/Natreps/reports/bhutan.pdf>>.
- ¹⁸² Dukpa, Lyonpo Zangley. *India-Bhutan GNH Dialogue Organized by CBS and Seminar Foundation (India): GNH and Education*. Rep. 10-12 Mar. 2010. Web. <<http://www.health.gov.bt/pressReleases/EducationGNH.pdf>>.
- ¹⁸³ Denman, Brian D., and Singye Namgyel. "Convergence of Monastic and Modern Education in Bhutan?" *International Review of Education* 54 (2008): 475-91. Print.
- ¹⁸⁴ <http://bhutanyouth.org/our-work/sponsor-a-monk/>
- ¹⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁷ Phuntsho, Karma. *On the Two Ways of Learning in Bhutan*. Written Version of Presentation during the Conference of South Asian Studies, Edinburgh, 2000. 2000.
- ¹⁸⁸ Denman, Brian D., and Singye Namgyel. "Convergence of Monastic and Modern Education in Bhutan?" *International Review of Education* 54 (2008): 475-91. Print.
- ¹⁸⁹ Powdyel, T. S. "The Bhutanese Education Assessment Experience: Some Reflections." *Prospects* XXXV.1 (Mar2005). Print.
- ¹⁹⁰ Ura, Karma. "A Proposal for GNH Value Education in Schools." *Grossnationalhappiness.com*. Gross National Happiness Commission, 21 May 2009. Web. <<http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/PowerPoints/value-education.pdf>>.
- ¹⁹¹ National Report on the Development of Education (Bhutan). ICE Report. UNESCO, 2008. Web.
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/bhutan_NR08.pdf>.
- ¹⁹² Powdyel, T. S. "The Bhutanese Education Assessment Experience: Some Reflections." *Prospects* XXXV.1 (Mar2005). Print.

-
- ¹⁹³ http://www.undp.org.bt/mdg_six.htm
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁵ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSAREGTOPHIVAIDS/Resources/HIV-AIDS-brief-August06-BTA.pdf>
- ¹⁹⁶ http://www.unicef.org/eapro-hivaids/regpro/buddhist_response.htm
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid
- ¹⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁹ Muggah, Robert. "Distinguishing Means and Ends: The Counterintuitive Effects of UNHCR's Community Development Approach in Nepal." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 18.2 (2005): 151-64. Print.
- ²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 157
- ²⁰¹ Ibid.
- ²⁰² Ibid.
- ²⁰³ Ibid. p. 157.
- ²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 156.
- ²⁰⁵ <http://www.bhutannewsservice.com/bhutanese-in-exile/education-in-camps/>
- ²⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁰⁷ <http://www.worldbank.org.in/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20195738~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:295584,00.html>
- ²⁰⁸ Ibid
- ²⁰⁹ Ibid
- ²¹⁰ Ibid
- ²¹¹ Manish Chary, *India: Nation on the Move: An Overview of India's People, Culture, History, Economy, IT Industry and More*, iUniverse Press 2009.
- ²¹² Arvind P.Nirmal "Towards a Christian Dalit Theology," in *Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology: Emerging Trends*, ed, R.S. Sugirtharajah (Mayknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1999)
- ²¹³ Ibid
- ²¹⁴ India Country Overview April 2010, World Bank,
<http://www.worldbank.org.in/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20195738~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:295584,00.html> (accessed 29 December 2010).
- ²¹⁵ Ibid
- ²¹⁶ http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Defining_Agenda_Poverty_Reduction/Vol_1/chapter_23.pdf
- ²¹⁷ Ibid
- ²¹⁸ Ibid
- ²¹⁹ http://www.thp.org/where_we_work/south_asia/india/research_reports/chronic_hunger_and_status_of_women
- ²²⁰ Ibid
- ²²¹ <http://www.azadindia.org/social-issues/GenderInequality.html>
- ²²² Ibid
- ²²³
- ²²⁴ http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Defining_Agenda_Poverty_Reduction/Vol_1/chapter_23.pdf
- ²²⁵ Ibid http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/06/0602_030602_untouchables.html
- ²²⁶ <http://www.worldbank.org.in/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20195738~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:295584,00.html#sustainable>
- ²²⁷ Ibid
- ²²⁸ Ibid
- ²²⁹ Ibid
- ²³⁰ http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/06/0602_030602_untouchables.html
- ²³¹ http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/06/0602_030602_untouchables.html
- ²³² Savarkar, V.D., *Essentials of Hindutva*, pg. 41,
http://www.savarkar.org/content/pdfs/en/essentials_of_hindutva.v001.pdf (accessed 1 December 2010)
- ²³³ <http://www.aimforseva.org/about.php>
- ²³⁴ <http://gospeldivinevisionministries.webs.com/>
- ²³⁵ <http://www.feedministries.faithweb.com/index.html>
- ²³⁶ <http://www.missionopportunity.com/mission-directory/christian-missions-india.htm>
- ²³⁷ http://in.crossmap.com/cmboard/list.php?&bbs_id=org1

238 <http://www.icmcindia.org/>
239 Report summary available at: http://www.aidsportal.org/Article_Details.aspx?ID=7192
240 [http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/early-marriage.pdf/\\$file/early-marriage.pdf](http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/early-marriage.pdf/$file/early-marriage.pdf)
241 <http://www.caritasindia.org/OurWork.aspx?Wid=5>
242 <http://www.indiapartners.org/>
243 Ibid
244 http://deafness.about.com/od/internationaldeaf/a/indiadeaf_3.htm
245 <http://info.bahai.org/article-1-8-1-16.html>
246 <http://www.bahai.in/>
247 Ibid
248 <http://www.sevamandir.org/>
249 Ibid
250 <http://www.ncdhr.org.in/nfdlrm/about-nfdlrm>
251 <http://www.nacdor.org/TEXT%20FILES/Introduction.htm>
252 <http://internationalbudget.org/pdf/NCHDR.pdf>
253 Ibid
254 <http://www.christiancouncil.in/>
255 Ibid
256 <http://navsarjan.org/navsarjan/history>
257 <http://www.usaid.gov/au/country/country.cfm?CountryId=11>
258 Jehangir Karamat, "Pakistan's Water World: The Political and Economic Impact of the Recent Floods" The Brookings Institute, Washington, D.C., August 17th, 2010.
259 Ibid
260 <http://www.einfopedia.com/pakistan-education-problems-and-solutions-of-pakistan-education.php>
261 <http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/overview.html>
262 Ibid
263 Ibid
264 http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2004/asia_near_east/Pakistan.pdf
265 [http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpCountries\)/D927619B0A8659BB802570A7004BDA56?OpenDocument](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpCountries)/D927619B0A8659BB802570A7004BDA56?OpenDocument)
266 Ibid
267 http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1809?_hi=1&_pos=1
268 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148800.htm>
269 <http://www.yespakistan.com/minorities/>
270 Ibid
271 Ibid
272 http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan_pakistan_statistics.html
273 Ibid
274 http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Pakistan/chap01.pdf
275 Ibid
276 http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Pakistan/chap01.pdf
277 Ibid
278 Ibid
279 <http://www.einfopedia.com/pakistan-education-problems-and-solutions-of-pakistan-education.php>
280 Ibid
281 http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know_sharing/grassroots_stories/pakistan_2.shtml
282 [http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpCountries\)/D927619B0A8659BB802570A7004BDA56?OpenDocument](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpCountries)/D927619B0A8659BB802570A7004BDA56?OpenDocument)
283 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/3536219/Mumbai-attacks-Lashkar-e-Taiba-Indias-chief-suspect.html>
284 <http://www.adb.org/ngos/docs/NGOPakistan.pdf>

-
- 285 Ibid
- 286 Ibid
- 287 <http://www.muslimaid.org.pk/index.htm>
- 288 <http://www.muslimhands.org/en/gb/>
- 289 http://www.caritas.org/activities/emergencies/caritas_in_emergencies.html?cnt=318
- 290 Ibid
- 291 <http://www.edhifoundation.com/>
- 292 <http://www.prcs.org.pk/history.html>
- 293 Ibid
- 294 <http://www.darulsukun.com/>
- 295 <http://www.alamgirwelfaretrust.com.pk/nawt/Welcome.asp>
- 296 <http://www.almustafa.net/index1.html>
- 297 <http://www.akhuwat.org.pk/>
- 298 Muhammad Asif Iqbal, Saima Siddiqui, “[Mapping the Terrain: The Activities of Faith-based Organisations in Development in Pakistan](#)”, 2008
- 299 <http://www.christianvolunteering.org/org/christian-development-organization.jsp>
- 300 http://mozu.gov.pk/Administration/Ministry_Profile.htm
- 301 Ibid
- 302 See for example Kristof’s commentary, <http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/20/religious-donations-going-away/#more-7085>
- 303 <http://www.moe.gov.pk/>
- 304 Ibid
- 305 <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5i-xDZKhJz4vVyAx-sdpk2cIKpX3A>
- 306 <http://www.christianfellowshippakistan.org/Pakistan/Welcome.html>
- 307 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2173184.stm
- 308 http://www.ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/2032153432IB11-SubaChandran-MadrassasInPak.pdf
- 309 Ibid
- 310 http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/04/world/asia/04islam.html?pagewanted=3&_r=1
- 311 Ibid
- 312 <https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http://www.usip.org/files/regions/faqs/Pakistan%2520Progress%2520in%2520Peacebuilding%2520April%25202010.pdf&pli=1>
- 313 <https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http://www.usip.org/files/regions/faqs/Pakistan%2520Progress%2520in%2520Peacebuilding%2520April%25202010.pdf&pli=>
- 314 Ibid
- 315 <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/pakistan/peacebuilding-organisations>
- 316 Ibid
- 317 Ibid
- 318 Ibid
- 319 Ibid
- 320 Ibid
- 321 Ibid
- 322 Ibid
- 323 Ibid
- 324 Ibid
- 325 <http://fellowshipportal.ning.com/group/ucoujalachristianorganizationujalaannightfall>
- 326 Ibid
- 327 Ibid
- 328 Ibid
- 329 Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Muslim Population, *Pew Research Center*
- 330 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148786.htm>

-
- ³³¹ http://www.adb.org/Documents/Fact_Sheets/AFG.pdf
- ³³² *Poverty Status in Afghanistan, A Profile based on National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA)*, The World Bank and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Economy, July 2010, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/AFGHANISTANEXTN/Resources/305984-1264608805475/6739619-1286210806756/AFPovertyReport.pdf>
- ³³³ World Bank Afghanistan Country Overview - 2010
<http://www.worldbank.org.af/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/AFGHANISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20154015~menuPK:305992~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305985,00.html>
- ³³⁴ <http://www.un.org/events/women/2002/sit.htm>
- ³³⁵ Ibid
- ³³⁶ Ibid
- ³³⁷ <http://www.womenforafghanwomen.org/images/IntWomensDay04/AfghanWomenFact%20Sheet.pdf>
- ³³⁸ <http://www.un.org/events/women/2002/sit.htm>
- ³³⁹ World Bank Data - Afghanistan
- ³⁴⁰ Ibid
- ³⁴¹ <http://www.undp.org.af/WhatWeDo/dg.htm>
- ³⁴² <http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/Part-3-Exporting-Faith-Together-but-worlds-apart-Christian-aid-groups-raise-suspicion-in-strongholds-of-Islam>
- ³⁴³ <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/0809/Afghanistan-aid-workers-deaths-highlights-delicate-position-of-Christian-affiliated-groups>
- ³⁴⁴ Ibid
- ³⁴⁵ http://english.moe.gov.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1
- ³⁴⁶ <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/flying-down-to-kabul/women-in-afghanistan/education/2200/>
- ³⁴⁷ http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/News_And_Events/pdf/2010/Afghanistan_NESP.pdf
- ³⁴⁸ Ibid
- ³⁴⁹ Ibid
- ³⁵⁰ <http://www.suite101.com/content/greg-mortenson-builds-schools-in-afghanistan-a178794>
- ³⁵¹ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/Resources/223546-1151200256097/chap1.pdf>
- ³⁵² Ibid
- ³⁵³ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rahim-kanani/islam-and-maternal-mortal_b_618826.html
- ³⁵⁴ Ibid
- ³⁵⁵ <http://www.rawa.org/index.php>
- ³⁵⁶ http://afghanwomensnetwork.org/wordpress/?page_id=31
- ³⁵⁷ <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/Afghanistan-law-order-elections/conflict-resolution-afghan/EN/index.htm>
- ³⁵⁸ http://www.usip.org/files/regions/faqs/PIP%20Afghanistan%202-2010_0.pdf
- ³⁵⁹ Malikov, Kadyr, *Muslim Community in Kyrgyzstan: Social Activity at the Present Stage*. – Bishkek: 2010
http://elibrary.auca.kg:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/466/1/SRC_Muslim%20community%20in%20Kyrgyzstan_Social%20activity%20at%20the%20present%20stage_eng.pdf (accessed 27 December 2010).
- ³⁶⁰ International Religious Freedom Report – Kyrgyz Republic, 2010 - <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148795.htm> (accessed 27 December 2010).
- ³⁶¹ Vennard, Martin, *Kyrgyzstan keeps a tight grip on religion*, BBC News, 19 January 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8446662.stm> (accessed 23 December 2010).
- ³⁶² Malikov, Kadyr
- ³⁶³ UN OCHA Kyrgyzstan Flash Appeal – June 2010-June 2011, http://ops.unocha.org/Reports/daily/CAPProjectSheet_900_20101227.pdf
- ³⁶⁴ Ibid
- ³⁶⁵ Dave, Bhavna. (2010) "Kazakhstan." *Nations in Transit 2010*. Washington, DC: Freedom House, pp 250-271; p 261
- ³⁶⁶ Ibid.

-
- ³⁶⁷ UNDP (2010) *2010: Millennium Development Goals in Kazakhstan*. 15 Oct 2010. Available: http://www.un.kz/userfiles/1006_oon_mdgr2010_eng.zip. Astana: Kuik Printing House, p. 38
- ³⁶⁸ Ibid. EDI rankings are calculated using: total primary net enrolment ratio, adult literacy level, gender-specific index and survival rates to grade five.
- ³⁶⁹ CIA World Factbook.
- ³⁷⁰ Dave, p. 259
- ³⁷¹ Central Asia News Wire. (2010) "Kazakh Census Reveals Ethnic, Religious Changes." 15 Nov 2010. Access 01 Dec 2010. Available: <http://centralasianewswire.com/Kazakhstan/Kazakh-census-reveals-ethnic-religious-changes/viewstory.aspx?id=2336>
- ³⁷² State (2010) "Kazakhstan." *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*. 17 Nov 2010. US Dept of State; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Accessed 1 Dec 2010. Available: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148793.htm>
- ³⁷³ Aydingun, A. (2007) "Islam as a Symbolic Element of National Identity Used by the Nationalist Ideology in the National and State Building Process in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*. JSRI No. 17, Summer 2007, pp. 68-83. Available: www.jsri.ro/new/?download=5_aydingun_17.pdf
- ³⁷⁴ Bayram, Mushfig. (2010) "Kazakhstan: Ethnic-based mosques "cannot be opened." *Worldwide Religious News*. 4 Nov 2010. Accessed 1 Dec 2010. Available: <http://wwrn.org/articles/34423/?&place=russia-cis>
- ³⁷⁵ State (2010) "Kazakhstan." *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*. 17 Nov 2010. US Dept of State; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Accessed 1 Dec 2010. Available: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148793.htm>;
- ³⁷⁶ Becket Fund. (2009) "United National Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review: Kazakhstan." 8 Sept 2009. Available: lib.ohchr.org/.../BecketFund_UPR_KAZ_S07_2010_BecketFundforReligiousLiberty.pdf
- ³⁷⁷ ADB. "Overview of NGOs/Civil Society: Kazakhstan." *Civil Society Briefs*. Accessed 01 Jan 2010: www.adb.org/Documents/.../Civil-Society-Briefs/KAZ/CSB-KAZ.pdf
- ³⁷⁸ ICNL (2010) "Number of registered non-commercial organizations in Kazakhstan." *Electronic Newsletter*. USAID, ICNL. Iss. 4. 28 May 2010. See also ADB.
- ³⁷⁹ ICNL (2010). "Court Practice in Cases Involving Non-Commercial Organizations." *Electronic Newsletter*. USAID, ICNL. Iss. 5. 02 Jul 2010.
- ³⁸⁰ Norwegian Helsinki Committee. (2010) "Broken Promises: Freedom of religion or belief issues in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan." *1-2010 Report*. Oslo. Available: <http://www.nhc.no/php/index.php?module=article&view=983>; 8
- ³⁸¹ <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/0,,contentMDK:20513289~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:258599,00.html>
- ³⁸² Turgut, Pelin. (2010) "Muslim Missionary: The Preacher and His Teachers." *TIME*. 26 Apr 2010. Accessed 17 Dec 2010. Available: <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1969290,00.html>.
- ³⁸³ <http://www.counterpart.org/our-work/geographies/kazakhstan>; Counterpoint International was born out collaboration between Marist Priest, Father Stan Hosie, and Betty Silverstein.
- ³⁸⁴ World Bank Country Brief 2010 - Tajikistan
- ³⁸⁵ Ibid
- ³⁸⁶ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5775.htm> (December 7, 2010)
- ³⁸⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1296639.stm (December 7, 2010)
- ³⁸⁸ Tajikistan Facts and Figures – WHO, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/where-we-work/member-states/tajikistan/facts-and-figures> (accessed 3 January 2010)
- ³⁸⁹ <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=TAJIKISTAN> (December 7, 2010)
- ³⁹⁰ Tajikistan Country Gender Assessment – Asian Development Bank, May 2006, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Country-Gender-Assessments/taj.asp> (accessed 3 January 2010)
- ³⁹¹ Zokirova, Nargis, Global Integrity – Tajikistan, <http://www.globalintegrity.org/reports/2006/tajikistan/notebook.cfm> (accessed 3 January 2010)

- ³⁹² 2010 International Religious Freedom Report – Tajikistan, http://dushanbe.usembassy.gov/pr_12102010.html
- ³⁹³ Ibid
- ³⁹⁴ Interview with Tatiana Kotova, November 13, 2010
- ³⁹⁵ De Cordier, Bruno, “Shiite Aid Organizations in Tajikistan,” Spring 2007, [crg/staff/publications/ISIM%20Review%2019-10%20\(article%20Bruno%20De%20Cordier\).pdf](http://crg/staff/publications/ISIM%20Review%2019-10%20(article%20Bruno%20De%20Cordier).pdf) (accessed 3 January 2010)
- ³⁹⁶ Pilot Project of DanChurchAid, ICCO, and Christian Aid on Preventing the Spread of HIV Among Labor Migrants from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and their Families – Key Findings, www.noedhjaelp.dk/.../Baseline%20study%20summary%20English.pdf (accessed 3 January 2010)
- ³⁹⁷ Interview with Shurob Khaitov, December 18, 2010
- ³⁹⁸ Interview with Abdurakhim Nazarov, December 18, 2010
- ³⁹⁹ Ibid
- ⁴⁰⁰ Ibid
- ⁴⁰¹ Program Overview - http://graduateinstitute.ch/ccdp/religion_politics.html
- ⁴⁰² Abramson, David, M., *Foreign Religious Education and the Central Asian Islamic Revival: Impact and Prospects for Stability*. Silk Road Paper, Central Asia – Caucasus Institute – Silk Road Studies Program, March 2010
- ⁴⁰³ http://www.undp.tj/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=299 (December 19, 2010)
- ⁴⁰⁴ United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for TURKMENISTAN 2010-2015, at <http://www.undg.org/docs/10462/UNDAF-2010-2015-Documents-ENGLISH-final-signed.pdf>
- ⁴⁰⁵ World Bank Turkmenistan Country Brief 2010 at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/TURKMENISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20631627~menuPK:300743~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:300736,00.html>
- ⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰⁸ CIA: The World Factbook—Turkmenistan at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html>
- ⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴¹⁰ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (1996). “Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan: Country Studies.” At [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+tm0031](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+tm0031)
- ⁴¹¹ Corley, Felix (2003). “TURKMENISTAN: New religion law defies international human rights agreements.” Forum 18 at <http://www.forum18.org/articles/8604/>
- ⁴¹² Tyson, David (1997). “Shrine Pilgrimage in Turkmenistan as a Means to Understand Islam among the Turkmen.” Central Asia Monitor—Online Supplement. No 1. at <http://www.uga.edu/islam/turkmen.html>
- ⁴¹³ U.S. Department of State Background Note: Turkmenistan at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35884.htm> (accessed 10 December 2010).
- ⁴¹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴¹⁵ Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2010 at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/Reports/NIT-2010-Turkmenistan-final.pdf>
- ⁴¹⁶ World Bank Turkmenistan Country Brief 2010 at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/TURKMENISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20631627~menuPK:300743~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:300736,00.html>
- ⁴¹⁷ McKee, Martin, Bernd Rechel and Inga Sikorskaya (2009). “Health in Turkmenistan after Niyazov.” European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, at http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/centres/ecohost/public_health/niyazov/health_in_turkmenistan_after_niyazov.pdf
- ⁴¹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴¹⁹ Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2010 at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/Reports/NIT-2010-Turkmenistan-final.pdf>
- ⁴²⁰ McKee, Martin, Bernd Rechel and Inga Sikorskaya (2009). “Health in Turkmenistan after Niyazov.” European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, at http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/centres/ecohost/public_health/niyazov/health_in_turkmenistan_after_niyazov.pdf
- ⁴²¹ Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2010 at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/Reports/NIT-2010-Turkmenistan-final.pdf>
- ⁴²² World Bank Turkmenistan Country Brief 2010 at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/TURKMENISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20631627~menuPK:300743~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:300736,00.html>
- ⁴²³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress (1996). “Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan: Country Studies.” At [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+tm0026](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+tm0026)
- ⁴²⁴ UN General Assembly, Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 723rd & 724th Meetings (AM & PM): “Concluding Consideration of Turkmenistan’s Report, Women’s Anti-Discrimination” (2006) at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/wom1558.doc.htm>

-
- ⁴²⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴²⁶ ADB Civil Society Briefs: Overview of NGOs and Civil Society in Turkmenistan at <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Civil-Society-Briefs/TKM/CSB-TKM.pdf>
- ⁴²⁷ <http://www.fethullahgulencmovement.mobi/press-room/review/1204-central-asia-fethullah-gulens-missionary-schools.html>
- ⁴²⁸ <http://www.bahai.org/worldwide-community/national-communities/turkmenistan>
- ⁴²⁹ Turkmenistan Community Empowerment Program, Counterpart International. <http://www.counterpart.org/our-work/projects/tcep-in-turkmenistan> (accessed 16 December 2010).
- ⁴³⁰ http://www.adb.org/Documents/Fact_Sheets/UZB.pdf
- ⁴³¹ <http://www.developmentandtransition.net/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&DocumentID=618>
- ⁴³² <http://www.developmentandtransition.net/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&DocumentID=618>
- ⁴³³ <http://www.undp.uz/en/mdgs/>
- ⁴³⁴ <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UZB.html>
- ⁴³⁵ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2924.htm>
- ⁴³⁶ <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=UZBEKISTAN> (December 9, 2010)
- ⁴³⁷ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2924.htm>
- ⁴³⁸ <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=19201>
- ⁴³⁹ http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=319
- ⁴⁴⁰ <http://www.uzbekistan.ms/guide/religion-in-uzbekistan>
- ⁴⁴¹ http://www.economist.com/node/1787408?story_id=1787408
- ⁴⁴² http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=58
- ⁴⁴³ <http://www.uzbekembassypakistan.org/index.php?q=content/over-5100-ngos-operate-uzbekistan>
- ⁴⁴⁴ <http://www.foreignpolicydigest.org/Asia/March-2010/uzbekistans-vanishing-civil-society-why-ngos-are-shutting-down-as-the-country-opens-up.html>
- ⁴⁴⁵ <http://www.adb.org/media/Articles/2009/12902-asian-infrastructures-funds/>
- ⁴⁴⁶ <http://www.devex.com/en/blogs/the-development-newswire/isdb-oks-usd772m-for-new-development-schemes>
- ⁴⁴⁷ http://edoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/HALCoRe_derivate_00003028/Political%20Culture.pdf
- ⁴⁴⁸ <http://www.caritas.org/worldmap/asia/uzbekistan.html>
- ⁴⁴⁹ <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travelblogs/41/86196/Infrastructure+War%3A+How+Trying+to+Fix+a+Problem+Can+Sometimes+Become+a+Fight?destId=357826> (December 9, 2010)
- ⁴⁵⁰ <http://sg.christianpost.com/dbase/missions/1761/section/1.htm>
- ⁴⁵¹ <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127374.htm>
- ⁴⁵² <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5167>
- ⁴⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵⁴ Jodi Koehn and Nancy Popson , Women and Foreign Assistance in the NIS David Abramson, Armine Kathleen Kuehnast, and Michele Rivkin-Fish. Meeting Report. November 7, 2001 http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1424&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc_id=8085&g (accessed 16 December 2010)
- ⁴⁵⁵ http://edoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/HALCoRe_derivate_00003028/Political%20Culture.pdf
- ⁴⁵⁶ <http://www.developmentandtransition.net/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&DocumentID=618>
- ⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/learn/world-vision-uzbekistan> (December 9, 2010)
- ⁴⁵⁸ http://www.un.uz/en/mdgs/goal_1
- ⁴⁵⁹ <http://www.undp.uz/en/mdgs/?goal=8>