A Journey of

Qing

1996-2011

PopulaPEACE)

Kalyani Menon-Sen, Richa Nagar, Rajesh Pandey, Adil Alir
October 2013

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

A Journey of
Questioning
1996-2011

Popular Education and Action Centre
(PEACE)

*Kalyani Menon-Sen, Richa Nagar,
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by
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Acknowledgement

The members of the evaluation team would like to express their thanks to all those who participated in the assessment process for their generous sharing of experiences, information and insights on PEACE and its work.

We would like to thank the PEACE team for their warmth, honesty and willingness to engage in critical self-reflection on their work.

We can never forget Dhirendra – his quiet commitment, gentleness, simplicity and unique insights left an indelible impression on all of us. His death has created a gap that will be hard to fill.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to engage with and learn from PEACE and its partners. We hope our work, and this report, are of use to PEACE as it moves ahead into the next phase of its journey.

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साझा सपना देखते है।

From the first PEACE brochure
*"God thought: At least human beings will be both good and strong.
But 'Good' and 'Strong' are still two different people."
From the poem 'Turn of the Century' by Wislawa Szymborska*

**Popular Education and Action Centre is the collective expression
of a group of like-minded activists who share the dream of
making "good" people "strong"**

Background

The idea of PEACE emerged from the critical debates on questions of development, and struggles against the violence inflicted on communities in the name of development, which shook the country in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. It was at the height of this turbulence that Popular Education and Action Centre (PEACE) emerged on the scene.

Anil Chaudhary, the founder of PEACE, was born in 1951 in Sitapur (UP) to a teacher couple, both active members of the Communist Party of India. He came to Delhi in 1975 to join the Jawaharlal Nehru University, then seen as a hotbed of leftist thinking. A student of Political Science, Anil was very active in student politics and became General Secretary of the students union in 1978 with the support of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). After leaving the university, Anil worked for several years with Delhi-based NGOs focusing on research, training and advocacy.

PEACE formally started its work in 1995 after almost one-and-a-half year of sustained and in-depth interactions with various groups to ascertain their analyses of the situation and thoughts on the most appropriate response. Anil's networks and contacts facilitated these conversations with groups and movements across the country.

The funding proposals prepared by PEACE over the various phases of its growth reflect the key dimensions of PEACE's worldview:

- Global business interests are influencing local and international policies, governance and structures to suit their own needs.

  The space for democratic debate, expression of difference and right to protest are increasingly shrinking at both national and international levels.

- In order to protect the democratic nature of our polity and the rights of marginalised/resource-less people, it is critical to strengthen "People's Struggle and Resistance initiatives" through critical educational processes.

In one of its initial documents, PEACE states its intent thus:
We wish to carry out our commitment under the banner of 'Popular Education', which for us implies enabling the deprived, marginalised and oppressed so that they can effectively intervene to transform the processes and structures influencing their lives, to their own advantage.

PEACE is a capacity-building organisation that deploys educational interventions as basic tools towards the fulfillment of its mission.

Participants in PEACE's educational programmes (trainings) are largely field-based social action groups focused on a variety of issues like land, forest, and water rights across the country.

PEACE's objectives

- To strengthen social action at the grassroots by assisting groups, individuals and institutions to evolve, consolidate and enrich their perspective, strategies and corresponding competencies.

- To assist people's struggles on issues of survival, identity and democratic space through enhancement of knowledge and information base of such efforts, and by building the capacity of the grassroots collectives to deal with macro political economic processes and structures.

- To motivate, orient and support youth from minority, Dalit and other marginalised communities so that they can become participants in struggles for social development and transformation.

- To initiate and facilitate networking among like-minded groups and individuals and establishing their linkages with wider movements and the macro level.

- To address the issue of gender equality in all its interventions.

PEACE's pedagogy draws inspiration from Paulo Freire's The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. A key element of the training is to build a culture of questioning ('Sawaliya sanskriti', an oft-repeated catch-phrase in almost every conversation).

The concept of "critical questioning" or "problem posing" is central to Freirean education, as a counter to the "banking" concept of education where the educator is assumed to be all-knowing while the learners are likened to empty vessels. The Freirean method urges the learner to ask questions in order to challenge the status quo. Freire explains that problem-posing education does not and cannot serve the interests of the oppressor, because no oppressive order permits the oppressed to ask the question "Why?" While "banking education" resists dialogue, problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. "Banking education" treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers.

"Sawaliya sanskriti" and collective action as values

PEACE believes that the ability to question, especially by the marginalised sections, is a critical lever for social change. This belief is reflected in PEACE's mission and objective: **"To assist people's struggles on issues of survival, identity and democratic space through enhancement of knowledge and information base of such efforts and building the capacity of the grassroot collectives to deal with macro processes and structures"**.

P EACE feels that most people's choices are being governed by the vested interests of large corporations and privileged

sections of the society. The mass media bombard people with messages systematically designed to skew judgment and thwart critical thinking. According to PEACE, when the participants start asking questions, they start seeing the larger picture and build a more enlightened perspective, enabling them to take informed decisions in the context of their own socioeconomic and political situations.

> In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. Although the dialectical relations of women and men with the world exist independently of how these relations are perceived (or whether or not they are perceived at all), it is also true that the form of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world. Hence, the teacher-student and the students-teachers reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world without dichotomising this reflection from action, and thus establish an authentic form of thought and action.
>
> *Paolo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

The internalisation by PEACE of this belief in promoting a culture of questioning and collective action is reflected consistently in all its activities, particularly the content and design of the training, and in the methods used.

Impact Assessment: Scope and Methodology

In tune with the ethos of PEACE, the assessment process was designed as an exercise of co-creation. A team of four facilitators led the process and put together the final document.

- The process began with a scoping meeting of the assessment team with PEACE staff and Board members (24-25 December 2011, USO House, New Delhi). The key output of the meeting was a broad design for the impact assessment exercise.

- It was decided that the impact of PEACE's work should be studied in relation to individuals, organisations and movements/campaigns.

- It was decided to involve all partners and allies of PEACE in the exercise through three workshops that would bring together those associated with each of the three key phases of PEACE's work (1996-2000, 2001-2007, 2008-2011). These workshops were held in Dehradun (26 March to 03 April 2012). The assessment team had direct interactions with around 150 people during these workshops.

- In-depth case studies were conducted to understand the impact of PEACE's work on different people's organisations.

- Representatives of networks and campaigns that PEACE has been associated with were also interviewed.

- The assessment methodology was participatory and interactive, and involved

  - Focus group discussions

  - Interviews

  - Case studies

  - Analysis of reflective writing

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PEACE Theory of Change: Assumptions and Experiences

True to its somewhat iconoclastic approach to social action – purposively unstructured and "carefully careless" – PEACE has never articulated its "theory of change" in formal terms. However, the assumptions underlying PEACE's overall strategy are clearly reflected in various documents and were further explored in the course of conversations during the assessment exercise.

Some of these assumptions are highlighted below.

Individuals can become politicised through critical reflection on their own lives and experiential realities. This is the fundamental belief that drives PEACE's work. This idea draws from Paolo Freire's concept of "critical consciousness": a constant awareness of the way in which "realities" may be constructed to hide and disguise inequality, injustice and oppression. Critical consciousness demands an ability to see and interpret the world in a way that can bring social and political contradictions to the surface. Critical consciousness also involves the recognition of connections between individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded. Sawaliya sanskriti (literally "culture of questioning" but used by PEACE more in the sense of

...al questioning") is a key element of the PEACE
...s that is presented as a tool for peeling away
...cted realities to reveal the underlying structures
...erarchies of power.

**...ting critical consciousness requires critical
...agogy.** Critical pedagogy involves "going beneath
...face meaning, first impressions, dominant myths,
...cial pronouncements, traditional clichés, received
...dom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep
...ning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal
...sequences of any action, event, object, process,
organisation, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass
media, or discourse." The PEACE pedagogy focuses on
creating a supportive and democratic space where the
learner can experience freedom, challenge and question
power-holders, and acquire the ability to take constructive
action for change. Workshops are conducted in two or
three phases with the same group of learners, allowing for
an extended cycle of action-learning to be created. This
cycle moves from the workshop to the outside world where
learning can be applied, and brings the lessons back into
the next workshop – another learning space where the
consequences of political actions can be collectively mined
for the insights they yield about the world. The content of
learning builds a direct connection between the concerns
of individual learners and the concerns of the movements
of which they are participants.

**Politicised individuals will engage with the world in
ways that disrupt the status quo.** Power is held in
relationships – whether the relationship of individuals
with their inner selves; intimate relationships within the
family whether between women and men, children and
adults, elderly people and people in their working years;
economic relationships such as those between landowners
and landless workers or corporations and their employees;
social relationships such as those based on caste,
community, ability or sexuality; relationships between the
state and citizens; and even relationships between human

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beings and the natural world. PEACE believes that "sawaliya sanskriti" – the adoption of critical questioning as a kind of "life mantra" – will inevitably impact all the above relationships in ways that make hitherto invisible power hierarchies visible, thereby disrupting the status quo. This is seen as a political act in itself.

Many NGOs and groups that started work in the 1970s and '80s in India, as elsewhere in the world, claim allegiance to Freire and his liberatory vision of social change. PEACE has been a consistent and vocal critic of the appropriation of the Freirean approach by the "development industry", and has distanced itself from the depoliticised and reductionist "participatory methodologies" promoted by the NGO sector.

> PEACE began as a statement against appropriation and co-option of participatory philosophy into the dominant paradigm of development and the voluntary surrender of its early protagonists. Our objective is to reinforce faith in the philosophy of participation that provides a critical thrust to the issue of people's control over processes and structures affecting their lives as against treating participation merely as a technique to elicit involvement for vindication of a few programmes and schemes.
>
> *From APPEAL website*
> *http://www.appealgroup.net/peace.htm*

PEACE is a trenchant critic of the limitations of NGOs and development organisations as actors for social change.

> In our analysis (...) we pointed out how a significant number of 'established' and 'professional' NGDOs are roped in for extending a helping hand in implementing the designs of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to promote 'private sector participation' in water, agriculture, forest, health and education sectors while a good number are constrained by the systems, procedures and the structures of their projects in playing any role in people's resistance and struggles.

Based on our constant interaction with activists from various ongoing struggles and campaigns, we are beginning to realise that a good section of well-meaning and good intentioned groups and individuals are unknowingly/knowingly involved in efforts of squeezing the 'constitutional guarantees' by the Indian Government on the behest of International Financial Institutions. Such groups and individuals are prompted by response to the 'immediate' requirements, i.e., access to education, food, employment and health, of the communities worst affected by the processes of neoliberal regime, unquestionably overlooking their 'strategic' requirements.

The so-called 'civil society' actors and NGDOs are first getting hooked into campaigns which by implication create 'demand' for such legislations; then they assist the government in drafting and legitimising the legislation (which ultimately reflects the concerns of IFIs and bureaucrats); and finally help implementing or/and monitoring or/and social auditing, which in turn creates basis for shifting from entitlement to cash transfer.

From PEACE funding proposal to EED, 2011-2014

It is on the basis of this understanding that PEACE defines its own role in social change. Although legally registered as an NGO, PEACE sees itself purely as a supporter of social movements and does not engage in direct action programmes. The slogan "Jiska mudda uski ladai – jiski ladai uski aguvai" ("Those who own the issue must own the struggle – those who own the struggle should set the agenda and take leadership") that PEACE offers to its partners is seen as equally applying to itself.
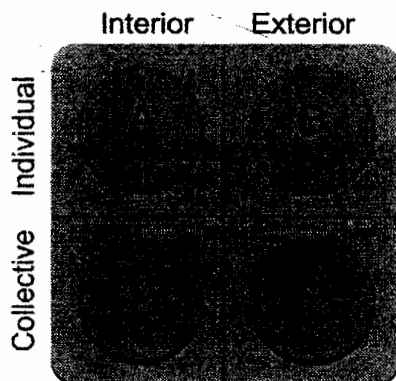
It is interesting to assess the PEACE approach to social change through the lens of Ken Wilber's Integral Theory,

described as a "theory of everything", that attempts to draw together various pre-existing paradigms (pre-modern, modern and post-modern) into a unified approach.[1]

In its simplest formulation, Wilber's theory postulates four domains of change that cover the entirety of human experience and must therefore necessarily be involved in any kind of systemic change.

Integral Theory addresses and transcends two fundamental dichotomies: interior-exterior and individual-collective. The two quadrants on the left focus on "interior" worlds – the life of the mind, in both its individual and collective aspects. The two quadrants on the right are focused on "exterior" worlds, or physical/material reality, again at the individual and collective levels.

- **Quadrant A:** Awareness, or the interior experience of "self"hood – intellect, beliefs, values, intentions, motivations and emotions.

- **Quadrant B:** Behaviour and actions that make up the "self" as seen by others – essentially, any aspects of the interior self (A) that are expressed outwardly.

- **Quadrant C:** Culture, cultural values, world-views and paradigms – the "collective internal world" of a society.

- **Quadrant S:** Systems, including the "material world" (the human-built environment and products created by human activity), and "nature" (the earth with its biosphere and atmosphere).

Wilber's quadrants can also be seen in terms of approaches derived from different schools of thought.

- **Interior individual accounts** include Freudian psychoanalysis which interprets people's interior experiences and focuses on "I".

- **Interior plural accounts** include Gadamer's

1. Wilber, Ken (2000). A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science and spirituality. Shambhala Publications. Boston, USA.

"I"	"It"
Interior individual	Exterior individual
Intentional	Behavioural
(eg Freud)	(eg Skinner)
"We"	"Its"
Interior collective	Exterior collective
Cultural	Social
(eg Gadamer)	(eg Marx)

philosophical hermeneutics which seeks to interpret the collective consciousness of a society and focuses on "We"

- **Exterior individual accounts** include Skinner's "behaviourism" which limits itself to the observation of the behaviour of organisms and ignores the internal experience, decision making or volition of the subject which is treated as a specimen, or "It".

- **Exterior plural accounts** include Marxist economic theory which focuses upon the behaviour of a society as a functional entity seen from outside.

Wilber contends that mainstream approaches to social issues are pathologically skewed because of a near-complete focus on that which can be externally measured and tested in a laboratory, while denying or marginalising subjectivity, individual experience, feelings and values. His term for the dystopic result of such a skewed world-view is "flatland".

The approach developed by PEACE has a strong resonance with Integral Theory in terms of its emphasis on bridging the internal/external and individual/collective perspectives. This is a recurrent theme of discussion in PEACE workshops.

> A focus on the self in both its internal ("hidden self", "private self") and external ("image and qualities in the eyes of others") manifestations is a key feature of PEACE capacity-building workshops for activists from people's movements. Traits and behaviours such as "ego, individualism, bigotry, dual-character, arrogance of expertise, intolerance, casteism, orthodoxy, customs and values" are explicitly identified as characteristics of the "culture of neoliberalism" as barriers to collective action. Workshops provide participants with the space and support for "working with the self" to address these issues. The concepts and tools applied in these workshops often draw from the behavioural sciences and transactional analysis.
>
> These issues are also discussed with movement leaders. For instance, a series of workshops with BIHAN, a forum of organisations involved in struggles against land acquisition for infrastructure projects in Uttar Pradesh, highlighted the need for "clarity on issues, forces and co-relations" for building joint initiatives. The issue of "ego" (personal, ideological, traditional) and confrontation around leadership and control of the network was identified as a major hurdle to joint action. The reasons behind these factors were the subject of much discussion. It was emphasised that the "crisis of ego is acquired from the society and requires self-development efforts to control the characteristics which are harmful for joint initiatives".
>
> *From PEACE Activity Report for 2011*

The PEACE critique of mainstream development highlights the devastating consequences of a development process that sees everything in economic and monetary terms, and has no space or respect for subjectivity, feelings or values. This critique is particularly well articulated in the context of the relationship between human beings and nature, reflecting PEACE's engagement with Adivasi groups and movements for "Jal, Jangal, Zameen" (water, forests and land).

At the grassroots level, 'economics' means the art of survival with human dignity. The charter for 'survival with human dignity' includes community and civil obligations and socio-cultural obligations apart from the sustenance and well-being of the family. For centuries such requirements for survival were by and large taken care of by the socio-political and socio-cultural fabric of societies like ours. Community obligations and common property resources played a more critical role in the lives of the poor than 'money' and both of these are threatened by the expansion of money economy and market.

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From APPEAL website
http://www.appealgroup.net/what_we_learned.html

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We are fighting ArcelorMittal – it is not only a fight to save our lands, but to save our identity, our culture, our existence... If they take our land and force us to leave this place, we will be scattered far from the forests and hills which are the basis for our history, our language, our religion. PEACE understands this – that is why we see them as our allies and supporters in this struggle.

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Activist from Jharkhand

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I will never forget my first visit to Niyamgiri. I was sitting in a Kondh village, exhausted after a long trek up the hill. A group of women suddenly started singing in their own language, with tears streaming down their faces. The meaning of the song was explained to me: "Niyamgiri is our life, Niyamgiri is our god, if you take Niyamgiri our world will come to an end... We won't let anything happen to this mountain." That song had a profound effect on me. I had never felt the pain of another as I did at that moment. I can never again think of natural resources in pure economic terms.

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Conversation with Dhirendra Pra*tap Singh, PEACE*

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Although Marxism has been the starting point of its conceptual framework, PEACE has also drawn from other streams of thought. This is particularly visible in the attempt to incorporate caste and gender issues into the analysis, and the identification of "culture" as a key site for the Legitimation of oppression. PEACE materials now

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foreground issues of caste and gender much more sharply than in the past, reflecting its engagement with a range of identity-based formations, including women's movement groups, Dalit groups and Adivasi groups/movements.

> Protests, movements and revolutions have always been there but earlier they were mostly confined to the question of control over the means of production, were largely class-oriented (...) Now they have taken a shift (...) social alliances are replacing the old class-based formations. (...) The post 1980 era, particularly in the developing world, saw rapid changes taking place in the social structure (with) new small-scale "micro-level" organisations assuming more importance than the old mass organisations like trade unions and peasant federations. (...) class-based categories of labour movements and peasant movements were taken over by new social movements (...) representative of the popular response to state repression and social disparities (which) could include new forms of labour, women's, teachers, student, tribal or Dalit movements.
>
> *From "Of social movements and protests"*
> *(Editorial, Lok Samvad, January 2004)*

Experiences of change

Our conversations and interactions with the PEACE team and those who have been part of the journey of the organisation provided an opportunity to test the validity and impacts of some of the assumptions underpinning PEACE's change strategy.

We present some of our findings, in the words of the people we spoke to, and who put down their reflections on paper – participants in PEACE workshops, PEACE partners and allies, and team members. [2]

Personal epiphanies

Many, if not most, of the participants at the PEACE

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2. All quotes in this section are from the reflective pieces contributed by participants at the assessment workshops.

workshops after 2008 are seasoned political activists whose Lives mirror the tensions, conflicts and contradictions that characterise the difficult terrain of social action in India today. Many of them spoke of the renewed sense of hope and purpose that they got from their interactions with PEACE. This sense of renewal and positive energy was attributed, on the one hand, to acquiring the analytical tools and concepts to "read" the confused scenario, and on the other, to the comradeship, connection and solidarity created in the workshops.

> With industry after industry closing down and union after union breaking up, my 30 years of organising factory workers in Kanpur came to naught. The city that was called the "Manchester of the East" became a graveyard in front of my eyes. I felt completely isolated and depressed, with no reason to live. It was in this state that I came to my first PEACE workshop. By the end of it, I was transformed. Not only did I find a way to understand what was happening, I realised that my dream was not dead. I realised that control over land was the new site of struggle – I decided that was where I needed to put my energies.

> I was part of an ultra-left movement, but became disillusioned by the violence. Then I joined mainstream politics. I fought and won an election as an independent, but ultimately became enmeshed in the corrupt processes of other parties. I was always tormented by the contradiction between my politics and my way of life. I felt unhappy and conflicted. It was at this time that I attended PEACE workshop. It gave me the answers to many of my questions and forced me to rethink my life. I took a decision to quit mainstream politics and go back to working directly with people.

> I have learnt many things from PEACE – my horizons have expanded, I have understood that the issues I have been struggling with are manifestations of global processes... but that is not all. I can't explain it, but I came out of that workshop a completely changed person – a new person.

> I was at a low point in my life when I came to the PEACE workshop. I was struggling on many fronts and felt completely

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alone. Connecting with the PEACE team and the other partici-
pants gave me new energy, convinced me that I shouldn't give
up my dreams.

New ways of "seeing, being and doing"

It is clear that PEACE has been successful in creating
spaces that reflect alternative ways of thinking, acting and
interacting with others and the world. Several people
commented on the extent to which they have been
influenced and inspired by the equality and respect they
found in PEACE workshops.

"The PEACE team came to our village and did a workshop
for the local community. This workshop had a great effect on
our team. More than the discussions and exercises, it was the
behaviour of the trainers that left a lasting influence on peo-
ple. They were simple and friendly, and they treated everyone
equally, with no discrimination."

"The PEACE workshop showed me what it means to live
with dignity – it made me determined that I would not com-
promise on dignity, no matter what."

"I have been to many training programmes and workshops,
and always felt discriminated against on account of being a
Dalit. It is only the PEACE workshops where I have seen
equality being practised. PEACE is able to practise what
many others preach."

"I was very nervous and afraid when I went for my first
PEACE workshop. It was the first time I was going outside
my village, that too all alone. I was worried about being
accepted, and about being able to take part in the discussions.
For the first two days, I was silent and suspicious, but the
open and friendly way in which the PEACE team behaved
drew me into the process... Soon it felt like I was with a
group of friends."

"I had been a trainer myself for many years when I came to

my first PEACE workshop. So I was aware that what I was experiencing was something unique – an environment that felt completely unstructured and free, friendly and easy, but where there was no compromise on concepts and rigour."

"The PEACE team helped me to realise the importance of relationships – that you can't influence people or motivate them to change unless you relate with them and try to see things from their eyes. This is what the PEACE trainers were doing in the workshop."

The sessions on self-reflection and self-development during PEACE workshops are remembered by many of the participants (particularly, younger activists) as life-changing experiences.

"The self-development module in the PEACE workshop showed me that I was not really the person I was trying to project myself as being. I took a decision on that day that I have been following till now: to be open and not to hide any-thing about myself. I found that far from pushing people away from me as I feared it would, this openness has brought me closer to people."

"I was involved in social action even before I got to know PEACE – but the PEACE workshop was the first time I got a chance to think about myself, reflect on my own life."
"What I remember most about the PEACE workshop is the exercise where they asked us to think about the past and recall our moments of happiness and moments of sorrow. This exercise brought me very close to everyone in the group."

"I used to work in an NGO and it always bothered me that we did not practise what we preached about women's equality. Women workers were paid less, treated disrespectfully, but I could never say or do anything. The PEACE workshop helped me to realise that I had to change myself before trying to change the outside world."

"The PEACE workshop was like a counselling session for

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me. I was able to talk about my life, and seek help to deal with many of the fears in which I felt trapped."

Dhirendra Pratap Singh, who led the Training Team from December 2003 until his tragic and untimely death in April 2012 (while this impact assessment exercise was in process), was mentioned with respect and affection by almost everyone we spoke to. His influence not only on workshop participants, but on his colleagues, is impossible to ignore.

> "I was initially quite resistant to the PEACE philosophy. But Dhirendra's way of speaking, his behaviour and his way of relating with others – these had a profound influence on me and drew me into the discussions."

> "Dhirendra always noticed when I needed help, and would step in quietly with some support. A professional relationship became a lasting personal bond."

> "I was a political worker, but I was thrown out by my party leaders because they found me too rebellious and I challenged their dominance. When I came to the PEACE workshop, I was full of cynicism and negativity, but Dhirendra was so open and accepting that I opened my mind and became inspired to engage in struggles once again."

> "I feel that I only know PEACE because of Dhirendra. He was a person I could turn to for help and advice in any situation. I never felt any constraint in asking him for help."

Taking on the system: from individual consciousness to collective action

Some of the interviews and personal accounts suggest that the processes initiated during the PEACE workshops have had significant impacts on the movements and organisations in which participants are involved. Not surprisingly, this is far more likely when senior leaders are directly involved in the workshops.

"It is because of the PEACE workshop that I developed a political understanding of communalism. I was able to intervene and resolve a dispute in my village that could have easily become a communal conflagration. But I know I was able to do it because of the understanding and the confidence I got from the PEACE workshops."

"I was already involved in the land struggle when I came to PEACE. But I had no idea that there were so many other struggles all over the country. It was the PEACE workshop that connected me to these other struggles and has given me the sense of being part of a huge movement. I realised that fighting against corporations is not enough – our movement is now also speaking out against communalism and fascism."

"Our struggle slogan was – We will part with our lives but not with our land (Jaan denge par zameen nahi denge). After the PEACE workshop, we changed this slogan. Now we say – We will give neither our lives nor our land, we will take the battle to the enemy's lair (Jaan bhi nahi denge, zameen bhi nahin denge, dushman ko bil tak khadenge)."

"I was a political worker and was familiar with leftist theories, but it is the PEACE workshop that made me understand the meaning of structural change... I realised that private property is at the root of structural oppression. I decided to donate my own personal property to the movement."

"My first PEACE workshop was an extraordinary experience. It was the first time I had been in a training session where concepts were unpacked so simply yet with such a sharp political analysis. With great trepidation, I asked the PEACE team if they could do such a workshop for my comrades. They agreed without hesitation – in spite of the logistical difficulties and personal problems, two of them came to our village and did a workshop for us. This was a turning point for our organisation."

"Just before coming for the PEACE workshop, my son was

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bitten by a dog. The doctor and compounder at the government hospital refused to give him the anti-rabies shot unless I paid them for it. I knew it was supposed to be given free, but I was helpless. I was full of anger and frustration but I couldn't do anything. The PEACE workshop filled me with confidence and gave me ideas on how to channel my anger into action. I went back, mobilised others and organised a gherao of the hospital, which had a huge impact."

"Our movement against land acquisition was being undermined by our opponents, who went around telling local people that we were fooling them. We took some members of the community to a PEACE workshop where the politics of land acquisition was discussed and people from other similar struggles shared their experiences. When we came back, these people became allies of our movement and were able to convince others to join us in resisting forcible land acquisition."

"I, along with a large group of comrades from our movement, successfully contested the panchayat elections in Bihar in 2011. I give the credit for this to the PEACE workshop where we acquired all the practical skills needed for running a political campaign."

PEACE: The Journey

The meeting of the assessment team with PEACE staff and Board members allowed us to trace the journey of PEACE, from its inception to the present.

Anil Chaudhury founded PEACE and continues to lead it. With his own background in student politics and experience of work in the development sector, Anil set out to establish an organisation with a minimal institutional structure – no more than what was necessary to "be able to comply with the laws of the land and generate financial resources". Anil is emphatic that PEACE is not a provider of training services but an educator with a focus on working with adults to encourage critical thinking.

Starting as a small team of two and half persons, PEACE established its identity as a support organisation to small groups, people's organisations and networks, and small NGDOs. Recognising the role of learning and education in social transformation, training was a central activity.

Broad social and economic changes were taking place in India in the 1990s. The active civil society was also in a state of flux, trying to make sense of the changes and work out how to adapt to them. Development priorities were being redefined due to the Structural Adjustment Programme that came on the tail of the IMF loan taken to tide over the balance of payments crisis of 1990. Anil felt that NGOs and activists lacked the information and perspective on these changes that would enable them to make informed choices,

and PEACE sought to fill this gap. Educating frontline workers and heads of organisations to make sense of the changes and take a position on them was one side of the mandate. The other was to strengthen the culture of questioning in the face of the government's efforts to create a forced consensus on the "reforms". PEACE felt that it could play a role in helping individuals and organisations that had a political position on these developments, to be able to articulate their views forcefully and with conviction. Building a positive culture of questioning – the ability to interrogate reality and build an independent analysis based on lived experience, without accepting the received wisdom – was seen as a critical necessity for this goal.

Even before its formal registration as an organisation, PEACE began working on developing a critique of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Bill (better known as the "Panchayat Bill"). Once formalities were completed and funding secured, PEACE launched its first programme: Organisation Building and People's Education (OBPE). Since the intention was not to guide the participants through a structured pre-designed training "module", the three-phase OBPE started with a design only for the first phase; the subsequent two phases being structured in response to the learners' requirements.

Finding that there was considerable demand for these trainings, PEACE initiated its second training series on self-development. This was followed by training on social analysis that aimed at building perspectives and skills in understanding the changing times.

The next step was a three-phase series for campaign organisers, in response to the surfacing of the need for stronger and more strategic collection and processing of information. As a part of this process, PEACE set up its own library and documentation centre, and launched a newsletter (Namabar) to communicate with trainees.

These initial days saw many discussions on parameters of

support to the various groups. In response to the long-standing criticism of "takeover" of grassroot groups by Delhi-based NGOs, PEACE adopted two non-negotiable principles:

- PEACE would not initiate any networks;
- PEACE would provide support to grassroots groups by sharing its infrastructure and staff time but would not work on their behalf.

An innovative approach to "economic literacy" – building an understanding of macro-economic changes through analysis of one's own life experiences – was piloted through the APPEAL programme (Action Programme for Economic and Allied Literacy) initiated in 1997. Methodology and tools were evolved to facilitate a process that began from analysis of personal income and expenditure, to the economics of livelihoods and the way they were being impacted by local, national and global policies and processes.

In 2004, PEACE undertook a strategic planning exercise that included discussions with a large number of partners and a scan of the overall political environment. New focus areas were identified and plans drawn up to expand the reach and scope of work. However, due to funding constraints, these plans had to be cut back.

The experiences of the preceding years, as well as discussions with partners, indicated that a focus on individual activists to build critical perspectives was no longer strategic. There was diminishing buy-in from NGOs who had either decided to work within the newly-emerging system or had made a decision not to resist it. Moreover, the legitimacy of NGOs supported by foreign donors and located in big cities was increasingly being questioned by activists. It was, therefore, decided to work with small grassroots organisations that were struggling for people's rights. As before, it was clear that PEACE would be supporting these groups and networks but would not volunteer to steer them, or initiate any actions with them.

In response to these new alignments, training programmes became far more decentralised, with more and more workshops being conducted at the local level and tailored to meet the needs of specific groups. The transition was completed by 2007: from this point on, PEACE worked exclusively with grassroots social movements. The spread expanded beyond the Hindi belt to Adivasi struggle groups in Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

Perhaps the most radical implication of the shift was for the trainers, who now had to engage far more closely in the struggles that they were trying to support through their trainings. The PEACE training team spoke of how it has risen to this challenge. It has been a mutual process of learning with positive outcomes for both parties.

Reflecting on their work, the PEACE team and the Board members identified the contributions made by PEACE to people's struggles over the past 15 years:

- Facilitated the creation of a pool of activists with critical perspectives who are actively contributing to various civil society organisations and social movements

- Created a platform where critical issues and questions that have been prevented from entering the mainstream development discourse have found legitimacy and visibility

- PEACE's clarity on issues and its political analysis of emerging trends serve as a beacon for field-based groups, which use the materials and discussions as guides for taking positions on contentious issues

- Voices from the grassroots have been supported and given visibility through PEACE newsletters. PEACE publications have also provided a platform and support for alternative writing and the expression of diverse views

- While civil society has been in a state of flux over this period, PEACE has continued to enjoy acceptability with most formations

- Small grassroots groups and movements have received institutional support from PEACE

- Larger networks have also gained from PEACE in terms of clarity on perspective and through the institutional resources and space provided by PEACE

- PEACE is viewed as a resource by movements – its interventions have supported both the process and content of the work done by these movements. Its institutional space and infrastructure is seen as a legitimate area to be used by field activists

- PEACE has succeeded in increasing collective initiatives through its role as an educator and information provider. It has also encouraged land supported new leadership, new initiatives and new alliances

PEACE's educational interventions are based on collective reflection. While PEACE has its own positions on various issues and articulates them freely, the team does not feel that this exerts any coercive influence on the political positions of the participants. Instead, PEACE is confident that its methodology opens the space for participants to undertake collective reflection and build a nuanced political understanding of their own lived reality, leading to better strategising for political action.

The PEACE team and Board members identified the following key areas for exploration by the assessment team:

- Effectiveness and desirability of "experiential learning" as a methodology

- Appropriateness of an "interventionist" approach as opposed to "service delivery"

- Strategic relevance of the focus on building holistic and critical perspective among field activists, particularly in terms of understanding micro-macro connections

- Value of PEACE "accompaniment" of organisations and struggle groups

- Criticality of information dissemination in strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages amongst organisations and developing an understanding of micro-macro linkages

A Journey of Questioning 1996-2011

Journey of PEACE

	Social Context	PEACE Proposal	Objectives of PEACE Intervention
Standing with people's movements, working with them to define PEACE's role			
1995-97	1. Emergence of communal/caste-based politics 2. Entry of multinational companies through joint ventures with public sector companies, i.e., Maruti and Pepsi foods. 3. Systematic undermining of parliamentary institutions 4. Rise of the power of specialised bureaucracy handpicked by the IMF-WB combine. Criminalisation, communalizatio, caste-isation and trivialisation of the democratic process has reached its zenith. All these developments have serious implications for the democratic space, nature and characteristics of social action in the wake of fading relevance of micro-structures in polity and	Alternatives in Organising	Linkages with appropriate resource agencies and with similar efforts in other parts to learn from providing sounding boards on strategic and organisational matters; helping out in developing evaluation and monitoring systems and meeting the staff development requirements
		Enhancing People's Participation in Self-Governance	Trainer's Training in people's education for participation in self-governance is a three-phase intervention: in the first phase, emphasis is on perspective building, enhancing the self-concept and confidence, orientation in the functioning of the Panchayat and sensitisation to the issue of accountability to the electorate; the second phase focuses upon skill building in terms of planning, dealing with various structures and development issues; the third phase will deal with individual requirements of the participants
		Strengthening Social Action	Contributing in promotion and strengthening of social action
		Motivation and Orientation of Youth for Development Action	A training programme with the objective of initiating activities, particularly among the youth, in order to check caste-based political mobilisation. The need for affirmative action with liberal intelligentsia in the minority community has been identified as the most urgent

decision-making; the grassroots micro nature of social action is today forced to evolve into wider and broader movements. On any issue, be it related to land, water, forest, education, healthcare, etc., it is not possible to seek a resolution at block, taluka or, for that matter, even at the district level	Training for Organisers of Public Education Campaign on Issues	A three-phase training programme to enhance understanding of the various segments of social environment and its dynamics, the skills to identify and collect relevant information regarding the issue and to repackage such information in appropriate form to meet the requirements of different constituencies
	Capacity Building of Small and New Groups	An educational intervention with the objective of facilitating in overcoming the conceptual and analytical stagnation of field-based activists. Enhancement of skills related to dealing with mobilisation, organisation and strategy. Cognitive, affective and motivational self-development needs of the individual activists working in the field for more than 5-10 years
	Social Analysis and Perspective Building Workshop (based on literature and theatre)	To develop methods of education utilising the existing heritage of various forms of expression familiar to the field activists in their socio-cultural context
	Training of Field Activists in Strategies and Pedagogy of Organising for Change	A training programme which blends the two streams of learning and organising with the following objectives: understanding of experiencial learning and its various facets that contribute in empowerment and organisation building; sensitisation to various aspects of facilitating adult learning and organisation development; skills to design and carry out learner-centred educational processes

Breaking the mould and actively experimenting in popular education

1997-99	1. Pressure on grass-root groups to become "professionals" of development sector more tuned to the "market" and the World Bank led development process 2. NGDOs becoming more of implementation partners for schemes promoted by funding agencies irrespective of the local grassroot needs. 3. With increasing hold of fundamentalist forces on administration and governance, the "Implementor and Professional" NGDOs are increasingly aligning with fundamentalist forces	1. Social Analysis & Perspective Building of Field Activists	PEACE proposes to execute this programme in two phases of seven days each. The main objectives of this training workshop are: 1. Enhancing social analysis skill amongst the field activists 2. Preparing them to resurrect and activate the culture of questioning in the society
		2. Activists' Training in 'Organisation Building and Methods of People's Education'	The main objectives of training workshops are: 1. Enhancement of understanding on those aspects of experiential learning that are helpful in enhancing skills in the masses and organisation building 2. Developing awareness and enhancing skill on aspects of adult learning pertaining to facilitation that are required in the processes and organisation development 3. Enhancing skills on planning and implementation of people-oriented learning processes
		3. Activists Training in Dealing with Wider Environment and Macro Structures	Based on the feedback received from the participant organisations, it was decided to continue to impart training on planning and executing various campaigns. Participants found capacity building on various components of campaign (such as how to prepare a press release, how to write a memorandum, how to prepare slogans, posters and street plays etc.) very useful. The main objective of this three-phase training programme are: 1. Enhancing understanding and awareness on wider environment and macro structures 2. Enhancing skill of strategising, planning and execution of various campaigns

		4. Issue-Based Capacity Building Training	Training workshops on issues like people's access & control over land, water and forest; child labour etc. The focus of these trainings are on strengthening perspective and awareness about various prevalent approaches on the concerned issue; information and awareness about the related structures, laws, procedures and practices, skills related to collection & handling of appropriate information and strategic use of that information
		5. Human Rights Education	Training of Human Right Activists during the last quarter of the first year. This training shall be of 7-10 days and cover various aspects ranging from conceptual understanding of Human Rights to the concrete skills of investigating, reporting, advocating and campaigning

Follow-up action on APPEAL

1999-2002		Training of Trainers (Macro Economic Environmen)	These programmes focus on: 1. Building a perspective on macro economic issues 2. Orienting the participants with the methodology and its theoretical basis 3. Enhancing their skills in carrying through and sustaining the process of learning within their respective reference groups
		Horizontal Exchange and Interaction among the Practising Educators	As capacity building cannot be a one-time exercise, PEACE decided to offer follow-up support in terms of being the sounding board and guide to the organisations initiating interventions after Training of Trainers programme. PEACE team members frequently visit the participant organisations, and try to link these organisations with various issue-based regional and national networks and resource centres

		Popular Information Centre	Activities of the centre will include keeping track of and accessing latest policy documents and secondary statistical data from Government of India and its institutions, various provincial governments and their institutions, World Bank and its offshoots in India, IMF, WTO, multilateral and bilateral operations in India etc

Strengthening alliances and social action

2002-2005	1. The rise of "profit" instead of "social needs" emerged as the sole objective of development effort 2. The poor and marginalised people lost their centrality in matters of governance	Action Programme for Peoples' Economics and Allied Literacy Workshops	This orientation programme is aimed at developing skills of grassroot activists in faciliating "economic literacy workshops" at the field level. At the end of the programme, the participants have to spell out individual action plans in terms of utilising the learning from the programme in their field of action.
	3. Decline in space for popular protest and differences of opinion 4. The stronghold of the global financial institutions and Transnational Corporations (TNCs) on the economy and decision-making has inexcusably increased	Organisation Building & People's Education	OBPE programme aims at enriching critical perspective and practical skills among field activists that are necessary for working among the deprived and marginalised communities. With its long duration stretching into three phases of eight days each and structured application being inbuilt into the process, this programme amounts to a cadre-building programme
	5. Differentiation in basic services, i.e., health, education, energy, water, communication and transport, in terms of paying capacity has successfully been established as imperative for "growth".	Skill Focused Advanced Training Programme	This programme is designed for the selected alumni from the previous phase and primarily focuses upon learning theories, group process and dynamics, group facilitation and self-development. The interested and inclined participants of this programme are later provided with the opportunity of joining the PEACE team as trainer apprentices in order to consolidate their experience

6. The changes in nature and conditions of labour, displacement of traditional occupations and marginalisation of labour-intensive technologies appeared as the order of the day during these years	In-house Training Support to Organisations and Networks	Going by experience of continuous requests from various networks, coalitions and organisations for in-house training of their activists, PEACE decided to make formal provisions for PEACE team's involvement in such support
7. Total disregard for subsistence agriculture (the most formidable safety net for rural poor in third world economies) and blatant assault on small and marginalised farmers unleashed by the National Agriculture Policy, 2000	Campaigns and Alliances Building	Though PEACE dose not convene any campaign or alliance in the formal sense, it has played a significant role in triggering off process that resulted in campaigns and alliances. PEACE has also played the role of assisting in crucial times and in critical areas the campaigns and alliances initiated by others. PEACE proposes to play a role in: 1. Initiating platform by way of calling meeting or consultation 2. Providing linkages with field groups and organisations 3. Taking part in collaborative actions and/or activities initiated by others 4. Sharing information, experience, infrastructure and other resources 5. Assisting the collective efforts by creating, publishing and disseminating educational materials
8. Substantial decline in the influence of European NGDO funding, which has been the hallmark of innovations and radicalism for decades. Instead, this period has witnessed a phenomenal increase in multilateral and bilateral funding in social development sector in India. This shift includes multilateral and bilateral access to NGDOs, which was a rare phenomenon before. The multilateral operations are led by World Bank and supplemented by UNDP, UNAIDS, UNIFEM, UNICEF etc. These operations primarily consist of WB-IDA credit in the field of forest management, health, primary education, agriculture, watershed and drinking water. Among the bilateral agencies, USAID, DFID and EU have emerged as key players. Tender filing and bidding for contracts for social development projects is fast picking up. This has	People's Information Centre	PEACE decided to continue and further develop the capacity to make the relevant documents of multilateral, bilateral and government agencies accessible to the field activists, groups and organisations. We propose to consolidate this role of ours in future and also develop mechanisms and competence in the field of electronic dissemination

		Initiative for Local Fund Raising	Post September 11, 2001, it is becoming more difficult to draw financial support for the process work of 'critical' nature from both national and international sources. It is proposed that in the present context, PEACE with the support of its partners shall make concerted efforts to address the issue and work systematically to evolve mechanisms for local fund raising to support grassroots actions and citizen's initiatives
	resulted in a good number of groups with a glorious and exemplary past in terms of their critical and strategic interventions shifting to "sectoral" and "project" approach and falling in line with the neoliberal agenda		

Countering the Emerging "Myths", i.e., Goodness of Globalisation

2005-2008	1. Flexing of military muscle by USA in the interest of protecting its business interests, particularly in the Middle East to secure its interest in oil 2. The relationship between the 'military complex', global trade and revival of the deficit-ridden failing economy of the US clearly signals a much more unilateral, centralised and undemocratic 'world order', which will facilitate concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of fewer and fewer corporations in the times to come 3. The emergence of popular resistance, be it against Iraq war or	Capacity Building	PEACE's overarching mission of "keeping the culture of questioning alive and vibrant" depends upon the core competence in the area of capacity building. Over a period of time, PEACE has earned the distinction of a training organisation that continued to focus upon social analysis and perspective building, strategic planning and organisation building, and skills to deal with macro processes and structures even during the era of specialised and techno-managerial skills
		Organisation Building and People's Education (OBPE)	This programme focused on igniting the quest for critical enquiry among the field activists. To be able to resond to issues emerging from the fast changing reality, PEACE decided to systematically incorporate issues like militarisation, ascent of the right wing, politics of identity, role and relevance of nation-state

Globalisation 4. The continuation of State/Market/Military dominance with complete indifference and contempt towards these popular movements 5. The neoliberal pursuit of Government of India continues unabated even after the changes of guard at the Central Government level. The same is reflected in the foreign and defence policies. Even on the front of democratic and civil rights, the aspirations of the people were belied in six months of the new government's taking over by the manner in which it has dealt with its poll promise to repeal the Prevention of Terrorist Activity Act	Orientation in APPEAL process	The process of APPEAL training has focused on building perspective and developing analytical skills, through experiential learning, to understand the process of globalisation, the international corporate interests behind the sway of the market forces and its green-room devised strategies to contain peoples' wrath and expand the empire of capital
	Thematic Workshops	In response to the growing need of the field-based groups that are already oriented in the APPEAL process and OBPE, PEACE proposed to organise 'sector specific' workshops in the area of land, agriculture, forest, water, health and education
	Skill Building in Documentation and Dissemination	Skill Building Training programme in documentation and dissemination: 1. To enrich and develop required skills in identification, collection, documentation and appropriate repackaging of relevant information 2. To enrich the skills of preparing briefs, updates, features and profiles of issues and struggles
	Strengthening Local Economy: Developing Alternatives	Over the last couple of years, PEACE came in contact with various groups who were not merely resisting the process of economic globalisation but were also involved actively in providing alternatives to the people in order to strengthen the local economies. PEACES decided to document these experiences and disseminate it

		Popular Information Centre	Focus of PIC was on updating 2,000 field groups regularly about the latest developments at the global and national levels. PEACE also launched a website www.struggleindia.com to document peoples' struggles for their right to land, water and forests, workers' struggles and struggles against displacement by 'development' projects
		Campaign and Alliances	PEACE continued to play a role in supporting various campaigns and alliances initiated by various grassroots action groups on a variety of issues like displacement, eviction of tribals from forests, farmers' opposition to Pepsi and Coca Cola, and against attempts to privatise river waters. PEACE has also joined hands with regional networks like DAG in Uttar Pradesh, ABHIYAN in Jharkhand, Nadi Ghati Sangharsh Samiti in Chhattisgarh, SAMVEDAN cultural programme in Gujarat etc
		Facilitating New Initiatives	PEACE facilitated new initiatives, particularly 1. South Asia Centre for Peace and Democracy 2. Third World Study Centre 3. People's Information Resource Network 4. Project for Future Earth 5. Forum for Rethinking on HIV/AIDS

Letting Partners Drive PEACE: Let the Learner Decide the Learning Agenda

2008-2011	This period was marked by following developments: 1. GDP growth, declining fiscal deficit and inflation rates made India Inc jubilant 2. Thousands of farmers are committing suicide; hundreds of thousands of the marginalised and deprived families are getting displaced from their livelihood and whatever meagre resources they have in their possession. The gap between the lowest and highest wages in industrial sector has escalated to 1: 22,000 3. Profiteering interests and proliferating demand for "nuclear energy" within India 4. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the 'retail sector' has unfolded another Pandora's Box which has threatened the livelihood of millions 5. Anti-terror laws are threatening all those who oppose the "neoliberal develop-	**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**	
		Strategies of People's Struggles and Methods of People's Education	The programme's focus was on 1. Enhancing awareness about the importance of strategic planning for effectiveness of the struggles 2. Enhancing understanding about macro structures and processes, and their effects on women in relation to the issue(s) of struggle 3. Enhancing understanding about the strategic planning process 4. Enriching skills of strategic planning and dealing with macro structures
		Perspective on Macro-Economics and Multilateral Institutions	The focus of the programme was on 1. Enhancing understanding of the participants on the basic concepts of macroeconomics based on their experiences in the local setting 2. Enhancing understanding of the participants about historical conditions of rise and growth of 'neoliberalism' 3. Enhancing understanding of the participants about genesis and functioning of the WTO in historical context 4. Enhancing understanding and awareness of the participants about the role of the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) in India 5. Enhancing awareness about the various local struggles in resisting the policies and projects of WB and ADB 6. Enhancing understanding about the effects of Multilateral Trade and Financial Institutions on women, their development and their struggles

ment paradigm" and mobilise the masses to resist displacement, mining, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), dams and the designs of IFIs and the corporate conglomerates	Sector and/or Issue Specific Workshops	The focus was on 1. Providing comprehensive overview of the recent developments in the sector, including their effect on women 2. Facilitating in-depth understanding of operational mechanisms of neoliberal prescriptions within the sector 3. Enabling the participants to do pro-poor critical analysis of the policies of the related multinational and governmental agencies 4. Equipping the participants to plan timely and effective interventions using available tools like Right to Information
6. The passage of SEZ Act 2005 without any public debate is, in fact, an act of 'declaration of secession' by the minuscule minority of the Sovereign, Socialist and Secular Republic of India that are called rich or aspire to be rich, from the rest of the country		
7. The 'restructuring' of the health, education and drinking water sectors undertaken by the Government of India on the behest of the World Bank is creating conditions that are 'conducive' for private players' takeover of these services	Strengthening Documentation Base of Struggles	The focus was to try out a different process to meet the goal of strengthening documentation capacity at the grassroots level by selecting 5-6 interested people from among the ongoing struggles and working closely and regularly with them to enhance their skills in various aspects of documentation
	Popular Information Centre	PIC continued to support 3,000 plus groups with its documents, newletters and other material
8. People and the communities at the grassroots are pushed against the wall and are forced to resort to resistance and protest in whatever manner they are able to do it. This, in turn, is leading to perpetual increase in state repression of both the communities and the activists who directly or indirectly associate with their cause	Campaigns and Alliance Building	On new issues like Nuclear Power (in the light of the ongoing Indo-US deal), large-scale Jatropha (bio-fuel) plantation on common and government land, and corporate land grab in the garb of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), PEACE continued to support campaigns and alliance building

PEACE Pedagogy: Promoting the Culture of Questioning

PEACE has developed and is implementing the following programmes:

- Training on Social Analysis and Perspective Building

- Training on Organisation Building and People's Education

- Training on Campaign Organisation

- APPEAL (Action Program for People's Economics and Allied Literacy) Training of Trainers Programme

- Strategies of People's Struggles and Methods of People's Education

- Perspective on Macro-Economics and Multilateral Institutions

- Skill Building in Documentation and Information Dissemination

Name of Training	Period	Rounds
Sangathan Nirman evam Lok Shikshan ke Tarike (Methods of Organisational Building & Popular Education): 3 phases	1996-2007	11 rounds
Abhiyan Ayojakon ka Prashikshan (Training for Campaign Organisers): 2 phases	1996-1999	3 rounds
Social Analysis and Perspective Building	1996-2001	6 rounds
Panchayati Raj par Karyakartaon ka Prashikshan (Training for Activists on Panchayati Raj)	1996-2001	5 rounds
Prathamik Shiksha: Chintayein aur Chanautiyan (Primary Education: Concerns & Challenges)	1999	1 round
Bhumi Sangharshon ki Karyaneeti par Karyashala (Strategies for Land Struggles): 3 phases)	1999-2000	2 round
Workshop on Communalism	2002	1 round
Training of Trainers	2002	1 round
Lok Arthashastra evam Sambadhh Saksharta Karyakram Karyashala (Action Programme on People's Education and Allied Literacy)	2000-2007	15 rounds
Training of Trainers on Panchayati Raj	2007	1 round
Dastavezikaran aur Prachar-Prasar ke Madhayamon ke Prayog mein Dakshata (Skill Building on Documentation & Use of Media)	2005-2007	5 rounds
Jan Sangharshon ki Ranneetiyan evam Lok Shikshan ke Tarike (Strategies for People's Struggles & Popular Education)	2008-2011	3 rounds
Vikas ka Arthashastra (Development Economics)	2008-2011	6 rounds
Gender evam Sanghathnatmak Soch (Gender and Organisational Approach)	2009	1 round
JNNURM: Dasha evam Disha (JNNURM: Situation and Directions)	2009	1 round
Visthapan evam Vikas (Displacement and Development)	2010	1 round
Vikas evam Vanchitikaran (Development and Deprivation)	2010	1 round

Review of Methodology

PEACE explains that their training methodology enables the learners to shape and direct their own learning instead of being mere passive recipients of expert knowledge.

A review of the PEACE training reports over the last 15 years reveals an interesting mix of training methodologies. These are summarised below.

Methodology	Used for	Examples
Group discussion	Collective analysis of popular literature; discussion for gathering participants' experiences on a variety of issues	Maila Aanchal for social analysis Short stories
Role Play and Theatre	Experiencing the intricacies of the social reality	Theatre activity
Simulations and games	Creating a here-and-now experience for understanding complex realities at the emotional level	Star Power, 'Relam Pel Sambhal Kar Khel' (board game)
Guided reflections	Examining individual and collective experiences	Reflection on changes in personal lifestyle to build concept of changing reality 24-hour day (gender analysis of women's and men's work)
Lectures and readings	To provide new input	
Practice sessions	To practise new skills	Writing of memos and press releases

The training methodologies used by PEACE invite the participants to reflect on their daily life through individual

reflection and writing, or collective experience sharing and storytelling. It then connects these insights with global change processes – changes in global economics, changing gender roles, or the dynamics of market forces.

An interesting part of the entire training process is the narrative and the idiom used, which is in tune with the participants' profile and context. PEACE has developed several innovative games/exercises to suit the context of the participants, and uses popular literature as an important resource for learning. For instance, the training on 'Lok Arthshastra' starts with participants listing down the changes they are experiencing in their daily life, in three domains: the kitchen, the workplace and the local market. The collective analysis of the changes in these separate but interrelated spaces leads the group towards a deeper understanding of market forces and their social complexities. To further explore this theme, the participants play a business game called 'Star Power' which gives them a deep and powerful understanding of the relationship between capital and the governing powers in society. A board game (modelled on Monopoly) allows participants to experience the dynamic between governments, the World Bank and multinational corporations. This game creates an experience of the political and business forces operating at the macro-economic level. The facilitator's role throughout the process is that of "holding" the space, facilitating discussions and providing relevant conceptual inputs in building a collective perspective.

The training designs usually move from micro (self) level to macro (society) level of analysis. PEACE finds that such a sequence is useful in ensuring learning of people who do have not had much formal schooling, but who have a lot of lived experience.

The training methodology adopted by PEACE highlights the integration of the learner's everyday social experience into the learning process. In this learner-centred approach,

PEACE continuously strives to come up with innovative learning methods, using cultural materials such as popular novels and street theatre; simulations and games to create here-and-now learning experiences; structured reflections and creative expressions in the form of songs, posters and campaign materials.

Taken as a whole, PEACE's training designs, pedagogical processes and methodologies reflect an abiding commitment to the democratisation of the learning process and in critiquing and resisting elitist, top-down and facilitator-controlled pedagogies.

Role of Facilitator in PEACE Training

PEACE trainings are not transactional in nature – they are not seen as 'services' provided by a vendor to a client. These trainings are transformational in nature and require relationship of mutuality, trust and friendship between the facilitator and the learners.

> He does not regard cognizable objects as his private property, but as the object of reflection by himself and the students. In this way, the problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the doxa (popular belief) is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the logos (reasoned discourse).
>
> Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

True to their Freirean principles, PEACE facilitators see themselves as a guide and a support for participants, who can help them to learn from their own experiences and the knowledge that they themselves have collectively created. This necessarily implies an intimacy and trust between the 'trainers' and the 'trainees'. Not surprisingly, then, the

'trainees' describe their relationships with the facilitators as like "family members", "friends" and "co-learners". The learning partnership is seen by the trainees as not just non-hierarchical but actively anti-hierarchical and a "very easy" one.

PEACE's training portfolio evolved through interactions with the groups it works with. New initiatives have been built around suggestions given by the participants during the course of ongoing training programmes.

In the first phase of PEACE's work (during 1996-2000), the focus was on 'Social Analysis & Perspective Building'. The economic literacy programme ('Lok Arthashastra') emerged from the social analysis programmes since people were interested in going deeper in understanding neoliberal globalisation and government policies in the post-1999 period.

PEACE facilitators are open about their own politics, and do not see themselves as "neutral" umpires in the process. For instance, it was the involvement of a feminist facilitator that brought a focus on the links between patriarchy and the market economy into the economic literacy programme.

Impact of PEACE's Work

> To assist people's struggles on issues of survival, identity and democratic space through enhancement of knowledge and information base of such efforts and building the capacity of the grassroot collectives to deal with macro processes and structures... We wish to carry out our commitment under the banner of "Popular Education", which for us implies enabling the deprived, marginalised and oppressed so that they can effectively intervene to transform the processes and structures influencing their lives, to their own advantage.
>
> *PEACE, Statement of Objectives*

Grassroots activists from people's movements are the primary constituency and audience for PEACE. The educational interventions evolved in three stages.

Until 1999, PEACE focused primarily on organising trainings and workshops. The information and resource centre for developing and dissemination information materials started in 2002. Later the same year, PEACE added to its agenda the work of supporting campaigns and alliances.

This trajectory suggests that while PEACE was inspired by the idea of "popular education", the turning points in its strategy and interventions were shaped by interactions with the field-based groups and struggles. Given this journey of co-learning with its partners, the impact of PEACE's educational interventions needs be identified and tracked at three interrelated levels:

A Journey of Questioning 1996-2011

1. Individual participants in trainings and workshops

2. Partner organisations

3. Movements, campaigns and struggles

Individual Reflections on the Impact of PEACE Trainings

PEACE trainings instilled a unique analytical understanding within me. I was already raising issues as part of a collective, but PEACE made me recognise the necessity of continuously fighting for one marginalised community or another. Today, I am not only fighting against casteism and communalism, I am also extending maximum support to the street vendors in their struggle for justice.

(Workshop participants)

The feedback workshops allowed us to assess PEACE's impact on individuals through focused group discussions and a reflection exercise where participants were invited to write about PEACE's influence on their lives and work.

Questionnaires and group discussions can play an important role in helping members of a group to begin the process of remembering and reflecting upon what they have learned from their encounter or relationship with a particular organisation or event. While the broad brush strokes provided by these sources tell us much about general trends of a phenomenon, a reliance on these sources alone can also lead to losing the nuances and diversity of the individual stories. In order to more fully apprehend the influence of PEACE on the social and political work and lives of its trainees, participants who attended the three impact assessment workshops in Dehradun from 26 March to 03 April 2012 were asked to write their own personal narratives about how they came to the social activism and political work that they do, how they encountered PEACE, and the role that PEACE

played in moulding their lives as activists who sought to make their worlds less violent and more just. Without providing a detailed profile of each of the 143 participant s who attended the Dehradun workshop, the following a nalysis highlights the richness and multiplicity of the trainees' experiences before and after their interactions with PEACE.

Beginnings

A significant number of participants saw themselves as coming from socioeconomically marginalised backgrounds with first-hand experience of exploitation, humiliation or poverty, while others identified themselves as coming from relative privilege but with a deep sensitivity to injustices perpetrated by systems of class, caste, communal or gender-based violence. Almost all the personal narratives outlined the profile of a sensitive and/or vulnerable person who was profoundly affected by a particular event or a series of events where s/he encountered or experienced oppression; who refused to accept the ways in which power relations operated in their social context; and who, through their own attempts to grapple with questions of exploitation and injustice, encountered other individuals or organisations at the local or grassroots level that helped them to embrace and advance on a path of social work or political activism. The following q uotations, the first from a Muslim man from Bihar and the next from an Adivasi woman from Orissa, illustrate such beginnings.

I was on my way to school when a boy called Ranjeet from my own village entered into a quarrel with another boy called Ramesh Singh. Ramesh was physically strong and started beating Ranjeet. I ran toward them to protect Ranjeet. My other friends, who were also going to school with me, caught up and began to blame me: "You fought with Ramesh to save this Chamarwa [chamar]?" . . . I was shocked. Yet, whomever I discussed this episode with found fault with me; they told me that my ways had degenerated because I was spending too much time with "those [dalit] people" . . . This incident con-

tinued to torment me . . . A few years later in college, there was a [goonda] called Arun who was Kurmi by caste and who terrorised all the students. One day, Arun asked a lower caste boy to reveal his caste, but the boy refused. In rage, Arun beat the boy so badly that he started bleeding from his mouth. I was watching all this from the school veranda . . . I could not stand to see the boy being tortured and jumped into the fight with a couple of my friends. However, we had to withdraw because Arun was much stronger than we were. After this episode, I was afraid to return to my college. I recounted everything to my father who spoke to some influential Kurmi men; they, in turn, instructed Arun to not pester me. At the same time, they warned me to not meddle with Arun's business . . . I was filled with hatred against casteism and communalism and adopting the path of Janwadi Navjawaan Sabha, I eventually became a member of CPI (M).

When I was a child, I sang Pandwani for seven years. Then I was married off. My husband treated me well for two years but, after the birth of my first son, he began abusing me physically and verbally. He brought in another woman to the house . . . and stopped providing me with food or clothing even though I worked for the family like a slave. I had to beg for food for myself and my three children. I laboured in the fields of others, but it was my husband who went and claimed my wages for his alcohol and then beat me mercilessly. I saw no point in arguing with an alcoholic, so I kept putting up with his abuse. But I was worried about how I would send my children to school and asked my father for his help . . . After this, my husband threw me out of the house. I went with my children to live in my mother's home, but my father got very angry with me: "You can't live here. Go take your children somewhere else." Immediately, I took my children out of his house and we began to live about a kilometre away in the same village. I devoted my sweat and blood to raising and educating my children. Around this time a Mill Mazdoor Morcha was being formed. [I, too, joined the campaign and that sowed the seeds of my political journey].

The preceding stories suggest that there were two kinds of trigger points shaping the socio-political journeys of participants. Individuals with first-hand experiences of

discrimination, exploitation and deprivation were frequently moved to act in an organised way against such systems after confronting intense violence and humiliation at the personal level. In comparison, people from relatively comfortable social positions embraced the path of activism after witnessing and connecting with such injustices in the lives of others and/or because of specific intellectual and political influences they encountered in their youth.

The following excerpts from the narratives of three other participants from Bihar help us to grasp both of these scenarios:

The political struggle in my college continued to intensify and soon came the day when thousands of students from different streets of the city emerged to protest before the Collectorate with their banners and signs. The police surrounded us from all sides and, suddenly, with the blowing of a whistle, laathis started raining on us. Then there was piercing voice: "Don't let that 'Mian' [Muslim man] run away!" A little later, there were dozens of saathis drenched in blood and five of us were taken to the police station . . . [The officer gave orders] to beat me. When they were done with me, they ruthlessly beat my four companions, all the while asking them: "Why are you helping this Mian to become a political leader? Apologise and swear that you will never support this Mian again!" I cried as I sat and listened, thinking of my father and all those people who visited my home in their Gandhi topis. Which independence? I asked myself. And which brotherhood? And what kind of nation building, where those who dared to raise questions were degradingly marked by their religion and physically tortured in this fashion? They threw me in the prison. People asked my father, "Why is your son in jail?" and he responded, "[My son] is not a thief or a rapist. They jailed him for trying to protect students' rights." The day I was released, thousands of people were waiting to greet me, shouting: "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Isai; Sab aapas mein bhai bhai." With caste-based and communal violence as my focus, I spread my struggles at the state level and committed myself to understanding every movement and group working on these issues.

In the 1980s, I joined the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini. This organisation was established in 1975 so that the youth who were involved in the Bihar Andolan could be saved from the clutches of political parties and so that they could continue working toward the goal of complete social, economic and cultural transformation. This youth organisation works with men and women who are between the ages of 14 and 30 years. After reaching my age limit, I began to work fulltime on the rehabilitation of those who were displaced by the construction of the Chandil dam in the Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. Since then, I have continuously committed my energies to opposing displacement and to securing people's right to just and adequate rehabilitation.

In 2007, I got appointed as a security guard at the Aditya Birla Telecom Limited Company. . . [and] started receiving Rs 2,900 per month for working 12 hours a day. I spent a whole year figuring out the basis on which I was getting Rs 97 per day. I read the Government of India's Minimum Wages Act of 1948 and found out from trade union leaders that labourers have the right to work for 8 hours, rest for 8 hours and spend the remaining 8 hours on other things [related to survival] . . . I sent a registered letter to this effect to the Manager of the Aditya Birla Telecom Limited in Patna, but when I did not get a response from them for several years, I started holding meetings about the Minimum Wages Act first with security guards of IDEA mobile tower . . . and then with others . . . [We] founded the IDEA Mobile Tower Workers Union and I was appointed as the secretary . . . Under the banner of the union, we demanded minimum wages and 8-hour work days from the district administration . . . Not receiving a response to my letter . . . the members of the union gheraoed the district administration . . . Then the SDO of Bhojpur wrote to the Manager in Patna that if, within the next 8 days, no clarification was provided to the workers with regard to their minimum wages, there would be a legal proceeding against the company as provided for in the 1948 Act. After my training with PEACE, I intensified the campaign by raising similar questions about minimum wages with workers located in other places. Troubled and fearful of our andolan, the IDEA management regularly sends me temptations and threats, but I have become completely fearless and stubborn after my training at PEACE.

Meeting, Learning and Growing with PEACE

For the majority of the participants attending the impact assessment workshops, the first encounter with PEACE happened through a chance meeting with a PEACE team member or through an unexpected opportunity to participate in a PEACE training or workshop. This first contact frequently turned out to be a critical event in sharpening the vision of the individual trainees, and sometimes in reshaping the course of their life as committed social activists. In the following paragraphs, we consider the influence of PEACE trainings on the participants in terms of (a) their analytical framework, (b) their methodology and (c) their vision and commitments for the future.

Analytical Framework

PEACE's pedagogical interventions, discussion sessions and learning materials enabled participants to understand how the issues they had been grappling with in their own local or regional context were not isolated phenomena; rather, these issues were intimately connected with – and often moulded or reinforced by – processes unfolding at regional, national and global scales. Accordingly, PEACE trainees came to appreciate the importance of sangathan or organised collective action across local, regional, national and global scales in order to address common and interconnected struggles. The following responses from three different participants reflect the ways in which PEACE trainings helped them to forge analytical connections among struggles across multiple geographical scales and to translate that understanding into their programme for action:

"It was by sheer accident that I got an opportunity to attend one of PEACE's workshops. I did not feel much connection initially, but soon PEACE grew on me without my knowing it . . . I used to try to find root causes of all the problems at the local level but soon this misperception was replaced by a

search for how things at one level were connected to another. I began to understand that local problems arise when national and global policies are put in place . . . This insight changed my ways of looking at the world, its issues and its problems. It was as if I had acquired a different [intellectual and political] identity."

"PEACE trainings educated me about various struggles in the country. They helped me appreciate the need for individual organisations to build a shared movement and platform with other organisations. After the trainings, the work of advancing the struggles continued with PEACE's cooperation."

"PEACE trainings instilled a unique analytical understanding within me. I was already raising issues as part of a collective, but PEACE made me recognise the necessity of continuously fighting for one marginalised community or another. Today, I am not only fighting against casteism and communalism, I am also extending maximum support to the street vendors in their struggle for justice."

Impact on Individual Participants

The training methodologies of PEACE helped participants to **refine their interpersonal and leadership skills** in ways that allowed them to build sustained relationships and dialogues with other movements and activists who were committed to a similar cause. The fundamentals of critical questioning and anti-hierarchical collective vision and action came to inform the principles and practices of those who internalised the lessons of PEACE trainings.

"After connecting with PEACE, **I found a new courage to talk** my mind [with other activists]. Staying with each other, sharing with each other, travelling places with each other, we learned how to speak with others, how to dialogue with others. PEACE gave me the strength to immerse myself in communities and to work from the inside."

"PEACE's training methods made me think not only about the nature and goals of social struggles, but also about the

ways in which people active in different struggles and organisations can share their views and analyses with one another. The trainings taught me that this **mutual exchange and learning of ideas required us to deepen the relationships among organisations and among people.** Only through such multi-dimensional work can one talk about a 'saajha andolan' (common struggle). This is how various people's movements came together as a united platform and initiated dialogues that we could not imagine previously. The trainees who met in PEACE workshops continued to interact at the local and regional levels. PEACE helped us to build shared strategies (saajhi ranneeti) and shared leadership (saajha netritva) for building common struggles (saajha sangharsh) that could advance organising and movement building on a larger scale."

Vision and Commitment for the Future

The analytical tools and political awareness derived from PEACE trainings seem to have contributed significantly to strengthening the trainees' resolve to advance collective work for radical social change in favour of the marginalised. The quotation below suggests that for some trainees PEACE became a powerful role model, an organisation whose work they wanted to expand and deepen in new locales with their own personal and organisational resources.

After observing and internalising PEACE's way of enabling and empowering people's movements, I began to ask myself: What should be the future directions of grassroots struggles? How can each of us help to revive the culture of critical questioning that is dying in our country? If PEACE can grapple with these hard issues, then why can't I use the resources in my own organisation to realise the goals of a people's revolution . . . I decided to do everything possible to increase people's will to struggle, to sharpen their awareness about issues, to refine their leadership abilities, to strengthen their inner confidence, to rekindle their self-pride so that the small and isolated struggles that they are continuing for their own rights could be translated into a process of building a collective understanding and strong bonds. This is my way of planting something meaningful for the future: a growing people's movement that is instilled with a true democratic spirit.

In its role as an educator, companion, and guide, PEACE serves as a catalyst and change agent for its trainees. At the intellectual level, trainees develop analytical tools to conduct class analysis and to understand the local, the national and the global as interrelated. At the level of social and organisational practice, trainees note that this deepened understanding of sociopolitical issues is accompanied by (a) a strengthened commitment to bring about equality in all spheres; (b) a patient and sensitive engagement with different perspectives that also makes space for each person to learn from their own experiences; (c) an ongoing effort to translate the principles of democracy and anti-hierarchical organising into practice; and (d) an ability to critically question one's own individualistic and ego-driven tendencies.

Given PEACE's influence in the intellectual and political lives of its trainees, it is not surprising that many of them expect PEACE to be present as their co-traveller, mentor and inspiration for a long time to come. The two concluding quotations from the personal narratives capture this sentiment:

> When I think of organisations such as PEACE, I expect them to be able to hear me whether or not I articulate myself in words . . . I expect that they will be there to wipe off my tears if I break down. This hope and faith inspires me to continue my fight.

> In my journey ahead, I see PEACE as an inspiration, guide and witness. I hope that PEACE will continue to provide the kind of publications and learning materials that it has actively shared and distributed so far, and I hope that PEACE with continue its active role as an educator and trainer of activists.

The following is a list of "critical changes" reported by participants in PEACE trainings:

- Greater ability and confidence in expression, speaking to

the media and in national forums

- Increase in commitment towards social change
- Fear of being branded an ultra-leftist
- Self-development through critical self-assessment and reflection
- Understanding one's own limitations
- Learning to control ego, developing patience
- Increased commitment to social action
- More confidence in going to the community, ability to deal with community issues in an effective manner
- More confidence in expressing views and asking questions
- More sensitive and open to other points of view and to learning from others
- Better ability to document and share information
- Broadened worldview
- Analysis expanded beyond class to also look at religion, caste and gender
- Increased ability for self-assessment and assessing others

The discussions confirmed an overwhelming positive response to PEACE trainings. People shared how these trainings broadened their perspective, helped them to work in a more effective manner and led them to appreciate the work of others. Participants shared their feelings of enhanced self-esteem and confidence as a result of the training, and the way in which it changed their engagement with others. Interestingly, they mentioned an increase in their ability to appreciate others, with positive fallout for the self. Others shared the conflicts that arose after the PEACE training at the professional or personal front and the alienation that it caused in the the short run. They spoke of this as an essential element of their own individual journeys of self-development.

A Journey of Questioning 1996-2011

Impact on Organisations

PEACE has moved from working with NGOs and development organisations (1996-2000) to working both with NGOs and with movements (2001-2007) and now to working exclusively with people's struggles and movements (2008-present).

PEACE's impact on organisations and groups was assessed through data collected during the assessment workshops in Dehradun[1] as well as through detailed case studies of few organisations and interviews with members of a few movements and networks that PEACE is associated with.

Discussions highlighted the fact that the focus of PEACE's work in the initial phase was on participation, with a strong statement being made against its appropriation and conversion into a mere training technique. PEACE spoke of its approach as 'Popular Education' that enabled and empowered the deprived, marginalised and oppressed to become actors so that they can effectively intervene to take the lead in transformation of their circumstances.

Since it was working largely with NGOs and development organisations, PEACE focused on issues such as people's participation in institutions of local self-governance, right to education, and access and control over common property resources. At the same time, PEACE was also training activists and strengthening their analytical perspectives and skills. Critical questioning was foregrounded as a weapon for questioning current models, practices and paradigms of development.

These processes had an inevitable impact on the organisations from where participants were drawn. Changes highlighted by participants are summarised below:

- Began questioning non-democratic decisions

1. Detailed notes from the workshops and discussions with individuals are available in the appendices to this report.

- Strengthened relationship with the exploited groups
- Increased interaction with struggle groups and social movements
- Realised that interventions in the field are not strategic
- Got branded as "protestors" by the organisational leadership
- Realised the limitations of an NGO, understood that we can't do what we want if we are in an NGO

One key fallout of the success in getting trainees to internalise the "culture of questioning" imbibed by the trainees was that some organisations decided to stop sending their employees to PEACE trainings as they felt that it was leading to their staff becoming dissatisfied and leaving. Some of the participants were asked to leave their organisations as, along with questioning development models and practices, they also started asking uncomfortable questions about the internal functioning of their organisations.

By 1999, PEACE had already begun to align itself with people's struggles, based on its analysis of the development sector which showed the locus of social transformation shifting away from NGOs. The PEACE critique of the NGO development sector highlighted the disappearance of the priorities of the poor and marginalised from the policy agenda, which it characterised as being driven by the profit motive rather than by social need.

The APPEAL programme (Action Programme for People's Economics and Allied Literacy) was started in 2000, at the same time that PEACE began its training series on campaign organisation and alliance-building. Participants in these workshops identified the following impacts:

- Better understanding of social issues, deepened perspectives
- Started forming issue-based groups at the community

- Better relationship and more meaningful collaboration with communities; issues are identified based on the community's priorities rather than the organisation's interests

- Better able to mobilise people and elicit their involvement

- Ability to take collective decisions

- Enabled to link with national and state-level groups

- Started dialogues with other groups for better understanding the real issues

- Stronger relationships with other groups, more sensitive to need for mutual cooperation

- Support to others working on similar issues

As PEACE deepened its relationships with struggle groups, the need for strengthening resistance to the inexorable march of neoliberal globalisation became a central priority. Alliance-building and solidarity-building between diverse movements and struggles became a core strategy. The Popular Information Centre was strengthened and an intensive training series on the economics of development (Vikas ka Arthashastra) was rolled out. Thematic workshops on particular issues, tailored to the needs of specific groups, were also organised, usually at the local level and on demand from local groups.

Participants identified the following impacts of PEACE programmes during this phase:

- Greater understanding of the connections between various issues

- Acquired competence in strategic coordination of peoples' movements

- Greater understanding of other movements, their struggles and issues

- Networking with like-minded groups

- Appreciated the need for collective action

The overall impression from these discussions was a very positive one. It was obvious that PEACE has made significant contributions to building the political perspectives of grassroot movements, strengthened their res olve to continue their struggles, and helped them to build alliances with others.

Impact at the Organisational Level

Apart from the feedback workshops, longer conversations were initiated with the heads/leaders of organisations/groups with which PEACE has had a longer and more intense engagement. These were written up as case studies.

Name	State	Established	Engagement with PEACE
JUDAV	Jharkhand	1995 Registered NGO	Since inception and before
Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti	Odisha	2001 Unregistered group	2007
Chattisgarh Mahila Manch	Chhattisgarh	2008 Unregistered group	2008
Rajasthan Mahila Karngar Union	Rajasthan	2008 Trade Union	2009
Krishi Bhoomi B achao Morcha	Uttar Pradesh	2007 Unregistered group	2008
Himpravesh	Himachal Pradesh	1998 Registered NGO	2009

The detailed case studies are provided as an appendix to this report, while key insights are summarised here.

All the above organisations/groups were unanimous in acknowledging the benefits of PEACE trainings (as did the individuals from these groups who participated in the trainings). In nominating individuals to attend PEACE workshops, all the groups recall that they were advised to give priority to people from the most marginalised of the communities they work with. They were also asked to ensure that the same participant attended all the phases of each training. Besides this, they could not recall any other criterion for participation (e.g., level of education).

The perceptions of heads of organisations about the impacts of PEACE training matched the perceptions of the individuals themselves: increased self-confidence; more effective communication and engagement with others; enhanced analytical skills; greater commitment to the work of the group. Among the benefits accruing to the organisation, it was felt that the PEACE training gave participants a more systematic approach to planning, put them in touch with other groups working around similar issues, and generally made them stronger members of the team. Unlike NGOs, struggle groups welcomed the inclusion of issues of internal democracy within the ambit of PEACE training.

PEACE has systematically built its relationships with struggle groups, becoming a trusted fellow-traveller in their journeys. These relationships have been nurtured by individual members of the PEACE team, taking on deeply personal and emotional dimensions.

Brief summaries of the case studies are presented here to highlight the enduring nature of the relationship between PEACE and these groups.

JUDAV works in Jharkhand and Bihar on issues of Adivasi identity and culture. JUDAV and PEACE have been associated from their earliest days. While there is a broad agreement on political issues, there are debates on some issues (for instance, cultural identity and identity politics).

JUDAV acknowledges PEACE's contribution on several fronts: injecting intellectual dynamism into the organisation and initiating new dialogues; by training key workers of JUDAV; by helping in documenting and disseminating learning from its work; and by giving moral support during challenging times. JUDAV finds that PEACE trainings are effective in helping activists to articulate ideas/beliefs and translate them into everyday practices, and also teaches them the practical skills of organising and campaigning. Ghanshyam feels that PEACE trainings have made his young colleagues more political and committed as well as more sensitive to power relations, bringing a new intensity and passion towards their work. They are able to raise critical questions about the organisation. Ghanshyam feels that PEACE has also learnt from JUDAV in terms of a more nuanced understanding of the relationship of communities with natural resources. According to him, PEACE's shift to working with struggle groups has also been influenced by its relationship with JUDAV.

Niyamgiri Surakshya Samiti (NSS) started in 2001 in Lanjigarh, Odisha, as a platform for exerting community control over natural resources and protecting the people's livelihoods, culture and traditions. The movement pledged to protect the Niyamgiri mountain and the Vansadhara and Nagavali rivers flowing from it, and to prevent any outsiders from taking it over. In 2002, the NSS strongly opposed the attempts of Sterlite, a multinational company, to set up an alumina refinery in the area. The movement was successful in garnering national and international support. Dhirendra visited the area in 2007 and initiated the movement's relationship with PEACE. An NSS activist who participated in PEACE trainings said that it helped him to evolve a long-term perspective on resistance and to learn from the strategies and experiences of other movements. The group felt that PEACE had helped them to build strong perspectives, collective leadership and solidarity. Trained activists became self-motivated and began setting their own agendas, and also influenced others in the group. They began to make linkages with other struggle groups and

becoming involved in creating larger platforms. The group feels that there is a qualitative difference between PEACE trainings and those given by others as the facilitators do not impose their own understanding or the trainees but focus on the issues that surface during discussions. They also appreciated the fact that PEACE team members interacted with them in their own surroundings without any 'urban' requirements. PEACE too has been influenced by NSS and acknowledges this debt.

Chhattisgarh Mahila Manch (CMM) was set up in 2008 as a collective of women from seven districts of Chhattisgarh. CMM came in contact with Dhirendra in its formative years, and was guided and supported by him in strategic planning and articulating its vision, mission and objectives. CMM now has 1,465 members in 122 groups, with a team of 54 women activists. The focus is on community control over natural resources, addressing violence against women, ensuring education and health for the marginalised communities, fighting corruption and generally working for women's rights. The group is committed to collective leadership and inclusive processes. They acknowledge the debt they owe to Dhirendra. CMM feels that it could become a state-level platform only because of the support they got from PEACE. They emphasise that PEACE trainers do not impose their opinions on the group but are facilitators of an open and collective process in which participants are able to express their thoughts. They use methodologies that break down the barriers between trainers and trainees and promote learning and sharing. They feel that there is a qualitative change in people who attend PEACE trainings. The culture of questioning promoted by PEACE has also influenced the CMM in emphasising internal democracy.

Himpravesh is a citizens' group based in Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh. The area is undergoing rapid change as a result of the promotion of industries by the government. The group takes up issues impacting the daily lives of people living in and around Nalagarh. They have raised the issue of stone quarrying, land acquisition and area re-

classification. They are also coordinating the resistance to a proposed cement unit and a thermal power plant in the area. Their long struggle has resulted in a significant High Court judgment against the JP Group of companies – the plans for the cement and power plants were rejected and heavy fines imposed on the company for misrepresentation of facts. Himpravesh has been in touch with PEACE for a couple of years. They find PEACE workshops and training programs useful in understanding the macro issues around the model of development, the implications of new economic policies and the impact of multinational companies. They feel that through PEACE, they have become connected to peoples' struggles all over the country.

Krishi Bhumi Bachao Morcha (KBBM) began as a movement against an inter-state expressway in Uttar Pradesh but has grown into a struggle against forced acquisition of agricultural land across the state. It was the engagement with PEACE in 2007 that enabled the group to expand its perspective and reach out to other groups working on similar issues across the state. The leadership recognises the role of PEACE, particularly Dhirendra who some of them knew from his earlier work in Uttar Pradesh, in strengthening their struggle. It was his interactions with the leadership of the movement that led to the decision to create a joint front with groups along the entire route of the proposed expressway, under a common banner. Apart from dedicated support from Dhirendra, PEACE also produced learning materials for the use of activists that contributed to building conceptual clarity and a political perspective. The KBBM leadership has participated in several PEACE trainings, and has very positive feedback on the relevance and impact. They appreciate the dialogic process of perspective-building.

Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Union (RMKU) is a registered trade union of domestic workers in Jaipur, with a current membership of 7,000. Mewa Bharti, the Secretary of RMKU, started as a student activist and became involved

with domestic workers in 2004 through an action research project. Her work has focused on organising the women around their rights, developing their perspectives and strengthening their resistance to violence whether in their own families or from their employers. Mewa's relationship with PEACE is comparatively recent, beginning with a workshop on urban issues in 2009.

Subsequently, Dhirendra became a mentor for Mewa and RMKU, helping her to build her own perspectives and strengthen the institutional foundation of the trade union through his hands-on support and practical advice. PEACE has helped RMKU in organising public events and campaigns. RMKU activists have been trained by PEACE. Mewa feels that the learning process in PEACE trainings is stronger than elsewhere because concepts are explored and explained in a simple way. However, she feels that she has not been able to contribute her own gender perspectives to the learning process. She finds the PEACE team to be gender-sensitive and aware about women's issues. Mewa's engagement with PEACE is limited to her own work. RMKU is not a member of INSAF, a national network that PEACE closely works with. Mewa actively participates in campaigns for the right to food and for social security for informal sector workers while recognising the contradictions between these campaigns and PEACE's positions. She finds PEACE materials and booklets useful but the language is difficult and not understood by the union members, a majority of whom cannot read Hindi in any case.

Impact on Networks

PEACE has taken a clear stand that it will not establish a network of its own. However, it provides critical support to a number of civil society networks through knowledge-building and strategic thinking, publishing materials on behalf of the network and providing space in their office. The PEACE office serves as the official address of a large number of non-funded campaigns.

Name of Network	Thematic focus	Area / State of coverage	Year of network creation	Contact with PEACE
Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)	Resist globalisation and communalism, defend democracy	National	1994 Registered	1994
Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace CNDP)	Nuclear disarmament and peace	National	2000 Unregistered group	2000
National Alliance of Anti-Nuclear Movement (NAAM)	Against nuclear energy plants	National	2010 Unregistered	2010
Himalaya Neeti Abhiyan	Environment protection and displacement	Himachal Pardesh	2004 Unregistered	2008
Right to Food Campaign	Right to food	National	2004 Unregistered	2004
Dynamic Action Group (DAG)	Dalit rights	Uttar Pradesh	1998 Registered	1998
BI HAN	Marginalisation	Uttar Pradesh	2003 Unregistered	2003
Lok Shakti Abhiyan	Land acquisition, protection of environment, forests and water	Odisha	2009 Unregistered	2009
Jal–Jungle Bachao Abhiyan	Tribal rights, land, forest, water, displacement.	Jharkhand	2008 Unregistered	2008
Na di Ghati Morcha	Land acquisition, protection of environment, forest and water rights	Chhattisgarh	2001 Unregistered	2007

Rajasthan Jan Sangharsh Morcha	Land, agriculture, displacement and livelihood.	Rajasthan	2010 Unregistered	2010
Lok Haqdari Morcha	Displacement and livelihood	Uttar Pradesh	2009 Unregistered	2009
SEZ Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti	Land rights, opppos- tion to SEZs	Uttar Pradesh	2007 Unregistered	2007
Krishi Bhumi Bachao Morcha	Land and agriculture	Uttar Pradesh	2007 Unregistered	2008
Parmanu Urja Virodhi Manch	Against nuclear energy plants	Haryana	2010 Unregistered	2010
National Alliance for Peoples Movement (NAPM)	Towards peace, justice and democracy	National	1993 Unregistered	2007
Human Right Law Network	Human rights	Delhi	1989 Registered	2007
Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha	Tribal rights, land, forest, water, displacement	Chhattisgarh	1968 Registered	1999
Chhattisgarh Mahila Manch	Land, agriculture, dis- placement and woman rights	Chhattisgarh	2008 Unregistered	2008
Odisha Mahila Manch	Women's rights	Odisha	2008 Unregistered	2008
Adivasi Moolvasi Astiva Raksha Manch	Land, water and forest rights	Jharkhand	2008 Unregistered	2008
Sanjha Manch	Unorganised workers rights, displacement	Delhi	2004	2007
Campaign for Survival and Dignity	Livelihood rights	National	2002 Unregistered	2002
Release Biyayak Sen Campaign Committee	Release of Dr Binayak Sen	Delhi	2010 Unregistered	2010
Jan Sangharsh Samanvay Samiti	Land, water and forest rights	National	2010 Unregistered	2010
Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti	Tribal rights, land, forest, water, displacement	Odisha	2001 Unregistered	2007
Orissa Suchana Adhikar Manch	Right to information, land rights	Odisha	2006 Unregistered	2007

Feedback was sought from three long-term network partners on their assessment of PEACE's contribution to their work.

The Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP) is a national network of over 200 grassroots groups, mass movements and advocacy organisations, as well as individuals. Formed in November 2000, CNDP demands that India and Pakistan roll back their nuclear weapons programmes. Their demands include an end to nuclear testing and development of nuclear weapons, and global and regional nuclear disarmament. CNDP raises mass awareness through programmes in schools and colleges, publications, audio and visual materials, and campaigning and lobbying at various levels.

Dynamic Action Group (DAG) is a collective of Dalit groups that came together in 1998. Apart from the entrenched caste system, the group also identified the lack of coordination between different Dalit groups, and their inability to raise issues in a sharp and political way, as major weaknesses in their struggle. It was also realised that non-Dalit organisations raise Dalit issues in ways that invisibilise both structural discrimination as well as historical subjugation. The objective of the network is, therefore, to strengthen the concept and philosophy of Dalit emancipation and expand public awareness on Dalit issues. DAG has 75 members spread across 35 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

INSAF (Indian Social Action Forum) was established in 1993, when the social action groups and peoples' movements were struggling to cope with the changing realities of globalisation and religious fundamentalism in the country. It is a national forum with a political thrust, bringing together over 500 social action groups, peoples' movements and progressive intellectuals to resist globalisation, combat communalism and defend democracy. INSAF is active in over 15 states of India.

All the network partners were well informed about PEACE and its work, as well as the rationale for the shifts in focus

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over the last years. Capacity building of activists, development of relevant learning materials for key constituencies, building political and social understanding and help in understanding the changing context were identified as the most important contributions made by PEACE to movements. They all appreciated PEACE's "soch ki safai" (conceptual clarity), logistical and infrastructural support to partners and the unhesitating support to human rights defenders. The issue of alienation of natural resources was recognised as the issue that was of greatest concern to PEACE.

CNDP acknowledges its own beginnings in the "Youth for Nuclear Disarmament" group sponsored by PEACE in 1998 – this group became CNDP after a meeting of around 600 people in December 2000.

DAG sees PEACE as a major inspiration in evolving an identity and perspective for the network – its slogan "jiska mudda uski ladai, jiski ladai us ki aguwai" was, in fact, coined by Anil Chaudhary. The engagement with PEACE resulted in a sharper perspective on Dalit rights in the emerging context of right-wing politics and neoliberal economic policies. Even though there has been a split in DAG, people from both factions continue to engage with PEACE.

Similarly, Anil Chaudhary played a key role in building INSAF into a national platform during his two terms as its General Secretary. PEACE has drawn energy from INSAF and has contributed to it through perspective-building trainings for network partners. INSAF perspectives have been heavily influenced through the dialogic process that PEACE team has taken them through. However, a possible negative effect of the close connections between INSAF and PEACE (they have adjoining offices, have a common funder, and participate in common activities) is the blurring in their roles and identities.

Interestingly, while appreciating PEACE's ability to engage with multiple actors, the network partners also mentioned

their own differences with some of the other members of the PEACE circle. This acceptability with a large constituency despite their internal differences is one of PEACE's strengths.

Network partners appreciated the fact that PEACE does not force its perspectives on its partners. This is recognised as a difficult balancing act since PEACE is known to have strong positions on various issues.

The logistical and infrastructural support provided by PEACE to various movements and campaigns is seen as an enormous and unique contribution. PEACE provides its address to as many as 11 campaigns. It gives unstinting support to causes where resources are not easily available, and even to individual activists in times of personal crisis. It does not try to establish ownership over the causes it supports – for instance, other than the address, PEACE is not mentioned anywhere in the materials produced by the various movements and campaigns it supports.

However, the core work of PEACE is clearly seen as building perspective through educational interventions. Ideological clarity, leadership and the ability to listen and facilitate dialogic processes were identified as major strengths. The ability to respect the positions of various groups and helping sharpen them rather than imposing their own views was universally appreciated. For instance, it was mentioned that PEACE's training on social analysis created analytical ability rather than transmitting an ideological framework. There was agreement that PEACE needed to intensify trainings with struggle-based groups to help them respond to and cope with the rapid changes in the economy and polity.

It is clear that PEACE, while not trying to project itself as a leader among the NGO community, has established a unique niche for itself as an open space where groups and movements can feel free to engage with and learn from each other. With its educational interventions and initiatives to bring together diverse voices on a common platform, PEACE is acknowledged to have strengthened the sector as a whole.

Summary of Findings

- PEACE is an organisation with **high credibility**, and is respected and trusted by its partners.

- While staying true to its original mission of **supporting social transformation processes through educational interventions**, PEACE has responded to shifts and trends in the socio-political landscape by refocusing its strategies.

- Although transparent about its own politics, PEACE **respects the perspectives and priorities** of its partners, and is careful not to impose its own views on them.

- PEACE's **"interventionist approach"** is seen as more effective than "service delivery" models of capacity-building, and is felt to be of **continuing relevance**.

- PEACE's **commitment to Freirean principles** is well reflected in its approach, methodology and tools. PEACE workshops are experienced by participants as **non-hierarchical and affirming spaces**.

- PEACE interventions have helped partners to build a **nuanced understanding of political, economic and social processes** and their interconnections at multiple levels and locations.

- PEACE publications and learning materials have played a critical role in informing partners of **macro policies and processes** at the global, regional and national levels and the **implications for their own lives, struggles and strategies**.

- Participation in PEACE workshops has opened the doors to **self-development, conceptual clarity and social commitment** for many individual activists.

- PEACE support has been crucial in building the **capacities** of small **grassroot groups** to respond adequately to community needs on the ground.

- PEACE has provided **consistent support to peoples' movements** (particularly those that are resisting corporate takeover of land and natural resources) by building their capacities to respond to rapid changes in the socio-political environment.

- The association with PEACE has motivated movements on other issues to take a **strong stand against communalism.**

- PEACE has created **open and democratic platforms** where movements and struggles with differing ideological moorings can come together for **exchange, mutual learning, solidarity-building and joint action.**

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Questions and Possibilities.....

The impact assessment exercise described in this report
was carried out as a joint exercise by the PEACE team and
the external assessment team. Along with a strong
affirmation of the PEACE strategy and validation of
PEACE's contribution to social action, the exercise also
threw up some questions and contradictions that have a
bearing on PEACE's future trajectory. These questions
wove themselves through almost every discussion between
the PEACE team and the assessment team, taking on depth
and complexity as the exercise progressed.

One such set of questions relates to the **role of institutions
in social transformation.** The PEACE strategy of enabling
individuals to experience a different worldview, helping
them to articulate a collective vision of an alternative
society and equipping them with some basic tools to act
for change has certainly yielded dividends in terms of
contributing to and strengthening democratic movements
on the ground. The conceptual frameworks and analytical
tools acquired through their association with PEACE are
identified by the people we spoke to as "weapons"
("hathiyaar") that have enabled them to challenge and
oppose the state, corporations, communal and religious
forces, and other "external" institutions.

But what of the more **intimate institutions** that shape and
are shaped by everyday relationships? While we heard

many stories of change experienced as an expanded and enhanced sense of "selfhood", only a few people spoke of having been able to go on to make changes in their families and organisations – for instance, ending practices of caste exclusion or gender discrimination in their daily lives. Many more shared their frustration at the contradictions between their family lives and their lives in the movement. The question came up again and again: how long can energy and commitment be sustained in the face of multiple pressures and contradictory desires – satisfying family expectations of a decent standard of living, or a child's demands for expensive clothes and toys; social pressure to get a daughter married off as soon as possible; the inability to challenge casteist practices in one's own family; the despair of being trapped in a violent relationship with a spouse or partner.

Can PEACE create the space within workshops to bring these issues to the table and unpack intimate institutions such as marriage and family and explore the ways in which they create and sustain hierarchies of power? Can the sense of collective solidarity and belongingness created by the association with PEACE also be a platform for holding each other accountable to a set of basic norms and values of personal behaviour? Or will the notion of "personal boundaries" go unchallenged and unquestioned as it does in most mainstream situations?

And what of the ability – or motivation – needed for movements to turn a critical lens on their own functioning? "Sawaliya sanskriti" – relentless questioning of received wisdom and apparent realities – is acknowledged as a basic value by everyone in the PEACE circle, but some also question the extent to which it has actually taken root within movements. Interestingly, this concern is voiced most often by women. Some women activists we spoke to shared their sense of frustration when, instead of taking action themselves (as they would if the person affected was a man), comrades from the PEACE network look to women's organisations to respond to

incidents of violence against women, or protest insensitive or misleading media reporting on violence. The argument is that violence against women is a concern that is most appropriately raised and addressed by women. Despite this being critiqued by the PEACE team as a misinterpretation of the "jiska mudda uski ladai" principle, the discussion on violence, like that on other gender issues, remains somewhat marginal to the main discourse. Do PEACE workshops address the connections between capitalism, patriarchy, casteism and communalism? What are the lessons of such an **intersectional approach** from a pedagogic standpoint?

The **marginalisation of women's issues** within movement spaces has been a long-standing issue of debate and tension within and between movements in India. The personal histories of many women activists reflect these tensions – some of the oldest feminist organisations in the country were formed by women who walked out of political and social movements in frustration at the denial of space for discussion of women's rights, or even a bare acknowledgement of women's personal experiences of subordination as activists. Conversations with young women activists suggest that these issues are still very much alive. Similarly, Dalit activists speak of their own experiences of caste oppression by comrades in struggle.

PEACE has contributed significantly to the effort to build a culture of democratic and inclusive decision-making within the movements with which it is associated. In the same way, can movements be convinced of the need to set **norms of equality** for their own functioning, and be publicly accountable for them? Can PEACE step in where many others fear to tread, and turn the lens of **critical questioning on the internal processes** of movements? Can PEACE develop tools and methods for "equality literacy" on the same principles as the initiative on economic literacy, starting from the self and family, and going on to expose the connections between patriarchy, neoliberal globalisation, caste, feudalism and militarism? Can PEACE

take the first step by applying these tools to its own pedagogic and organisational practices?

Another issue raised by several of the people we spoke to was the need for backing up the critique of the dominant economic paradigm with proposals, if not demonstrations, of economic alternatives. For most of the movements that PEACE works with, the issue of economic survival is one that confronts them at every turn. The rank and file of movements are facing unimaginable levels of economic deprivation – how long can they sustain their resistance with no material means? Can an individual with no assets and no prospects be expected to refuse a government dole or a corporate handout, on grounds of principle alone?

The PEACE initiative on economic literacy did, in fact, throw up several examples of communities that are successfully implementing **economic alternatives** independent of markets and state programmes. How can PEACE help in disseminating such experiences, and in deepening and strengthening such experiments? Does PEACE have the competence and resources to take on this task? Would such an activity be compatible with PEACE's present focus and positioning? Or is it a responsibility that movements must collectively assume, and explore within their own contexts?

PEACE's strategy of being a clearing-house for the supply of **info rmation and resources** to democratic movements has been strongly validated by this exercise, but there are still large areas where paucity of reliable information is constraining movement action. One such area of darkness is that surrounding the **activities of Indian corporations.** It is ironic that information on the functioning of international organisations like the World Bank is easier to access than information on the business plans of Reliance India. Despite media coverage of high-profile corporate scams, there is a deafening silence on the thousands of instances of corporate violations of laws and rights at the local level, often carried out in full public view with the collusion of the local administration. Data of this kind is occasionally thrown up

by fact-finding exercises, but is not consolidated in a way that can make a political impact. There is a strong case for PEACE to set up a "**corporate watch**" (or even simply "Reliance Watch") initiative, similar to the monitoring of World Bank activities in India undertaken as part of the APPEAL programme. Advance information on sanctioned projects, particularly their geographical locations, would help both in mobilising resistances on the ground as well as in mounting a legal challenge to project implementation.

PEACE could also usefully revisit and re-theorise its ways of gathering and disseminating information to movements. Cultural activists – writers, artists, performers – continue to be closely involved with PEACE, but their influence on the form and style of information-sharing is not very visible. In sharp contrast to the style and use of language in workshops and face-to-face encounters, PEACE materials rely heavily on the written word and are cast in a somewhat formal language and style. The issue of creative form is not merely a matter of comprehension and accessibility – it has broader implications for the political practice and pedagogies of democratic movements, enabling them to unpack and address complex issues in more nuanced and effective ways.

Why is it that, even when there is next to no other constituency for revolutionary politics in a capitalist society, the one group most likely to be sympathetic to its project consists of artists, musicians, writers, and others involved in some form of non-alienated production? Surely there must be a link between the actual experience of first imagining things and then bringing them into being, individually or collectively, and the ability to envision social alternatives—particularly, the possibility of a society itself premised on less alienated forms of creativity? One might even suggest that revolutionary coalitions always tend to rely on a kind of alliance between a society's least alienated and its most oppressed; actual revolutions, one could then say, have tended to happen when these two categories most broadly overlap.

David Graeber, 'The New Anarchists', New Left Review, January-February 2002

The continuing relevance of PEACE's "interventionist approach" – capacity-building not as a professional service but as a political intervention – has been validated by the participants in this exercise. The need for expanding this kind of support to many more movement groups also came up in the discussions, with "more workshops" being the recommended solution.

There is certainly a case for **broad-basing and decentralising** the learning processes initiated by PEACE, through building the capacities of movement activists to enable them to make critical connections between local experiences and resistances, and the larger national and global processes that shape and are shaped by them. However, NGO experiments of this nature have often been disappointing, with activists who are identified as trainers falling into the mould of "experts" and ultimately becoming alienated from the rank and file of the movements from which they are drawn. Can PEACE, with its commitment to Freirian ideals and commitment to erasure of the trainer/learner dichotomy, avoid this trap?

Looking back at our experiences during this exercise, it seems that knowledge-creation and knowledge-building are no longer the primary fulcrum for PEACE's engagement with social transformation. Moving away from the focus on "knowledge-building" of the development industry as well as from the concern with "movement-building" of Leftist action groups whose authoritarian ways of functioning often stand in direct contrast to their egalitarian ideologies, PEACE has placed its faith in evolving an anti-authoritarian and democratic body of practice as the vehicle for social transformation.

This commitment to creating open, **unstructured, non-hegemonic political spaces** is a unique distinguishing feature of the PEACE approach. The value of PEACE as an "open access space" for political and personal affirmation, self-interrogation, renewal, learning, theorising and strategising was highlighted by all the movement leaders

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whom we interviewed in the course of this exercise. Such spaces can also be powerful sites for knowledge-creation and theory building. The "Occupy" movements have shown that theorising and practice can fold into each other far more purposefully and creatively in these "wild" spaces, than in the tame and domesticated environment of institutions whose existence depends on the same powers that they claim to challenge.

At a time when all democratic processes are under threat, and when many movements have been pushed to the wall by the the state-corporate complex acting in collusion with communal and feudal forces, **protecting and expanding "open spaces"** would seem to be the most urgent priority for PEACE and its partners. How can these spaces be acknowledged and expanded without compromising their essential unstructured-ness? How can their essential egalitarianism and anti-hegemonic nature be sustained even while opening them to a much wider range of actors and ideologies?

PEACE's legal identity as an NGO has increasing implications for its future trajectory. Thus far, **legal and regulatory requirements** have not been a significant constraint for PEACE in either ideological or functional terms, but this situation is changing. Laws and rules governing NGO functioning in India are being tightened in ways that are designed to target and stifle dissenting voices and subvert any attempts at public debate on state policies. In such a situation, PEACE – one of the few organisations that does not "sit at the policy table" at the invitation of the government, refuses to take funding from corporate sources and does not make any attempt to disguise its political agenda with development jargon – is poised on a knife-edge. Toning down its critique of the state or backing off from open confrontation on policies would be read by many of its allies as a betrayal of the principles it has been defending since its inception. On the other hand, survival in its present form is necessary for PEACE to continue to provide much needed logistical and practical support to

movements in their encounters with the Delhi bureaucracy, the courts and the national media.

These questions and dilemmas are hardly unique to PEACE – many other groups and movements across the world are confronted with them as they strive to translate their visions of social transformation and social justice into reality. Although the space to reflect on these questions could not be created within the framework of the present assessment exercise, we hope they will be carried into other discussions and other spaces of relevance for PEACE.

PEACE stands out as one of those rare organisations that have the political will and courage to confront difficult issues head-on, even if the process brings new and even more tangled questions in its wake. We wish to place on record our appreciation of PEACE's work, and our hope that we will continue to walk together on this journey of questioning.

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The Impact Assessment Team

ADIL ALI is an independent consultant whose work focuses on the interface of issues around citizenship, governance, gender a nd the environment. He has worked with civil society o rganisations in India as well as in South East Asia on people's a ccess and control over natural resources, livelihoods, human rights, corp orate accountability and governance over the past two decades. His past experience includes strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.

KALYANI MENON-SEN is a feminist researcher and activist who has been working for over twenty-five years on issues of women's rights, particularly the impacts of neoliberal economic p olicies on women. She has contributed to critiques of u.rbanisation policies in India and is closely involved with struggles against eviction and dispossession of the working p oor in Delhi. She has written and campaigned on issues of v iolence against women, particularly state violence and its linkage with economic policies.

RICHA NAGAR is Professor of Gender, Women's and Sexuality S tudies at the University of Minnesota. She has worked closely with Sangtin Kisaan Mazdoor Sangathan in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh. Writing in English and Hindi as a scholar, creative writer and theatre-worker, Richa has authored more than 100 articles, essays, stories, plays and poems. Her co-authored books include Sangtin Yatra (Sangtin, 2004), Playing with Fire (University of Minnesota Press and Zubaan, 2006), A World of Difference (Guilford, 2009), and Ek Aur Neemsaar (Rajkamal Prakashan, 2012). She has co-edited Critical

Transnational Feminist Studies (SUNY Press, 2010). Richa is currently in Cape Town as a visiting professor at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape.

RAJESH PANDEY Rajesh Pandey is a Leadership Coach and an Organisation Development and Training specialist. He is a certified MBTI, OPQ and PCMM Practitioner and is also a PDP Member of Indian Society of Applied Behavioural Sciences. Rajesh is an expert in organisational competency framework design and assessments and has been on the panel of experts for some of the world's leading HR consulting firms. Some of his Organisation Development interventions have won National and International awards. Before moving to the private sector, Rajesh worked with social sector organisations across India. He is a prolific writer and a regular columnist ('Success Factor') for Hindustan Times.

Terms of Reference

Popular Education and Action Centre (PEACE), is a small group of committed and experienced people, working towards strengthening the social action at the grass roots. Though it acquired formal shape only in 1994, PEACE shares long-standing relationship with wide range of groups across the country, brought to its fold by the members and well wishers.

PEACE began as statement against appropriation and co-option of participatory philosophy into the domination paradigm of development and anticipatory or voluntary surrender of its early protagonists.

Our objective is to reinforce faith in philosophy of Participation that provides critical thrust to the issue of people's control over processes and structures affecting their lives as against treating Participation as mere technique to elicit involvement for vindication of few programmes and schemes.

In committing itself to realizing the transformative potential of participatory methodologies, PEACE has consistently focused on issues of resource control and access and emphasized the need for marginalized people's central involvement in (and ownership of) the production of knowledge about their own lives, struggles, and futures.

Popular Education for us implies enabling the deprived, marginalised and oppressed in a manner that they can effectively intervene to transform the processes and structures influencing their lives, to

their advantage. Following strategies were adopted to pursue the idea:

- To strengthen social action at the grass-roots by assisting groups, individuals and institutions to evolve, consolidate and enrich their perspective, strategies and corresponding competencies;

- To assist people's struggles on issues of survival, identity and democratic space through enhancement of knowledge & information base of such efforts and building the capacity of the grass-root collectives to deal with macro processes and structures;

- To motivate, orient and support youth from minorities and other marginalised communities to join the efforts of social development and transformation;

- To initiate and facilitate networking among the likeminded groups and individuals and establishing their linkages with wider movements at macro level.

Over the years PEACE has evolved and grown by learning from experience along with its partners, fellowship, likeminded alliances, forums, networks and individuals and sustained its socio-strategic relevance in fast changing post liberalization era. The experiential journey of PEACE is marked by three distinctive phases characterised by shifts in its strategies, the nature of field groups it relates with and the thrust of its educational interventions in tune with the changes in the broader socio-political scenario.

The first of these phases was between 1995 and 2000 when it attempted to reach out to wide sections of small groups in enriching their perspective and enhancing capacity to build organizations that were able to make informed choices in fast polarizing world and not to slip into realms of Neo-liberalism.

From 2001 developing deeper understanding about Neo-liberalism and its institutions became the core thrust of PEACE's educational interventions while from 2006 onwards we found ourselves concentrating on strengthening the resistance/struggle groups spread across Orissa, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Purpose of the Impact Assessment:

PEACE plans to undertake an impact assessment of its work to critically reflect upon its experience and improve upon its interventions.

Intended results:

An external assessment about the strategic interventions of PEACE over the years reflecting achievement of results, effectiveness, processes and performance. A reflexive process among primary stakeholders identifying key learnings and contribution that PEACE has made to their work and to the larger constituency relevant (sharing experience with other community of educators, including donors). A document pointing towards consolidating past learnings and possible new directions for PEACE.

Process including key nodes:

The Impact Assessment exercise will be based on a stakeholders review format, with external facilitators anchoring the process. The process will involve the following nodes:

An inception meeting with the PEACE Team and Board Members to finalize the Impact Assessment process, identifying key stakeholders to be consulted and drawing up the framework for the assessment.

Stakeholders' meetings to assess their engagement with PEACE, Key learnings from the engagement as well as perceived utility of the intervention. (Three workshops of participants from three phases of PEACE's intervention.)

- Case studies: Training impact on individual and organisation and how it was used to make social change

A questionnaire based feedback from a sample of former participants and their organisations about the effectiveness of the PEACE trainings. A review of PEACE publications and periodicals, its mailing list and a feedback form administered across the mailing lists. A meeting of the assessment team with key staff to reflect on the observations and final presentation to the PEACE team, including board members for feedback.

Thrust areas for the Assessment:

- Trainings: Design/Outreach/Frequency/ Competencies
- Popular Publications: Themes/quality/Response
- Campaign and Alliances-role of PEACE
- Interrelationship between the three functions-how network engagement has impacted knowledge production and training material production.
- Capacity of the team
- Available Resources and Infrastructure
- Network and institutional goodwill

The overall review will be anchored to address validity of assumptions of intervention methodology, the efficacy and scale of interventions, the programme effectiveness and support and feedback provided by PEACE as a support organization.

Key Questions to be explored:

- Reasons of PEACE taking specific pathways and opinions of people/participants who have journeyed together, especially those who stopped walking the same path, and why.
- What are the critical assumptions that form the bedrock of PEACE's interventions and how do the programmes reflect these
- What is the specific difference that association with PEACE has provided to people in their engagement with their constituencies
- How do participants view PEACE as an institution and how close is that to PEACE's self-image

In the workshop mode, the following dimensions will be explored:

Evolution of Interventionist approaches in each organization/network in the period 1995-2000 as a result of training provided by PEACE. Contribution of specific training materials, workshops and/or linkages facilitated by PEACE that allowed activists and their organizations to undertake/envision work/build analytical perspective(s) that they could not have pursued in

PEACE's absence.

Exposure of trainees from different organisations to the value of experiential learning. Personal engagements in struggles/issues and contribution of PEACE's specific training methods in advancing their struggle by tapping their own experiences rather than following expert knowledge or models from above and each of these context specific issue/struggle impact and evolve PEACE's own methodology pertaining to experiential learning.

Understanding of horizontal and vertical linkages amongst organisations/struggles/issues and incremental benefits of engaging in these relationships between groups/activists and PEACE and amongst themselves. PEACE as a companion support in helping advance a particular struggle/issue taken up by specific organisations/ individual activists at key points in their lifecycle. Experiences of individual trainees and that of their organizations.

Proposed Names of facilitator:
Ms. Kalyani Menon-Sen

Mr. Adil Ali

Mr. Rajesh Pande

Ms. Richa Nagar

This team will have over all responsibility of the study and will take help from:

Ms. Anita Mathur
Ms. Pramodani Pradhan
Mr. Ghanshyam
Mr. Gautam Bandopadhyay

Time Line: Preparatory consultation and desk study- October-December, 2011

Workshops- January- March, 2012

Case Studies – February-May, 2012

Debriefing meeting- June, 2012

Study Report by September, 2012 end

Notes from Feedback Workshops with PEACE Trainees

Three back-to-back workshops were held with people who had attended PEACE trainings. The participants were invited according to the period that they had attended PEACE training and this was divided into the 3 phases of PEACE's work.

1995-2000: 26 participants
2001-2007: 45 participants
2007 onwards: 62 participants

Highlights of discussions and our insights these workshops are summarised below.

Understanding of the participants about the basic premises of PEACE's interventions (5 principles in PEACE's perspectives)

It was an interesting process to see the commonality among participants across workshops in their understanding about the core principles followed by PEACE: building a culture of questioning, creating analytical minds and harnessing experience-based knowledge towards co-learning. Besides this, the other descriptors used were "encouraging participation, openness/transparency, simple behaviour and those related to positions on secularism, democracy, globalisation and others. In each workshop, group reports were presented in the plenary, followed by a discussion. The PEACE team members were participants in the process facilitated by the external impact assessment team. In the course of the discussions, the core principles mentioned above came through the articulation of the workshop participants across all the workshops. This was an

interesting process as the participants had been trainees in different kinds of workshops – from OBPE and APPEAL to specific workshops for some grassroots groups. This has shown the consistency of the educational methodology used by PEACE and the fact that the trainees have a clear understanding of the pedagogy used, which they have found useful. Another interesting commonality was the consistent feedback across the four workshops that the trainings were useful (in the words of a participant, Irfan) "in developing a political viewpoint".

Has engaging with PEACE changed your life or way of doing work? How effective are the trainings? Have the trainings also led to changes in mindsets and behaviour?

Group-level changes due to PEACE interventions

Summary from Workshop 1: 1995-2000

Began questioning non-democratic decisions

Organisation development and development of leadership

Strengthened relationship with the exploited sections

Fear of losing Staff members

Has increased interaction with struggle groups and social movements

Interventions in the field are not strategic and comprehensive rather than piecemeal as earlier

Have been branded as "protestors"

Realised the limitations of a NGO and that we cannot achieve what we wanted to do in that framework

Individual-level changes due to PEACE interventions

Ability to express with confidence

Commitment towards social change

Fear of being branded an ultra-leftist

Training programmes give space for critical self-assessment and reflection

Increased confidence in articulating oneself in front of regional and national forums

Addressing media with confidence

Summary from Workshop 2: 2000-2007

We managed to mobilise people and were able to make them participate

We learnt how to take collective decisions

Developed the ability to form and be part of national and state-level organisations

Understood the reality of policies and issues

We started a culture of dialogue with other groups which helped in understanding the real issues

Our relationships with other groups improved, we became more sensitive to mutual cooperation

We started supporting others who were working on similar issues.

We developed the ability to identify issues on the basis of community's participation

We started developing issue-based community organisations

Our understanding of social issues has become better and deeper

Now we are able to work with the community and are able to bring about positive results

The organisation became stronger

Earlier we were more focused on individual and organisational (NGO) interest, now we work towards issues critical to the community and we are able to provide the leadership

Now our relationships with the communities are far more open and meaningful

Understood our own limitations

Able to control our ego, developed patience

Our morale and interest in social action increased manifold

There is marked difference in our commitment

Our confidence in going into the community increased; now we were able to deal with community issues in an effective manner

Our confidence in expressing our points of view and asking questions has improved

We became more sensitive and open to listen to other's point of view and learn from them

Our ability to document and exchange information has improved

Summary from Workshop 3: 2007 onwards

Saw the connections between various causes

Got a chance to hear, appreciate and understand the issues of others

Got a systematic orientation on strategically co-ordinating a people's movement

Increased networking with like-minded groups

Felt the relevance and need for collective action

Helped in self-reflection

Increased self-confidence

Broadened worldview

Behaviourial change

Became more understanding and appreciative of differing viewpoints

Analysis expanded beyond just looking at religion, caste and gender

Increased understanding for self-assessment as well as being able to assess others

We saw that there was an overwhelming positive response at an individual level. People shared how they were able to work in a more effective manner, that it broadened their perspective and led to appreciation of the work of others. An interesting dimension that we had heard from the workshop with the PEACE team was that the PEACE workshops acted as a catalyst for people to start questioning their organisational leadership and, consequently, a number of people had actually left the organisation that had deputed them for the training. However, we did not find any significant evidence of the same in the participants of workshops from the 1995-2000 and the 2000-07 periods, with a majority of them having continued to work in the same organisation. (A possible bias in this could have been that the invitations for the workshops were sent to the last known address of the participants and that they might not have received the invitation if they had left the organisation).

However, the people who had actually left their organisations forcefully made the point that they did so due to the orientation that they had got during PEACE trainings and when they sought to apply the same in the organisations, there was significant resistance which led to conflict and their eventual separation from the organisation. In an overall sense, the trainings were not only found useful for the direct work performance but also lead

to a number of instances of better understanding of others, empathy and personal behaviour change.

Suggestions for making PEACE trainings more effective

This was by far the part where the response was the lowest. There were also requests for specific trainings on single issues, for instance on the Right to Education/Information and the Food Security Bill. While no critique emerged, there were certain suggestions which are listed below:

- Gaps between trainings are too long
- Duration of each training is too long
- PEACE's selection process of its participants unclear to the participants
- Unexplained withdrawal of PEACE from certain states
- Publications do not reach everyone at the same time and with the same consistency
- PEACE should make its annual reports available and accessible
- Impact assessments should be held more regularly by PEACE
- Need for active and sustained dialogue with participants
- Need for a network at the national level

Does/did PEACE training methodology help you in "looking within"? Did the methodology have any impact in the building/fostering of relationships? How? Would you attribute this to specific interventions in PEACE's training or to its overall impact?

Most of the responses clearly accepted that the overall experience of participation in a PEACE training was a reflexive process. While most people did not feel that there were specific interventions and it was seen more as a sum of the whole experience, the OBPE's session on self-development was identified as a critical catalyst by some participants. Participants shared their enhancement of self-esteem and confidence due to the training and the manner in which it changed their

engagement with others. Interestingly, this also meant their own ability to appreciate others increased and how this had a positive response for the self. Others shared their own conflicts due to this process either at the professional or the personal front and the alienation that it caused in the the short run. However, they felt that too was part of their own individual narratives of finally getting into a better situation.

PEACE facilitates in building a worldview by clearly identifying processes and structures linked with class-based exploitation. Does it leave out basic issues related with everyday life while creating a grand narrative? In the current context, what do you see as the role of NGOs and social movements? In these changing times, where do you see the relevance of PEACE?

Interestingly, NGOs were severely criticised in all three workshops as they were seen as a representative of the status quo, of being government agents and engaging in welfare activities which do not make any real change in the lives of people. Distinctions were made between large organisations with foreign funds and small grassroots groups. The feedback was that the larger organisations are more focused on budget utilisation and achieving project targets rather than on working for the betterment of the community. A number of organisational leaders present in the workshops said that funds are sought to be able to work in the community, as this permits other non-funded work of real consequence at the community level.

Issues in the big bad world out there which PEACE trainings do not address fully:

- One has to make compromises
- Pessimistic about judicial processes which take too long to redress issues
- A lot of energy and time is wasted on mundane issues
- Disappointment with donors

Limitations of NGOs

- Difficult to get support from like-minded people
- Negative role of media
- Confrontation with powerbrokers and elites
- Family disputes
- Differences with NGO leadership
- Differences with political leaders

Opinion about NGOs

- Work on project basis
- Restricted by government rules and regulations
- Commitment to social change in not very strong
- Lack of unity and tied to various interest groups
- Donor controlled
- Local groups restricted to local viewpoint

Role of PEACE

- Providing strategic direction
- Bringing together people with similar ideology
- Providing opportunities and resources
- Motivator
- Clear understanding of issues
- Co-ordinator
- Materials help in guiding local groups
- Inputs to strengthen issue-based groups

PEACE is not replaceable as it occupies a unique niche where it is acceptable to struggle groups as well as NGOs. It provides a unique learning agenda for the grassroot-based activists, which

is not available through any other source in the country, raises its own resources to enable this process to empower activists and their groups, and works in a clear and transparent manner.

The need for the kinds of intervention and training PEACE conducts is still relevant. Grassroot activists still look upon PEACE to sharpen their abilities.

The nature of PEACE as an NGO supported by foreign donations was recognised by the participants. It was not seen as an adversarial position, but more as a pragmatic solution. Indeed, the role of PEACE was seen as critical in strengthening social movements around the country, especially by the participants in Group 3 comprising activists from struggle groups who have been active in their local areas, mostly as volunteers. Such educational opportunities are simply not available for volunteers in these struggle groups.

Given the requirements of the participants, and the kind of institutional investment required for running an operation such as PEACE, an understanding foreign donor is essential. There is limited amount of resource mobilisation options in India and while philanthropy in India is picking up, it is not currently available for this kind of work. The struggle groups, while seeing the utility of this kind of intervention, are also not in a position to pay for such services as their own limited resources are utilised for mobilisation purposes.

Participants Responses about PEACE Intervention

As we can see above, there is a clear change in the nature of the benefits derived through PEACE trainings over time as the pattern of the participants changed. The participants were requested to identify three aspects that they felt were unique to

Features Unique to PEACE Trainings
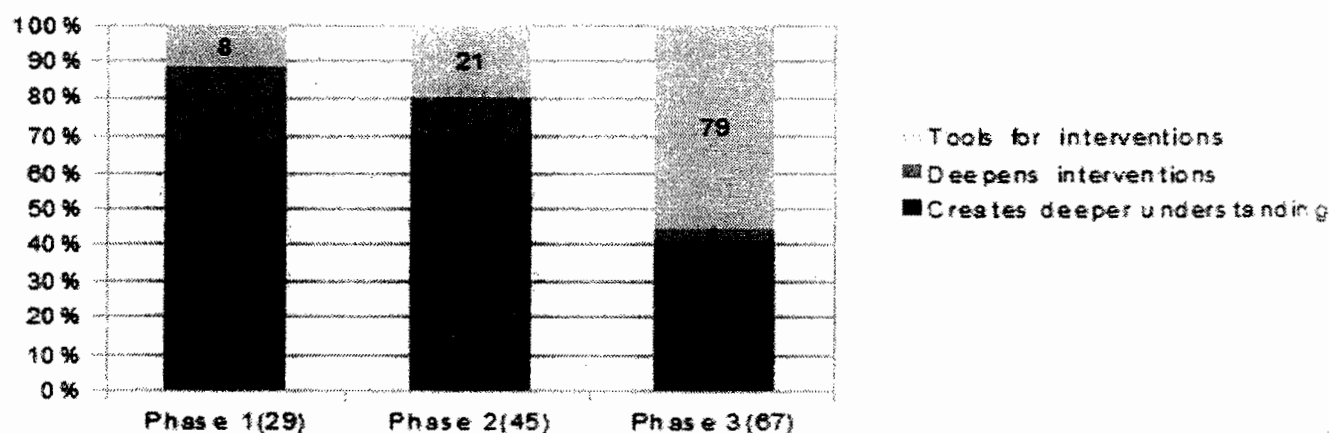
PEACE trainings. The responses were then classified into three categories based on the attributes assigned by the participants[1].

1. These are some of the attributes which were assigned separate categories. Each participant was requested to list a maximum of three attributes (some of them chose not to respond or gave 1 or 2 attributes only) and these were later slotted into the following categories. The following are illustrative and shown below:
   a. Deeper Understanding: clarify vision, facilitate development of view point, explaining implications of policies, create in-depth understanding of issues, understanding national and international linkages etc.
   b. Deepens Interventions: strategy development, comprehensive pro grammes, documentation.
   c. Tools for intervention: increased leadership, participation, collective decision making, inclusiveness.

The trend clearly reflects the changing nature of PEACE interventions as well as the constituency. The programmes themselves are a reflection of the time period in which they are located and we can see a significant contribution to knowledge and a deeper understanding playing a significant part of the uniqueness across all phases. Interestingly, the category of Tools for Interventions seems to increase over time as we move from Phase 1 to Phase 3 and reflects the changing nature of

Elements of change after the training
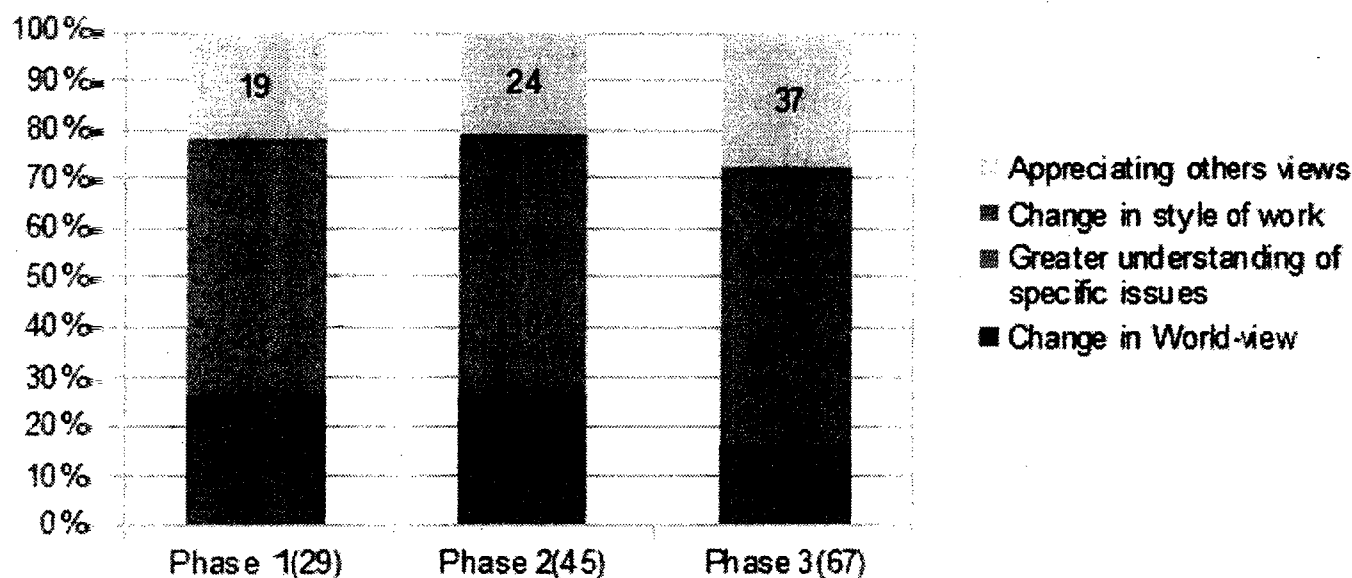
participants in PEACE training programmes as there is a move from sophisticated NGOs in Phase 1 to smaller NGOs in Phase 2 and an almost exclusive focus on social movements in Phase 3. The seemingly relatively low numbers for Deepening Inter ventions is also understood in the same context whereby PEACE did not seek to directly influence the work of the NGOs and groups that they are working with and focused more on providing tools for interventions, which we see growing over time when PEACE training programmes consciously started building specific tools, leading to more effective leadership, deeper engagement with stakeholders and more inclusiveness in decision making.

The second chart reflects another question which sought to understand the specific changes that participants felt after going

through a PEACE training programme. Towards this, participants were asked if PEACE training resulted in changes in the way they worked through a multiple choice of options with most participants choosing two or more. Interestingly, these show us that approximately about half the responses across the phases pertain to greater understanding while the other half are about processes[2]. As PEACE training interventions became more specific over time, the participants felt that they had a greater and deeper understanding on specific issues. The distribution also shows that the trainings have not only being useful for developing an understanding about the inter-connectedness of issues but also around processes and has influenced the work on the ground by the participants. It also reflects that the pedagogical structure of the trainings has remained similar even if the focus has changed over time.

2. The multiple choice option deliberately listed Change in Worldview as the first point and Greater Understanding of a specific issue as the last point. However, for ease of presentation and analysis they have been put next to each other. The chart may be interpreted like the follows. In Phase I, at least 19(66%) of the participants felt that they could understand and appreciate differing and different points of view, 24(83%) felt that it resulted in a change in the manner in which they worked, 21 (72%) felt that they gained knowledge on specific issues of their interests and 22(76%) felt that it contributed in expanding their worldview.

Institutional Case Study

5.1   Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Sangathan (Interview with Mewa Bharati)

Mewa Bharati is the founder and secretary of the Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Sangathan, a trade union of women domestic workers with a current membership of 7,000 women, mostly long-term migrants from Cooch Behar in Bengal.

Mewa started as a student activist with the SFI but soon became restless with the top-down style of the organisation and broke ties with it. She worked for a while with Vividha, a Jaipur-based NGO, and then joined PUCL. She and her husband worked closely with Kavita Srivastava and helped to set up community kitchens for daily wage workers in the city during the drought years.

In 2004, Mewa was recommended by Kavita for a fellowship from Jagori, a Delhi-based feminist resource centre. Mewa was given support for a small action-research project on the situation of women domestic workers in Jaipur. The report of this study was later submitted to the Government of Rajasthan. Jagori continued supporting Mewa. Apart from her salary and rent for a small office, Jagori helped Mewa in mobilising domestic workers around their rights, building their perspectives and capacities and supporting their struggles against violence from their families as well as from their employers. The Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Sangathan was registered as a trade union in 2008.

Mewa first came in contact with PEACE in 2009 when she attended a workshop to build a political analysis of urbanisation. Later, she also attended a PEACE workshop in Jaipur for activists from movements for natural resources where she says her eyes were opened to the potential of struggles and movements in transforming society.

Even though her brother-in-law also works in PEACE and she knows the other members of the training team, it is clear that PEACE for Mewa meant Dhirendra, whom she acknowledges as a mentor. He would stay at her house whenever he was in Jaipur, and sit talking with Mewa and her husband late into the night. Mewa tells us that these conversations with Dhirendra ranged over a wide canvas of issues and made her aware of new political dimensions that she had not considered before. Dhirendra gave her a conceptual framework for building up the organisation and helped her to strengthen the institutional foundation for her work. It was from him that she learnt that the foundation of an organisation is a relationship of trust where the women are confident that the organisation will stand by them and support them no matter what the situation.

Mewa says she turned to Dhirendra even for advice on handling cases – when a member of the union was arrested after being accused of stealing by her employers, she called Dhirendra rather than her contacts in Jagori, because she was says she knew he would give her step-by-step guidance on what to do. In any case, it was clear from our conversation that Mewa's relationship with Jagori grew more distant after the financial support came to an end and people who had worked closely with Mewa moved on to other things. Although Jagori continued to support training for union members, they were not involved in the public hearing Mewa organised in September 2010, which was attended by 3,500 women and gained a lot of media attention. PEACE helped Mewa to write the background note and collect case studies for the event, which was funded entirely by the sale of coupons, through which a sum of Rs 25,000 was raised. Members of the PEACE team who attended the event also helped with the documentation.

The present structure of Mewa's organisation evolved through

discussions with Dhirendra. Each member pays an annual fee of Rs 20. The money collected in this way covers the expenses of meetings and cases, and is also used to help out women in need of help to tide over emergencies. There are chapters in 21 bastis. The day-to-day work of mobilising and organising meetings is done by a local committee comprising a few of the active women.

Funding is becoming an issue. Mewa says it is difficult to manage organisational work without full-time workers. There were five full-time workers who were hired for a small project supported by the Dorabji Tata Trust. Although they were trained by PEACE and were motivated to think of themselves as activists rather than NGO staff, four of them left because they needed to earn a living. The one who continues with Mewa is paid a salary of Rs 4,000 out of the membership fee kitty. Mewa is now trying to get support from Action Aid for a project on access to basic services in bastis which will include a few salaries. Mewa is aware of the tensions inherent in this "projectisation" but feels that this kind of work cannot be done without funding.

We ask Mewa her opinion of the "PEACE process" – the "seekhne-sikhane ki prakriya" that is repeatedly mentioned in every conversation about PEACE. Mewa says that the learning process at PEACE workshops is much stronger when compared to trainings and meeting organised by other NGOs. She says concepts are explored and explained in such a way that a common understanding emerges. We ask whether and how she has contributed to "sikhana" – for instance, was she able to bring her experiences and insights on gender into the learning process at PEACE workshops? She agrees that gender is a weak area for PEACE even though the team is gender-sensitive and aware of women's issues. She says gender issues did not come up in her discussions with Dhirendra.

Mewa is not involved with other issues that PEACE is engaging with, many of which have direct implications for her own work. For instance, she is not aware of the campaign against the Aadhar project (the biometric identity database). She tells us that the women would, in fact, like to have Aadhar cards. Her organisation is not a member of the INSAF network in which PEACE plays the

central role. Mewa says that Dhirendra never spoke to her about INSAF – she says their conversations were around her struggle to build up her own organisation.

Mewa is an active member of the Right to Food campaign and the Campaign for Social Security for Informal Workers. It is Mewa who attends the meetings of these groups – the women from the organisation go only for the dharnas and demonstrations where Mewa says they make up the bulk of the numbers. Mewa says there are tensions within these campaigns on practical issues. She is aware of PEACE's ideological opposition to these campaigns but these do not seem to have shaped her own interactions.

Mewa finds PEACE materials such as the newsletters and issue-based booklets informative but difficult to read and understand without help. She says she has to read each article several times in order to comprehend it. They are of no use to union members, the majority of whom cannot read and write Hindi. She says that she sometimes shares information and analyses from PEACE materials at the monthly meetings.

5.2 Niyamgiri Surksha Samiti (Interview with Lingraj Azad, Kumti Maji and others)

Lanjigarh is a block in the south-western region of Odisha, better known as KBK (Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput). The Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution applies to this region. Over 50,000 families live in 517 villages spread over 21 Gram Panchayats of this block. Adivasis comprise 50% of the population, while Dalits account for another 25%. The block is spread over 401.14 sq km. Two panchayats in the block – Lanjigarh and Batilima – are especially rich in natural resources. The Niyamgiri Mountain in the area is the source of 32 small and big springs that meet with the two rivers, Vansadhara and Nagavali. These two rivers flow through Kalahandi and Rayagada districts in Odisha and Srikakulam district in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. These rivers play a vital role for food security in the region.

The state government's plans to hand over the resources in the region to multinational corporations would be disastrous for

Adivasi culture and livelihood. Despite being aware of the adverse consequences, the educated and so-called civilised section of society is maintaining a criminal indifference on the issue. It is the Adivasies living in the dense forests of the region who are opposing the plunder of the natural resources and consequent displacement.

For the protection of this traditional land of Adivasis, their culture and natural resources, the people of the region are protesting and agitating under the banner of Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti (NSS). The NSS was founded on 16 September 2001 by the Adivasis of various villages in Lanjigarh block. In the beginning, the NSS banner was red and white. Daisingh Manjhi, Bheem Manjhi and Mardi Manjhi were the prominent leaders when the movement for the community rights of the Adivasis was launched. On 26 July 2002, the Sterlite Company convened a gramsabha meeting for establishing an aluminium refinery plant. The villagers strongly opposed it and chased away the officials of the company. On the same day, the people of that gramsabha held a meeting and resolved to protect their natural resources, culture and traditions from the nefarious designs of the multinational companies in collusion with the state and central governments. They also decided to protect the Vansadhara and Nagavali rivers along with the Niyamgiri Mountain.

PEACE's association with the NSS dates back to 2007 when PEACE activist Dhirendra Pratap Singh visited the region. PEACE invited NSS activists to participate in its training programmes.

Satya, the first NSS activist to attend a PEACE training programme, says the training helped him to develop the vision of a long-term movement. He came to know about various movements going on in the country and the world. During various phases of the training, he developed an understanding of effective strategies of peoples' movement, how to organise collective struggles, and about the role and the qualities of leadership.

Activists of the Niyamgiri movement say that before coming in contact with PEACE, there was no coordination among the activists. Training helped to create coordination, enhanced interest

in the activities of the movement and a better understanding of the issues. It also helped to develop an understanding of the importance of collective leadership. It also helped the activists to transcend individualism and ego.

According to the activists, the PEACE training has helped them to understand the importance of documentation and also to develop the capacity to undertake it. The training has instilled in them an interest to read radical literature and fostered the ability to lead the movement in adverse situations. The trained activists have become smarter. Activists who confused their role before the training are better able to decide their role by themselves after the training. The activists who participated in the training are also able to help the other activists to acquire a wider vision and understanding of the movement and the issues at stake.

After training, the activists understood the importance of practising equality and fraternity among themselves. They were also able to develop appropriate methods of teaching and learning, besides consolidating their analytical capacities.

Who among the NSS activists will participate in the training is a decision taken after collective deliberation within the samiti. Special care is taken to ensure that the participants should be from the deprived community and have interest in the organisation and the struggle. It was also kept in mind that the selected participant should be able to attend all the three phases of training.

The NSS activists believe that fundamental changes are witnessed in the conduct and the understanding of the activists after returning from the training. Earlier, their thinking was self-centred, but after the training, their understanding became organisation-centred and they developed positive concerns towards the movement. Now, their central concern is how to expand the movement. They have started reading literature and magazines to be well-informed about various ongoing movements and also the movements of the past. They have started taking the initiative to interact and coordinate with other movements and their leadership in order to build broader common platforms on common issues. The activists of Niyamgiri movement feel that

they have been greatly influenced by PEACE activists. Wherever PEACE activists go, they cite the example of the Niyamgiri movement as a model. They tell acitivists of other movements about the exemplary collectivity and commitment of the Niyamgiri movement.

According to the Niyamgiri activists, earlier they used to go to Delhi to attend PEACE training. The lodging and food arrangement was taken care of by PEACE. But now PEACE activists come to the area and live among the activists like them, sharing the sleeping arrangement on the ground and conducting discussion and deliberations on various issues. They don't let the local activists feel that they have come from a big city like Delhi.

After training, there have been noticeable changes in the conduct of the members. Those activists and leaders who used to spend maximum time in the towns and cities, have started to spend maximum time in the villages and work among deprived and affected people. They have developed intense commitment and concern towards the deprived section of society and, consequently, the trust of the deprived sections of society in the leaders of the Niyamgiri movement has been consolidated. This has strengthened the organisation and made the movement more effective.

In order to explain the positive effects of the training, the NSS activists cite the example of Angad, a 20-year-old activist who rarely used to speak earlier. He would attend meetings but could not participate in the deliberations. He was unable to understand the issues well; discussing them was out of the question. But after the PEACE training, he has become smarter and has developed sharp understanding of the issues. There has been a qualitative change in his ability to express himself. When he talked on the issues now, it is difficult to believe that it is the same young man who was hesitant to open his mouth on any issue. He has developed appreciable interest in reading and has a good collection of books and magazines. He has also developed his leadership abilities. Now he takes concrete initiatives to develop collective leadership in awakened citizens' forums. All this is a result of the processes of learning and teaching during the PEACE

training programme. The dialectical culture of PEACE to acquire knowledge through questioning and counter-questioning has instilled in him the art of not only questioning others but also himself. He has also developed the skills of creating fraternal relations not only with the members of his organisation, but also those from other organisations.

NSS activists point out that PEACE trainings are fundamentally different from trainings by other organisations. PEACE facilitators do not impose their views on the participants, but articulate and formulate the conclusion arrived at by collective exercises and deliberations. It makes the participants feel that they participated in the process through which the conclusions emerged. PEACE encourages the participants to acquire and develop knowledge through experience.

5.3 JUDAV (Interview with Ghanshyam)

JUDAV came into being as an organisation in March 1995, after having split from its parent organisation, the Lok Jagriti Kendra (LJK), due to differences in ideological positions. In some ways, JUDAV's history is closely entangled with PEACE's and can be traced back to a major national political controversy that began in 1986 around the construction of large dams. Organisations such as Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Lokayan and Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) played a central role in the debate. LJK was not untouched by these critical debates, and a rift began to emerge within the organisation in 1986-87 over the construction of two dams on the Subarnarekha and the Kharkai. One was planned to be built with World Bank funds near Chandil, about 40 km north of Tatanagar and the other was planned near Eecha, 60 km southeast of Tatanagar. It was estimated that the two dams would displace 1.25 lakh people. While Sangharsh Vahini opposed the construction of these dams altogether, another faction favoured construction with rehabilitation, echoing the same tensions that appeared in movements and activist platforms such as NBA and PRIA.

By 1991, those who opposed construction of large dams were either forced to quit or resigned on their own volition from LJK.

While the Chandil Dam moved forward, a massive grassroots mobilisation forced the World Bank to pull out of Eecha Dam in 1994. The opponents of the dam argued that: (a) nature and culture, once destroyed, cannot be rehabilitated or compensated for; (b) the employment promised by the government to the displaced will only be granted, at the most, to members of one generation, whereas the forest is the source of sustenance and livelihood for all members of a family generation after generation; and (c) the relative unfamiliarity of the local communities with a monetised economy makes them more susceptible to exploitation.

With this victory over the Eecha Dam project came the resolution that there should be an organisation to advance the principles of the movement as well as the struggle for swashaasan (self-rule) through an active resistance to neoliberal globalisation and communalism. Thus, JUDAV was registered in March 1995.

Similar processes, trajectories and tensions marked PRIA and other organisations at this time. In 1991-92, the World Bank created CIVICUS to merge the course of NGOs with that of neoliberalisation, and communal forces were being mobilised full swing to push this process. In this sense, the journeys of Ghanshyam, a founding figure of JUDAV, and of Anil Chaudhary, a founder of Popular Education and Action Centre (PEACE), were closely linked and the two organisations can be seen as each other's hamsafar – or co-travellers – politically, philosophically, and as resources and supporters for one another. Both organisations were thoroughly committed to resisting displacement; both argued tirelessly for people's collective control over resources; both promoted a secular ethos; and both were staunch supporters of the principle, jiska mudda uski ladai, jiski ladai, usiki aguwai.

Issues, debates, ideology

Many individuals who later associated with JUDAV had been active in the Jharkhand Mukti Andolan and the Jharkhand Coordination Committee in the early 1980s. In 1987, there was a padyatra from Gua (in West Singhbhum district) to Jamshedpur demanding a separate state of Jharkhand while also resisting displacement and

arguing for people's collective control over water and forests. Adivasi women and men, youth and children – including those from Eecha – joined in large numbers. Hundreds of them were imprisoned between 1987 and 1994 during the course of this struggle. During 1993, the World Year of Indigenous People, the South Asia Indigenous People's Conference was held in Tonto, about 125 km from Tatanagar. Five thousand people participated in this five-day conference, including Indians, Bangadeshis and Australian aborigines. In addition to reiterating the call for community ownership of natural resources and a categorical rejection of development that led to displacement or rehabilitation, the collective demand for self-rule that emerged from this gathering included 50% reservation for women in all decision-making structures – from Parliament to the panchayats. The mainstream demand for an independent state of Jharkhand failed to raise these issues, and to appreciate the close relationship between cultural identity and political autonomy. But the precurser movement to JUDAV traced these issues back to 1765 when the British got deewani in Jharkhand and imposed lagaan in 1779, sparking resistance from the Adivasi communities such as Munda and Santhal, which proved that the question of cultural identity was inseparable from that of conserving rivers, forests and land. The same ideological divide has continued to separate JUDAV from the mainstream politics in Jharkhand today.

Throughout this journey of issues, ideology and struggles, PEACE has been an important hamsafar for JUDAV. There have been close long-term relationships between individuals from the two organisations; there has been mutual sharing and learning at the level of organisational philosophies, ideologies and practices; and Ghanshyam considers Anil Chaudhary to be a co-founder of JUDAV. Trainers, trainees, and volunteers from JUDAV and PEACE have frequently visited each other's organisations and helped to support and advance each other's ideas and beliefs. Both organisations can be described as like-minded – saman dharma, sam vichar – although a healthy debate has continued between JUDAV and PEACE on the question of cultural identity. While PEACE's Marxist principles have led it to regard identity politics as essentially problematic, JUDAV has been more influenced by JP's ideology, linking materialism with spirituality, and seeing identity as problematic only when it is

ghettoised, but not when combined with the principles and practices of unity in diversity. However, disagreement can be a strong indicator of democratic partnership; disintegration results only when disagreement translates into closed minds and hearts.

The close relationship between JUDAV and PEACE has allowed both sides to cultivate a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the individual and the collective in the context of organising and movement building. Strengthening collectivity does not imply denial or dismissal of what an individual brings to a struggle, but individualism is a barrier in nurturing collectivity. Organisation (sangathan) is not the end (laks hya), it is merely the means (sadhan) to an end. The key challenge for a transformative organisation, then, lies in developing the culture, skills and practices that allow it to mobilise the creativity and leadership of the individual for the bigger common good of the collective. Capitalism as a system appreciated this fact, and therefore, invested itself in promoting democracy. To save our earth, however, we need to replace neoliberal democracy with principles and processes that advance communitarian democracy.

PEACE as JUDAV's Hamsafar

As a hamsafar, PEACE has nurtured JUDAV in crucial ways. Whenever JUDAV felt like its own ideas were reaching a standstill, PEACE was there to inject an intellectual dynamism by initiating new dialogues. Over the years, several members of the PEACE team, including Sanjiv, Khurshid Anwar and Dhirendra, played a critical role in training key workers of JUDAV, and in advancing their capabilities and skills. PEACE workers also helped members of JUDAV to find hope and courage at some of the hardest moments of disappointment and disillusionment during confrontations with the violence of the dominant system. Last, but not the least, PEACE has effectively deployed its organisational and institutional connections to aid publications on critical political issues and struggles and to do the crucial work of disseminating this literature to others in struggle.

There are several examples of the crucial support that PEACE has

provided to JUDAV. In December 2008, three persons were killed and seven injured in state-sponsored firing at an installation site of a power plant. One of those injured lost an eye and has a bullet stuck in his brain. Ghanshyam was declared a Maoist. At this time, Ghanshyam's meetings and long discussions with Anil Chaudhary in Delhi proved to be pivotal in enabling JUDAV to understand itself as a non-violent organisation. In the same year, JUDAV was deregistered and then, too, Anil Chaudhary, PEACE and INSAF provided critical help to JUDAV in its legal battles and public hearings by explaining to outsiders the value of the work, philosophy and commitments of the organisation. Similarly, the Gujarat pogrom brought an unprecedented challenge for JUDAV -- politically, ideologically and emotionally. At this time, too, PEACE enabled JUDAV to develop its intellectual and ideological tools for understanding the close workings and interdependencies of communalism, fascism and globalisation. In a nutshell, PEACE and Anil Chaudhary have consistently and tirelessly provided moral and ideological tools as well as personal support to a number of individuals from JUDAV so that it could stay strong on its course, and successfully battle with the sociopolitical hurdles on its way.

Training and Shifts: Expectations, Selection, Learning

JUDAV works in 20 out of 24 districts of Jharkhand, and in three districts of Bihar. Its paid workers (between 50 and 55 in number, 37% of whom are women) are drawn from the village level, and there is an ongoing local training programme for them. In addition, JUDAV supports 32 fellows, at least one from each district, to undertake the work of research, reflection and writing. Every year, JUDAV typically selects from this group of employees and fellows, four to five women and men who show more preparation and potential than others, to participate in PEACE trainings. In 2011-12, JUDAV sent eight trainees to PEACE.

JUDAV sends its employees and fellows to PEACE trainings with some specific expectations, including (a) preparing and training the workers/ volunteers for a long struggle; (b) helping them to learn the delicate and dialectical negotiation between how to articulate their ideas and beliefs and how to translate the same into everyday practices; (c) helping them to become not only better educated about

the nature of other struggles in India, but also about how to offer maximum assistance and support to those struggles; and (d) helping them understand and internalise the need to sustain the work of political mobilising and organisation building alongside continuous critical reflection, writing, reading and dialogue.

Several changes can be observed among JUDAV members after they have attended PEACE trainings and events. First, PEACE trainees reflect a clearer understanding of, and heightened sensitivity towards, the issues at hand. For example, one participant who often tended to be quite sexist returned from PEACE with a remarkable sensitivity towards gender differences, and to everyone's surprise, accompanied a woman co-worker in a moment of grave crisis when her husband died while she was attending a meeting in Bhubaneshwar. Second, PEACE trainees returning to JUDAV express their ideas and analyses in a more refined way, especially about the articulation of power relations. These team members also display a new intensity and passion towards their work as political thinkers and doers, and they frequently become avid readers and the most frequent users of JUDAV's library. Finally, while the relationship between the administration and volunteers or workers in any organisation is often marked by suspicion and uncertainty, JUDAV members returning from PEACE trainings raise critical questions about the organisation with a sense of security and openness, enabling, in turn, healthier and more intimate and trusting relationships between JUDAV administrators and the employees.

Two major shifts that JUDAV members attribute to PEACE events and interactions include a deepened and nuanced understanding of the politics of communalism and the issue of nuclear disarmament. PEACE, too, has actively learned from JUDAV, especially about (a) how the creation of poverty and destruction of the earth cannot be adequately comprehended or made a focus of struggle without locating these in relationship with community ownership of natural resources (jal ,jangal, zameen); and (b) the centrality of identity politics in Adivasi sangharsh (indigenous people's resistance). According to Ghanshyam, PEACE's shift toward working directly with movements instead of NGOs can be attributed in a good measure to the influence of organisations such as JUDAV.

5.4 Himpravesh
(Interview with J S Dhukhiya)

"JP Associates' Bageri thermal power plant in Nalagarh district has been cancelled by the High Court of Himachal Pradesh. The HC has given strict orders to JP Associates for violating all norms. The Bageri thermal power plant will be dismantled in three months time. JP Associates was asked to deposit 25% of the total project cost, approximately Rs 100 crore, as a penalty. The transfer of common lands to JP Associates was deemed illegal and cancelled. The cement plant and grinding unit adjacent to the thermal plant were also given notice that if these remain non-compliant, then action can be taken by the HC in these cases also."

Himpravesh is a citizens' group in Nalagarh in Solan district in the foothills of the Shivalik Mountains in Himachal Pradesh. The region of Nalagarh, Baddi and Barotiwala has been showcased by the state government as a site for rapid industrial development in HP. In the late 1990s, the state government began pushing for the industrialisation in the region, offering excise incentives and tax holidays to industrialists. Coinciding with this, the Town and Country Planning Act of Himachal Pradesh was passed in 1997. This resulted in uncontrolled growth of new industries such as pharmaceuticals and a wave of construction activity started, which is still continuing. By one estimate, more than 12 billion dollars worth of investment has taken place in the state.

Himpravesh has its genesis in the coming together of citizens to protest against stone quarrying, particularly in the vicinity of Nalagarh. The organisation was registered in 1998. It has eight office bearers and about 70 members. All the members are residents of the area and engaged in various farm-related activities or are retired personnel from various government departments. The organisation does not receive any kind of funding or support from any governmental or international body. It is a truly a citizens' group supported by the citizens of the Nalagarh region. The group largely takes up the issues impacting the daily lives of people living in and around Nalagarh.

The first issue that Himpravesh took up in 1998 was of stone

quarrying. The rapid industrialisation in the state caused high growth in construction activity in and around the industrial zone of Baddi/Nalagarh and Barotiwala belt. Suddenly, the demand for construction material ballooned and it became extremely profitable to start stone quarrying in the hills and set up stone crushers.

The group members met almost all the officials seeking help and support in protecting the environment of the region from the increasing pollution. Though the offcials listened sympathetically, it did not lead to any positive outcome. After years of trying to move the bureaucracy into taking action, the group decided to knock the doors of the court. In 2004, the HP High Court formed a committee to review the situation and recommend action. The committee gave its report to the High Court leading to the formulation of a Mining Policy to restrict the uncontrolled mining activity. Despite the court orders, however, the mining activity continued unabated.

The second major struggle for Himpravesh was against land acquisition, beginning in 2005-06. The group became part of Bhoomi Bachao Sangarsh Samiti, Nalargarh. They organised a number of rallies and protest marches. Due to the continuous protests of farmers and other citizens against land acquisition, the villages were finally exempted it. This victory taught the group the power of collective struggle.

In 2008-09, Himpravesh got involved in opposition to the Department of Town and Country Planning, Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh. Eighty villages came under the jurisdiction of the department. Farmers and other residents started getting harassed for electricity connections or any modification in their house or any other construction activity. The villagers had to visit the department office to get their construction plans approved and faced harassment in the process. After the villagers came together and organised protests, the villages were excluded from the jurisdiction of the department.

The most important milestone in Himpravesh's history was in 2007 when M/s Jai Prakash Associates Limited started the process of setting up a proposed cement grinding unit (2.0 MTPA), multi-fuel

(coal, rice husk and municipal solid waste) based Captive Thermal Power Plant (30 MW) and furnace oil based Emergency DG sets (3 X 10.89 MW each) at Padiyana village (Tikkri), near Bagheri in Nalagarh tehsil.

The group was engaged in struggles on issues related with mining and land acquisition at that time and remained unaware of the plans of the Jai Prakash Associates until the middle of 2007. In July 2007, the group organised a rally against the proposed thermal power plant. Having witnessed the power of collective action already, the villagers participated in big numbers. On 17 July, the member-secretary of the HP Pollution Control Board issued a show cause notice to JP Associates, stating that the construction on the thermal power plant had been going on illegally without the consent of the competent authorities (i.e., the MoEF). A public hearing was organised and the government ordered JP Associates to stop all work at the power plant.

Manoj Gaur, an official of the company, met the protestors and assured them that all work had been stopped and the company would be withdrawing. However, the work continued surreptitiously and in 2008, the new government reversed the order and allowed the company to carry on with the work.

This event again propelled the group to organise a collective action. This time, the group decided to meet each household in the affected area comprising 10 panchayats. The purpose of these house to house meetings was to educate all the affected villagers within a 10-km radius of the thermal plant on how the plant was going to impact their lands and the environment. The company was planning to dig borewells to the depth of the sea level to be able to fetch enough water to meet the demands of the thermal plant. This would have left hardly any groundwater for the use of the villagers.

In September 2009, another public hearing was organised by the Pollution Control Board. A large number of villagers participated in it and protested against the setting up of the thermal power plant. They asked why a public hearing on environmental impact was being conducted a second time even though the company's

case had been rejected earlier. The villagers also asked why the company had started the construction work without environmental clearance from the government of India.

Despite the protests by the local community and the opposition voiced in the public hearing in 2009, the MoEF gave environmental clearance to the cement factory and thermal power plant in 2010. When Himpravesh came to know about this, it filed a PIL in the HP High Court challenging the company's claims on environment protection and alleged that it got the MoEF's permission on the basis of false claims.

Finally, in May 2012, the struggle saw its first big victory with a landmark judgment by the High Court. The court ruled against the company, finding it guilty of a number of lapses, including misleading the authorities on several occasions to obtain environmental and other clearances. A penalty of Rs 100 crore was imposed on it for misrepresenting facts. On 6 July 2012, the court also rejected the review petition filed by the company.

Relationship with PEACE

Himpravesh came in touch with PEACE in 2009-10 through Ghuman Singh, who is the coordinator of the network of organisations and citizens' groups active in the Nalagarh region. Himpravesh activists have been attending PEACE workshops and training programmes for the past couple of years. They see these workshops as an opportunity to learn more about the issues related with the model of development pursued by our decision-makers and governments. They look up to PEACE to help them understand the wider implications of the new economic policies and impact of multinational companies etc. They feel that because of their interaction with PEACE they learn about people's struggles all over the country and realise that they are not alone in this situation. It gives them courage to continue their struggle and also network with other like-minded groups.

5.5 Chhattisgarh Mahila Manch (Interview with Shipra, Jaya, Pushplata and others)

Chhattisgarh, rich in mineral and other natural resources, is one of

the three newly created states of India. As there was never any strong movement for a separate state of Chhattisgarh, it can be argued that the state's creation was not for the accomplishment of peoples' aspirations but for the vested interests of the political and economic forces. Has there been any improvement in the conditions of the poor and downtrodden? Or has the process of exploitation and oppression become more intensified?

In the past 12 years, the hold of capitalist forces has only intensified and national and multinational corporates are today bent upon plundering the natural and mineral resources of the state. People have been organising and protesting against the exploitation and oppression by these companies. Women too have been organising themselves for their rights. One such women's organisation is the Chhattisgarh Mahila Manch (CMM), not to be confused with the CMM (Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha) founded by Shankar Guha Niyogi.

Women activists from seven districts of the state came together in 2006 to form the Chhattisgarh Mahila Manch. It took almost two years of hard work to give it a concrete shape. The first task was to formulate its mission and goals. Gradually, the organisation was able to consolidate itself and made big strides towards becoming a force to reckon with. Meanwhile, the activists came in contact with PEACE activist Dhirendra Pratap Singh, who guided them and extended all possible forms of cooperation. In 2012, the CMM reviewed its mission, vision and goal to redefine its role and decide on its future initiatives. The friends from PEACE played an active, important role in the process.

CMM decided that its role is that of an active agent for constructing a society based on scientific thought and free from violence and inequality, in which everyone gets opportunities of dignified life and all kinds of exploitation, oppression and repression are abolished. The women activists took the initiative in making the organisation dynamic in line with its stated vision. It was decided that groups or individuals had to fulfil certain conditions for becoming members of the organisation. Only those groups that are women-dominated and led by women, and which are free from any discrimination based on

caste, religion or gender, would be considered for membership. Currently, CMM has 1,465 members, including 122 women's groups and 54 activists. CMM undertakes work on mainly the following issues:

1. To strengthen the Gram Sabha for community rights over land, water and forest and ensure active participation of women through concrete initiatives

2. To organise the women and agitate against violence on women, in cluding domestic violence

3. To make concrete initiatives for the educational and healthcare facilities for deprived and exploited groups

4. To mobilise and organise people for struggle against pervasive corruption in various schemes

5. To conduct awakening campaign for women's rights and provide legal training

The temperament and understanding of some women activists of the organisation indicate that if the organisation continued acting collect ively and developing strong collective leadership, the CMM will make a distinguished place for itself not only among the women forums and organisations of Chhattisgarh but in the whole country. DP Singh's intimate emotional and ideological affinity with the organisation played an important role in strengthening and building its ideological capacity. All the activist members of CMM feel that they have suffered an irreparable loss because of his demise. They feel that CMM has lost a sensitive, sensible and visionary friend, philosopher and guide with his untimely death. But they are confident that the organisation will continue receiving help and guidance of other friends from PEACE.

PEACE has played an important role in giving the CMM an organised shape and making it ideologically sound, sharp and competent. The training programmes conducted by PEACE have been vital in enabling the members of CMM to comprehend the essence of 'team work' and how it transcends individualism. PEACE training has inspired the CMM members to work in active cooperation with each other. It inculcated in them the sense to identify the issues and make strategies for concrete initiatives. It is

with the active cooperation and intervention of PEACE that the CMM has been able to become a state-level women's forum.

A specific feature of PEACE training that the activists identify is that the facilitators do not impose their views on the activists but help in articulating and formulating the conclusion arrived at by collective exercises. It breaks the hesitation and stage fright through games, storytelling and cultural activities that make them participate vocally in the collective process of the training. That makes the process of learning and teaching interesting and comprehensive. CMM selects its members for participation of PEACE training by collective exercises and makes sure that the selected participant belongs to the deprived and exploited communities. Special care is taken to ensure the participation of Dalit and Adivasi women.

According to CMM leaders and activists, there have been qualitative changes in those who have participated in PEACE trainings. Those who were earlier unable to articulate their experiences and prepare reports are now competent in writing their reports on their own without anybody's help. They can now plan and document their case studies also. They have developed documentation skills and also show enhanced leadership qualities.

For example, take the case of Jayadhruva, a resident of Farsaguda in Bastar district. Earlier, she would hesitate to speak in the meetings. She would work on certain issues without understanding them. After participating in the PEACE training, Jayadhruva has not only become vocal but has taken up organisational responsibilities also. Today, she is the secretary of CMM. She has acquired clarity not only on women's issues but also on other issues. The organisation is proud of her vision and ideological commitment. The guidance and help of friends from PEACE proved crucial in enabling activists like Jayadhruva to perform a leadership role.

Another example is that of Anita Dhruvlahre from Janjgir Chapa. Anita was a quiet introvert when she joined the organisation. She was hesitant and had tremendous stage fright when she went for the PEACE training. She started noticing qualitative change in

herself after the first phase of the training. After completing the training, she started mobilising and organising people from 11 villages who were opposing the RKM Power Plant. She prepared a broad mass base for the movement and deployed militant forms of protest such as dharnas, demonstrations and road blockades. As a consequence, all the displaced families not only got appropriate compensation but also jobs.

According to CMM activists, during the process of PEACE training they became acquainted with many other issue-based movements. PEACE trainers also provided them with literature about these movements. This instilled in them the habit of reading and writing, because of which the activists are now capable of documenting their programmes and processes. The quality of reports has also improved.

CMM activists say they have adopted the PEACE culture of acquiring knowledge through questioning, which facilitates the democratisation of the organisation. It helps in doing away with the arbitrariness of certain individuals and in developing the art of collective decision-making. Though the process of collective decision-making is tedious and time-consuming, but once the decision has been arrived at through this process, it can be implemented effectively.

What sets apart PEACE trainings is that the trainers help the activists to blossom into active players in the process of social movements and capacity building. The activists begin to feel qualitative changes in themselves during the process of training in phases. It enhances their self-confidence. The trainers do not impose their views on the participants, and their attitude and behaviour is so informal that the distinction between trainer and trainee becomes minimal. Because of the absence of hypocrisy in the trainers, the trainees easily mix with them.

The activists say that they have experienced more change in themselves as a consequence of PEACE training than they had expected. PEACE has always readily responded to their demands for more information and literature on particular movements. The trainers easily adjusted with the activists' style of living with the

ground realities and in scarcity. They never let them feel that they have come from a Delhi-based organisation. The process of changing along with each other continued and shall continue. CMM activists hope that their intimate professional relationship with PEACE shall be long lasting. Though they have been badly shaken by the untimely demise of DP Singh, they believe that PEACE will prove to be a companion and guide in their journey as a social movement.

5.6 Krishi Bhumi Bachao Morcha (Interview with Arun Singh, Raghavendra and Ramashre)

In 2007, the government of Uttar Pradesh initiated the Ganga Expressway project – a 155-feet-wide eight-lane road along the river. The road was to be built with an elevation of 26 feet and with 40-foot slopes on both sides. The plan also envisaged a 800-metre green belt on both sides of the road and by-passes every 5 km. Bicycles, motorcycles, rickshaws, autorickshaws and tractors would not be allowed on the expressway. Eight parcel lands along the road were also to be used for developing infrastructure and attracting investment. These lands, which have to be within a 3 km radius of a core village, would be acquired for industrial/commercial/residential/institutional purposes.

The people who would be affected by land acquisition for the project approached various political parties to get them to take up their cause, but realised in the process that they had to take the initiative themselves. The protests started from the Navi Pachdevra village in Ghazipur district and soon spread to Devchandpur, Vishanpura-Lamhaji and Lonepur-Vishrampur. People in Ghazipur formed the Ganga Expressway Virodhi Kisan Morcha (GEVKM) in 2007 and soon after, village-level units were created in Saidpur, Holipur, Nasirpur, Basantpatti, Chakkiya Bason and Sidhona tehsils.

The activists realised that this initiative needed to be expanded beyond Ghazipur as the Expressway cut across several districts and so they started engaging with communities in Ballia and Varanasi districts as well. Two meetings were held in Ballia and it was decided that countering the Expressway project would need

state-level action. Besides GEVKM, a number of other organisations – PUCL, Lok Adhikar Manch, Kisan Sangh, Socialist Unity Centre of India, Pashupalak Sangh etc – were also involved in the process. As the struggle was not only for just compensation but actually aimed at protecting agricultural lands, the new platform was named 'Krishi Bhumi Bachao Morcha' (KBBM). It was also recognised that the Expressway project was part of the process of land grab by the state in collusion with private capital for Special Economic Zones, parcel lands, factories and townships.

Meanwhile, people's resistance against the Yamuna Expressway project, a similar project in the western part of the state, was growing, leading to incidents of state atrocities in Jaitapur, Aligarh district, and in Mathura district in 2009. There, the struggle aimed at ensuring the best possible compensation.

On the other hand, the movement in the eastern part of the state aimed at opposing land acquisition for the Ganga Expressway project. Village-level committees resisted the attempts by the developers to mark the route. To generate awareness around the implications of the Ganga Expressway land acquisition for the life and livelihood of the local communities, a march was organised through the districts of Ghazipur, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Bhadohi and Allahabad in two phases over 2009-10. All the markers of the Ganga Expressway installed by the developer, JP Group, were dug out by the villagers. While the march was underway, BUILD Environment Soceity approached the Allahabad High Court against the Ganga Expressway. The High Court granted a stay and all work on the project was stopped. The march was also stopped. However, two months later, acquisition process for parcel land in Tilthi was initiated affecting 93 villages. JP Group started the survey process in Kone Block of Mirzapur despite the stay order. The protests started again. Local people assaulted the survey team and chased them away. For this, 250 people were charged with various crimes by the police. The people from Kone Block invited the leadership of the GEVKM to support them, as the march had passed through that area earlier.

Some months later, when JP Group started surveying in Ghazipur and Varanasi also despite the stay order, GEVKM took

out a motorcycle yatra to generate awareness and show solidarity with the village-level resistance. The survey team was beaten up by the villagers in Saraiya village of Varanasi district. Following this incident, police had to be brought in to make the survey work possible. But even that proved to be inadequate. In Basupur village of Varanasi district, a survey team was doing measurements from atop a water tank on the Ghazipur main road, while four police vans were deployed around it. However, when the people gathered there, the police withdrew and the survey work was stopped. The then Chief Minister Mayawati announced that if the people did not want the Expressway, then it would not be made.

After this, all work on the project came to a halt though the state government and the JP Group continued their paperwork. GEVKM organised a yatra from Ballia to Noida from 30 October to 14 November 2011. Soon after Assembly elections were announced, JP Group withdrew its security deposit for the project as they had still not got the mandatory environmental clearances.

Post elections, the new Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party reportedly asked UPA government at the centre to facilitate environmental clearance for the project, signalling the state government's intent to restart the project. He has already announced an 8-lane Agra-Lucknow Expressway.

Current efforts are to keep the movement strong and united as they await further developments.

The leadership recognises the role of PEACE, specifically that of late DP Singh who some of them knew from earlier. Around 2008-09, his engagement with the leadership made them realise that a common struggle across the entire zone of the Expressway was needed. This perspective was shared with other members in a meeting in late 2009 in Lucknow, where a decision was taken to work under the leadership of Krishi Bhumi Bachao Morcha. A couple of months later, another meeting was held in Varanasi, in which groups and NGOs from across the state participated. They decided to work under the KBBM banner and a common

programme was arrived at. DP Singh was instrumental in creating and facilitating this process as well as in forging linkages with movements in other states. While the movement recognised the need to reach out and engage with others, it was due to DP Singh's initiative and support from PEACE that this could happen.

PEACE thus had a role in making D P Singh available for the movement at a critical time. It also produced materials directly relevant to the struggle, which helped in educating the members about various policies and update them about struggles in other areas. DP Singh also contributed by giving clarity to the perspective of the movement.

The Morcha leadership has participated in trainings by PEACE. Eleven members have gone through trainings organised in Allahabad and Udaipur. They found that the trainings contributed to their capacity for social analysis and also gave them the ability to articulate it so that they in turn can help others with the analysis. While they had an individual equation with DP Singh and recognise his contribution, engagement with others in the PEACE team is now helping them develop relationships with others. They feel that PEACE collects people together and takes them through a dialogic process without articulating its position but by helping people sharpen their perspective. However, they felt that PEACE should articulate its own position clearly.

PEACE

Popular Education and Action Centre (PEACE)
A - 124/6, 2nd Floor, Katwaria Sarai
New Delhi 110016
peaceactdelhi@gmail.com