On a visit to (British) Prime Minister Tony Blair, on 18 February 2003, when he tried to convince us that the war on Iraq was meant to hasten the coming of peace to the Middle East and, especially, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, I turned to him and said: “Mr Prime Minister, the shortest way to Baghdad goes through Jerusalem. For once peace comes to Jerusalem; peace comes to the whole world.”

So said The Rt. Rev. Riah Abu El-Assal, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem & the Middle East (pictured right), at The University of York’s Heslington Lecture on 20 October.

The Heslington Lectures have been an annual event at the University since 1965, and their theme is ‘religion and the modern world’. The PRDU Open Day, held annually each October (to mark United Nations Day), this year linked with the Lecture because of the topicality of the speaker and his subject.

Hundreds of people gathered in the University’s Central Hall to hear the Bishop talk about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the prospects for peace in the Middle East. His is a unique view – he is an Arab, an Israeli citizen, and a Christian who is known for his active participation in the struggle for justice and peace for all peoples, and for encouraging dialogue between different faith communities.

In his call for world action he said: “Much can be said about the past. What matters now is what is happening these days, and what the prospects for a peaceful settlement are. The situation is worse than Apartheid South Africa. Death awaits at every corner. And yet I have been one of the very first people to come to the PRDU as a mid-career professional seeking time to reflect and, possibly, a change of direction. In May 1993 I was encouraged by my father to attend a PRDU ‘Disaster Intervention’ workshop. One year later, now an unemployed Graphic Designer, I attended the ‘Rebuilding Sarajevo’ workshop. After that, Sultan invited me back to York, primarily to design and produce a newsletter for the Unit – a project he had been wanting to get off the ground for some time.

Those were exciting times for all of us. I can still remember coming up with the title, revival, on my way to work one morning – we had been thinking of War-Torn, but that seemed too negative – and the thrill when the first issue came off the press.

My career never did change direction, but coming to York was the best move I ever made, and I can’t thank Sultan and Charles Cockburn enough for that. I am very proud to have been so involved with revival from its infancy, and to have watched the PRDU and its newsletter grow and mature over the last 10 years. I hope revival will still be around in 2014; I hope I will still be the Editor. One thing I can be sure of is that the PRDU will still be going strong – and revival has played a major part in its development.

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Grazi M Ward
Sultan Barakat writes: This edition marks the 10th anniversary of 
**revival**, and so gives us an opportunity to reflect on the role it has played, and should continue to play, in the life of the PRDU. In my mind it was the publication of the first issue of **revival** in July 1994 that marked the real establishment of the Unit, and it has charted the Unit’s progress and supported its development ever since. It has been a successful vehicle to keep in touch with the PRDU’s many supporters around the world, and serves as an aide-mémoire of our achievements.

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**Revival** has played a crucial role in the PRDU’s development, so this is an appropriate moment to reflect on how the PRDU started and where it is going.

The idea for the Unit first germinated in 1988, during my doctoral studies. With the support of Charles Cockburn, my then supervisor at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, we started offering a series of workshops to explore the concept of post-war reconstruction – as unclear in that period of change as the wider political scene in the aftermath of the Cold War. It emerged that, despite the immediacy of human need in conflict situations, it is necessary to maintain a strategic view prioritising needs within an overall framework for long-term development. It was also clear that: every situation is different and has to be treated with sensitivity – there are no templates for reconstruction; no one profession holds the key to reconstruction – multi-disciplinary cooperation is essential because reconstruction involves every aspect of society; war-torn societies can usually not recover without outside help, but unless they lead the process it will not be sustainable. It was on the basis of this understanding that the PRDU was created at The University of York in 1993.

From these beginnings the PRDU has expanded in an astonishing way: from a ‘new’ idea to a mainstream academic discipline, merging with the Department of Politics in 2000; from a ‘one-man (or one student) band’ to the present team of eight full-time academics, three research fellows and two part-time administrators; from one supervised MA dissertation to one hundred and twenty-two students on the Post-war Recovery MA and a further 26 on this year’s 22 students on the Post-war Recovery Studies, and many have found their way into employment around the world. They keep us in touch with developments in critical post-war contexts, and many have found opportunities for the PRDU to take on commissioned research, which keeps us at the forefront of practice on which we can then reflect. This has resulted in a growing volume of academic writing, both individual publications by full

Meanwhile the outreach of the PRDU has been extended by the 100 plus graduates working around the world. They keep us in touch with many moving from one crisis area to another around the world, has been no mean feat, for which we have to thank our administrators Anna O’Connell and Sally Carter. The posting of **revival** on the PRDU website is yet another stage in our development and makes it available to an even wider audience, including those working in areas where traditional post does not reach.

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From 1997 it has also been the main vehicle for publicising our MA in Post-war Recovery Studies, and keeping in contact with the growing number of graduates. Profiling of the MA students in **revival** has frequently helped to match them to jobs and placements and facilitated our study trips by giving our hosts confidence in the calibre of our students. This proud achievement is largely attributable to the consistency, relevance and quality of **revival**’s content and presentation, and for that we owe a great debt to Gavin Ward, general Editor as well as production manager for all of these 10 years.

As the PRDU has grown so has **revival**’s readership. Maintaining a database of some 3,500 subscribers, many moving from one crisis area to another around the world, has been no mean feat, for which we have to thank our administrators Anna O’Connell and Sally Carter. The posting of **revival** on the PRDU website is yet another stage in our development and makes it available to an even wider audience, including those working in areas where traditional post does not reach.

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The MA course is now in the capable hands of two permanent members of staff, Dr Alp Özerdem and Dr Roger Mac Ginty, whose professional skills and research backgrounds ideally complement each other. The teaching model, which we developed as a response to the complexity of post-war contexts, combines practice with academia and is targeted mainly at mid-career professionals from many professional and national backgrounds. It has also proved to be a model of ‘evidence based learning’ which is being more widely adopted.

The other great strength of the MA continues to be its guest lecturers, many of whom (including Gianni Rufini, Fabrizio Pagani, William Lume, Ian Davis and Ray MacGrath) have regularly delivered components of the course and, thus, made a significant contribution to its development.

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Celebrating 10 Years of revival

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PAGE 2 ISSUE 20 • OCTOBER 2004 revival
Peace in Jerusalem: Bishop Calls for Action

continued from front page

continue to believe that the darkest of moments in any night are those that precede the dawn.

What is required now is not another statement, not even another UN Resolution. What is required is action.

When the world joined hands against the shameful Apartheid system in South Africa, things began happening and it is gone. It is time for a joint and collective action which will ultimately not only serve the Palestinians, but will guarantee Israel its security and the recognition of its neighbouring countries.

The Bishop began the evening by greeting his audience with Solomon and conveying the same from all those – Palestinian and Israeli – who are suffering in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including “the faithful remnant of the Arab Palestinian Christians, among them our own Anglicans spread through the Diocese of Jerusalem which cover Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. (Not the easiest of Anglican Dioceses in the world.)”

Throughout his talk the Bishop’s dry humour was evident.

“I want also to take this opportunity”, he said early on, “to invite you to come and see for yourselves what has been happening in the Land of the Holy One, which many refer to as ‘The Holy Land’. Yes, a land with many holes indeed these days.”

At other times the sadness and enormity of what he was saying seemed to visibly affect him, despite the fact that he has spent much of his life campaigning around the world.

Causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict

According to the Bishop, causes of the conflict and the on-going hostilities are many and varied. He cited “serious mistakes over the last century that caused much of the pain and suffering today” and he gave a brief, chronological summary of these. “Religious myths that have not been dispelled” were also blamed. “There is a serious disregard to UN Resolutions”, he continued. “Had those been implemented, many lives would have been spared.” He feels that the UN has become hostage to the American Administration, and that oil has proved to be a curse for Arab countries.

The need for a peaceful settlement

“I am asked to address an issue that continues to address itself, not only to us Palestinians, but to the world at large. No wonder many believe that only when peace comes to Jerusalem, to Palestine, peace comes to the whole world.”

Time and again, throughout his talk, the Bishop spoke of ‘peace’ and ‘justice’, and called for both sides to confront each other with the ‘truth’. “There can be no peace without justice”, he declared, “and there can be no justice without truth”.

He said that sometimes the truth will hurt, that for some it won’t be what they want to hear, and he acknowledged that there may be people in the audience listening to his talk who would be angered by what he had to say.

He blamed “the illegal Israel occupation” as “the root cause of all of this conflict”, saying, “there can be no peace for Israel except in the peace and safety of the Palestinian people and their right to self determination, and their legitimate and sacred right to an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian land, side by side with Israel.”

He made it clear that these were political views and not religious ones: “What Israel says about the rise of anti-Semitism, is in fact anti-Israel and anti the policy of the Israeli government.”

The Bishop emphasised the fact that such a peace has to being lasting and built on agreement from both sides. “Not even the ‘Separation Wall’ will guarantee the Israelis the security they aspire to. I keep saying to them, whenever and wherever we meet, that the best secured borders are with reconciled neighbours.”

He believes that there is much in common between the two sides, and quoted Desmond Tutu who, when asked how he viewed the co-existence between Arabs and Jews, said: ‘You remind me of scrambled eggs that no one can unscramble’. Unfortunately, at the moment, one common attribute is the readiness to die for Israel or for Palestine. The need now, says Bishop El-Assal, “is to make both parties realise that it is more important to live than to die. Why not LIVE for Israel and for Palestine?”

Hope for a new dawn

Although he sees the situation today as “dim and quite depressing”, Bishop El-Assal also sees some signs of hope, based on events which have taken place over the last 10 years or so.

He said The Oslo Accords (1993) “marked the beginning of a new stage. Both parties mutually recognised each other. Such a recognition cannot be reversed.” And the following year, different meetings held in Camp David, Sharm-El-Sheikh and Tab and the Bishop finds hope in, although he says it “lacks the bottom line. It speaks of land swaps when the UN Resolution and the Arab countries expect Israel to withdraw to the 4th June 1967 lines”.

The Sheriff of York and the Sheriff’s Lady flank (from left to right) The Rt. Rev. Riah Abu El-Assal (Bishop of Jerusalem), Dr Sultan Barakat (PRDU Director), and the Rev. Graham Jones (Methodist Chaplain at The University of York).
Dr Sultan Barakat and Dr Richard Jones of the PRDU, together with Dr William Lume of the Centre for Inter African Relations, have completed a three-month stakeholder mapping and programme development consultancy for the Delegation of the EU in Uganda and the Ugandan Ministry of Finance. The objective of the consultancy was to develop an EU capacity building programme for responding to conflict and disasters in the north of Uganda.

Although Uganda is often hailed by the international community as an example of development progress, a significant part of the country is beset by conflict. In the north (Acholi, Lango, Pader and Gulu) the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) rebellion has claimed thousands of lives since its formation 17 years ago. The LRA commits serious human rights abuses against civilians in villages and remote areas. A common strategy is to abduct children and brutalise them into fighting. There has been extensive displacement and economic migration.

The other main area of conflict is in the drought-prone north eastern district of Karamoja – populated by a range of ethnic groups collectively known as the Karimojong who have traditionally been cattle keepers – and is essentially based on cattle raiding activities. The proliferation of small arms, particularly the AK47, has increased the number of deaths associated with each raid. The ongoing cycle of raiding and revenge has displaced over 10,000 people.

PRDU’s mission began in January 2004, undertaking a stakeholder mapping exercise for donors, local and international NGOs, government departments and civil society organisations in order to carry out an assessment of previous and existing development/conflict prevention programmes. From this the constraints, gaps, lessons learned and priority areas for future intervention in the conflict regions could be summarised.

In the short term the main priority area was for the capacity building of the Department for Disaster Management at the Office of the Prime Minister. The PRDU, together with key stakeholders, designed a programme to enable the Department to:

- respond to the conflict in the north of Uganda;
- coordinate other ministries so that key sector strategies are reflective of regional needs; and
- establish a programme for training, livelihood intervention, project implementation and needs assessment.

The overall objective is to improve the conflict response mechanism of both the Government and other non-state actors to deal with conflict and disasters. By this means the Government will be empowered to:

1) provide a framework of guidance and assistance and, where necessary, to address conflict and its consequences;
2) coordinate actions;
3) prevent future conflict from arising;
4) strengthen coping mechanisms and livelihoods of communities living in conflict areas and, finally;
5) promote positive socio-economic development for the whole of Uganda.

The mission was funded by the EU and the programme implemented in accordance with the 9th European Development Fund.

News in Brief

**New Deputy Director**

Professor Mark Evans has been appointed as Deputy Director of the PRDU. He will be working closely with Dr Sultan Barakat to take the Unit forward into its next phase of development.

Since October 2000, Mark has worked with Sultan on several training and consultancy missions in Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Afghanistan.

**Welcome Sally**

Sally Carter joins the PRDU as part-time Administrative Assistant. Sally, who previously worked for six years in the undergraduate office at The University of York, will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies. If you have any queries regarding the course, please contact her on sc23@york.ac.uk.

**Website Discussions?**

With the growing number of PRDU alumni based around the globe, working for a variety of local and international NGO and organisations, we thought that an Alumni discussion page on our website would offer a forum for open discussion between practitioners and enable them to air their views or raise questions.

Watch our website – www.york.ac.uk/depts/poli/prdu – for further details. We are very interested in receiving your feedback on this idea, so please write to Dr Roger Mac Ginty on rm17@york.ac.uk if you would like to make any comments or suggestions.

**MA in Post-war Recovery**

The success of the MA in Post-war Recovery continues to build. This year, we have received a record number of applications for the course. Applicants have come from a wide variety of backgrounds, many with excellent field and academic skills.

This year we have pleasure in welcoming 22 new students – see pages 9–11 for further details.

To see how studying at the PRDU, as part of our growing worldwide alumni, can provide an excellent stepping stone in your career, read the articles on pages 12–15.
**Miscellaneous News**

**Reflections on Reconstruction in Iraq**

Following the success of *Reconstructing War-Torn Societies: Afghanistan* (vol.23, No.5, 2002), Third World Quarterly have commissioned a Special Edition on Iraq. The intention is to produce a multi-disciplinary volume of academic and professional substance in order to provide guidance and insight on the reconstruction of Iraq as it passes through the difficult transition from ‘war to peace’. It will be wide ranging, tackling the anticipated complexities associated with the various aspects of rebuilding Iraq, from the geo-political to the micro, social and economic.

Dr Sultan Barakat will edit this issue and many leading authorities in the field have agreed to contribute, including:

- Dr Nadje Al-Ali, Lecturer, Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK; HRH Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, President of the Club of Rome;
- Kjell Bjork, Research Fellow, University of York, UK;
- Lt Col Richard Brown, Chief, Infrastructure for MNF-I, Baghdad, Iraq; Dr Frederick Burke, The Center for International Emergency, Disaster and Refugee Studies, John Hopkins University Medical Institute, USA; Professor Alex Callinicos, Department of Politics, University of York, UK; Margaret Chard, Research Fellow, Department of Politics, University of York, UK; Professor Aided Dawisha, Professor of Political Science, Miami University, USA; Dr Toby Dodge, Department of Politics, Queen Mary University, UK; Dr Ghassan El Khalout, Director, Islamic Relief, Baghdad, Iraq;
- Dr Eric Herring, Department of Politics, University of Bristol, UK; Professor Jacqueline Ismael, Department of Politics, University of Calgary, Canada; Professor Tareq Ismael, Department of Politics, University of Calgary, Canada; Dr Richard Jones, Research Fellow, Department of Politics, University of York, UK; Dr Philippe Le Billon, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, University of British Colombia, Canada; Professor Michael Leezzenberg, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; John Warren, Cultural Heritage Consultant, ICOMOS, UK.

The release date for this journal (vol.26, No.4, 2005), 25 June 2005, will coincide with a conference hosted by the PRDU – under the auspices of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan – on the ‘Reconstruction of Iraq’, to which all contributors and other interested parties will be invited. Further details of this event will be posted on our website later this year.

- Dr Sultan Barakat
- Professor Alex Callinicos
- Professor Jacqueline Ismael
- Dr Philippe Le Billon
- Professor Michael Leezzenberg
- John Warren

**Academic Success**

No fewer than five PRDU Doctoral students graduated at The University of York’s ceremony in July. Esther Charlesworth, Richard Jones, Carel Richter and Arne Strand (pictured here from left to right), together with Carol Westrik, joined those of the 27 MA in Post-war Recovery Studies graduates from 2003-04 able to return to York to receive their awards in person. Many were too busy working in conflict areas around the world to be able to attend, so here is our opportunity to say congratulations to all on their academic achievements.

- Politics, University of York, UK; Margaret Chard, Research Fellow, Department of Politics, University of York, UK; Professor Aided Dawisha, Professor of Political Science, Miami University, USA; Dr Toby Dodge, Department of Politics, Queen Mary University, UK; Dr Ghassan El Khalout, Director, Islamic Relief, Baghdad, Iraq; Dr Eric Herring, Department of Politics, University of Bristol, UK; Professor Jacqueline Ismael, Department of Politics, University of Calgary, Canada; Professor Tareq Ismael, Department of Politics, University of Calgary, Canada; Dr Richard Jones, Research Fellow, Department of Politics, University of York, UK; Dr Philippe Le Billon, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, University of British Colombia, Canada; Professor Michael Leezzenberg, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; John Warren, Cultural Heritage Consultant, ICOMOS, UK.

**After the Conflict**


**Visiting Research Fellow in New Zealand**

Roger Mac Ginty spent May 2004 as a visiting research fellow at the School of Maori and Pacific Development Studies, the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Kindly hosted by the Director of the School, Dr Eci Nabalarua, he conducted research into the possibilities of a synthesis between western and indigenous peacemaking and grievance management techniques. Conflicts in Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and other Pacific communities mean that the region has gained expertise in responding to conflict and dealing with reconstruction challenges. One of the issues that became apparent in Mac Ginty’s research was the extent to which western language and concepts have come to dominate thinking about, and approaches to, conflict.

The University of Waikato, which has New Zealand’s largest Maori student population, has a long-running exchange scheme with the University of York, and the PRDU hopes to welcome a member of staff from Waikato in the future.
One important component of the MA is the practical experience students gain during their 6–8 week placements. It gives them the chance to work for a host organisation of their choice, often in a country or field new to them. Each student gives a placement presentation, assessed as part of the MA. Extracts from some of the 2003–04 placements are summarised on pages 6–9.

The PRDU would like to express its sincere thanks to all of the hosts for their valuable support this year.

(StUDENT Organisation Country)

SAIFULLAH ABID Italian Consortium of Solidarity (ICS) Italy; FAY BALLARD Rwandan Initiative for Sustainable Development (RISD) Kigali, Rwanda; MARK BRALS FOR Secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Geneva, Switzerland; MARCO BRIL FORUT Sri Lanka; AMANDA BURNS Post-conflict Reintegration Initiatives for development and Empowerment (PRIDE) Sierra Leone; FELIPE CAMARGO Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Sweden; SARAH CARRADE European Commission Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina; HAMAYOON FERHUT Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Geneva; NEIL GARVIE FORUT Sri Lanka; VERONICA GRAZIOLI St. Mary’s Hospital Lacor Gulu, Northern Uganda; GARETH HUGHES INCORE Northern Ireland; KATIE JEFFERSON European Commission Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina; ANTHONY MAKANA World Vision Uganda; AKEMI MARUMO The Japan Centre for Conflict Prevention (JCCP); People’s Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) and FORUT WODEPT Japan & Sri Lanka; PANGO MASHIMANGO; JUNKO MASUDA Women’s Organisation for Development, Equality, Peace and Temperance (WODEPT) Pultsam, Sri Lanka; SARAH McLAUGHLIN Organisation for Security & Cooperation (OSCE) Bosnia & Herzegovina; HELEN MURRAY Birzeit University West Bank, Palestine; INDUKA PERERA Democratic Dialogue Belfast, Northern Ireland; HABIB UR RAHMAN Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development Kabul, Afghanistan; KAREN ROGERS; IOANNIS SEMERZIDES Organisation for Security & Cooperation (OSCE) Bosnia & Herzegovina; AMSON SIMBOLON International Rescue Committee (IRC) Afghanistan; SITARA PRDU York, UK; ABDUL HAI SOFIZADA United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Geneva, Switzerland and Afghanistan; MONICUE VAN HOOF International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Timor Leste, West Timor; MATTHEW WHATLEY European Commission, external relations, and Malawi Electoral Commission Afghanistan and Malawi.

Reintegration of Former Combatants in Sierra Leone

My placement was with PRIDE (Post-conflict Reintegration Initiatives for Development and Empowerment), a local NGO based in Freetown and founded on the realisation that failing to understand ex-combatants’ needs can threaten sustainable peace and development in Sierra Leone.

My main tasks were to carry out research and advocacy on reintegration policies and contribute to the development of forthcoming programmes. These include a follow-up project to a survey carried out by PRIDE in 2002, entitled Ex-combatant Views of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court in Sierra Leone. This project will assess the impact of the TRC and Special Court and determine whether these institutions have helped people in Sierra Leone to make sense of the war and to reconcile ex-combatants with their families and communities.

Since 2001, staff and volunteers at PRIDE have worked to develop confidence and mutual understanding with ex-combatants through programmes such as Human Rights education, Sexual and Gender Based Violence campaigns, and the promotion of formal and vocational education.

I also took a trip to the east of the country to compare the situation in remote rural areas to that in the capital. In the district of Kono, which suffered the highest levels of devastation in the country during the war and where few international NGOs have been active, the German organisation GTZ’s Community Education Centre is the focal point of an important initiative that has helped to reintegrate former combatants while also rehabilitating their receiving communities. It offers basic literacy and numeracy education, vocational training in carpentry, masonry, tailoring and gara-tying, and recreational activities (such as drama, music and sport) that promote community-wide economic and social progress.

Although efficient disarmament and demobilisation and adequate short-term reinsertion support are crucial, I learned that the ultimate aim of reintegrating former combatants as responsible and productive citizens can only be achieved with longer-term rehabilitation efforts. These efforts must include substantial economic and social support mechanisms for those families and communities faced with the reality of receiving back ex-combatants.

Amanda Burns, United Kingdom
Two work placements allowed me in-depth access to an election environment. In Afghanistan, the intention of the European Commission (EC) was to look closely at the preparations being made for the June 2004 election, with a view to deciding whether to mount an electoral observation mission. This election was to be the first ever in the country and the management was largely in the hands of the UN. The EC team sent into Kabul consisted of five experts, and my placement lasted 18 days, including time in Brussels for briefing and de-briefing.

My specific tasks were to focus on the logistical and security matters relating to any planned European Union Election Observation Mission. I attended meetings with election planning staff to gain an overview of the nature of the election, and with security officials from various organisations including UN, NATO and the US army. My time in Afghanistan showed clearly that external pressures on countries can dictate the timing of elections.

My second placement was in Malawi, which achieved independence from the British in the early 1960s and slid into a dictatorship. Ten years ago, following the death of the President, multi-party elections were held under a new constitution. The Department for International Development (DFID) took a close interest in the election preparation and identified weaknesses in the planning and preparation for the elections due to take place on 18 May 2004. DFID asked IFES to send two experts to assist the management process, one concerned with IT and the other with logistics.

I was appointed as Head of Logistics within the Malawi Electoral Commission – a permanent structure which expands enormously in the run-up to a general or presidential election. My main tasks were to design and implement a plan for the production and distribution of the polling station kits, and to ensure the distribution went according to plan. I was asked to take responsibility for the security of the results centre, which placed me in charge of the central warehouse and about 70 staff. In addition, it meant that I had to brief senior members of the Malawi army as they were given the responsibility of supporting the election operation. I also liaised closely with the police and army to ensure that the results centre did not become the focus for post-election violence.

These work placements confirmed my wish to develop my knowledge of the election process – a fascinating area of work which gives many insights into life within a country. I learnt that the usefulness of elections cannot be assessed until some time after they have taken place.

Matthew Whatley, United Kingdom

A popular consultation on East Timor, under the auspices of the UN, was held in August 1999 and resulted in an overwhelming vote for independence from Indonesia. Immediately after the announcement of the results, the Indonesian Army, backed by East Timorese Militia Forces, went on a violent rampage which resulted in the killing of innocent people and the mass displacement of some 80 per cent of the population. One third crossed the border into West Timor, while two thirds of the population fled into the mountains. During the twenty days of violence, some 75 per cent of the private housing and public buildings were systematically destroyed, and the country was literally in ruins when on September 20 the Australian-led UN forces arrived.

With this background in mind, the aim and objective of my work placement was to gain better insight into the process of (forced) displacement of roughly 250,000 East Timorese citizens into West Timor. Furthermore, I wanted to find out why an estimated 28,000 people did not return to a new, independent Timor Leste, and study the provisions that are in place within Indonesia to assist the former refugees to integrate into their country of first asylum.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) hosted me. Their main mandate is to help ensure the orderly movement of persons in need of migration assistance, whether displaced persons, refugees, or nationals. In Timor Leste, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and IOM were leading agencies relating to Refugees. Both organisations have assisted the return of over 175,000 East Timorese citizens back to Timor Leste since 1999.

Apart from interviewing returnees in Timor Leste, I conducted research in a West Timorese refugee camp and a resettlement area – in order to find out whether East Timorese nationals who are currently residing in this Indonesian province would rather return or be locally integrated, and what provisions were in place for them to stay. The people that I spoke to confirmed the initial assumption that ‘everybody’ would return if they had the choice. However, the option of resettlement to other islands turned out to be a popular alternative choice, due to the thorough implementation of the local integration programme. As I had never worked in programmes that directly deal with issues that are of vital importance to refugees and IDPs, it was an excellent opportunity for me to gain insight into what factors can play a decisive role in a successful outcome of return and reintegration programmes in the context of post-war recovery.

Monique van Hoof, The Netherlands
MA in PRS 2003–04

Working for World Vision, a highly credible NGO in Uganda, means working in a child-focused relief and development environment.

Gulu district is located in northern Uganda on the border with Sudan. It has experienced an 18-year violent insurgency between the rebels of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government. Ninety per cent of the population of Gulu are considered displaced, living in 33 camps scattered throughout the district. The insurgency has been characterised by killings of innocent civilians, maiming, mutilations and abductions of children.

The decision to go to Gulu was not an easy one for me, a Sudanese national. Sudan is known to be the main sponsor of the on-going insurgency in Uganda. Upon arrival, I sensed frustration and despair among the hundreds of families whose children are still under the LRA captivity. These abducted children are being used by the LRA to inflate its ranks. Boys are used as combatants while the girls, mostly aged between 9 and 11 years, serve as sex slaves for the senior commanders based in the Sudan.

In Gulu, I was treated with great respect in certain quarters and with suspicion in others. I decided the best way forward was to build trust and friendship. This paid dividends. The PRDU should be credited for helping me discover my skills of ‘keeping afloat in hostile waters’.

My placement supervisor at World Vision, Mr James Otim (a highly knowledgeable and respected fellow in the area), and Mr Patrick Onen were very helpful in advising and mentoring me in Gulu.

Through my six field visits to the displaced camps, distributing relief or interviewing the people, I was able to collect field research materials and to put into practice the numerous theories learned in the class at York. I was able to draft a project proposal using the logical framework taught at York and was also able to come up with a budget for one of the projects. Just as the people of Gulu made a positive impact on me, I am also convinced that they learned much from my newly acquired PRDU skills.

Anthony Makana, Sudan

Returning Home – Afghanistan

One element that is emblematic of transition from war to peace, or demonstrating a post-conflict situation, is the return home of the displaced population – a key challenge of post-war recovery.

My work placement started at the UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, continued in Pakistan, and ended at the UNHCR Office of the Chief of Mission (OCM) in Afghanistan. My objective was to examine the challenges facing the reintegration of the more than 3 million Afghan refugees who had returned since the fall of the Taliban regime, and to explore my growing curiosity in the reasons why many Afghans still chose not to return home. Studying at the PRDU provided me with ability and vision to dig into these issues with a renewed perspective and an analytical mindset.

I was able to study the impact of land-related problems on the sustainability of the reintegration, and how these problems affected the decision of Afghan refugees, such as those in Pakistan, as to whether to return home. I learned about, and was able to examine, some of the dominant complexities related to land which had an adverse bearing on the livelihoods, food security, and the physical and legal protection of the returned population, both in urban and rural domains.

Interviews with the refugee community in the host country gave an opportunity to distinguish the different trends and reasons – such as economic, political, ethnic and generalised violence – for the Afghan refugee exodus. This information can contribute to the understanding of the Afghan refugee phenomenon and the challenges in responding to their reintegration needs.

The lessons learned from the placement experience emphasise the difficulty in dealing with the reintegration needs of a large returnee population in a country still grappling with continuing insecurity, strained resources, a fragmented social fabric and political uncertainties. Addressing these needs entails continued support to returnee reintegration and collaborative efforts beyond that of a single government ministry or an international organisation. The complexities of the reintegration challenges require a clear and broader division of labour at the national and local institutional levels in Afghanistan; a greater engagement of multilateral and bilateral agencies with expertise in the long-term development; and a constructive role played by the external actors, particularly the neighbouring countries, in helping stabilise the situation in Afghanistan.

Abdul Hai Sofizada, Afghanistan
Democratisation, BiH

The conflict in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) ended in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. Since then there has been an extensive international presence in the country to enforce the Accords, try to attain sustainable peace, and ensure that democracy becomes permanently instituted.

I spent my work placement with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) at their Mission headquarters in Sarajevo. The Mission is involved in security, human rights, education, public administration reform, and democratisation. I worked directly with the Parliamentary Support Programme which focuses on the state parliament, but also deals with the two entity parliaments and seeks to increase co-operation between the three.

OSCE is assisting members of the state parliament to set up an Ethics Committee to monitor the behaviour of MPs and increase public confidence in the political institutions. As part of this process I was involved in the planning of seminars on Codes of Conduct in parliamentary environments.

Working with the OSCE gave me a greater appreciation of issues concerned with the democratisation of post-conflict societies, and a broader experience through which to assess the theories and case studies we have discussed during the taught modules of the Master’s course. Through my work, challenges faced by international organisations acting in post-war societies became clear. Dealing with citizen apathy and the ongoing political fallout from violent conflict makes the job of international organisations all the more difficult.

Witnessing a post-war system in action highlighted to me the importance of political institutional design in post-conflict societies. It became clear that this has a direct and unavoidable impact on the sustainability of peace. My experience has reinforced my belief that democracy is far more than mere ‘free and fair’ elections. In BiH elections were held soon after the Dayton Peace Accords were signed, but the process of true democratisation is ongoing, and will be for some time to come.

Karen Rogers, United Kingdom

In March 2004 I graduated in International and Diplomatic Sciences – Development Policies at the University of Bologna with a thesis on the post-war reconstruction of Lebanon. During my studies I worked in Ghana, in the field of micro credit; and in Jordan as an intern of the Italian Embassy Commercial and Development Office. I also worked in the UN Office in Geneva for some months in 2001. My main academic focus is the Middle East, and International Organisations’ response to post-war challenges.

Carlo BENEDETTI
Italy
Background in international development

Zimbabwe emerged from wars for majority self-rule into a brutal civil war. There followed a period of peace and economic prosperity which has now returned to a state of intolerance and the systematic oppression of human rights. As a result of my experiences there I’ve committed over 10 years to international humanitarian relief and development in Africa, Asia, Central America and Eastern Europe, working for NGOs, the UN, and a private security company providing advice and support for the Presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Roberto BERNARDO
United Kingdom
Background in IT and humanitarian aid

I studied for a Politics degree in Japan and specialised in Islamic countries. My degree included a year in Russia, at Moscow State University. In 2003, I joined a project led by the Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development, and went to Thailand to see how the UN, governments, international NGOs and local NGOs work together to develop an area. I also worked as a research assistant, at an advocacy NGO in Japan, and acquired information about how to evaluate NGOs’ activities.

Azusa CHIBA
Japan
Background in politics

I graduated in 2004 from The University of York with a BA (Hons) in History. Since then I have spent six months as a volunteer in Ghana, as an assistant manager of an Integrated Community Centre for Employable Skills. My main role was to generate funds for tools, materials and structural improvements by contacting various local, national and international organisations. The unique nature of the PRDU MA was its main attraction. The balance between theoretical analysis and practical experience is an exciting prospect.

Steve CUMMING
Canada
Background in social work

I graduated from The University of York in 2003 with a BA (Hons) in History. Since then I have spent six months as a volunteer in Ghana, as an assistant manager of an Integrated Community Centre for Employable Skills. My main role was to generate funds for tools, materials and structural improvements by contacting various local, national and international organisations. The unique nature of the PRDU MA was its main attraction. The balance between theoretical analysis and practical experience is an exciting prospect.

I graduated with a Master’s of Social Work from Carleton University, Ottawa, and have done volunteer and paid work with vulnerable populations of youth. Last summer, I worked in a Community Centre in East Jerusalem helping design a Civic Education programme for Palestinian adolescents. The Centre was part of a network – in East and West Jerusalem, Be’er Shiva, Nablus and Amman – in which local social workers completed their Master’s at McGill University, Montreal, and then returned to work in their respective regions.

Rachel BROCK
United Kingdom
Background in politics

I graduated in 2004 from The University of York with a BA Honours in Politics. I spent my second year at the University of Illinois, USA, where I studied international law, politics and the media, and American foreign policy. Throughout my studies I have developed an interest in reconstruction after conflict, and foreign intervention. By taking part in this course I hope to further my knowledge in this multifaceted area and apply the skills that I learn to my future career.

Steve CUMMING
Canada
Background in social work

I graduated with a Master’s of Social Work from Carleton University, Ottawa, and have done volunteer and paid work with vulnerable populations of youth. Last summer, I worked in a Community Centre in East Jerusalem helping design a Civic Education programme for Palestinian adolescents. The Centre was part of a network – in East and West Jerusalem, Be’er Shiva, Nablus and Amman – in which local social workers completed their Master’s at McGill University, Montreal, and then returned to work in their respective regions.
initiatives for peace and human rights.

Since September 2002, I have returned to my country to help coordinate a humanitarian assistance – initially with UNOPS and a local NGO), and then worked for an Italian NGO as a consultant for development education and raising awareness projects. I gained field experience in Serbia (collaborating with UNOPS and a local NGO), and in Malawi where I worked as project manager for a UNICEF-financed programme dealing with education and professional training for adolescents.

I have volunteered extensively as a nurse’s aide in a hospital in Ghana, and at a women’s centre where I was in charge of sexual assault education and support services. These experiences have catalysed my desire to investigate the impact of war upon women’s health. After this MA I will attend medical school, and then I would like to assist with long-term healthcare development in post-war countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

I have 21 years of military experience, in the Royal Air Force (security and counter intelligence), and in the Army Medical Services. In 2001 I completed an operational tour as Commander of British and Scandinavian Medical Services within the Multi-National Brigade (Central) in Kosovo, developing an interest in the relationship between military and humanitarian objectives. I hope to improve my understanding of the decision-making processes that aim to provide suitable environments for successful post-conflict reconstruction.

Since graduating in Mathematics and Statistics, I have worked as an NGO volunteer in development and humanitarian assistance – initially with Afghan refugees, in particular women (and their education) and children in Pakistan. I also participated in human rights activities concerning women and children, and worked as a volunteer with different women advocacy groups. Since September 2002, I have returned to my country to help coordinate a special fund to support women’s initiatives for peace and human rights.

For the last 3 months I have worked in Sudan with a British NGO providing emergency medical relief to displaced people in Darfur. Previously I have worked as an English teacher in a school for IDPs in Sudan, in a Nepal village, and for Albanian refugees in London. I have volunteered extensively as a researcher for Campaign Against Arms Trade, Merlin, and HealthProm (maternal and child mental healthcare in states of former USSR). I graduated with a BSc in International Relations from the LSE in 2003.

While studying for an MA in Education in Japan, I started to work for an NGO which was concerned with education issues. I took charge of the Kashmir peace picture book project, and the project for libraries in Pakistan jails, through researching in Kashmir and Pakistan and attending the editing meeting in Nepal. My interest is education in conflict areas, especially for traumatised children and child soldiers.

I joined the Cooperation for Peace and Development Association. In 2001, I joined the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) as a community peace-building programme officer. CPAU have initiated community peacebuilding and peace education projects at school level, to replace the culture of violence with one of tolerance. In late 2003 I was appointed as Research and Advocacy Manager for CPAU, who I represented in the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC).
Konstantia NIKOPOULOU
Greece
Background in international studies
I graduated from the Department of International and European Studies at the University of Macedonia in 2003. During my studies I became interested in the problems faced by developing states, and the role of NGOs in the process of development. I volunteered for a Spanish NGO working in management of development projects in Latin America and Africa. The experience that I gained consolidated my interest in the impact of war on women, and their role in the reconstruction of society.

Waheed OMER
Afghanistan
(Altajir/OSI/FCO Scholar)
Background in teaching and training
In 1992 my family migrated to Pakistan. I have a degree in International Studies and Diplomacy, and was as an ESL teacher (& teacher trainer) in Peshawar. From 2000 I worked with the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Returning to Afghanistan in 2003, I worked for the Constitution Commission as national coordinator for public education & public consultation. I was recently involved in identifying and training potential young leaders – a project I coordinated on behalf of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a political German organisation.

Nicklas POMMER
Germany
Background in politics
As a conscript in the German Army, I worked with soldiers who had served in peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo. In 2001 I came to the University of York to study Politics, after which I did an internship in a Christian NGO looking after teenage refugees in Berlin. There I came into close contact with political refugees from Iran and Turkey, teenagers from Afghanistan, and former ‘child soldiers’ from Angola. This gave me some experience of their sufferings, and also of the bureaucratic systems they have to face in their host countries.

Peter QUINNEY
United Kingdom
Background in engineering and management
After gaining an Engineering degree in 1981, I worked on exploration oil rigs in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. After that I worked in Europe for an American company on Microelectronic Laser Systems, and in the UK for a Danish vending company. For the last 14 years I have run my own company manufacturing a computer-based cashless payment system. So what am I doing at the PRDU? I am keen to change direction and find a course that will help me utilise my management skills in the field of reconstruction & development.

Simonetta ROSSI
Italy
Background in community development and project management
I have been engaged in development and relief work for the last 16 years with NGOs, UN and EU. I’ve worked in: reintegration of ex-combatants and war-affected populations; micro-credit projects; land planning and urban re-qualification; rural development; women’s rights; and emergency projects after natural disasters – from Latin America to former Yugoslavia and the Middle East. My interest in the PRDU MA is based on the necessity to enrich my experience through new knowledge and theoretical analysis.

Jamal SITEPU
Indonesia
Background in teaching
I graduated in International Relations at Gadjah Mada University, Java, in 1991. I then returned to North Sumatra to work as an English teacher. In 1999 I, together with 6 friends, founded an NGO called ELPPAMAS (Institution for Developing and Empowering Civil Society) of which I am now the director. The recent conflict in Aceh forced thousands of Javanese transmigrants to flee to North Sumatra. We became involved in managing humanitarian assistance for the IDPs, without neglecting our previous concerns about human rights issues.

Tigest TEJIWE
Ethiopia
Background in peace and development studies
Wishing to contribute to the alleviation of poverty in my country, I studied Peace and Development Studies at the University of Bradford. Then I began my active involvement with CRDA, a local Ethiopian umbrella organisation which provides communication networks and discussion forums for NGOs in Ethiopia. I spent the past 18 months working with an EU/GTZ-IS project, reintegrating Ethiopians displaced from Eritrea after the Ethio-Eritrean border conflict. From this experience stems my wish to acquire practical tools in post-war recovery.

MA Scholarships
Over the past few years, the MA in Post-war Recovery has attracted financial support from many institutions and individuals. For example, the Association for Cultural Exchange (ACE) now offers a scholarship. ACE is a charitable trust based near Cambridge, and has a distinguished history of funding worthy causes that often have a cultural dimension.

These generous donations have enabled students from war-torn countries, with financial difficulties, to come and study in York. During the MA, these scholars develop their academic skills and practical knowledge of working with communities in war-affected countries. Many of these students are now working in the field.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the following:
The Altajir World of Islam Trust
The Association for Cultural Exchange (ACE)
The Barakat Trust
The British Council
The DFID Shared Scholarship Scheme in conjunction with The Association for Commonwealth Universities
The Open Society Institute
The York Ainsty Rotary Club
Where are they now? ...

The PRDU has always believed that the ultimate test of the quality of the education it provides is the future employment of its graduates and the contribution they make at the workplace.

Referring to the challenges which he and the PRDU have faced, and overcome, during the last ten years. Sultan Barakat says in his article (pages 2 & 16): “When I see former students in positions of influence, and the way they are able to respond to communities in desperate conditions, I know it was worth persisting.”

There are now over 100 PRDU graduates working around the world. They keep us in touch with developments in critical post-war contexts, which helps us to remain at the forefront of practice on which we can then reflect. The proposed development of an Alumni discussion page on our website (see news article on page 5) will, we believe, create yet another vehicle to enhance dissemination, assist in problem-solving, and encourage debate.

Answering the question Where are they now?, the next four pages contain articles from seven of our alumnus.

Reconstructing Civil Infrastructure in Iraq

My interest in post-war reconstruction developed in mid-career when an opportunity arose in 1997 to serve on military operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina (I had been a reservist for many years). With some good luck, I was posted to head a small team initiating large civil infrastructure projects.

Further work in Kosovo (this time as a civilian) convinced me that this type of work had more dimensions to it than anything I had done before. However, I felt I lacked one key element to do the job effectively, and that was an academic baseline which would inject some theoretical direction into that with which I was involved.

And so I came to York in 2000. The MA degree course had everything in it that I could wish. I was certainly looking for academic discipline and analysis – that came early with the conflict analysis assignment (and the brilliant tutoring from visiting lecturer, William Lume). The rest was a natural progression, combining theory and practice in the many facets of reconstruction and development, culminating in research and analysis for the last major piece of work – the dissertation.

Now I work in Iraq as a military reservist, again deeply involved in the reconstruction of civil infrastructure. Things are far from perfect but now I find, in this type of situation, I can confidently make a difference through influence. In fact, in many ways it is easier to make an impact here than in a less challenging environment.

Anyone who has been involved at the front end with post-war reconstruction will know what an imperfect science it is. PRDU gave me the depth of understanding to analyse each situation in some depth, and propose solutions. What was also exposed is how ill-prepared are many senior people selected to work in temporary (international) administrations providing post-war governance (and even more so those who undertake earlier strategic planning in anticipation of the outcome of a conflict, from a distance). How many times have I said to myself, ‘If only he or she had been through the PRDU’!

PRDU must be the ideal example of how useful academic research can be when linked to future real-life situations; and yet the apparent urgency of post-war reconstruction seems to leave no time for serious reflection and comparative analysis, particularly at that euphoric period just as war ends (almost always more apparent than real). Perhaps ‘academics’ are just as much to blame – for, in their thirst for easy data, they often prefer to analyse the past than mould the future.

Post-war reconstruction is big business and growing. Enormous talent is required to do it justice and the PRDU is undoubtedly helping to generate this in its own unique way. PRDU’s reputation is now worldwide and it seems to me that no other institution has come close to emulating its prestigious MA degree in Post-war Recovery Studies. The triumvirate of Sultan Barakat, Alp Özerdem and Roger Mac Ginty has much to be proud about.

Richard Brown, United Kingdom
MA Graduate 2000–01

In many ways, for Richard, it is easier to make an impact in Iraq than in a less challenging environment.
Researching the Effect of Mine Action

Since September 2003 I have been working as a researcher for the Assistance to Mine-Affected Communities project (AMAC) at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO). AMAC was established in 1999 to examine how communities are affected by landmines and mine action. Mine action is the term used for interventions designed to reduce the mine threat such as demining, mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, and advocacy to stigmatise the use of landmines. Conclusions from AMAC research are used to inform policy and practice and to develop capacity building exercises for various actors in the mine action world.

As PRDU teaches, successful post-war recovery is dependent on restoring a sense of security and stability, and promoting sustainable social and economic development. The continued existence of landmines after a conflict is a constant reminder of the conflict and violence which hinders reconciliation and peacebuilding. Landmines kill and maim survivors of conflict which increases the burden on the family and local medical services, and deprives families of an income earner. Mined land cannot be safely resettled or used for income generation, which prevents the return of IDPs and refugees and hinders access to natural resources and efforts to improve the infrastructure.

It is generally accepted that the post-war recovery phase must address the issue of landmines, although it is not always considered or known how it can be addressed most effectively. AMAC aims to fill this gap through research which is conducted among mine-affected communities, donors, governments, and mine action organizations. The impact of landmines and mine action is examined in context to develop an understanding of the interaction between the mine threat, the mine action intervention, and vulnerable communities, national and international actors, and broader post-conflict goals such as building a sustainable peace and promoting development.

My position at AMAC primarily involves desk and field based research and analysis of the findings, and liaising with the mine action community. In the last year, work for AMAC has taken me to Cambodia, Kenya, Sudan, and Thailand to conduct fieldwork and attend international meetings and conferences. The AMAC project is currently focusing on the interaction between mine action and peacebuilding using case studies from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Sudan to explore the issues. As part of this research, I travelled to Sudan to spend three months conducting fieldwork in the Nuba Mountains. I looked at the role of mine action in confidence-building between the two sides of the conflict and how demining has helped to support the local ceasefire agreed in January 2002. Findings from this research will be presented at the Review Meeting of the State Parties to Ban Landmines in Nairobi in December 2004.

The AMAC project builds on the skills and knowledge I developed at PRDU and gives me the opportunity to combine my academic interests with my desire to be involved in work which has a practical application.

Rebekah Roberts, United Kingdom
PhD Graduate 2002

Holistic Management of Rehabilitation

I am CARE Nederland’s senior programme co-ordinator for the Balkans, Middle East and Caucasus. A member of the CARE International family, we specialise in relief/rehabilitation during and after conflicts and natural disasters.

In these last challenging years, since leaving Northern Uganda, I’ve learned to become a holistic manager looking after proposals, development, strategic programmes, acquisition, M&E, Human Resources and financial management. I am also learning how to be a good mother and diplomatic wife – my husband is the first secretary of the Dutch Embassy in Cairo.

Little time is left to think and brainstorm on what I learn from my life and work. Nevertheless, while carrying out my frequent field trips in the regions, I do appreciate talking to people about the political, social and economic challenges they are currently facing.

In the Balkans the situation is becoming acute. Unemployment is reaching uncontrollable levels. Inadequate, sometimes rushed, macro economic policies are undermining the well-being of the overall population and constantly putting at risk the fragile political stability. Kosovo is an example of how things can easily go wrong if appropriate political responses are not provided effectively and timely. People are losing hope for their future, and they are left with the optimistic expectation of soon becoming part of the European Union. But at what cost?

In the Middle East the situation is not good, especially with respect to women’s empowerment (better to say gender equity), civil society development and political participation of all citizens; this is nothing, of course, to compare with the difficult political negotiations the Arab countries and the overall world have to deal with to keep a certain regional political stability.

The big challenge is to empower all civil society in preventing conflict and participating more actively in the decision-making process of the political elites. But how?

Nika Salvetti, Italy
MA Graduate 1998–99
Working for the Red Cross Community

After graduation in 2001, I accepted a Regional Associate position with the International Disaster Response Unit of the American Red Cross. Our main responsibilities are to deploy staff and materials to international disaster sites in support of the host Red Cross or Red Crescent National Society in the affected country. Once in country, we work under the auspices of the National Society, but also in close coordination with the IFRC and other National Societies that have come to provide assistance. Although my responsibilities are primarily for Europe, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, when large-scale events occur, such as the Sudanese refugee situation in Chad, I support the operation as required.

My most recent deployment was to Bam, Iran, as part of our Emergency Response Unit, which is a mechanism coordinated through the IFRC. While in Bam, we worked closely with the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but also with the British Red Cross and the IFRC’s Field Assessment and Coordination Team. My team’s role was to coordinate the distribution of relief items – received through the IFRC’s Emergency Appeal – with the Iranian Red Crescent Society, and to provide daily reports to the IFRC. At the request of UNOCHA, my team also organized and chaired non-food coordination meetings with international relief agencies that had come to Bam, in order to mitigate duplicative distributions.

One of our initial activities was to support the Iranian Red Crescent Society’s desire to erect a tent camp for 500 families (about 3,000 individuals) returning from medical evacuations. We provided family tents as well as water and sanitation services, but the Iranian Red Crescent managed all aspects of camp management. Within a week of occupation, several international relief agencies had incorporated the camp into their distribution plans and, by the end of February, a small school was operating and private and group mental health consultations had been established.

There were, of course, some operational challenges that affected the distribution activities and coordination efforts, but given the number of National Societies and international agencies and donors present, it was an impressive effort by all.

Matthew Parry, USA
MA Graduate 2000–01

Clearing Cluster-bomb Units in Southern Baghdad

Upon completion of the Master’s course at the PRDU, it was time for my first post-dissertation mission. With quite a few years of international experience behind me, and now an MA in Post-war Recovery Studies, I left for Iraq.

My mission was to establish an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) operation in Baghdad on behalf of the German NGO, HELP (or Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe as it is known in Germany). Relying heavily on my past experiences from South East Europe and my recent studies, I felt confident, despite the dangerous conditions in Baghdad at the time (October 2003) and the knowledge that there was much hard work ahead.

A few weeks before our arrival the UN headquarters in Baghdad had been bombed and the UN staff had withdrawn from Iraq. I met with a few old colleagues in Amman, Jordan, who were pulling out, while we, a team of four mine action experts and one expert for other relief programmes – all civilian foreigners – moved in.

The initial impression was fairly much what I had expected. It was a country under occupation, full of checkpoints, illegal markets, criminality, winds of change, despair, hope, ingenuity and heart warming hospitality. Iraq is in many ways exceptional, but the human reactions in post-war conditions are recognisable anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, as I learned more about my new environment it became ever more evident to me that Iraq was not a post-war society but a country at war, both with the coalition and itself.

Iraq presented a harsh environment to work in. The violence was ever-present, and the resentment against the occupation forces, and foreigners in general, grew during the time I was there (and continues to grow). Donors were not willing to risk their money in such an unstable environment. Many NGOs dropped what they were doing and pulled out.

Iranian Red Crescent Society volunteers in the Hamadan tent camp in Bam, Iran.
Since graduating from the PRDU, I have held the position of Project Officer for the Business and Conflict programme, at International Alert (IA). IA is a UK-based NGO working towards transforming some of the violent conflicts around the world and contributing towards preventing others.

My post is both geographically and thematically specific – working on the role of the private sector in conflict transformation in the South Caucasus. The region is held hostage to three ‘frozen’ conflicts, which resulted in large-scale displacement and still continue to have other negative effects on the region some 10-12 years since cease-fire agreements were signed.

The line between post-war and conflict prevention is becoming increasingly blurred in the Caucasus, as many efforts of the international donor community focus on either reconstructing the damage (physical and economic) from the violent conflicts in the 1990’s, or on trying to prevent these frozen conflicts escalating into violence.

The specific project I am involved in looks at the links between economy and conflict, in particular shadow/alternative economies which evolved during the last decade as a response to the lack of economic opportunities and widespread poverty, resulting both from the fall of the Soviet Union and from the conflicts. This component looks at the relationship between conflict and shadow economies via research and action. The first phase of the project has brought together seven teams of researchers from four countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey) and three non-recognised entities (Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh) to look at various aspects of links between economies and conflict.

The second phase will start to engage with the business community, assessing its role in peacebuilding.

Besides local and national businesses, the project also engages with TNCs working in the Caucasus. In particular we are trying to conflict-sensitise the work of oil companies.

The work is very challenging, looking at new ways of trying to transform conflicts in a volatile region. However, the work with local partners and the work at International Alert is tremendously interesting and, hopefully, over time it will make a substantial difference on the ground.

Diana Klein, Israel
MA Graduate 2001–02

After a brief stint teaching in Honduras, I have been working since October 2003 as an Immigration Officer in the Fort Erie Refugee Unit for Citizenship and Immigration Canada. I implement Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act for land claims made at the Buffalo USA and Fort Erie Canada border, the busiest land crossing for refugees entering Canada from the USA. Working with translators on a daily basis, I have processed claims from people from over 30 different countries. The large percentage of our claimants come from Colombia and Sri Lanka, and the field research in Sri Lanka during my year at the PRDU has been immeasurably useful with regard to the latter.

The work is very diverse, sometimes heart-wrenching and sometimes just frustrating. I suppose this is a typical reaction for many types of humanitarian work, except now that I work for the government I get paid considerably more to feel this way! Initially starting out on a six month contract, I have recently been renewed for another year.

Mary E. Bryant, Canada
MA Graduate 2001–02

US funds were available, but naturally these came with the price of association with the coalition forces. All westerners were assumed to be Americans until proven otherwise. Just to be associated with civilian foreigners presented a threat to our national staff.

When we became operational (after the intensive training of 30 national EOD operators), we were asked to go to the Rashid area in the south of Baghdad to clear cluster-bomb units.

The area was known to house much resistance to the coalition forces. US forces had levelled a number of houses in the area after attacks had been launched from them against a US base in the region. Nine victims, children and adults alike, had been killed and maimed by cluster-bomb units after the air strikes during the previous six months.

Our own staff, born and raised in Baghdad, did not want to be in the area. It was said to be a poor area before the war, and the situation had been worsened by recent conditions.

Instantly, my experiences during the MA course came alive in a new sense, from conflict analysis to cross cultural communication and community liaison. The course helped me, as a practitioner, to ask the right questions as to why we as humanitarians were there, and how we should operate. The conclusions drawn were far from the answers I would have found a year earlier, before my time in York.

Thanks to the patience, intelligence and open-mindedness of our national staff we spent some good times in this volatile area in southern Baghdad. Today there are no longer any accidents caused by cluster-bomb units in that part of town.

The MA course does not tell you what to do in difficult situations, but it gives you the tools to understand and address the various issues that may impede progress. It teaches you to reflect on any given situation from many new angles – something I found very valuable many times in Iraq.

The course has not made my life easier, but it has made me think more deeply about what I do, and has made me better at doing it.

Kjell Bjork, Sweden
MA Graduate 2002–03

... news from the PRDU alumni

Processing Refugees Entering Canada

MA Graduate 2001–02

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time PRDU staff and – a recent development – the publication of edited volumes bringing together contributions from colleagues in academia and in the field. Two volumes, Reconstructing War-torn Societies: Afghanistan (published in 2004 by Palgrave) and After the Conflict (forthcoming in 2005 by I.B.Tauris) will be joined by a third, which is in preparation, on the situation in Iraq.

The capacity to contribute in this way to understanding how societies rebuild themselves after war has been built with inputs from a second generation of professionals, our MA and PhD graduates. Some have returned to work at high levels of administrative responsibility from which they are able to reflect on practice (Sean Deely, Dr Arne Strand, Dr Carel Richter, Dr Ben Hoffman, Haneef Atmara, Mohammed Elsan, Mohamed Marikar, Matthew Parry, Magnus Wolfe Murray, Richard Brown, Tjama Kurt, Nika Salvetti, Dr Esther Charlesworth, Dr Rebekah Roberts, and many others). Some have been co-opted into the PRDU as research fellows (Gareth Wardel, Kjell Bjork and our two full-time researchers, Dr Richard Jones and Margaret Chard).

Looking back over these extraordinary 10 years, I can remember many moments of doubt at situations that seemed too dangerous or difficult, but I was always spurred on by the realisation that those we were trying to work with had already experienced even worse danger and difficulty. Now when I see former students in positions of influence, and the way they are able to respond to communities in desperate conditions, I know it was worth persisting. Taking the first steps was something of an act of faith on my part, and particularly from those who supported me, but experience has shown that making this stand brought together a great many like-minded people and gave them the chance to increase their individual and collective impact on the causes and effects of war.

How do I envisage the PRDU developing over the next 10 years? Already we have initiated the mainstreaming of the subject in the postgraduate teaching and, more recently, in the undergraduate teaching of the Department of Politics. My individual role is giving way to team-working (hastened by my recent promotion to fatherhood which will not allow me to be as constantly on the move as before!), with Professor Mark Evans, Head of Department of Politics, stepping in as a Deputy Director of the PRDU to help develop the MA courses and research programme.

The publishing partnership with I.B. Tauris is set to continue, with a proposal to produce a series of books by individual authors reflecting different areas of expertise in the field. It will be up to a new generation of graduates to set the goals for future research and practice.

There is one key issue that I can be certain the PRDU will be addressing: the growing gap in understanding between the Muslim world and the West. We have been commissioned by the British Council to research the issue in four Middle Eastern countries and I believe that the PRDU, with its range of expertise, support and contacts around the world, is uniquely placed to take that forward. As we address this and other root causes of conflict, the commitment of our old friends has been strengthened by two new advocates, The University of York’s Vice Chancellor, Professor Brian Cantor, and His Royal Highness Prince El-Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, both of whom are actively supporting the development of the PRDU into its next decade.

In this future of expanding horizons, is there still a role for revival? As the emphasis in the world of academia has become focused on publication in academic journals, it is more difficult to maintain a newsletter as a forum for new ideas and debate. That, however, is what we should continue to do, both as a vehicle for involving professionals beyond academia and for clarifying where we stand on current issues. This then is a call for more, not less, contributions from colleagues, including new ideas for developing this platform for independent views and news on post-war reconstruction issues.”

Sultan Barakat October 2004