Editorial

Last November PRDU’s Patron, HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, launched an annual lecture series in York with a talk on reconstruction and development in the Middle East. In his conclusion he called for the region’s leaders to focus on the benefits of regional cooperation involving civil society, governments, businesses and investors.

The PRDU covers many regions throughout the world with its research, consultancy and professional development. This issue of revival though, focuses mainly on the Middle East, and major projects which are being conducted and planned by the Unit on Gaza, the Gulf States, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen.

We hope the leaders take heed, but in the meantime the articles here show how the PRDU is itself a leader in helping to foster friendships, collaborations and inter-personal networks which are, as Sultan Barakat says, “critical in developing and disseminating innovation”.

Gani M Ward

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Reconstruction as diplomacy in the Gaza Strip

The reconstruction of the Gaza Strip following the Israeli offensive in December 2008 and January 2009 is critical for interrupting the cycle of conflict and suffering in the Palestinian Territories. To achieve this important goal, policy makers and leaders of the international community must learn from Gaza’s long history of reconstruction and international development or again watch the process devolve into a global scramble for accolades, accusations and influence.

These are two of the general conclusions of a PRDU study into the reconstruction of Gaza authored by Professor Sultan Barakat, Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck and Research Assistant Jenny Hunt. Initiated in December 2008, during the early phases of the conflict, the report of this study, The Reconstruction of Gaza: A Guidance Note for Palestinian and International Stakeholders, featured in the discussion at the January 2009 Arab League summit in Kuwait.

“The situation still appears to be one of strategising and posturing, and many stakeholders are hoping that the politics will somehow be set aside in the interests of the people of Gaza,” Professor Barakat said upon launching the report to international organisations, Palestinian civil society, political leaders, government agencies and academia. “The propositions put forward in our report may provide a series of institutions and mechanisms which can reduce the influence of politics and allow pragmatic solutions to take root.”

The PRDU released its initial report, which includes a foreword by HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, on 19 January, a day after Hamas and the Israeli government had agreed a ceasefire. This report includes the following ‘foundational’ recommendations:

- Conduct an independent investigation of war crimes, committed by all parties to the conflict, thus ensuring that international standards of justice are applied and showing the Gazan population that their plight has at least been acknowledged.

- Ensure free movement of humanitarian supplies via two routes: the Egyptian border and the Mediterranean Sea. Both must be quickly rebuilt and used under close international supervision.

- Establish a representative commission to govern reconstruction, involving representatives of all major Palestinian political groups and delegates from major humanitarian institutions. The ‘Gaza Reconstruction Commission’, would govern the process in the absence of a universally-recognised political authority and ensure accountability and transparency.

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Surveying the damage on 13hat’s main street.
PRDU News

New collaboration with IIE and RHSC aids Iraqi scholars’ reconstruction contribution

Displacement during conflict saps a country of many of its most talented and skilled citizens, who thus fail to fulfil their rightful position as catalysts and leaders of reconstruction. To address this challenge, the PRDU organised a workshop for 40 displaced Iraqi scholars in partnership with the New York-based Institute of International Education’s (IIE) Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF), and the Regional Human Security Centre (RHSC) in Amman.

Held in Amman, from 14–15 June 2009, the workshop included lectures and participatory discussion groups. Each of the attendees was then undertaking a placement, supported by the SRF, with an academic institution in the Middle East and North Africa.

The event was opened by HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, who spoke of the need for the region of West Asia and North Africa (WANA) to take greater control of its own human security challenges. He cited the appalling level of attacks against Iraqi scholars, the deterioration of that country’s higher education system and the need for Iraqi scholars to rebuild it to its former level of excellence.

Leading the workshop was PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat, supported by Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck and alumnus Lt Col Richard H. Brown. Mr Zyck lectured on the history of post-conflict reconstruction, and its financing in contemporary Iraq. Mr Brown, building upon his own three tours in southern Iraq with the British Army, discussed challenges related to infrastructure rehabilitation and critical service restoration.

Participants reacted energetically to the material and engaged in lively discussions. By the end of the workshop they had designed research projects which several expressed an interest in pursuing, independently or through a placement within the RHSC.

A close affiliate of the PRDU, the RHSC has recently received support from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the IIE to host up to 10 Iraqi scholars. This workshop is the first of a broader series to be organised for displaced Iraqi scholars through the support of the IIE. As Professor Barakat announced at the outset of the training: “It is necessary for displacement to build capacities rather than to allow their erosion. Instead of treating displaced Iraqis as a burden, we can use them to develop their host countries and rebuild their homeland.”

New staff

We would like to congratulate Dr Rajesh Venugopal on his appointment as Altajir Lecturer in Post-war Recovery Studies. Richard Muir, Director of the Altajir Trust, said: “The trustees are delighted, and see it as a significant move forward”.

Rajesh will be joining the PRDU in October 2009 from Oxford, where he currently works as Research Officer at the Centre for Research in Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE). His primary field of expertise is on political economy approaches to post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, ethnic conflict, nationalism, globalisation, and development, particularly in the South Asian region. He has conducted fieldwork in Sri Lanka, East Timor, Ghana, India and Nigeria, and is currently writing a book on the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict.

Rajesh will work closely with Sultan Barakat to develop a research agenda focusing on reconstruction in the Muslim World, and contribute towards the teaching on the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies and Chevening courses.

The PRDU also welcomes Dr Janine Clark who has been awarded the post of Lecturer, replacing Dr Roger MacGinty. Janine will be joining us in September from Aberystwyth University where she has been working since 2007 as the Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow in the Department of International Politics, on a research project entitled Religious and Judicial Paths to Peace-Building in BiH.

Janine is a specialist on the former Yugoslavia, in particular Serbia and Bosnia-Hercegovina, and has also worked in the field of peace studies. Her research interests encompass transitional justice, international war crimes tribunals, and trust-building and reconciliation processes in post-conflict societies, including Rwanda. She has considerable teaching experience having recently designed, convened and taught an undergraduate module, War, Peace and Justice in the former Yugoslavia.


Five distinctions among the 2009 graduands

Congratulations to the following students who successfully completed the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies in 2008 and were awarded their degrees at the graduation ceremonies in January and July 2009 – (D) denotes distinctions: Fahrunnisa Akhatur, Kathryn Allen, Samson Barrige, Sara Caggiati, Maxine Cahal, Malaiiz Daud, Barbara De Anna, Sarah Dewhurst, Mark Frankish (D), William Fryer, Donagh Houlihan, Jenny Hunt (D), Andrea Iro (D), Yuka Itakura, Hiroko Kato, Thomas Keating, Cecilia Laverty, Kazuki Nemoto, Njord Pattiasina, Sudakshini Perera (D), Robert Perkins, Alexandr Rahmanow, Mario Renza, Rory Shanks, Gulandum Sharifiuov, Neil Snaitth, Thomas Stratton (D), Amy Thornton, Hector Vivero, Mariko Yagi, Risa Yokoyama, Zafar Yildoshev.
Enabling conflict resolution among Lebanese officials

The PRDU has recently launched a training programme for Lebanese municipal officials with the support and partnership of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Initially conceptualised in March 2008, the training programme is intended to tackle conflicts at multiple levels. While enabling officials to adopt and fulfil roles in conflict resolution within and between communities, the presence of well-trained individuals at the local level may eventually provide a barrier to larger-scale, intra-state conflict within the country.

The training course will engage at least 50 Lebanese municipal personnel, including the heads of the country’s 36 unions of municipalities, and numerous municipal council members. The course content will include basic information regarding peace and conflict while also enabling officials to assess sources of conflict vulnerability, build trust, mediate disputes and provide development projects and basic services in a conflict-sensitive manner.

During a recent needs assessment to Beirut, course leader Sultan Barakat met with numerous municipal representatives and a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. As part of a focus group discussion with the heads of nine municipal unions, officials highlighted a lack of revenues, confusion concerning the roles of municipalities, a lack of transparency and disagreements over land rights as key challenges.

According to Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck, who will be serving as the course manager, this situation reflects lacklustre decentralisation which prevents decision-making authority and resources from trickling down to municipal authorities and, eventually, the populations they serve. He noted, “the presence of relatively un-empowered local officials tends to suggest the existence of an ineffective state, thus leading to greater conflict vulnerability. While it is common to suggest resource distribution lies at the core of decentralisation, municipal officials in Lebanon are also able to demonstrate their value by playing an active part in mediating disagreements and ameliorating potentially conflict-causing tensions.”

Responding to Conflict (RTC), an international NGO based in Birmingham, is partnering the PRDU for this project, which begins in July. Following an initial two-week period of training, Lebanese municipal officials will take several weeks to apply the skills learned to their daily responsibilities. Upon completion of this ‘practical implementation period’, participants will share experiences with one another and identify areas in which additional capacity building may be beneficial.

The PRDU looks forward to deepening this engagement with UNDP Lebanon and is presently identifying an additional training dimension related to customary conflict resolution actors and institutions.

As Professor Barakat noted, “in approaching conflict resolution, it is critical to support all those who are already trusted and able to intervene within sensitive matters. In conflict prevention, as in conflict itself, it is best to have several lines of defence.”

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CPD (Continuing Professional Development)

PRDU receives major contracts from FCO

From 2010 to 2013, the PRDU will welcome at least 28 mid-career professionals each year from conflict-affected and fragile countries, as part of two newly awarded Chevening Senior Fellowship Programmes from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). These 12-week courses are a testament to the success of the PRDU’s ongoing Chevening programme, and to the Unit’s growing leadership in areas such as security sector transformation, governance and the rule of law. “We are gratified to deepen our engagement with the FCO and Chevening Programme,” said Professor Barakat, the Executive Director for both courses. “When I founded the PRDU some 15 years ago, this sort of hands-on, practically-relevant education was at the core of my vision for the Unit. The Fellows will also learn from one another and develop the sorts of relationships and inter-personal networks which are critical in developing and disseminating innovation.”

The first course, Conflict Prevention and Resolution, represents a collaboration with two leading international organisations, Responding to Conflict and International Alert. Lecturers and trainers from the PRDU and these two British institutions will address issues such as conflict analysis, negotiation, mediation, peace processes and conflict-sensitive approaches to reconstruction and development.

The second course, Reforming the Security and Justice Sectors in Post-Conflict Countries, also involves internationally-renowned partners, including International Alert and Penal Reform International, as well as key experts from within the University’s Department of Politics and School of Law. This programme will address the close inter-relation between transformations in the security and justice sectors with a particular emphasis on the demobilisation of armed groups, the building of accountable security institutions and the pursuit of justice and human rights after conflict.

In addition to instruction from the courses’ Director and Convenors – Professor Barakat, Dr Alpaslan Özerdem, and Dr David Connolly – Fellows will have an opportunity to interact with experts from Switzerland, Norway, Canada, the United States and the Balkans. The Programme also includes hands-on group study visits. Fellows on the conflict prevention programme will visit Amsterdam and meet with international organisations and local leaders working to mitigate tensions within a diverse and sometimes fractious city. Those on the justice programme will have an opportunity to view security and justice sector reforms in the UK through a group study visit to Northern Ireland, a site of extensive reforms among the police forces and prison system.

Such practically-oriented learning will also be reflected in work attachments which Fellows will undertake for two weeks with governmental, non-governmental and private-sector actors in Britain and beyond. As Professor Barakat indicated, “the Fellows bring with them a life’s worth of experience, though one of our greatest contributions can be to help them see beyond their own approaches and learn from experiences in the UK and other countries.”

If you are interested in learning more about the Chevening Senior Fellowship Programmes at the PRDU, or if you would be interested in participating as a host, a mentor or a lecturer – or in providing work placements for Fellows – contact PRDU Administrator Sally Carter at sc23@york.ac.uk
**Funding secured for Philippines**

Following their pilot study in September 2008, Dr Alpaslan Özerdem and Sukanya Podder have successfully secured a one-year British Academy funding of £7,150 for the second phase of their field research – Identity, ideology and child soldiering: community and youth participation in civil conflict – in Mindanao, the Philippines. Cooperating closely with Eddie Quitoriano, an alumnus of PRDU’s Chevening Conflict Resolution Course, the research will look at youth participation in the Moro National Liberation Front in order to analyse variance in participation across tribes, and the role of community in respect to the different groups. A household survey will be designed to pilot in select communities where armed groups are dominant. The process will also be complemented with some participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques, including play-sessions for children.

Children will be encouraged to sketch experiences to help them narrate their own stories.

**New publication**

Edited by Dr Alpaslan Özerdem and Dr Richard Bowd, Participatory Research Methodologies: Development and Post Disaster/Conflict Reconstruction will be published by Ashgate in November. It assesses the use of participatory methods as a research tool in the contexts of development and reconstruction after conflict and disasters, through identifying the cross-cutting themes and establishing a comparative lessons learned framework. The 18 chapters from practitioners and researchers, 11 of which are case studies, represent a wide range of issues and countries.

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**Research Round-up**

**PRDU examines Gulf States’ support for post-conflict reconstruction**

During 2007, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates alone contributed nearly £2 billion for international development, and, increasingly, their focus has been upon war-torn countries. The Gulf States have now played major roles in the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon, Iraq and the West Bank and Gaza. Yet, despite discussions of the rise of non-Western donors from within the Middle East, there is little understanding as to such countries’ motivations or impact.

This situation is now starting to change, with a major research project launched by PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat and Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck. This project is supported by the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics (LSE), which will be publishing a forthcoming paper by Professor Barakat and Mr Zyck through its Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States. Specifically, this project focuses upon the objectives underlying Gulf States’ donorship to conflict-affected environments, the tangible forms which Gulf assistance takes and the impact it has had both on war-torn contexts and on global practices and institutions. The paper, to be published in the Autumn, will be available for download at: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEKP/output.htm

**Research impact – findings turned into future directions**

In August and September 2009, PRDU Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck will be supporting the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of Bosnia-Herzegovina in developing its internal monitoring and evaluation capacity. As part of a NATO-funded project initiated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Mr Zyck will provide training on evaluation methods to the MoD’s Personnel Transition Support Unit (PTSU). This project will also comprise the development of a strategy for tracking and assessing the reintegration of discharged soldiers and retiring MoD staff members.

In no small part, this initiative emerges from an evaluation of military downsizing in Bosnia-Herzegovina undertaken by Sultan Barakat and Mr Zyck in August and September 2008. This evaluation recommended intensive capacity building for the PTSU and a greater focus on principles of local ownership.

According to Mr Zyck, “this training will help to ensure that those who depart from defence institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina are appropriately cared for and that, as so often happens, any potential difficulties are discovered before they have inflamed tensions in this still-fragmented Balkan country”.

**Non-Western approaches to social reintegration of former combatants**

Over recent years there has been a significant increase in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants by non-Western states, international organisations and non-governmental organisations. This opens up a potentially discipline-influencing area of research that could challenge existing conceptualisation of the nature, orientation and ‘ownership’ of reintegration.

Funded by the University of York’s research priming fund, the new research project led by Dr Alpaslan Özerdem will:

- undertake pilot studies in Liberia and Sierra Leone to investigate the context of non-Western approaches applied in the social reintegration of former combatants;
- convene a collaborative workshop drawing on national and international expertise on this topic with a view to developing a major research bid to a research council.

Overall, the essential aim of this application to the pump-priming fund is to assist a larger application to a funding council (namely the ESRC).
Research Round-up
Assessing needs in Yemen’s most conflict-affected region

Yemen, it has recently been stated, could be the next Afghanistan – an underdeveloped, strategically-located and largely ungoverned context in which terrorist groups may establish training bases. Sharing a long border with Saudi Arabia and with close proximity to Somalia, Ethiopia and other East African hotspots, it has been the site of attacks against American and French naval vessels and a secondary base of operations for the resurgence of sea-born piracy.

The governorate of Sa’ada, located in the Northwest of Yemen, is home to a sporadic but destructive conflict between a rebel movement and government forces. Despite Qatar’s attempts to broker a lasting peace agreement, talks failed and another period of fighting broke out earlier this year. Five rounds of fighting since 2004 have created a humanitarian emergency, though an in-depth needs assessment has not been conducted due to concerns regarding security, politics and access. As a result, international assistance, while flowing, has been limited, and organisations such as the United Nations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Yemeni government agencies have been unable to design or provide in-depth analysis of needs in the following sectors: housing, livelihoods, assets, access to credit, fuel supply, food security, nutrition, health, education, water supply, sanitation and social protection.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative measures are being employed, and survey data is being illustrated with information gained from focus group discussions with, among others, children and internally displaced populations.

“While academics are so frequently called in to ascertain ‘what went wrong’ in humanitarian and reconstruction operations, it is gratifying to be included in the assessment of needs and development of strategies to meet them,” Professor Barakat said. “Our hope is that humanitarian assistance and support for ‘early recovery’ can help to improve relations between the warring parties and help resuscitate hopes for a lasting peace in Sa’ada.”

Zyck, the assessment team comprises 25 members, including four sector specialists, based full-time in Yemen. Having designed the methodology and data collection tools, Professor Barakat and Mr Zyck travelled to Yemen in April of this year to provide intensive training to all team members and to engage in pilot testing. Consultations were also held with representatives of the United Nations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Yemeni government agencies.

The final assessment report will be able to provide in-depth analysis of needs in the following sectors: housing and shelter, livelihoods, assets, access to credit, fuel supply, food security, nutrition, health, education, water supply, sanitation and social protection. A combination of qualitative and quantitative measures are being employed, and survey data is being illustrated with information gained from focus group discussions with, among others, children and internally displaced populations.

“We hope is that humanitarian assistance and support for ‘early recovery’ can help to improve relations between the warring parties and help resuscitate hopes for a lasting peace in Sa’ada.”

Danny – who previously graduated from Sheffield Hallam University with a BA Hons Social Science & Law before completing an MA in Global Politics & International Law at the University of Sheffield – is now in his second year as a PhD student at the PRDU.
Leaders, opinion elites and representatives of the media and civil society from Morocco to India assembled in Amman, Jordan on 19-20 April for the first West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Forum meeting. Moderated by the PRDU’s Director, Professor Sultan Barakat, the event tackled the major social, economic and environmental challenges facing countries within the region.

In the words of the Forum’s founder, HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, the Forum sought to bridge the gap between “what is and what ought to be”. Expounding upon this objective, the event’s keynote speaker, former Finnish President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Martti Ahtisaari, reminded all in attendance that “peace is a matter of will” and that popular will can only develop through dialogue between States, and between States and civil society within the region.

The WANA Forum is supported by The Nippon Foundation – whose President Yohei Sasakawa attended the meeting. At least initially, it is a five-year process which aims to engage innovative and distinguished regions from West Asia and North Africa to identify key priorities, develop policies and programmes and advocate for their adoption among civil society, governments and international organisations. It marks a shift away from a strict focus upon the Middle East to also encapsulate northern and parts of eastern Africa, Turkey and large segments of both central and South Asia – areas of the world which share similar dilemmas but which have failed thus far to address them in a coordinated manner. As such, in addition to the development of innovative policies and plans, the Forum aims to build bridges across countries previously perceived to comprise distinct regions.

As Professor Barakat indicated in his opening remarks to the Forum: “We hope to focus more upon the common needs and experiences of the people across individual states and regions rather than to allow ourselves to become bogged down in exclusionary definitions about which countries we believe comprise WANA. An inclusive approach is required.”

The meeting’s more than 80 participants, from 29 different countries, identified the most important of these ‘common needs’ and began the process of developing the means to address them. Experts from across the region discussed issues such as authoritarian governance, armed conflict, post-war reconstruction, cultural atrophy, unravelling social cohesion, didactic educational systems, inadequate healthcare, the ongoing economic crisis, rampant unemployment, water shortages, environmental degradation and natural resource depletion, to name but a few.

The WANA Forum meeting maintained an optimistic focus by dwelling more upon potential solutions than the depth and variety of challenges. HRH El Hassan highlighted the need for a Regional Cohesion Fund which would allow wealthy countries from WANA to contribute to the development of their relatively poorer neighbours, and the founding of a international and inter-denominational volunteer programme, modelled on the American Peace Corps, to enable the development of relationships between people in WANA and beyond. Building upon the experience of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Ambassador Chinnaya Gharekhan, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India for West Asia and the Middle East Peace Process, suggested the establishment of a regional university funded by countries across WANA.

One key priority identified and endorsed by the Forum was post-conflict reconstruction and, particularly, the founding of a WANA-based centre to build capacities for governments, civil society and others to engage in reconstruction, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development initiatives. This idea was presented at the WANA Forum by Professor Mark Evans, Deputy Director of the PRDU, and Research Fellow Steven Zyck.

In addition to Professors Barakat and Evans and Mr Zyck, the WANA Forum was also attended by distinguished PRDU alumni, including: Najla Ayubi, a judge, lawyer and activist working with the Asia Foundation in Afghanistan; Fatima Gailani, President of the Afghan Red Crescent Society; Fahim Hakim, Deputy Chair of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; and Professor Akbar Zargar, Dean of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Shahid Beheshti University, Iran. Recent graduate of the PRDU’s Chevening Senior Fellowship Programme on Conflict Resolution, Mr Mohammed Sherbini, also played an active role.

Over the course of the coming five years, these individuals and the other members of the WANA Forum will expand the network of participants, conduct research, develop policies and programmes and engage in advocacy related to reconstruction and the other identified social, economic and environmental priorities. In addition to attending and helping to organise future meetings, the PRDU will be engaging in research related to reconstruction, social cohesion and donorship within West Asia and North Africa in order to support the Forum and its promising objectives.
Conference News

Economics and security

Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck participated in the 13th Annual International Conference on Economics and Security, held in Thessaloniki, Greece, this June. Participants from more than 30 countries focused upon issues such as the causes of conflict and terrorism, the economic ramifications of armed violence, and global trends in military expenditure.

Mr Zyck’s paper, Post-Conflict Demilitarisation and State Fragility, attempted to situate one of the conference’s key themes – military expenditure and the right-sizing of armed forces – within a context of contested governance. “One of my key goals was to gain a greater appreciation for economic and econometric approaches while also encouraging these in attendance to engage with on-the-ground realities in conflict-affected environments”, he said.

Participation in this conference is an indication of the multidisciplinary focus of the PRDU’s research and its unique position at the intersection of fields such as international development, security studies, and peace and conflict studies. The PRDU looks forward to further engagement with economic enquiry and, as part of its research into post-conflict private sector development, has been collaborating with leading bodies such as the Donor Committee on Enterprise Development.

Integrity in Galway

Last October, Research Fellow David Connolly presented a paper at the annual conference of the Political Studies Association Ireland, which was held at the University of Galway. The paper drew upon some of the PRDU’s work over the past 18 months on the conceptual operation of integrity and its relevance to post-war recovery.

The theme of the conference was the ‘politics of peace and conflict’ and the emerging Conflict Resolution Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs was among the sponsors. Notable plenary speakers included Nuala O’Loan (Irish Government Roving Ambassador and Special Envoy for Conflict Resolution to Timor-Leste) and Professor Brendan O’Leary (University of Pennsylvania).

Social charter for the Middle East

Last November, HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, gave the first of a series of annual lectures in York on Post-war Recovery. In front of distinguished guests including Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, HRH outlined his vision for a regional social charter for the Middle East.

Referring to the region’s many post-conflict recovery processes, and its adaptation to the ongoing financial crisis and climate change, he said: “Such problems will best be approached through a regional social charter initiated on one of the Middle East’s most common, shared and fundamental challenges: the provision of water and energy in the light of climate change.

According to Prince Hassan, “other trans-border goods and services such as agriculture, transportation, telecommunications, utilities, infrastructure, emergency response and the elimination of communicable diseases should also be addressed as part of this charter”.

“This opportunity to act upon the benefits of regional cooperation must not be missed. Parochial interests must give way to the broader interest, to a region which is less focused upon competition and short-term solutions and more concerned with heading off those mounting challenges which have been far too long overshadowed by pettiness and division”, he concluded.

Post-war urban planning

A joint paper by Sultan Barakat and PRDU doctoral student Shipra Narang-Suri has been included in an edited volume Responses to Crises in Urban Spaces which is being published by HumanitarianNet later this year. Originally presented at the HumanitarianNet Forum held in Odense, Denmark, their paper War, Cities and Planning: Making a case for urban planning in conflict-affected cities focused on the role of urban planning in post-war recovery efforts. It suggested that the marginalisation of planning in the aftermath of more recent conflicts is a result of the unquestioned dominance of the liberal peace agenda, and the failure of international administrations to appreciate the positive or negative impacts of planning, or the implications of neglecting planning in post-war recovery.
MA Field Visit to Jordan

For a second consecutive year the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies field study visited Jordan, in December 2008, in order to re-assess the displacement challenges experienced by Iraqis in the country. Led by Sultan Barakat and Alpaslan Özerdem, the students of the 2008–09 academic year focused on three primary areas of needs – education, health and livelihoods. Through the application of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the students worked in three small groups in order to focus on their particular research tasks, gathering information on how Iraqis deal with those challenges and how they have been assisted by national authorities, local NGOs and the international community. Going back to Jordan allowed the field study participants to take the findings of the previous year’s visit as baseline and make comparisons with their own findings. On these pages, a student from each group – education, health and livelihoods – reports on their key area.

Livelihoods

What are the main challenges and opportunities concerning the Iraqi need for a livelihood?

Work and employment are crucial factors to ensure the survival of any social group; when the availability of work is scarce or hindered by legal constraints, the very basics of economic self-sufficiency are being severely challenged. In order to understand the challenges and opportunities raised by the need for a livelihood of Iraqis in Jordan, our research was subdivided into three focal areas: legal status, financial capital and social capital. After a review of the existing literature, we conducted a total of 46 interviews, 113 questionnaires, and six focus groups involving both Jordanians and Iraqis, which allowed us to gain a relatively good understanding of the situation.

The vast majority of Iraqis in Jordan have overstayed their visas, therefore becoming illegal residents in the country. Such a condition does not allow them to seek any form of legal employment, thus seriously endangering their economic self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the legal obstacles to employment faced by Iraqis are supplemented by an overall scarcity of work opportunities in Jordan. Probably in recognition of the fact that the other main resources available to Iraqis in the country are ever-depleting savings and remittances, the Government of Jordan has so far adopted a so called ‘Blind Eye Policy’ which allows Iraqis to work in the informal market generally unhindered by the Jordanian state, even though they are unable to enjoy the labour rights granted to legal workers.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges faced by Iraqis, their status as immigrants with uncertain legal rights has so far determined an extremely limited level of social interaction both within the Iraqi community and between Iraqis and Jordanians, with further negative implications for the development of successful livelihood mechanisms.

Further complicating the entire situation is the uncertainty regarding the exact number of Iraqis who currently reside in Jordan. Lack of knowledge regarding the size of the problem does not allow for effective interventions by CBOs (community based organizations), NGOs, the Government and international actors to alleviate the suffering of Iraqis and the economic burden they impose on Jordan. As a side effect of this, our access, and consequently the results of our research, were largely limited to the subgroup of Iraqis who had made their presence known to UNHCR, making a credible assessment of the entire situation almost impossible.

Marco McAllister

Education

The education group were tasked with investigating access to quality education for Iraqi refugees in Jordan, as well as assessing the impact on the host community. From a human security perspective the provision of education provides not only freedom from fear – offering children a safe, working environment – but also freedom from want – providing refugees with a sense of individual improvement, so that they are not relegated to a life based on handouts. Building on the success of last year’s MA research, the team evaluated the success of the Kings 2007 educational degree, which enabled all Iraqi children to access the public education system regardless of their legal status.

The research combined elite interviews (including representatives from the Ministry of Education, the head of UNHCR, and other key national and international NGOs), with a number of school and home visits, enabling us to complete surveys, conduct focus groups, and perform some rapid rural appraisal (RRA) activities, with Jordanian and Iraqi children.

Last year the education group concluded that, despite the education bill, access to education remained a problem, particularly in terms of the hidden costs and continuing fears over legal status. However, our research findings proved that over the past year, although some problems still remain, NGO programmes had successfully reduced concerns over access.

Iraqi social workers participating in a focus group.

Members of the ‘education team’ on a school visit organised by the Minister
Health

Subsequently, the focus needs to move away from access to address the quality of education received. In particular, the central problem area highlighted in the research was the level of overcrowding within schools, adversely affecting the quality of education for all. This was compounded by the deteriorating economic situation in Jordan, which saw nearly 30,000 Jordanian students move from private into public schools. Complaints regarding the quality of education cannot simply be blamed on the refugee crisis. The education team therefore recommended working closely with the government to reduce class sizes and improve teacher pay, to ensure the dual benefits of the education system for both displaced persons and host communities.

The research would not have been possible without the cooperation of all respondents and the support of the Regional Human Security Centre, and our host organisation Save the Children, in Jordan.

Natasha Price

Following an extensive review of available literature, the health team identified the three major themes of availability, awareness and access to constitute the research framework. The main outcomes pointed to a health service provision for Iraqis based on a large number of unconfirmed assumptions, from the issue of overall potential beneficiary numbers, to the actual level of coverage and access possible for Iraqis. The team found inconsistencies in the application of institutional policies which, if not monitored and enforced, risk marginalising a significant number of vulnerable Iraqis.

Secondary and tertiary care are still expensive and are not incorporated in the recent policy application, entailing relatively high costs on Iraqi families, most of whom cannot work for an income. Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the effects of trauma experienced or witnessed in violent Iraq prior to flight. Coupled with the consequences of not being able to actively contribute to one’s own livelihood, these constitute the basis for vast psychosocial and mental health needs. The available services in this field are scarce and still too poorly coordinated to be effective. The level of impact of Iraqi presence on the Jordanian health system is greatly dependent on the actual numbers of Iraqis present in Jordan, and whether they are making use of these available services, or will do so in the future.

In the months that followed the field visit, the Government of Jordan, together with UN agencies in charge of the protection of Iraqis in Jordan, changed their policies, extending access to a wider range of services. Although this in principle is an improvement in terms of health care provision, the next step will be to research the actual levels of utilisation from Iraqi citizens and the subsequent impact on their health and well-being.

Pietro Galli

Reconstruction as diplomacy in the Gaza Strip

continued from front page

• Appoint a Reconstruction Chief – an international leader with substantial experience in mediation, reconstruction and consensus-building – to coordinate input from international stakeholders in the reconstruction process. The Gaza Reconstruction Chief should ensure that donors’ generous pledges of assistance are fulfilled, promote coordination among international actors and advocate against external impediments, such as border closures, to the reconstruction process.

• Establish a Gaza Reconstruction Trust Fund (GRTF) to coordinate and manage the hundreds of millions of dollars committed by donors, in order to ensure transparency and accountability. Setting of priorities for such resources should, however, remain with the proposed ‘Gaza Reconstruction Commission’.

In addition to such recommendations, the report also includes an analysis of challenges facing Palestinian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. Strengthening local civil society and private firms will help mitigate conflict, bolster moderate voices, generate employment and impel Palestinian re-unification.

This study and report, which is available for download on the PRDU website (www.york.ac.uk/depts/poli/prdu), builds upon the Unit’s recent activities with international organisations, governments and others in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia.

“I am encouraged by contacts we are receiving from various humanitarian organisations and Palestinian factions. They reflect an evident thirst for new approaches,” Professor Barakat said. “The challenge now remains as to whether basic concerns for human security and technically appropriate interventions have the ability to overcome the entrenched positions and bitterness which surround this conflict.”
**MA 2008–09**

**Liberian civil society**

Liberia is a small country in West Africa that was absolutely decimated by 14 years of civil war between 1989 and 2003. Over the course of the conflict, nearly 10 per cent of the population was killed, and more than half displaced. Six years on, with over 10,000 UN peacekeeping troops in place, it is still only ranked 176 out of 179 countries in the world in terms of human development. I was lucky enough to spend my placement with Mercy Corps, as the country was attempting to find second gear in its attempt to physically reconstruct and heal the social wounds of war.

**Timor-Leste: a troubled paradise**

The newly independent nation of Timor-Leste is still struggling to come to terms with its own existence. The country has suffered sporadic outbreaks of violence since independence in 2002. The most recent crisis, in 2006, erupted following divisions within the security forces and resulted in the creation of 150,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) as communities became polarised between those who came from the east of the country and those from the west.

UNDP’s Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit (CPRU) was created in response to the 2006 crisis, and aims to bridge the gap between humanitarianism and long-term, sustainable development. Whilst it focuses predominantly on issues pertaining to IDP return and reintegration, it also has an objective to meet the wider needs of conflict-affected communities throughout the country.

During my time working in Dili, I was involved with daily activities relating to the Unit’s various projects, focusing on areas such as strengthening dialogue and early recovery for IDP reintegration, and providing support to the trust-building element of the government’s National Recovery Strategy. Such projects involve close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and, together with development partners and NGOs, aim to find durable solutions for the reintegration of displaced persons. I attended several community dialogue meetings associated with these projects, and also created a literature review on key ‘post-2006 crisis’ issues to be used as a reference point for new staff joining the CPRU.

My placement experience provided me with a valuable opportunity in which to challenge myself and apply the knowledge I learnt during class. I now understand the importance of local empowerment and capacity building. The Timorese people are the only ones capable of effecting genuine and lasting change, and therefore international actors should play a supportive role in equipping them with the necessary tools to shape their own future.

**Rebecca Thorne**

**Rice distribution at Metinaro IDP camp.**

**Chris Maclay**
... Placements ...

‘Post-post-war’
Sierra Leone

When do we stop defining a country by a prior period of violent conflict? When does a country become ‘post-post-war’? This was a question I found myself confronting during my eight-week work placement with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society.

My placement occurred seven years after the official end of the civil war in the country, and the activities I performed took me to the heart of the Society’s dilemma about this period in Sierra Leone’s history.

During my time with the Humanitarian Values programme of the Red Cross, I travelled around the country to take part in projects aimed at helping the people of Sierra Leone recover from the civil war. This included representing the Red Cross during activities in its Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation (CAR) programme, which aims to rehabilitate and reintegrate war-affected children through counselling, skills training and community sensitisation.

However, I also found myself taking part in the genesis of new ideas and projects that drew attention away from the previous war, away from explicit references to peacebuilding and rehabilitation. The Society was beginning to posit the end of the post-war era and the beginning of a new one. As a result, I was also requested to produce project evaluation and needs assessment materials that focus on the new generation of Sierra Leonean children who were not directly affected by the war, and the Sierra Leonean youths who were presumed to be reintegrated.

By taking part in this process during my placement, I was able to test and develop my skills as a humanitarian practitioner during a fascinating period of transition for the Red Cross. Yet I was also able to gain an insight into the complex ethical issues that face practitioners during such a transition. The definition of the current phase in a country’s history may be regarded as wordplay but I learnt that it powerfully determines who receives support, and how.

Mark McGuinness

Hidden communities in Jordan, Russia and Iraq

During my placement, I was fortunate to work for the International Organisation for Migration’s (IOM) Jordan, Russia and Iraq missions. Jordan, a small country that is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention, has accommodated two of the greatest displacement crises of the Middle East – the mass displacement of the Palestinians in the late 1940s and again in the 1960s, and the pre- and post-2003 displacement of the Iraqi people. However, while many Palestinians have been granted citizenship rights in Jordan, most Iraqis currently reside in the country illegally on expired visas.

Russia, on the other hand, is a vast country with phenomenally long borders and a visa application system that is notoriously difficult to navigate. It is suspected of hosting a large number of displaced communities, including Afghans, Tajiks, Ethiopians, Nigerians, Iraqis and many more. The majority of these people will have either been smuggled or trafficked into Russia, and many have been pushed into the informal work sector.

Iraq is a politically unstable country with little means of controlling its borders. It is often seen by desperate foreigners as holding a wealth of economic opportunity and attracts a large number of Bangladeshi labour migrants, among others. Many of these migrants enter the country illegally with the help of a local accomplice, and many are forced into bonded labour as a result.

Each of these countries hosts a number of hidden communities – hidden precisely because they are undocumented, unregistered and illegal. Their exact number, identity and locations are unknown, which makes them almost impossible to reach and to help. Many of them are suffering from the traumas of war and displacement, many are in need of urgent assistance. The IOM is currently working with local law enforcement bodies and NGOs on the ground in all three countries in order to help separate victims from willing criminals, but more still needs to be done.

This comprehensive internship programme allowed me to conduct invaluable research for my dissertation in irregular (or ‘illegal’) migration in multiple contexts.

Alexandra Lewis
... 2008–09 placements continued

Agrarian conflict in the Philippines

It is widely recognised that the distribution of natural resources can provide a motivation for social conflict. After decades of agrarian reforms, unequal land distribution in the Philippines continues to reinforce rural inequality and fuel conflict across many parts of the country.

For my placement, I was fortunate enough to spend two months working with the Quezon Association for Rural Development and Democratisation Services (QUARDDS), a small NGO based in the Quezon Province of the Philippines. The majority of QUARDDS beneficiaries are located in Bondoc Peninsular, an area in which a small minority of powerful landowners has retained vast expanses of land, and continues to dominate local politics. Twenty-one years after the emergence of the state-initiated Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, attempts to redistribute land to landless farmers continue to be met with violent resistance from those who benefit from the prevailing agrarian structure. Through campaign, community organisation, and the provision of legal assistance, QUARDDS works to strengthen the capacities of Bondoc’s landless farmers in order to improve their opportunities for obtaining secure access to land.

The placement offered me an opportunity to experience, first hand, the challenges of working within the rural development sector, and to put into practice many of the practical skills I had learned during the MA course. My responsibilities included:
conducting community visits;
participating in community meetings;
accompanying beneficiaries to dialogues with members of local and national government; and developing methods for incorporating conflict sensitivity into QUARDDS’ daily conduct.

Given their area of expertise, a placement with QUARDDS also offered me the opportunity to pursue my research interests in agrarian reform and conflict. As well as being thoroughly enjoyable, the placement has contributed enormously to my knowledge, skills and confidence, and I would like to offer my appreciation to Ed Quitoriano and the QUARDDS staff for providing me with such a valuable experience.

Laura Plested