Psychosocial Assessment of Development and Humanitarian Interventions (PADHI)

Social Policy Analysis and Research Center (SPARC)
University of Colombo
Overview of Presentation

- Introduction to the PADHI Programme
- Why ‘Psychosocial’? Background and Rationale
- Methodology
- The Conceptual Framework for Wellbeing in Sri Lanka
- Initial findings
PADHI Goals and Objectives

GOAL:
- To ensure that development and humanitarian interventions promote and protect the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals, families and communities

OBJECTIVES
- Develop conceptual framework for understanding the determinants of psychosocial well being in Sri Lanka
- Develop methodology and related tools to assess psychosocial impacts
- Curriculum development for students, academics, practitioners, administrators and policy makers
Why ‘Psychosocial’?
Psychosocial vs. Mental Health

- Conflict as a ‘**mental health emergency**’. Trauma and PTSD as a framework through which the psychological consequences of war were understood and interventions designed.

- ‘Psychosocial’ as an alternative holistic approach to understanding suffering. Understanding the individual within socio-economic and cultural contexts. **Person within the environment.**

- In Sri Lanka, the intersection between poverty and conflict has meant that ‘suffering’ is often expressed as resource deprivation.

- The breakdown of social networks and its impact on identity and status form a significant aspect of how suffering is experienced.
Why ‘Psychosocial’?:
Overview of the Psychosocial Sector in Sri Lanka

- Proliferation of interventions. Difficulty in differentiating between development and psychosocial interventions
- Psychosocial not an intervention but an approach.
- Development interventions had unintended impacts on communities and on the outcomes of programmes
- Lack of assessment methods to measure impact of interventions
- Need to address processes and ethics of interventions
- Importance of assessment for programme design and implementation
PADHI Methodology

Exploratory Phase – ‘What is Psychosocial Wellbeing?’
- Multi-disciplinary review of literature -- 8 papers
- Consultations with experts and practitioners in the psychosocial sector;
- Consultations with academics in the development sector
- Consultations with communities
Community Consultations

- Hambantota and Ampara
- 20 Focus Group Discussions
- Variables – Urban/Rural; Ethnicity; Gender; Age; (status)
- Data analyzed and mapped to conceptual framework

Group discussions focused on:

- Current sense of wellbeing – how do they experience wellbeing now?
- Aspirations – what kind of life do they aspire to have
- Enablers and barriers – resources needed to achieve aspirations
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<tr>
<th><strong>Access to material, physical, &amp; intellectual resources</strong></th>
<th><strong>Exercise participation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Experience competence and self worth</strong></th>
<th><strong>Build social connections</strong></th>
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<td><strong>basic human needs</strong> - food, shelter, and health</td>
<td>Have a <strong>voice</strong>; shape and influence decisions. People are <strong>not passive</strong> recipients or beneficiaries of development, but are <strong>active agents</strong> recognizing <strong>diversity</strong> and <strong>heterogeneity</strong> of communities</td>
<td>Ability to <strong>function</strong> and fulfill roles &amp; responsibilities. Coping in times of crisis. <strong>Self worth</strong> - self esteem and self confidence. Experience through using knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>Importance of relationships. Individual embedded embedded in relationships. Source of identity and sense of belonging. Importance for continuity of cultural practices.</td>
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<td><strong>infrastructure facilities</strong> - roads and transport services, energy, communication</td>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
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<td><strong>human aspirations</strong> education and livelihoods</td>
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<td><strong>Intellectual resources</strong> – develop intellect</td>
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**Build social connections**

- **Importance of relationships**
- **Individual embedded embedded in relationships.**
- **Source of identity and sense of belonging.**
- **Importance for continuity of cultural practices.**
Key Findings – Access to Resources

Access to resources focused on four main aspects:

- achieving economic security;
- the availability of employment opportunities and being able to engage in viable livelihood and income generation activities;
- the availability of and access to good quality education and training;
- and the availability of and access to good quality and efficient services.
Key Findings – Access to Resources

Adequate Income → Economic Security → Avoid Debt → Education → Children

Adequate Income → Savings

Economic Security → Employment/Livelihoods

Avoid Debt → Employment/Livelihoods

Children → Employment/Livelihoods

Education → Employment/Livelihoods
Experiencing Competence and Self Worth

- Development of one’s Character
- Fulfilling one’s Role and Responsibilities (Family and community)
- Having influence in one’s Community
- Meeting Challenges

Experiencing competence
Experiencing Competence and Self Worth

- Children’s Achievements
- Experiencing Self Worth
- Personal Achievements and Satisfactions
- Role Fulfillment
Exercising participation was articulated exclusively as contributing to one’s community by both men and women. Participation, it seems, is exercised mainly for two reasons:

- establishing and maintaining one’s membership in the community; and
- expanding one’s sphere of influence beyond one’s family.
Building Social Connections

- Establishing membership in the collective
- Building Social Connections
- Maintaining familial relations
Family Wellbeing Overview

Positive Wellbeing

- Economic Security – employment, ownership of house, savings
- Positive relationships – unity and harmony; communication between the generations
- Roles and responsibilities are fulfilled – instilling morals and values in children; taking care of the elderly
- Moral behaviour and achievement of family members – religious devotion; education, employment and marriage
Family Wellbeing Overview

Negative Wellbeing

- Economic insecurity – financial difficulties, debt
- Negative behaviour of members – alcoholism and domestic violence; gambling, substance abuse
- Ill-Health
- Lack of cohesion due to migration
Mediating Wellbeing - Power and Influence

- gaining access to resources needed to be achieved before power over resources. Importance of employment or viable livelihoods
- **Education** – Employment; Social status, social mobility
- **Family connections and relationships** – inheritance, overseas employment, networks outside the village.
- **Strategic alliances with state officials** – GS, health officers, police, politicians
Enablers – Systems and Institutions

- Family – primary unit through which wellbeing is enabled
  - Wellbeing of family members had a direct impact on individual wellbeing
  - Family structure and nature of relationships
- Informal groups – savings groups, neighbours
- State Institutions key to creating an enabling environment
- Religious Institutions
Enablers – Systems and Institutions (cont.)

Key systems:

**Economic System**

inability to pursue one’s livelihood was due to the lack of capital, weak market linkages, inadequate access to loans, and lack of infrastructure facilities.

Lack of infrastructure facilities like communication, electricity, water and roads affected to what degree individuals and communities could achieve wellbeing.

Lack of permanent employment and jobs that matched educational attainment
Enablers – Systems and Institutions (cont.)

**Political System** – ethnic conflict and absence of peace; corruption

- Could not engage in livelihoods
- Disruption of education
- Lack of opportunities to use knowledge and skills
- Breakdown of family and community networks due to displacement
- Physical and Mental health affected
- Injustice of the political system manifested through corruption – political patronage deciding factor in access to resources
TEAM:
Harini Amarasuriya
Asha Abeyasekera-Van Dort
Udeni Appuhamilage
Mihiri Ferdinando
Maleeka Salih
Prasadi Fernando

ADVISORS:
Dr. Gameela Samarasinghe
Prof. Ramani Jayatilleke
Prof. Siddhisena
Dr. Shermal Wijewardene

AFFILIATED FELLOWS:
Prof. Jeanne Marecek
Dr. Jon Hubbard
Dr. Alison Strang