Youth**Action**Net®

CASE STUDY SERIES

People for Parity:

WORKING TOWARDS GENDER

PEACE IN INDIA

Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfnet.org

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

https://ghd.georgetown.edu

INTRODUCTION

Meet Aditya Gupta, co-founder of People for Parity

Growing up in a middle-class family and graduating from India's prestigious Indian Institute for Technology in New Delhi, Aditya Gupta did not expect to become a social entrepreneur fighting for gender equality. Aditya lived in a comfortable home where gender norms were accepted without question, and he had no notion of a more troubling mindset that brewed under the surface. He followed the path of success defined by his socio-economic status and worked at a management consulting firm after graduation. His life changed, however, when he returned home to find escalating tensions between his parents. Serving as mediator, he soon discovered that the source of the fissure was deeply ingrained beliefs and social expectations that his parents held about their respective gender roles. Disillusioned and distraught with this realization, and unable to find meaning in his work as a consultant, Aditya quit his job and entered the world of development. Working for Technoserve in Nairobi, Kenya, he was drawn to the issue of gender equality in the poor rural class.

Then in 2012, a young female student in New Delhi was beaten, gang raped, and tortured on her way home with a friend. The woman, dubbed Nirbhaya (meaning "fearless"), died of her injuries two weeks later. The incident sent shockwaves through the city and prompted protests across India demanding greater awareness and action surrounding women's security and sexual assault. For Aditya, this incident was a turning point. When he returned to India, he immediately began gathering friends and fellow classmates to analyze the problem of gender discrimination. Today, he notes that many of his initial ideas to curb gender-based violence and discrimination simply addressed the symptoms of a deeper problem. With the help of mentors, Aditya honed his thinking and founded People for Parity (PfP) in 2013 to directly engage with social beliefs that normalize gender discrimination and violence.

From the outset, a cadre of dedicated volunteers supported Aditya. One of these volunteers was Arushi Mittal. Like Aditya, she graduated from IIT Delhi. A strong desire to help people and better understand social issues motivated her to enter the social sector immediately after college. Passionate about gender equality, Arushi began volunteering for PfP at its founding, and soon became an indispensable part of the team. In 2015, Arushi joined the organization full time as co-founder.

People for Parity is challenging norms and building a culture of Gender Peace in India.

The Problem

In 1993, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined gender-based violence (GBV) as "Any act … that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of

liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."[1] A study conducted in 2012 found that 92% of women in New Delhi have experienced some form of violence in public spaces, and 88% of women have experienced verbal sexual harassment, such as unwelcome comments, obscene gestures, leering, or whistling.[2]

GBV threatens the health, dignity, and security of all people, and is perpetuated by a culture of silent acceptance.[3] In 2012, the Thompson Reuters Foundation ranked India last in a poll on the best and worst countries to be a woman,[4] falling behind even Saudi Arabia, where women's civil and political freedoms are highly restricted. India's legal system openly supports women's equality by outlawing discriminatory behavior and practices such as infanticide, child marriage, and domestic violence. However, these practices are still common. This trend indicates a deeper, broader cultural acceptance of violent behavior towards women rooted in traditional notions of gender roles. The World Values Survey, conducted between 2010 and 2014 by an international network of researchers based in Stockholm, revealed that two-thirds of Indian women feel that spousal abuse can be justified.[5]

Several organizations focus on bringing about gender equality through economic development, believing that improvements in socio-economic status will lower the incidence of violence and discrimination over time. However, recent studies suggest the value of a more nuanced approach to achieving gender equality. The "Mind, Society and Behavior" World Development Report for 2015 stresses that people's actions are strongly influenced by perceived identities, networks, and social groupings, and recommends that development programs adopt a deeper understanding of human behavior to effect positive change.[6]

The Solution

Aditya and the PfP team have been surprised by how widely prevalent GBV is in the daily lives of the people they have encountered. Even more troubling, however, was their discovery of a deeply-ingrained mindset of gender discrimination. The PfP approach embodies the idea that individual and societal belief systems perpetuate behaviors that normalize GBV. Concepts of gender roles, power differentials, and so-called acceptable practices are not isolated to one socioeconomic class, caste, or gender. They are fostered from a young age and manifest in every facet of life.

PfP seeks to create a safer, more peaceful, and more equal society for people of all genders—an ideal state they call Gender Peace. Recognizing the complexity of GBV, PfP created three work streams, or interventions, to work towards this goal. Each work stream focuses on young people between the ages of 18 and 30. PfP views this age bracket as a formative period when individuals are making the most critical decisions of their lives, including dating and becoming romantically involved. Given India's recent youth bulge, PfP believes that targeting this demographic is increasingly important to bring about Gender Peace.

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[1] http://www.hhri.org/thematic/gender_based_violence.html
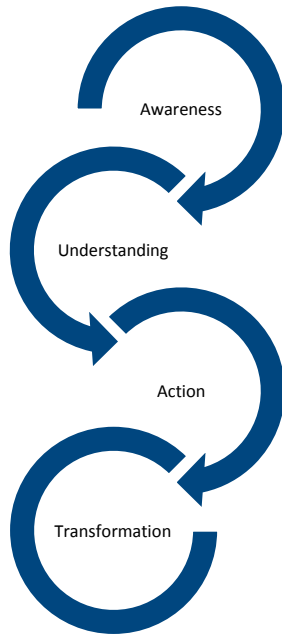[2] http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures
[3] http://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence
[4] https://www.forbes.com/sites/worldviews/2012/06/13/us-ranks-6-in-best-worst-g20-countries-for-women/#6286d2047397
[5] http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp
[6] http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/06/15/wdr2015-mind-society-and-behavior

Figure 1: PfP's Process for instilling the values of Gender Peace

Awareness

Understanding

Action

Transformation

PfP's work streams are focused on ensuring that individuals identify the need for change within themselves and engage in a holistic process of awareness, understanding, and action to achieve transformation. The interventions instill an awareness of gender by educating trainees on definitional challenges, urging them to face the often-taboo subject of sexuality and encouraging them to identify discriminatory practices within their everyday lives. Then, participants engage in dialogue to share experiences and better understand instances of discrimination and violence. This process includes gaining a better sense of an individual's own belief systems and how those beliefs impact the way he or she engages with gender. PfP believes that fostering understanding is central to overcoming deeply ingrained social norms that influence people's realities. Participants then explore what action for change would look like and support each other in designing community projects on gender issues that affect their lives. Ultimately, PfP aims to bring about transformation, where all participants are more aware of gender equality as a set of core values, better equipped to engage in tough conversations, and empowered to effect change in their communities.

Operational Model

PfP is a registered non-profit in New Delhi. Led by Aditya Gupta and Arushi Mittal, the team consists of three full-time staff, four part-time staff, and volunteers. Five mentors and advisors contribute valuable expertise on youth development, experiential journey design, content development, and social enterprise management.

PfP's current strategy involves three interventions, or work streams. The first work stream is a six-month intensive fellowship called Pratiti. This experiential journey creates a space for frank conversation about and engagement with sensitive topics. The program is aimed at transforming youth into empathetic leaders who possess a peaceful value system and can recognize and tackle gender issues in their daily lives. The second work stream consists of capacity-building workshops for development organizations and government institutions. These workshops equip members with the tools and training necessary to better address discriminatory gender norms in the workplace and in their communities. Workshops are often conducted in partnership with other established NGOs and community organizations. The third work stream, called Storytelling for Change, is still being developed. As part of this initiative, PfP will design and distribute content that illustrates the values of Gender Peace. Through short films and educational toolkits, PfP will tell stories of men and women who challenge the typical gender roles expected in Indian society. A story may show a positive image of a sensitive, vulnerable man, or a fun and loving couple in a gender-peaceful relationship. To provide different kinds of role models exemplifying who Gender Peace, PfP will distribute this content in schools and through its institutional network.

The organization has relied primarily on grants from partners such as India Youth Fund, Pravah, and the Tata Trust. However, as part of the educational workshop work stream, development organizations and government institutions such as the Delhi police force, the Telangana police force, the Aga Khan Foundation, and VSO India Trust hire PfP to train employees on gender-related issues. PfP hopes to move in the direction of a revenue-based model.

Figure 2: PfP's three work streams and strategy

Capacity-Building Workshops

Pratiti Fellowship

Storytelling for Change

A generation of changemakers that embodies the values of Gender Peace

Over the years, Adity and Arushi have refined PfP's model through several iterations of workshop curricula and methodologies for change. For example, PfP developed a free personal safety mobile application named Pukar. Developed in partnership with local police, the app and web platform allowed users to send messages with their location to police and five other contacts, and police could track a distressed user's location. PfP promoted the app through NGO, political, civil society, and police conferences between 2013 and 2015. However, PfP realized that Pukar addressed the symptoms of GBV rather than the cause. By engaging youth and focusing on the mindset that leads to GBV, the organization has since concluded work on Pukar and redirected efforts to the three work streams.

PfP's commitment to refining the operation model has been an asset. Both the Pratiti Fellowship and the workshop activity stream emerged from the team's dedication to increasing capacity-building. Going forward, PfP plans to expand Pratiti by moving into new localities. While most of the work has centered around Delhi and surrounding communities, the Pratiti fellowship has recently expanded south, operating in Jaipur and Bhopal. PfP also plans to expand workshops by attracting more institutional clients, a core component in the move towards a more revenue-based model. Lastly, PfP will continue building content for Storytelling for Change. Once quality content is developed, the organization hopes to assemble toolkits for schools and companies to expand the reach of the Gender Peace narrative.
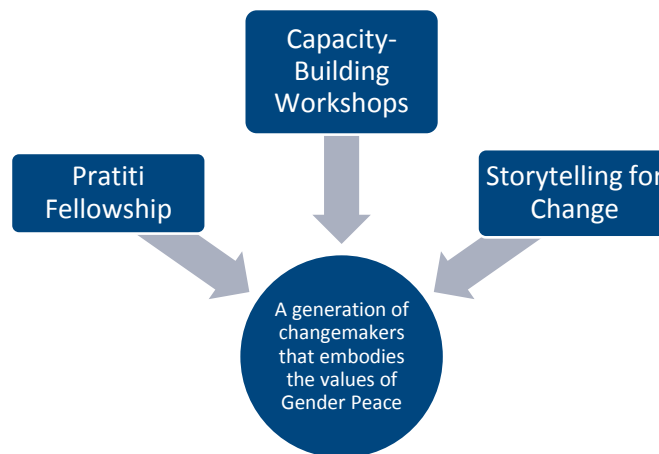
IMPACT
*Transformed **410** youth into change makers for gender peace*
*Engaged **24** partner institutions*
*Reached a total of **8,841** youth over three years*

KEY ASSETS AND SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

PfP's strengths lie in the dedicated and passionate leadership, inclusive definition of gender, and focus on the root causes of gender-based violence. These assets have the potential to set the organization apart from competitors in this space.

> *We don't simply seek to put a stop to violence. Violence is not an incident, it's a culture. We strive to build what needs to exist in its place: a culture of gender peace.*
>
> *Aditya Gupta, co-founder of People for Parity*

Dedicated and Passionate Leadership

Aditya and Arushi are empathetic young leaders who embody the values that they are promoting. They are age-peers with their beneficiaries and role models that can inspire the move towards Gender Peace.

A leader sets the internal ethos of an organization and provides a face for external clients. Aditya brings a level of passion and self-awareness about the issues facing his city and country, and translates that into PfP's work. While GBV is a complex issue, Aditya manages to articulate the key components of the problem as well as the change needed to truly achieve a more peaceful society. His manner and articulation should not be overlooked as an asset, especially given the degree to which PfP's work relies on partnerships with donors and beneficiaries.

Likewise, co-founder Arushi Mittal leads by example. Growing up, she searched for strong female role models that defied typical gender roles but found that, beyond a policewoman character on TV and astronaut Kalpana Chawla, they were in short supply in the media. Her first-hand experience of gender norms, coupled with her passion for change, fuels PfP's cause. She approaches her work with humility, wants to grow and learn along with the participants, and sees the PfP journey as not only a professional endeavor but also a spiritual one. In this way, Arushi is an indispensable team leader and facilitator.

PfP's growth as an organization in just the last four years demonstrates the leadership's commitment to learning, adapting, and evolving. The organization has transformed over time on all levels, from the overall service model, to the work streams, to the workshop curriculum and content offerings. This humility, in the face of a challenging issue, is essential for success.

Inclusion of All Genders in Achieving Gender Peace

A competitive analysis of gender-based programs in India reveals that PfP is truly unique in recognizing all genders are a part of the problem of gender discrimination as well as the solution. Today, the conversation around gender is limited to topics of women's health, safety, political participation, and education. Programs in this area generally focus on women's rights and empowerment, and only recently have initiatives involved boys and men. PfP's innovative concept of Gender Peace and the approach to achieving this ideal state is a significant asset.

PfP truly strives towards a holistic solution for GBV involving healing and empathy from those who identify as male, female, transgender, and genderqueer. Far from restricting conversations about gender to simply the rights of women, PfP stresses that the problem of GBV affects all genders. Furthermore, the belief systems that lead to GBV are held by all genders, and the inclusion of all genders in the solution is integral for creating a more peaceful society.

Focus on the Root Cause of Gender-Based Violence

Many organizations that tackle GBV focus on the downstream effects of violence. For example, organizations may aim to put a stop to violence through heightened security measures or use advocacy to effect change at the policy level. These types of initiatives are undoubtedly necessary and valuable, but focus on the effect of GBV, not the cause. PfP focuses on the mindset that accepts discriminatory norms and practices in every-day life. This goal, to tackle belief systems through a process of understanding, challenging, and ultimately transforming, evolved from Aditya and his partners' experiences living, observing, and listening to people of all walks of life in their city and experiencing the belief systems first-hand. Through the organization's interventions, the team has seen people of all genders sit together, share experiences, and challenge the assumptions they held towards one another. PfP has witnessed workshop participants transform the way they perceive gender relations, and the organization provides a uniquely safe and open space for connection, introspection, and discovery to take place.

> *I used to think that I had never disrespected or misbehaved with anyone on the basis of class, caste, or gender. But the three-day Pratiti workshop made me realize how mistaken I was. I became aware of the many occasions on which I had myself committed gender-based discrimination or disrespected someone. However, I was also happy to understand what gender really means and how not to repeat such actions in the future.*
>
> *Pratiti Fellow*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

Develop Clear and Consistent Marketing Materials

PfP relies heavily on grants, partnerships, and sponsorship, and future growth depends on the ability to articulate market offerings in a clear and compelling way. This is especially true as the organization embarks on expanding the capacity-building workshop work stream and moving towards a revenue-based model.

To better reflect PfP's vision and mission, the organization must consistently present the theory of change, work streams, and activities across marketing materials. Currently, PfP's website, annual reports, one-page fact sheet, and organization profile each structure the work streams in a slightly different manner. For example, the one-page fact sheet describes three work streams as Social Actors, Development Projects, and Survivors of GBV. The annual report presents these activities differently, using Pratiti instead of Social Actors, Gender Consulting instead of Development Projects, and Partner Projects for collaborations with other community organizations. To readers,

inconsistencies in communications materials could suggest a lack of clarity in the organization's purpose and mission.

PfP should clearly organize and define the work streams based on objective and beneficiary. Ensuring that each work stream is clearly delineated by objective, target beneficiary, and linked to PfP's overall mission will allow the organization to better present its work in a compelling way to potential donors and clients.

Establish Clear Evaluation Metrics

Given that PfP's work focuses on cultural and mindset changes, measuring the reduction in instances of GBV is difficult. The organization has relied on qualitative surveys, anecdotal evidence, and observations to measure success. However, PfP should invest time and resources in developing quantifiable metrics to measure program effectiveness. An impact evaluation framework would ensure that the organization has concrete data to present to donors and clients, as well as an internal tool to better identify areas for improvement.

As the organization attempts to better structure a theory of change that reflects the main work streams, it should clearly define how success is measured within each activity. After setting concrete and measurable goals for each activity, PfP should identify impact indicators that can assist in tracking progress towards those goals. For example, as much of PfP's work focuses on long-term mindset and behavioral changes, the organization may consider developing an evaluation program that follows beneficiaries for an extended period. This model could increase the length of observation, administering follow-up surveys one or two years after workshop participation.

While this recommendation relies heavily on the availability of time and funding, the long-term benefits of setting clear and measurable goals will be invaluable.

CONCLUSION

People for Parity is embarking on a new phase of work that is more focused on scaling and amplifying impact. Driven by passionate and dedicated leadership and with a unique approach to addressing GBV, People for Parity has significant potential to scale to new localities, attract additional clients, and expand towards a revenue-based model. However, in order to achieve this goal, PfP must invest in developing consistent marketing and messaging and a robust evaluation framework. These tools will enable the organization to translate the internal mission-driven ethos into an exciting investment opportunity for external clients.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PEOPLE FOR PARITY

- People for Parity Website
- People for Parity Facebook Page
- Twitter: @PeopleForParity
- Blog: Reflections from PfP Staff
- Impact: Stories of Transformation
- Email: contact@peopleforparity.org
- Aditya Gupta's YouthActionNet Profile: http://www.youthactionnet.org/fellows/1401/
- YouthActionNet Video – Preventing Gender-Based Violence in India:
  http://www.youthactionnet.org/videos/preventing-gender-based-violence-india
- YouthActionNet Blog – The Role of Youth in Empowering Trans Communities:
  http://www.youthactionnet.org/blog/nicole-sterling-youthactionnet-intern-studies-role-youth-empowering-trans-communities-worldwide
- IYF Blog – He's a Computer Engineer from India Fighting Gender-Based Violence:
  http://www.iyfnet.org/blog/hes-computer-engineer-india-fighting-gender-based-violence

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