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Winter Institute in Development Planning for Bhutan India Borderland Regions 2017 [WIDPBIBR] "The Transboundary Policy Innovation Laboratory"

3 – 18 December 2017

Programme Partners

Jindal School of International Affairs
O.P. Jindal Global University
[Project Implementation and Coordination Partner]

Action Northeast Trust (The Ant), Chirang, Assam
[Programme Mentorship and
Fieldwork Supervision Partner, Chirang]

Department of Political Science
Bodoland University Kokrajhar
Bodo Territorial Area Districts [Assam]

North East Research &
Social Work Networking (NERSWN), Kokrajhar
[Programme Mentorship and
Fieldwork Supervision Partner, Kokrajhar]

Knowledge Partner

Northeast Institute of Social Sciences and Research
[Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies], Dimapur Nagaland.

International Programme Partner

Losel Gyatsho Academy, Pelrithang, Gelenphu, Sarpang District, Bhutan.

Programme Director:

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Programme Co-Directors:

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1. Introduction

It is increasingly being recognized in the study of international relations that Borderlands represent a dynamic subsystem marked by complex and historical interlinkages between communities and local governance systems that transcend established inter-state boundaries. The concept of interstate borders (and the functional role of frontier regions) in international relations has undergone a fundamental shift, whereby the “unifying, symbolic, dividing, and exclusionary role of a border as a founding principle of a sovereign state”¹ has been contested. Rather “social scientists, historians, anthropologists, economists, and functionalists have identified the crucial role of borderland communities as organized polities within the larger institutional architecture of their state of belonging and have underlined the importance of local culture.”² According to Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (2005) the literature on borders, boundaries, frontiers, and borderland regions suggests four analytical lenses to interpret and understand borderlands: “(1) market forces and trade flows, (2) policy activities of multiple levels of governments on adjacent borders, (3) the particular political clout of borderland communities, and (4) the specific culture of borderland communities.”³ Despite the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of Borderland Studies (and the creation of academic associations both regionally and globally) there is a marked disjuncture in terms of practical and academic training being provided to students of the social sciences (such as international relations, political science and sociology) for understanding developmental challenges of the Borderlands. Most academic associations for the study of Borderlands (and select courses being offered) are not accessible to students studying in the global south; and, very few International Relations programmes in South Asia provide opportunities for students (and scholars) to engage with **contextual understandings** of transboundary issues.

In order to bridge the gap between theory and praxis, the **Transboundary Policy Innovation Laboratory** provides an **alternative pathway to studying and researching international relations for university students through a structured and systematic immersion (and sensitization) in the form of field visits to key frontier districts in the Bhutan-India border region in Assam**. The programme aims to train a new generation of scholars and policy analysts by providing opportunities to understand methods of research, community engagement and theory. Furthermore, the programme will enable participants to work on small-scale research and **transboundary policy action** projects that will lead to collaborations with stakeholders based in Assam (with a view to provide micro-level, contextually sensitive and evidence based policy formulation).

The is thus a platform which seeks to provide an interface in the study of Borderlands and consists of the following components:

- A **Credited Field Course [Equivalent of 4-Credits]** which allows for emerging young scholars of social sciences from the academic partner organizations to become sensitized to developmental and governance challenges faced by those residing in borderlands (through a structured curriculum and field visits).
- A **Mechanism** to critically **reexamine the fundamental concepts of international relations**: sovereignty, borders, formal and informal trade and cross-border cooperation.
- An initiative that allows **participants to develop original research and policy action projects** and building an interface with organizations and government officials working in the borderland regions in both Bhutan and India.
- A **Platform for Policy Innovation** that leads to the **documentation of best practices and development of new models for cross-border cooperation** through rigorous comparative analysis.

2. Objectives and Rationale

2.1. Background to Bhutan-India Relations

The history of Bhutan-India relationships has been extensively documented. It must be noted that the current relationship between Bhutan and India encompass a broad range of sectors, from formal diplomatic linkages to deepening economic relationships.⁴ In addition, a number of cross-cultural collaborations have also occurred. At the same time, it can be stated that based on the official data available, there is a greater scope in promoting innovation through knowledge generation across boundaries. For instance, the fact that Primary health care coverage currently stands at about 90 per cent of the population in Bhutan⁵ and that Child Immunization is near universal.⁶ In addition, the movement towards malaria elimination⁷ is a major achievement which holds critical lessons in the arena of health cooperation.⁸ The transmission of learning from Bhutan can be seen whereby the State Government of Madhya Pradesh became the first State in India to set up a 'Happiness Department', with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan saying it will work to ensure “happiness in the lives of the common people” on the lines of the neighboring country Bhutan.⁹

One of the key arenas of investigation is the localizing of international political practice. The framework of borderlands allows researchers to uncover local socio-cultural practices at the sub-regional level as well as newer modes of people-to-people contact which tend to get overlooked in mainstream analysis of international relations. The focus on development planning is also critical. A number of schemes for infrastructure improvement as well as socio-economic progress (especially through the mechanisms of Border Areas Development Programme-BADP) are being implemented along the Bhutan-India border by India.¹⁰ These schemes constitute an important policy space and continuous evidence generation on key sectors will contribute to providing greater convergence.

2.2. Rationale and Justification

The study of the Bhutan-India¹¹ bilateral relationship until has been dominated by studies which **primarily rely on institutional approaches and frameworks**. In other words, based on existing policy measures, analysts seek to predict **patterns of state behavior based on quantifiable interactions**.¹² However, a cursory of examination of the literature on Borderlands is indicative of the fact that interactions in the realm of border regions constitute a distinct sphere of cross-cutting relationships that transcend boundaries.

Moreover, to decipher the relationships and issues of border regions one must go beyond the formal bilateral connections, to include a vast arena of people-to-people contact. These varieties of people-to-people contact are interlinked with broader socio-historical and cultural linkages as well complex sub-national interactions that have evolved in antiquity. Furthermore, these cross-border linkages must be embedded in cooperative mechanism that have emerged between officials in the districts [and other administrative units] across the international borders. Another aspect of the border regions entails the manner in which individuals' livelihood and social mobility opportunities are shaped. These critical aspects of foreign relations are not conventionally documented in foreign policy studies.

One of the major consequences of this lacuna is an increasing gap between the theory and praxis of foreign policy, whereby measures being taken (for instance in terms of border management) might not coincide with existing socio-economic and cultural practice. Alternatively, informal cooperation across markets and the manner in which goods are traded, are also closely linked to deeper cultural practices. From the perspective of development, comparative work on key entitlements and access to services (such as health and education) would allow for identifying areas of further cooperation. Despite the existence of a variety of educational institutions dedicated to the study of international relations, there is no sustained research programme dedicated to the analysis of Bhutan-India interactions that spans both institutional and community perspectives. Furthermore, until now, there is so specific academic programme occurring which focuses consistently on the Bhutan-India borderland regions.

3. Expected Outcomes of the “Transboundary Policy Innovation Lab”

3.1. Research Outcomes [Policy Papers/Briefs]

- **Scope and Challenges for Bhutan-India Trade Cooperation: Community Insights from Gelenphu (Bhutan) and Chirang District (Assam).** The Case-Study will utilize qualitative and quantitative approaches to construct a history of the evolution of Bhutan-India trading linkages in Gelenphu, Chirang and Kokrajhar. Furthermore, the case study will use primary narratives of the trading community and consumers at weekly markets in Gelenphu and Chirang to understand the **good practices and bottlenecks in trade facilitation**.
- **A Situational Analysis of Cooperative Mechanisms in Health Access and Education Entitlements in Bhutan-India Borderlands:** The key objective of the case study will be to study and assess the situation of healthcare and education in the borderlands. The aim of the case study will be to identify **areas for transnational cooperation between adjoining border districts**. Insights on health access and education will be drawn primarily from Gelenphu (Bhutan) and Chirang (Assam). Included in the case study will be transboundary cooperative mechanisms for combatting vector borne diseases.
- **Social Entrepreneurship and Development Models in Border Areas:** The Case Study will examine organizational approaches to promoting livelihoods through social entrepreneurship and other models by civil society organizations, the district administration and Bodoland Territorial Council [BTC].
- **Comparative Approaches to Border Management:** The case study will provide an account of Bhutan-India relations, through the lens of Border Management. The policy brief will seek to draw on insights from key government stakeholders in Bhutan and India and provide consolidated recommendations for border policy and border development.
- **Understanding Foreign Policy Formulation:** The case study will examine the formulation of foreign policy challenges for Bhutan, with a focus on border districts.

3.2. Research Clusters for Participants

The programme utilizes a cluster based approach, whereby participants work on key clusters and specialize in a subject area prior to the actual research visit. Furthermore, the students will be divided into two groups (with one set of students based in Chirang and other group based in Kokrajhar).

- *Livelihoods and Labor Patterns*
- *Cross-Border Trade Flows*
- *Natural Resource Management*
- *Social Entrepreneurship*
- *Community Health*
- *Gender and Development*
- *Transnational Governance Models*
- *History and Culture*

3.3. Pedagogical Outcomes

The key pedagogical outcome for the programme would be the short-term training and exposure on the interdisciplinary field of International Relations and Global Studies. Furthermore, using Problem Based Learning Methods and creating mixed groups of students from the academic partner organizations would be a key innovation.

3.3. Outcomes [Track-III Dialogues and Cross-learning]

The Transboundary Policy Innovation Lab will lead to continuation of non-formal dialogues mechanisms between stakeholders and future scholars of international relations. The programme will aim at developing a new generation of foreign policy analysts who are familiar with the context of foreign policy making in the context of the Bhutan-India borderland. The capacity of the participants to engage with field research will also be enhanced. **The final workshop to be organized by participants at the conclusion of the programme will have participants from civil society, government officials and community leaders from both India and Bhutan.**

4. Methodology and Curriculum

The central aim of the *Transboundary Policy Innovation Lab* is to provide an alternative perspective that transcends the security oriented interpretations of the subject of international relations. Furthermore, the curriculum is designed in order to encourage critical thinking and discover new pathways of transnational cooperation and collaboration. Keeping this in view the methodology includes **four interrelated components**:

- **Readings and Coursework:** The coursework for the programme will include a key academic component whereby participants are provided theoretical frameworks to enable rigorous analysis. The thematic areas of the readings include research papers and articles on Borderlands Theory, Borderland Studies, Regional History, Migration, International Trade and Development.
- **Project Development:** Participants will develop research and policy-action projects based on data collected in the course of their stay in Chirang, Kokrajhar and Golenphu (Bhutan).
- **Institutional Visits:** Participants will interact with a number of institutions and stakeholders as part of the course. These include civil society organizations, district officials, educational institutions and business associations.
- **Field Visits:** The curriculum will also include field visits to border villages and trading centers on the Bhutan-India border.

5. Sites for Field Visit for the Programme

5.1. About Chirang District (BTAD, Assam)

Chirang district is one of the four districts of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) under the Govt. of Assam, created vide notification No. GAG (B).137/2002/Pt/117 dtd. 30/10/2003 within Assam under Clause 6 of Article 332 by the 90th Amendment Act, 2003 of the Constitution of India under the provision of the Sixth Schedule. The district has been functioning with effect from 04th June, 2004. It was carved out of the districts of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Barpeta. Kajalgaon is the District Headquarters. About 67 km length of the district falls along the Bhutan-India international border out of which 25km stretch falls under Borobazar Development Block while a 42km stretch falls under Sidli-Chirang Development Block.¹³

5.2. About Kokrajhar (BTAD, Assam)

Kokrajhar is one of the 27 districts of Assam with 2.85% of the state population and is the gateway to Northeast India. Both the rail and road network touch this district at Srirampur on the way to the rest of the region. The district is located on the north bank of the mighty Brahmaputra and stretches to the international border with the Kingdom of Bhutan. It is bounded on the north by the Himalayan Kingdom and by West Bengal on the west; the district of Dhubri in the south and in the east by Chirang district. Kokrajhar district lies roughly within 89°46' East to 90°38' East and 26°19' North to 26°54' North Latitude.

5.3. About Gelenphu, Bhutan

Gelenphu is located at about 30 kms to the east of Sarpang, the Dzongkhag Headquarters. Though, Sarpang is the administrative centre for the Dzongkhag, Gelephu, due to various factors, has prospered and developed as a market town serving the hinterland. The Sarpang-Gelephu Zone offers unique opportunities for Bhutan, as well as for the citizens within the services catchment area. The geographical setting of the town with relatively flat terrain, close proximity and well established connectivity with India, and its location as a nodal connection for the central parts of Bhutan, makes the place one of the preferred locations for future development.¹⁴

6. Programme Partner Organizations

6.1. Project Coordination & Implementation Partner: Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA)

The Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA) is India's first interdisciplinary Global Policy School and administers two innovative degree programmes: Master of Arts in Diplomacy, Law and Business (MADLB) and a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Global Affairs. Through its various research centers, publications, conferences and research projects, the JSIA has generated substantive policy impacts since 2011; and, is emerging as one of India's premier graduate schools in the field of International Affairs. JSIA alumni have undertaken a variety of careers after graduating from the MADLB programme ranging from think-tanks, corporates, NGOs, media houses and political risk analysis firms.

6.2. Programme Mentorship and Fieldwork Support Partner, Chirang District: The Action Northeast Trust (ANT, Assam)

Started in October 2000, the ANT is a voluntary organization based in Rowmari in Lower Assam. It works directly in villages for furthering the pace of development in the areas mainly falling under Chirang District of Bodoland in Lower Assam (around 180 km from Guwahati, the capital of Assam and 53kms from Gelenphu. At another level, it works to build up the voluntary sector in the Northeast Region. The ANT works directly in around 220 villages across 6 work clusters in Chirang District – bordering Bhutan - mainly with the poorest and marginalized in villages, irrespective of community, class or religious affiliations. Its activities can be divided into 6 thematic areas: Empowerment of Women and Girls; Promoting Community Health; Child and Youth Development; Remote Areas Development Programme; Peace and Justice Promotion; Building Sustainable Livelihoods – small farmers support; microcredit for micro-businesses.

6.3. Programme Mentorship and Fieldwork Support Partner, Kokrajhar District: The North East Research & Social Work Networking (NERSWN)

The North East Research & Social Work Networking (NERSWN) is a secular, not-for-profit, gender-just, non-political organization set up in 2004 and registered in 2005 under the Societies Registration Act 1860. NERSWN is a responsive voluntary institutions conceived, led and managed by a bunch of committed & dynamic young people from the region, working towards sustainable & holistic change mainly in the North East region of India. NERSWN, seeks to reach out with social endeavor to the doorsteps of people, to realize development & rights of the marginalized by building capacities of communities and strengthening knowledge technology & network.

6.4. Academic Partner: Department of Political Science, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar

Bodoland University was established by Bodoland University Act 2009, passed in the Assam legislative Assembly. The present Bodoland University is an up-gradation of the Kokrajhar campus of Guwahati University to a full-fledged state University as per the provision of the Act. The setting-up of the new university comes as a fulfillment of the dreams of the people of entire lower Assam, irrespective of caste, creed or economic status. The new university would cater to the educational need of the people, not only of the Bodoland area but also the adjoining states and nations like Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. The Department of Political Science was established in 2005 with 4 Guest Teachers and 17 students as part of Kokrajhar Campus of Guwahati University. In 2012, the Department has become a part of the Bodoland University with 7 permanent teachers and 90 students. One of the key objectives of the Department is to start Post-Graduate Course in Sociology, P.G. Diploma Course in Gender Studies, Rural Development, Peace & Conflict Studies and North-East Studies. The Department has a vision to act as the 'hub' of policy study for the whole Bodoland area besides becoming a 'centre of excellence' subsuming the area of Human Rights; Rural Development; Peace, Women and Tribal Study within a decade.

6.5. Academic Partner: North East Institute of Social Sciences and Research Dimapur, Nagaland (Academic Partner)

North East Institute of Social Sciences and Research Dimapur, Nagaland, has the privilege of being the first Master of Social Work (MSW) College, started by the Catholic Church in Nagaland and is affiliated to the Nagaland University. The Management of the College is with the Diocese of Kohima, Nagaland. The Bishop constitutes the Governing Body of the college. The Bishop of Nagaland, who is the President of the Governing Body, constitutes the managing committee of the college as per the rules and regulations of the Society and keeping with the norms laid down by the University. The NEISSR offers the first ever MSW college in Nagaland offering specialization in Peace and Conflict Transformation as well as Youth Development.

6.6. International Programme Partner [Losel Gyatsho Academy, Pelrithang, Gelenphu, Sarpang District, Bhutan].

Surrounded by the beetle nut trees, the predominant cash crop of the south, Losel Gyatsho Academy is located five kilometers away from the town, Gelephu in a fine ambience conducive to the teaching learning process. The establishment of school dates back to 2013, where the school started as Prince Namgay Wangchuk in Tama by the visionary and progressive patron of the school Mr. Tshering Dorji. It was later shifted to Gelephu, Pelrithang. The school is affiliated to the Bhutan Council for school Examinations and Assessment. Right from its inception, the school has been one of the leading schools in terms of its academic excellence, games, sports and literary activities. The school has been producing excellent academic result since inception of the school. The school gives utmost importance to academic matters as well as extracurricular activities. Since the school emphasizes on discipline and value based learning, the atmosphere is highly conducive to learning. Also we pay much attention to the all-round development of grooming the personality of the students. In addition to this, the school has made available the service of a pool of highly qualified, dedicated and well experienced teachers from India as well as the toppers from the major educational institutions of our country. The school makes sure that every child of this institution gets personal care and proper attention in the class and outside the school. At present the school has got two streams, Arts and Commerce. A good number of our students get enrolled at Sherubtse, Gedu, Taktse and other major tertiary institutions every year. The team work and devotion of the staff to the cause of Education is really worth mentioning. The keen interest of the management, principal and staff of the school to take up the school to the pinnacle of excellence in academic field has given its dividend. As of now the school has got the strength of 428 students, hailing from different parts of the country and a Teaching staff of 16, dedicated to the cause of education. In sports and games, the school has bagged many awards in Dzongkhag and national level.

¹ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly. 2010. "The State of Borders and Borderlands Studies 2009: A Historical View and a View from the Journal of Borderlands Studies", *Eurasian Border Review*. 1/1 Spring:5-6.

² Ibid.6.

³ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective," *Geopolitics* 10(4): 633.

⁴ As stated by the Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India): "During 2012, bilateral trade reached 68.3 billion. Imports from India were Rs. 41.7 billion, accounting for 79% of Bhutan's total imports. Bhutan's exports to India amounted to Rs. 26.6 billion (including electricity) and constituted 94% of its total exports. Total bilateral trade in 2012 grew by about 11% from the previous year." Available at: https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bhutan_April_2014_eng.pdf

⁵ See UNCTAD (2013), *An investment guide to Bhutan Opportunities and Conditions 2013*, p.20

⁶ See UNCTAD (2013), *An investment guide to Bhutan Opportunities and Conditions 2013*, p.21

⁷ Yangzom et al. 2012, "Malaria control in Bhutan: case study of a country embarking on elimination," *Malaria Journal* 2012, 11:9. Also see Wangdi et. al. Malaria burden and costs of intensified control in Bhutan, 2006–14: an observational study and situation analysis, *The Lancet Global Health* 4(5): 336-343. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(16\)00083-8](http://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(16)00083-8).

⁸ See further: Adhikari D. Healthcare and happiness in the Kingdom of Bhutan. *Singapore Medical Journal*. 2016;57(3):107-109. doi:10.11622/smedj.2016049.

⁹ See <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Madhya-Pradesh-becomes-first-State-to-have-%E2%80%99Happiness-Department%E2%80%99/article14491921.ece>

¹⁰ NITI Ayog, Programme Evaluation Organization, Evaluation Study on Border Areas Development (2015). Available at http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/report-BADP.pdf

¹¹ India shares a 699 Km long border with Bhutan along Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Of this 267kms lies in the state of Assam. See [http://mha.nic.in/hindi/sites/upload_files/mhahindi/files/pdf/BM_MAN-IN-BHUTAN\(E\).pdf](http://mha.nic.in/hindi/sites/upload_files/mhahindi/files/pdf/BM_MAN-IN-BHUTAN(E).pdf)

¹² See John Berthelsen, "Booming Bhutan", *Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/bhutan/2013-01-30/booming-bhutan>.

¹³ See <http://chirang.gov.in/>

¹⁴ See http://www.gcc.bt/background_history

Appendix 1: Master Schedule of the Programme

Date	Weekday	Content 8:30am-12:00pm	Content 12:00pm-6:00pm	Content 6:00pm-9:00pm	Thematic
1st December 2017	Friday	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	<i>ARRIVAL/ant Resource centre</i>
2nd December 2017	Saturday	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	<i>ARRIVAL/ant Resource centre</i>
3rd December 2017	Sunday	Arrival [for those present visit to Kajalgaon District Market	Arrival [for those present visit to Kajalgaon District Market and Chirang	Resource Centre, Selection of Book for Review, Interview	<i>ARRIVAL/ant Resource centre</i>
4th December 2017	Monday	Orientation at the ANT	Visit to DC Office and SP Office [Chirang]	Resource Centre, Selection of Book for Review, Interview	<i>Understanding Ideas, Paradigms of Development and Programme Management</i>
5th December 2017	Tuesday	Visit to Dhubri	Visit to Dhubri	Visit to Dhubri	<i>Indo-Bangladesh Border</i>
6th December 2017	Wednesday	Visit to Dhubri	Visit to Dhubri and Return to the ant	Visit to Dhubri and Return	<i>Indo-Bangladesh Border</i>
7th December 2017	Thursday	Visit to BTC and NEDAN Foundation [Building Regional Referral System for Anti-Trafficking]	Visit to NERSWN [Identity, Development and the Search for Autonomy]	Return and Resource Centre Work	<i>Understanding Development and Transboundary Programme Management</i>
8th December 2017	Friday	Visit to the ant projects [as assigned by the ant]	Visit to the ant projects [as assigned by the ant]	return to the ant	<i>Narratives of Development Work</i>
9th December 2017	Saturday	Visit to Deosri Cluster Office and Travel to Gelenphu [Drop]	Visit to Gelenphu [Identification of Key Institutions]	Travel Gelenphu [Drop]	<i>Travel Day</i>
10th December 2017	Sunday	Rest Day & Market Visit Gelenphu	Rest Day & Market Visit Gelenphu	Orientation	<i>Orientation and Rest Day</i>
11th December 2017	Monday	Visit to Sarpang and Interview with DC	Interaction with Indo-Bhutan Friendship Association	Border Visit	<i>Mapping Policy Space and Stakeholder Analysis</i>
12th December 2017	Tuesday	Narratives of International Trade and Livelihoods	Understanding Border Management [Bhutan Gate and Dadgiri SSB]	Border Visit	<i>Narratives of the Border and Border Biography Method</i>
13th December 2017	Wednesday	Narratives of International Trade and Livelihoods	Return to the ant	Travel from Gelenphu to Chirang	<i>Narratives of the Border and Border Biography</i>
14th December 2017	Thursday	Livelihood and Health Clusters [Field Visit]	Report Writing and Synthesis and Preparation for Seminar	Cluster based Fieldwork in Chirang	<i>Community Resource Mapping</i>
15th December 2017	Friday	Programme Seminar	Programme Seminar	Return to Chirang + Additional Activities	<i>Presentation of Experience and Interaction</i>
16th December 2017	Saturday	Follow Up Fieldwork, Report Writing, Departures	Follow Up Fieldwork, Report Writing, Departures	Follow Up Fieldwork, Report Writing, Departures	<i>Follow Up Fieldwork, Report Writing, Departures</i>
17th December 2017	Sunday	Report Writing and Departures	Departures	Departures	<i>Departures</i>
18th December 2017	Monday	Report Writing and Departures	Departures	Departures	<i>Departures</i>

Appendix 2: Programme Coordination and Selection Committee

Dr. Samrat Sinha (Associate Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs) [Project Director]: Dr. Samrat Sinha is currently Associate Professor and Assistant Dean (Academic Affairs) at JSIA. Some of the studies conducted by Dr. Samrat Sinha include: Commissioned study on District Level Community Based Peacebuilding Mechanisms in Northeastern India (Assam and Nagaland: Ongoing); Assam Ethnic Violence and Needs Assessment of IDP camps in Bodo-Adivasi violence 2014-2015; Nutrition Survey and Field Assessment in the aftermath of the Bodo-Muslim Ethnic Violence in Assam in IDP camps (2012-onwards); Commissioned field study on Child Welfare in Maoist Conflict Affected districts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand (2015); Study on Insurgency Dynamics in Manipur and development on micro-level event database on Manipur Insurgency (2010 onwards). Post-Disaster Studies include: Jammu and Kashmir Flood Impact Evaluation Study 2015; Sikkim Earthquake, 2011; Cyclone Aila, Sunderbans Region of West Bengal, 2009; Andhra Floods 2009; Bihar Kosi Floods 2008. Professor Samrat Sinha taught at the Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management (JTCDM), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)-Mumbai between 2008 and 2012. His broad areas of work are on peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance and borderland studies. Dr. Samrat Sinha has a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations (University of Delaware, USA), an MA in Political Science and International Relations (University of Delaware, USA), MA in International Politics (JNU) and a BA(Honors) History (University of Delhi).

Mr. Raju Narzary (Executive Director, NERSWN): Mr. Raju Narzary is a social activist working to promote equitable development in the villages of Bodoland. Raju's first introduction to activism was with the student movement in Assam. He went on to obtain a Masters' Degree in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences before returning to work in Assam. He currently works to promote the right of communities in Bodoland to equitable health. He promotes the livelihood of women vendors and conducts actionable research for development. He is also a member of the People's Right Forum, Assam, National Campaign for Right to Food, the Lower Assam NGO Forum and the Medico Friend Circle.

Dr. Sunil Kaul (Executive Director and Founding Trustee-The ANT): Dr. Sunil Kaul is a founding member of the Action Northeast Trust (the ant), a voluntary development organization working to improve quality of life in northeastern India. The ant acts at two levels: working with communities to ensure basic services such as health care and local employment opportunities, and sharing knowledge and experiences with a variety of NGOs across the region through training workshops and printed publications. Dr. Sunil Kaul guides the ANT's programs to strengthen society by devising strategies that will add value to development practices and promote peace. He has also trained nongovernmental groups in community health and formulating health strategies in different parts of India. He has an MSc in Public Health (in Developing Countries) from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, is an Eisenhower Fellow, and a faculty member of Institute of Development Action (IDeA). He is also Financial Advisor of Aagor Daagra Afad, Trustee at Lowcost Standard Therapeutics, consultant to Community Health Initiative of Meghalaya, Rural Development Society and Advisor (Assam) to the Commissioners for Right to Food.

Ms. Jennifer Liang (Founding Trustee-The ANT): Jennifer Liang completed her Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and has been working in the area of health and women's issues. She is the Managing Trustee and a Founding Trustee of the Action Northeast Trust (ANT). She is also a trustee of Asha Darshan, Adviser at the Institute for Culture and Rural Development (I-CARD) and is a trainer at Institute of Development Action (IDeA). She is the former Northeast representative of Ashoka Innovators for the Public. She was awarded the United Kingdom's Chevening Gurukul Scholarship in 2013 and studied globalization and leadership at the London School of Economics. Her main areas of interest are gender equality, the development and rights of children, peace building and organizing capacity through training. She is committed to getting women into top leadership roles and to developing women leaders based on feminist principles.

Professor Upasana Mahanta (Associate Professor and Assistant Dean, Student Initiatives, JGLS): Dr. Upasana Mahanta is an Assistant Professor and Executive Director in the Centre for Women, Law and Social Change, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University. Prior to joining Jindal Global University, she was working as an Assistant Professor in Centre for Women's Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Dr. Mahanta has completed her Ph.D. from Centre for Canadian, US and Latin American Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was also a Shastri Doctoral Fellow in the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Mahanta's research interests include role of women in emergent political institutions; gendered understanding of conflict; women organizing and resisting in insecure contexts; and examining development through a gendered lens.

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