Major ESRC-DFID grant to investigate the impact of research on policy

Personnel from the PRDU have been awarded a grant from the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a project entitled ‘The Influence of DFID-Sponsored State Building-Oriented Research on British Policy in Fragile, Post-Conflict Environments’. The application was developed by the project’s Principal Investigator, Professor Sultan Barakat, co-investigator Dr Adrian Leftwich and PRDU Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck. The value of the award is greater than £347,000.

The objective of this project, which is set to last 36 months starting October 2010, is to analyse and evaluate the manner in which state building-oriented research – sponsored by the Department for International Development (DFID) since the end of the Cold War – has influenced British policies in fragile, post-conflict environments. It also aims to contribute to evidence-based policies which are instrumental in preventing armed conflict and fostering effective ‘developmental states’. Put more simply, the project will help to answer the elusive question of how research can have a tangible influence upon policy-making, a subject which has been addressed by experts in the natural sciences and public administration but has rarely before been applied effectively is a worthy aim, which should give power back to the people. As you will see on these pages, the PRDU’s expertise is already being harnessed in independent policy evaluations.

However, we wait to see whether a focus on transparency, evaluation and results sits comfortably alongside a central conviction of the UK government – to reduce top-down control and give power back to the people.

Giani M Ward

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Stock of Existing Knowledge, Evidence, and Analysis

Model of Research-Policy Interaction, developed specifically for the project.
The PRDU has recently completed a major research project on behalf of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) that examines the role of education in emergencies and post-crisis transitions. The study was led by PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat and Professor Frank Hardman from the Department of Educational Studies at the University of York. They were joined by three project researchers: Dr David Connolly (PRDU Research Fellow), Dr Vanita Sundaram (Lecturer in Educational Studies) and Mr Steven A. Zyck (PRDU Research Fellow).

This research project contributes not only to broader understandings of the relationship between education, humanitarian crises and transitions; it also involved the development of increasingly rigorous methods and criteria through which to measure and evaluate the results achieved by education interventions.

Following a period of intense debate, education has recently, joined food and water, shelter, and health care, as the fourth pillar of humanitarian action. Its relatively recent inclusion stems from the recognition that the majority of the 77 million children globally who are currently out of school reside in contexts afflicted by conflict, natural disasters or a confluence of the two. In particular, girls are the largest group excluded from educational opportunities.

The PRDU-led study supported the international community’s claim that education is not only harmed by conflict and disaster; it can also help communities to recover in the aftermath of crises while developing resilience which will enable them to persist through future challenges. In addition to facilitating learning, the study demonstrated that schools can provide a safe space and sense of normality during and following upon situations of instability. Perhaps most interesting was the study’s ability to engage with and examine UNICEF interventions aimed at using education as a tool of peace building, conflict prevention and disaster risk reduction.

Professors Barakat and Hardman and their collaborators specifically focused their enquiry upon a US$201 million grant provided by the Government of the Netherlands to UNICEF in 2006 for the innovative Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) Programme. From October 2009 to May 2010, the PRDU had the unique privilege of engaging directly with the EEPCT Programme and UNICEF, including through field work in New York as well as in numerous parts of Nepal, Kenya and Southern Sudan.

In addition to an extensive documentation review and synthesis of existing data, this study involved interviews with UNICEF personnel and representatives of major international organisations such as the European Commission, the World Bank, Save the Children and others throughout the world. An in-depth, online survey was also utilised in order to reach out to UNICEF, civil society and governmental institutions in more than 40 countries.

Field work, however, provided many of the greatest insights into the challenges facing education delivery in emergency and crisis-affected contexts. Interviews, surveys and focus group discussions were organised with stakeholders at all levels, from leading representatives of the international community to individual EEPCT Programme beneficiaries in rural communities. Deputy Team Leader Professor Hardman reflects how the research “forms one of the most extensive studies that I have worked on. The findings provide new guidance for all those responding to educational needs during emergencies and will influence the building of theory in this area.”

The study paid particular attention to promising interventions such as those aimed at enhancing the capacities of governmental officials and those which sought to enhance social cohesion during and in the aftermath of conflict. For instance, Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP) in Nepal had enabled education facilities to remain neutral and separate from conflict dynamics while the Learning Along Borders for Living Across Boundaries (LAB4LAB) initiative in West Africa had enhanced cooperation and diminished tensions between diverse communities.

In addition to examining such interventions and studying the broader relationship between education, emergencies and post-crisis transitions, this study involved the development of innovative methods and approaches. The investigators, based on documentation review and field work, crafted a set of indicators and methods which will enable scholars as well as humanitarian practitioners to measure the effectiveness of educational programming in challenging contexts.

Given the added value of this study to the body of research on education, conflict, reconstruction and humanitarian action, the PRDU is currently working with colleagues in Educational Studies to develop a new research project using funding from the University of York’s Research Priming Fund. These plans include an international workshop on ‘The Role of Education in Conflict, Crisis and Recovery’ in York which will bring together key academics and policy makers working in this area. This event is expected to result in an edited volume in 2011 as well as a major grant application to the ESRC.
UNRWA head calls for Palestinian refugee question to be prioritised in peace process

Karen Abu Zayd, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief Agency in West Asia (UNRWA) delivered the second annual Prince El Hassan bin Talal lecture in post-war reconstruction and development at York last November. She was introduced to a large audience by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of York, Professor Brian Cantor.

Commissioner-General Abu Zayd began by setting out the mandate of UNRWA, which was established in the wake of the 1948 Israeli-Arab conflict, and offers assistance and protection to 4.6 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories. “These refugees, and their descendents” she said, “are among those holding the greatest stake in whatever prospects there might be for recovery from decades of strife and suffering across the Middle East.”

Ms Abu Zayd explored the characteristics of exile and conflict in the Palestinian context, considering their global implications, including the consequences for reconstruction and development. “Palestine” she said, “is a metaphor for dispossession, the struggle for statehood and the quest for freedom from imposition on Palestinian rights, their physical and economic space and their dignity.” She described Palestinian refugees’ situations across the Middle East, including in the occupied West Bank and Gaza where she noted that, “Violations of Palestinian rights are so extensive that every article in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is invaded or flouted.”

Her speech also dwelt at length on the Goldstone report, released in September 2009 in the aftermath of the December 2008 Gaza War. “It signals a critical move towards enforcing the rule of international law and is a powerful demonstration of the universal and equal application of legal principles and rules to all – States and non-state entities alike.”

A significant message that Ms Abu Zayd delivered in her presentation was to call for the prioritisation of the Palestinian refugee issue, which has often been held in abeyance during peace talks as a contentious issue resistant to resolution. “I question the validity of the prevalent logic and call for its reversal”, she argued. “Reflecting refugee concerns early in the negotiation effort will bear fruit in generating confidence in the process and promote acceptance of its outcomes.”

The full text of the presentation is available at the PRDU website: www.york.ac.uk/depts/poli/prdu/PRDU%20lecture.%20Karen%20Abu%20Zayd.pdf

PRDU research to examine impact of Multi-Donor Trust Funds

The PRDU has recently been awarded a grant from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to examine the impact of multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) on aid effectiveness and state building. An increasingly popular method of aid financing, MDTFs have been praised for enabling sustainable financing for post-conflict transitions and persistent challenges such as HIV/AIDS but have, in practice, been undermined by bureaucratic and institutional operating procedures.

This study, which is led by PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat and PRDU Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck, will include a comparison of MDTFs, which have been implemented in more than two dozen conflict-affected contexts around the world. Findings of this six-month study will be published by DFID as part of its Systematic Review series, which attempts to consolidate cutting-edge research as a means of informing policy and practice.

The project builds upon previous research by the PRDU on aid financing and MDTFs, including Professor Barakat’s article, “The failed promise of multi-donor trust funds: aid financing as an impediment to effective state-building in post-conflict contexts” (Policy Studies, April 2009).

PRDU launches Advanced Course on Conflict, Crisis and Transitions with ODI

The PRDU has long provided postgraduate courses, short courses such as the Chevening Senior Fellowship Programmes and training for individuals in conflict-affected contexts around the world. As of 2010, it is expanding its range of continuing professional development (CPD) activities through the launch of an ‘Advanced Course on Conflict, Crisis and Transitions’ in partnership with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the UK’s premier international development think tank.

The Advanced Course is a product of discussions between the PRDU and ODI concerning the need to expand learning opportunities for busy policymakers and practitioners within the UK and abroad. While both institutions noted a range of short courses provided for entry-level professionals and job seekers, they undertook a process of benchmarking which demonstrated that mid-career and senior international professions were rarely offered advanced learning opportunities.

This Course will run from 21 to 28 July at the University of York and will welcome up to 40 mid-career professionals from the UK, continental Europe, the Middle East and beyond. While in York, participants will address core issues – including conflict analysis, global governance, economic growth, and basic service provisions of evaluation methods – before dividing into specialist tracks on ‘governance and security’ and ‘humanitarian action’.

PRDU Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck noted that “following this pilot programme, the option remains to expand the course during future years and to provide increasingly targeted training on specialised topics such as conflict management and state building as well as on practical skills related, for instance, to needs assessments or evaluation methods”.
Focus on Training

The Chevening programme is named after Chevening House in Kent, the official country residence of the British Foreign Secretary. It began in 1983 and has developed into a prestigious international programme of Scholarships and Fellowships. The first Scholars started in 1984, the first Fellows in 2005. The programme provides nearly 1,000 Scholarships at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK for postgraduate students or researchers from over 130 countries. It also provides over 200 Fellowship places for mid-career professionals who are already working in fields related to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s (FCO) policy goals. The programme is largely funded by the FCO, and is managed by the British Council.

Chevening in York
Conflict Prevention and Resolution

A new syllabus for 2010 marked the 5th year of the prestigious Chevening Senior Fellowship Programme on Conflict Prevention and Resolution, which is now expected to run annually until 2013. The course continues to build upon its previous innovations and achievements, but now gives greater consideration to the prevention of violent conflict, e.g. through early warning processes and systems, in line with recent changes to UK foreign and international development policy.

Also, while this Chevening course traditionally worked in close collaboration with the leading experts and organisations in this field, in 2010 International Alert and Responding to Conflict (RTC) became official course partners. This has allowed: a more integrated approach to the study of conflict mitigation; a more rigorous study of the links between theory and practice; more regular teaching/training from core staff such as Ms Cynthia Gaigals and Ms Fleur Just (Alert) alongside Ms Joan McGregor and Dr Vesna Matovic (RTC); and 2-week work placements that now focus on building operational partnerships with the Fellows’ organisations. Dr David Connolly, PRDU Research Fellow, continued as convener, with Professor Sultan Barakat as the Executive Director.

The 14 Fellows this year came from 13 diverse country contexts across Central, South and South East Asia, East and West Africa, and Europe. The training, as always, proves critical in terms of relevance and timing. Many of the participants returned immediately after the course to play crucial civil society roles in country contexts shaped by growing tensions and new conflicts (Burma, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe). Other Fellows – from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Somaliland – brought valuable post-war/conflict insights to the group. Alternatively, those from Armenia and Herzegovina reinforced the importance of early warning and conflict prevention.

Stephen Kimiri Mwamba from Peace and Development Network (PEACENET) Kenya summed up his experience on this year’s course: “What a wonderful way to begin 2010. The depth of material, the professionalism of the delivery, the interactive environment and the undoubted relevance to my current work and country scenario made this the most enriching experience that I have had in my career.”

During the 12 weeks, key instructors and speakers – such as Dr Ben Hoffman, Mr Nick Hopton, Dr William Lume, Mr Gianni Ruffini, Dr Arne Strand and Mr Matthias Stiefel, in addition to Dr Rob Aitken from the Department of Politics – were welcomed back to York. Special thanks also go to Professor Gerd Junne and his team at the University of Amsterdam for kindly hosting the group for the Netherlands field visit. The PRDU was delighted to welcome the following new speakers to the course: Mr Kai Brand-Jacobsen (Director, Department of Peace Operations, PATRIR); Ms Deborah Davies (Reporter, Channel 4 Documentary Team, Dispatches); Lt. Col Justin Holt (former Stabilisation Adviser to the governor of Musa Qala, Afghanistan, UK Stabilisation Unit); Ms Eleanor Petch (Deputy Head, Conflict Group, FCO); Mr Chris Pycroft (Head of Policy, DFID).

Reflecting upon how the course has evolved since 2006, convenor Dr Connolly says, “The course continues to integrate a wide range of themes and case studies using a multidisciplinary approach while tackling the real challenges faced by practitioners and policymakers. The number of applicants and the expectations of participants have increased each year which encourages us to innovate in terms of the learning process, the range of speakers and the ways in which the leading organisations now participate.”

The Chevening team would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of the course, and we now look forward to welcoming the next group of senior Fellows in 2011.

Chevening in York
Security and Justice Sector Reform

The security and justice sectors, as can be seen in contemporary Northern Ireland, are often closely associated with the onset and resolution of conflicts around the world. Predatory police and military institutions, as well as corruption-riddled judicial systems, alienate local populations from the state and hamper progress not only on governance and human rights but also on economic growth and peace building.

Given its recognition of these challenges and its strong performance implementing short courses for the FCO, the PRDU was awarded the Chevening Senior Fellowship Programme on Reforming the Security and Justice Sectors in Post-Conflict Countries from 2010 onwards. This 12-week programme, which is delivered in partnership with International Alert, brought 13 mid-career professionals from 11 conflict-affected countries – in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and Latin America – to York for intensive training.

Professor Sultan Barakat, who serves as the Executive Director for both the PRDU’s Chevening Senior Fellowship Programmes, noted that “having people such as the Deputy Minister of Justice for Liberia and a Senior Superintendent of Police from Indian Kashmir is not only fascinating but also shows that the lessons we address can have a tangible effect on war-torn parts of the world.”

While in the UK, Fellows underwent an interactive learning experience which not only included staff from the PRDU and Department of Politics, but other internationally-renowned experts in...
issues such as arms control, intelligence reform and penal reform. Notable among speakers included Brigadier General (ret) Henny van der Graaf of the Royal Netherlands Army, who has served on numerous high-level disarmament panels at the United Nations, and Sir Francis Richards, former Director of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and Governor of Gibraltar. In addition to addressing a wide range of issues including democratic accountability, human rights and transitional justice, the Fellows also interacted with British government institutions. Following in-depth briefings from magistrates and barristers in Yorkshire, and visits to a Magistrates’ Court, they closely engaged with the North Yorkshire Police (NYP) as well as Baroness Angela Harris of Richmond, who has been involved with policing issues throughout her career. The NYP later provided a two-week ‘work attachment’ scheme for a select group of Fellows, who were able to study all elements of policing, from communications and training, to counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics. Similar schemes were provided by the Thames Valley Police, International Alert, Transparency International, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Further information about the UK’s own struggle with post-conflict security and justice reform was gained during a week-long visit to Northern Ireland, where Fellows were able to meet with key figures, tour prisons, examine the conflict and witness the vibrant debate surrounding devolution of the region’s police forces and judicial institutions.

The notion of policing, in particular, as a form of collaborative, consensual partnership between the people and the security services was fascinating for the Fellows, who strove to develop plans for introducing similar models of community-based policing in some of their home countries. The planning for this process of ‘policy transfer’ was already evident in a number of papers developed by Fellows on topics such as penal reform in Liberia, anti-corruption in defence procurement in West Africa and democratic oversight of the Colombian intelligence apparatus.

The PRDU and International Alert look forward to continuing this collaboration for a further three years with the support of the FCO and British Council. More information regarding this programme may be found online at: www.york.ac.uk/depts/poli/prdu/chevening_justice/
Promoting regional leadership in West Asia and North Africa

The PRDU has continued and deepened its partnership with the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Forum through a series of conferences organised in late 2009 and 2010. In October 2009, PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat, who serves as the Moderator of the Forum, led an ‘Expert Consultation on Reconstruction and Recovery’ in the WANA region.

This event, which featured presentations by Lecturer Dr Rajesh Venugopal and Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck, examined the ways in which governmental and civil society institutions within the WANA region could take greater leadership in post-conflict reconstruction processes. Government ministers and high-ranking officials from Lebanon, Iraq and the occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as HRH El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan and well-known UN diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi made key contributions through addresses and discussion. Key findings of the ‘Expert Consultation’ concerned issues such as state sovereignty, local ownership and capacity building.

These issues were followed up in May 2010 at the second annual WANA Forum meeting in Amman, Jordan, which included 120 experts and leaders from across the region. The WANA Forum’s four themes – social cohesion, the environment, ‘green’ economic growth and post-conflict reconstruction – were examined through a series of addresses and presentations by world-renowned scholars and leaders from government, civil society and the private sector.

Of particular relevance to the PRDU was the Forum’s endorsement of an action plan to guide future efforts pertaining to reconstruction and recovery within the WANA region. This action plan included the following: the mapping of regional reconstruction initiatives; the design of a regional training institute related to peace, conflict and recovery; the organisation of a joint consultation with representatives of donor institutions from within the WANA region and, in particular, the Gulf States; and the launch of a research initiative concerning the use of reconstruction as a means of promoting peace and reconciliation.

As Professor Barakat, who also moderated the May 2010 WANA Forum event, recently reminded participants in Amman, “The WANA Forum is motivated by a fervent desire for the people of this region to drive their own processes of growth, development and change, whether they relate to the resuscitation of war-torn societies, the conjoining of prosperity and environmental responsibility, or the strengthening of relationships between all peoples and cultures of our region”.

The WANA Forum – sponsored by The Nippon Foundation – is currently in its second of a five-year process of research, advocacy and action, and the PRDU looks forward to continuing this beneficial partnership through to 2013.

International Studies Association

PRDU Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck presented a paper, jointly prepared with Sultan Barakat and Mark Evans, entitled Karzai’s Curse: Legitimacy As Stability in Post-Conflict Environments in New Orleans in 2010. While there, he gained insight into the reconstruction process following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Also present at the conference was doctoral student Simon Robins, whose work featured in two panels, discussing transitional justice and the wives of the “disappeared” in Nepal.

Scottish Centre for War Studies

Professor Sultan Barakat and Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck produced a paper, presented by Mr Zyck, concerning human security in contemporary Afghanistan. The paper was presented at the Scottish Centre for War Studies conference on ‘Afghanistan’s Next Crossroads: Ten Years of International Intervention, 2001–2011’ in March 2010. This paper, which built upon the PRDU’s recent and ongoing research in Afghanistan, generated wide interest in noting that “reconstruction in a context of conflict or incipient insurgency is not a development process; it is a political one, a form of communication with the local population and, oftentimes, unwitting negotiation with existing and potential spoilers.”

Political Studies Association

At the end of March 2010, Dr David Connolly presented a paper on community driven recovery at the Political Studies Association Annual Conference in Edinburgh. During the conference, Dr Connolly also chaired a panel on Development Politics that focused on the role of the World Bank and urban development.

European Consortium for Political Research

In September 2009, Dr David Connolly presented at the 5th European Consortium for Political Research, General Conference, in Potsdam University, Germany. The paper – ‘Resistance, Renewal and Redesign: Disseminating
Mapping Sub-national Governance Reform in Afghanistan – formed part of a panel on ‘hybrid forms of governance after war’ and contributed to a long-term research project on ‘Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood’ based at the Berlin Free University.

Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP and the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR)

PRDU Research Fellow, Dr David Connolly, travelled to Constanța, Romania in September 2009 to participate in an annual Development Summit organised by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with NGOs and academic specialists from across the region. In a paper written jointly with Professor Sultan Barakat, Dr Connolly explored the opportunities and challenges to new forms of international development in Afghanistan.

As a follow up to the summit, Dr Connolly was invited to speak in Bucharest in December 2009 for a specialised training programme on ‘Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Stabilisation – Key Challenges and Responses’ which was organised by the Romanian MFA and UNDP. During this follow-up visit, Dr Connolly travelled to the city of Cluj where he met with faculty and students and discussed the potential benefits of a partnership between the PRDU, Babes-Bolyai University and the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR).

British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) roundtable discussion on Afghanistan

Building upon his commissioned study on sub-national governance and recent field research across the country, Dr David Connolly engaged in a series of policy-oriented initiatives on foreign policy and international development in Afghanistan during 2009. In early September, Dr Connolly spoke at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as part of a roundtable discussion on Afghanistan with representatives of the FCO, Department for International Development (DFID) and 15 NGOs.

Dr Connolly outlined possible future implications for political reform at the sub-national level.

HumanitarianNet Forum

War, Cities and Planning: Making a case for urban planning in conflict-affected cities, a joint paper by Sultan Barakat and Shipra Narang-Suri has been included in an edited volume called Responses to Crises in Urban Spaces (Editors: Grindsted, Piquard, Zammit and Day), which was published by HumanitarianNet last year.

The paper was originally presented at the 2008 HumanitarianNet Forum, where experts and specialists from across Europe were invited to build a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural exchange of thoughts and ideas on the issues of urban spaces and crises. Such crises may be caused by various phenomena: man-made or natural disasters, conflicts arising from social and economic discontent, bad governance, or acts of terror.

External teaching in Italy

From 26–29 April 2010, the PRDU continued its annual teaching on the MA in International Affairs at the Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale in Milan. Dr David Connolly, Dr Rajesh Venugopal and Mr Steven A. Zyck covered a broad range of topics including: a critical introduction to post-war recovery; economic recovery; monitoring and evaluation; and DDR. The sessions drew upon the PRDU’s field research in Afghanistan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Sri Lanka to explore the linkages between theory and practice, and to help the participants prepare for their field visit to the Palestinian Territories.

Where are they now?

After seven years in the PRDU, first as a PhD student and then as a Research Fellow, Dr Richard Jones joined DFID as a Conflict Advisor in 2007. Since early 2008 Richard has been in Afghanistan working in Helmand and Kabul. As the Stabilisation Advisor for Musa Qala, Helmand, Richard was embedded with the UK military and led the Military Support to Stabilisation Team in the wake of the clearance operation to retake the town. He worked alongside the new District Governor (a former Taliban Commander) to address governance and reconstruction.

As Conflict Advisor, based in the British Embassy in Kabul, Richard has advised on DFID state building initiatives for sub national governance in Helmand.

These focus on connecting the provincial Government in Lashkar Gah with district administrations to form a basis for more effective line ministry delivery. This enhances perceptions of Government. Currently Richard is seconded to ISAF’s Force Reintegration Cell, working in conjunction with the GoA on the ‘Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Programme’.

Research Round-up

PRDU releases seminal working paper on Gulf State contributions to conflict-affected contexts

While commonly under-recognised, non-Western donor countries, particularly from the Arab Gulf States, have re-emerged as major donors to developing and conflict-affected countries. The Saudi government funded a major process of mosque restoration in Bosnia-Herzegovina while also providing and subsidising electricity, food and education for large numbers of the Bosniak (Muslim) population. Following the most recent round of intensive violence in the Gaza Strip, the Arab Gulf States – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar chief among them – pledged more than twice as much financial assistance as the US and European Union combined.

Yet despite the growing role of the Gulf States in conflict-affected contexts, and while a select number of scholars have begun to track the dollar amounts involved, far too little has traditionally been known about what their largesse supports and why. These fundamental questions lie at the heart of a major working paper being released by PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat and Steven A. Zyck (Research Fellow) through the Centre for the Study of Global Governance (CSGG) at the London School of Economics (LSE). This paper comprises one output of CSGG’s Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States, which is supported by the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences.

This work was initially inspired by the PRDU’s study of housing compensation in the aftermath of the so-called ‘July War’ in Lebanon in 2006. Professor Barakat and Mr Zyck found that, with relatively little attention in the media and academic literature, Gulf States had provided anywhere from US$915 million to nearly US$2 billion for the housing sector alone. They thus sought to examine how Gulf State donors had operated in other contexts, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Iraq and the occupied Palestinian Territories.

The final paper – portions of which have been presented to wide interest at meetings of the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Forum in Amman, Jordan – is intended to ensure that the Gulf States’ current generosity, which builds upon a long-standing record of humanitarian action, is utilised as effectively as possible while helping to promote peace and stability.

Professor Barakat noted that: “What we have found is not so much that the Gulf States need to copy the models used by the US, UK or Europe but that, in many respects, they can serve as a model for reminding Western donors of the need for non-coercive forms of aid which recognise the legitimacy of recipient states.”

This report will be available electronically at the PRDU’s website as well as at: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEKP/donorship.htm

Doctoral

Congratulations to Kjell Bjork, Rand Irshaidat, and Dr Shippa Narang Suri, who have recently completed their post-doctoral studies within the PRDU, supervised by Sultan Barakat.

Outline details of their theses can be found here, and further information will be available shortly on our website at: www.york.ac.uk/depts/poli/prdu/PhDAAlumni.htm

Information about ongoing PhDs can also be found on our website.

Kjell Bjork
Sweden
The Evolution and Implementation of the International Mine Ban Treaty

The International Mine Ban Treaty was finalised on 18 September 1997, in Oslo, and has proven a successful tool to address the humanitarian disaster caused by landmines, yet most of the mine-affected country signatories will not be able to meet its clearance deadline. My thesis examines the underlying reasons for this discrepancy, and explores the Treaty’s successes and shortcomings.

The gap in research to which this thesis makes an original contribution is to link mine action with wider governance issues and national long-term development. I developed a framework of factors relating to the Civil society, Governance and the Functionality of mine action institutions affecting a country’s capacity to implement the Treaty effectively.

To explain the interrelationship between the research areas within the framework, the thesis provides an in-depth case study of Jordan to better understand the reasons why some countries succeed in implementing the Treaty, while other seemingly comparable countries fail to do so.

The thesis uses a qualitative research methodology which was designed to test the framework. The results highlight the opportunities for civil society to affect national mine action policies and the need for governing bodies to view landmines as an obstacle to long-term development. The functionality and capacity of different types of mine action actors are identified, as is the need for strong regulatory capacities to coordinate and endorse mine action on a national level.
Research

I, my thesis discusses the failure of American public diplomacy in the Arab world post 9/11; a phenomenon acknowledged by American officials and political theorists.

I chose Jordan as a case study because it enjoys several aspects that afford it the power of representing the political views dominant in the Arab world: political stability; the presence of different Arab nationalities; and the high activation of American programmes. The research utilised in-depth interviews with groups of different social and educational backgrounds.

The findings indicate eight major themes that can be attributed to the failure of public diplomacy – foreign policy, credibility, dialogue, propaganda, political language, allies, culture, and tools of public diplomacy. These themes function as points of reference to public diplomats. The study confirms the importance of understanding, and accounting for, the humanitarian, cultural, political, and social structures of the targeted audience prior to launching public diplomacy campaigns.

The thesis investigates the role of urban planning in the reconstruction of war-torn cities, particularly under the aegis of international transitional administrations, and the impact of the approaches adopted on long-term development, sustainability and reconciliation between communities.

It sheds light on the role urban planning has played in Mostar since 1994, and how it has been understood and used by local interest groups and various international actors.

The thesis concludes that although urban planning has historically played an important role in post-war recovery, it has been marginalised in more recent post-war reconstruction efforts due to the over-arching emphasis on building a liberal peace, and the unwillingness of international actors to think beyond their own mandate.

Straddling the worlds of urban planning, state-building, governance, post-war reconstruction and peace building, this research not only makes a useful contribution to literature, but also provides food for thought for policy-makers and practitioners.

Involving displaced Iraqi scholars

In 2009, the PRDU launched a collaborative initiative with the Institute of International Education’s (IIE) Iraq Scholar Rescue Project – part of the Scholar Rescue Fund – to promote the involvement of displaced Iraqi academics in issues of post-conflict reconstruction. Based on the success of initial workshops organised by the PRDU and IIE in Amman, Jordan in 2009, this programme will be expanded in 2010 and 2011.

Participatory events will focus on the reconstruction of Iraq’s higher education (HE) system. The PRDU looks forward to involving the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and Jordanian university leaders, within this process.

The PRDU is currently establishing the parameters for a major research project in which displaced Iraqi scholars, supported by IIE, will craft research papers related to various aspects of HE reform/revitalisation. These papers will then be presented at a major international forum in Amman in January 2011 and will form the basis of a volume to be edited by Professor Sultan Barakat.

As Professor Barakat noted, the scholars “will be able to use this opportunity, while displaced, to remain engaged with the issues affecting Iraq, and be far better prepared to guide the process of HE reform in their own country, and offer an Iraqi voice on the reconstruction process, once they are able to return.”

New doctoral research students

Katie Bishop
United Kingdom

Using cultural heritage in a post-conflict situation to assist in the regeneration and development of war-torn communities

My research will explore the use of cultural heritage as an active tool of community-led regeneration, rather than regarding it as collateral damage in need of restoration. I am particularly interested in how heritage management can be used to bring attention to minority groups in the aftermath of war, with emphasis on its role in gender equality, formal and informal education and commemoration.

Anna Larson
United Kingdom

The politics of post-conflict democratisation in Afghanistan

I’ve been working in Afghanistan since 2004, for the most part as a researcher for the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). AREU conducts qualitative research into aspects of development in Afghanistan, and my area of focus has been governance – elections, service delivery, democratisation and state-building. I’m focusing my PhD research on a similar field, as I want to build on the experiences and knowledge I’ve gained so far through academic analysis.

Alexandra Lewis
United Kingdom/Russia

Crime and crime control in post-conflict settings

In times of conflict and civil unrest, criminality gradually overpowers societies. While many post-conflict initiatives strive to increase security and bring about peace, few give sufficient weight to the restoration of law and order. All crimes are widely considered a secondary concern by those dealing with insurgencies and terrorism. Yet many of the ideals to which we aspire in the so-called ‘peacebuilding’ narrative are not achievable where lawlessness prevails.
Afghanistan: The London Conference
Seven things to get right this time

This is an edited version of an article by Professor Sultan Barakat and PRDU doctoral candidate, Anna Larson, which was specially commissioned for a Parliamentary Brief Special Report to coincide with the London Conference in January 2010.

Repackaged stabilisation policies will not prevail in Afghanistan. In nine years, coalition efforts to build sustainable peace have been all but cyclical. January’s London conference provides an opportunity to move beyond the re-labeled rhetoric of previous commitments. It marks the chance to recognise the complementary value and potential contribution of non-military approaches to stabilisation.

It is worth remembering that the scaling-up of military activity in Iraq coincided with a broader effort to achieve civil stability through the so-called ‘Sunni awakening’, for example. While comparisons between the two countries should be treated with caution, if the ‘surge’ is to be successful in Afghanistan, then it also needs to be grounded in a political settlement based on seven key principles:

1. Internal reconciliation
Afghanistan does not exist or function as a unified state. As such, internal reconciliation to promote a collective agenda between central government and provincial personalities is crucial. Diverse groups and their leaders must be understood and negotiated with sequentially, step by step, until a consolidation of powers is achieved. Grievances of differing people groups must be taken on board so that the government is seen to be working in the interests of the various ethnicities.

To a small extent, this has already been achieved in terms of the minority Hazara representation in government. President Karzai’s own negotiation skills must be encouraged but also formalised, rendering deals and compromises legitimate. All decisions on international foreign policy regarding Afghanistan must be made in communication with the Afghan President, as a means to re-affirm his legitimacy as leader.

2. Governmental legitimacy
The simultaneous support and undermining of the Afghan government is futile. At present officials are elected or selected according to constitutional provisions and yet are not given fiscal authority or autonomy to function as decision-makers. This provides incentives for elected officials to seek alternative means of gaining popular ‘legitimacy’, such as securing funds for service provision through informal and/or illicit means.

In maintaining a firm grasp on policy-making and financial reins the international community gives mixed messages to the Afghan public and to elected officials. These generate resentment and mistrust of international agendas and promote anti-coalition discourse in the public sphere.

3. Visible rule of law
A fatal shortcoming of the Bonn Process – initiated in December 2001 with a series of commitments to rebuilding the Afghan state, and culminating with the inauguration of parliament in 2005 – was its lack of emphasis on rule of law. Long delays for court hearings do nothing for the promotion of governmental legitimacy. This ‘justice vacuum’ creates an ideal recruiting ground for anti-government insurgents. It is crucial that this oversight is rectified, through the provision of publicly visible mechanisms to ensure that civil justice is administered.

Allocation of police to civil policing duties, as opposed to auxiliary counter-terrorism functions, is mandatory. A hybrid form of civil policing should be created, rooted at the community level. In this manner, policemen and women could gain trust and respect within the communities in which they serve.

4. Regional inclusion
The influence of neighbouring countries in Afghanistan’s political and economic affairs has long been seen by Afghans as unwelcome interference. It must be recognised that both Iran and Pakistan have the potential to influence the trajectory of stabilisation in Afghanistan significantly, and that an ‘AfPak’ focus is not enough to understand the extent of this influence. Economic interests of all neighbouring countries, China included, need to be seriously considered and incentives understood.

From these countries’ perspectives, military expansion of coalition forces could be seen as a direct threat – in the case of Iran in particular. Iran must be seen as a key regional player and moved from being perceived by the West as ‘on the menu’ to ‘round the table’.

5. Substantive incorporation of Islam
To date, international assistance has paid lip-service to Islamic principles but has not taken them on board substantively as a means to promote stabilisation. It is time to put coalition money where its mouth is, recognising and harnessing the positive force that these principles – such as morality, social justice, and community – can provide. Moderate Islam needs to be re-claimed as a positive force to push the stabilisation agenda forward. If this approach and corresponding action is not taken, Taliban elements will retain a moral high ground, continuing to appropriate Islam for their own purposes.

6. Upholding the sanctity of Afghan life
The contrast between attitudes towards loss of coalition lives and loss of Afghan lives – both military and civilian – contradicts the principles that were used to justify the invasion of Afghanistan in the first place. While every coalition loss is (rightly) registered and honoured, the same is not true of Afghan human losses. This discrepancy is not lost on members of the Afghan public.

In order to convey gratitude and a sense of value to those Afghans killed in the war effort, it is essential that fatalities are individually registered and civilian deaths investigated by inquiry. Those responsible must be held to account, whether by public apology or other forms of restitution.

7. Restoration of local loyalties and motivations
Finally, a sustained, strong motivation for fighting insurgents in Afghanistan is distinctly lacking on the part of Afghanistan National Army (ANA) troops. The tendency to shift between sides is common, not least because an ideological commitment to the coalition effort is not generally present. To promote this, localised loyalties need to be harnessed in order that soldiers’ desire to protect their home areas can be used as part of the motivation to combat insurgents. National solidarity and identity could then be built as the result of collected local loyalties and identities.

However, this needs to be undertaken in a systematic and structured manner, unlike the arming of village militias outlined in the Afghan Social Outreach Programme (ASOP). Instead, localised regiments of the ANA should be formed to strengthen connections between citizens and state institutions.
MA in Post-war Recovery Studies

Student Profiles 2009–10

Jamal ABBASI
United Kingdom
Background in management

I graduated from the University of Glasgow in 2007 with an MA Honours in Business and Management. Having been involved in a number of development related projects over the past ten years in the Middle East and Nepal – where I spent a year as a volunteer teacher – I endeavour to use the Post-war Recovery Studies MA to build, develop and channel skills in the area of Security Sector Reform.

Sayyid Hashim ALAVI
Afghanistan
(OSI/FCO/Al Tajir/ University of York Scholarship)
Background in the UN

I worked as (Senior) Political Affairs Assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Office of United Nations Assistance Mission in Kabul. My main area of focus was to advise the UN Envoy on local political developments; research various topics in areas of cross-pillar concern regarding political, human rights and security issues; and crosscheck facts reported through the press or other sources. Our team worked closely with the Afghan Administration and political parties on various issues. Prior to this I worked for the UN in Peshawar and Islamabad.

Eileen CARLSON
USA
Background in criminology and political science

In 2008, I graduated from Simon Fraser University, Canada, with Bachelor’s degrees in Criminology and Political Science. Throughout my undergraduate studies I tried to focus on an international outlook and, because of this, have done most of my work in the areas of terrorism, international law, genocide and human rights. I chose to study in Europe so that I could blend my two degrees to really concentrate on what I love, and the PRDU has offered that chance in both an academic and practical environment.

Bertram CHAMBERS
United Kingdom
Background in history and politics

Through studies and my time living abroad with my family – in Oman, Antigua, Italy and now Norway – I have developed a genuine interest in international affairs and differing cultures. My Bachelor’s degree dissertation, The Iranian Feminist Movement – a Long and Ongoing Struggle for Basic Human Rights, introduced me to the issues of conflict, human rights and the effects of a harsh totalitarian regime. I am looking forward to working in the field of humanitarian affairs, helping to shape the future of nations emerging from conflict or natural disasters.

Brianna CACACE WILSON
USA
Background in international relations

I graduated in 2008 from the University of St Andrews, Scotland, with an MA Honours in International Relations. My interests are in peace studies and post-conflict development. As my studies have mainly been theoretical and conceptual, I am looking forward to gaining some practical tools and experience that will enable me to pursue a professional career in the humanitarian and development field.

Hugh FRERE-COOK
United Kingdom
Background in history

I have just completed a degree in Modern History at the University of York. I am interested in working abroad, potentially with people and in the diplomatic world. With this in mind, the Post-war Recovery Studies MA at the PRDU seems to be a brilliant course, providing a wide variety of practical and academic learning and experience.

Sonia EQBAL
Afghanistan
(OSI/FCO/Al Tajir/ University of York Scholarship)
Background in peace studies

I graduated from Juniata College, Pennsylvania, in 2007 with a degree in Peace Studies and International Politics. I then spent a year with the US Institute of Peace. Following this I moved back to Kabul and worked with the World Bank, managing and supervising two field researches, and co-authoring the reports. The first was the baseline study for an impact evaluation of the National Emergency Rural Access Program, and the second was to design an implementable monitoring and evaluation framework for the Education Quality Improvement Program.

Samuel DONALDSON
United Kingdom
Background in philosophy and economics

I graduated in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. During my studies I took a module in development economics, and quickly became fascinated in international development. I have also had involvement with peacebuilding work through an internship with Concordis International, and have a particular interest in Nepal, having lived there as a child. This year will be a great opportunity for me to develop a deeper understanding of peacebuilding and development, as well as the practical difficulties involved in post-conflict recovery.

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I graduated from Simon Fraser University, Canada, with Bachelor’s degrees in Criminology and Political Science. Throughout my undergraduate studies I tried to focus on an international outlook and, because of this, have done most of my work in the areas of terrorism, international law, genocide and human rights. I chose to study in Europe so that I could blend my two degrees to really concentrate on what I love, and the PRDU has offered that chance in both an academic and practical environment.

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Michael HANDS  
United Kingdom  

Background in humanitarian aid

I have worked in international humanitarian aid since 1995. My interest in post-conflict recovery studies has gradually grown from my experiences after working in post-conflict countries like Western Sahara, Eritrea, Iran and Sudan. Over the years I have developed the view that the aim of humanitarian aid can often be less important than how it is implemented. My hope is that my studies will help me to understand the bigger picture so that I may better implement humanitarian projects.

Michael IRISH  
STEPHENSON  
Denmark & USA

Background in post-conflict election processes

I have worked in post-conflict environments for the last nine years. My main area of focus has been elections, although I have held a few other positions as well. During this time in the field I have had the opportunity to work with the UN, EU, IOM, Council of Europe, and the OSCE. I have long wanted to pursue a master’s degree. PRDU’s Post-war Recovery Studies programme is giving me the chance to get an insight into the theoretical aspects of post-war dynamics, which I hope to apply in the field.

Eirik Hjulstad IVERSEN  
Norway

Background in politics and conflict resolution

In 2006 I completed my BA in Political Science from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. In June 2009 I graduated from the University of Bradford with a BA (Hons) in Conflict Resolution. My second year of this degree was spent on the ISCOR program at San Diego State University, and I also completed an internship at the National Conflict Resolution Center. I see a growing importance of post-war recovery in the context of peacebuilding, development and security, and I want to develop knowledge and skills fit to the realities of post-war recovery.

Simon Le TOCQ  
United Kingdom

Background in international development with NGO management

I graduated this year from the University of East London with a BA (Hons) in International Development with NGO management. Prior to this I spent just under a year in rural Uganda working with school children and farmers on various issues such as reproductive health and sustainable agriculture. My interest in post-war development probably stemmed from this time in Africa where I frequently came into contact with the repercussions of the LRA troubles in the North, and became aware of the circumstances surrounding the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Charles MARTELL  
United Kingdom

Background in NGO and commercial sectors

Having spent the last 11 years working in a number of countries in both the NGO and commercial sectors, I feel it is time to expand my knowledge of societies which are now in post-conflict reconstruction and development. I have been fortunate enough to have spent the past six months working in Nepal. It’s not all work! In recent years I have found time to lead a team to 2nd place in a ski race to the North Pole, and also created a team to successfully row across the North Atlantic Ocean, raising funds for charity in the process.

Nick MARTIN  
United Kingdom

Background in history and international politics

I graduated in 2008 from the University of Exeter with a BA in History. Throughout my degree I increasingly focused on issues of peace and conflict. This included Tony Blair’s role in the Iraq and Kosovo wars, colonial conflict and decolonisation, and international politics. I was especially excited by the PRDU, as it offers the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to first-hand experience in the field, in an area which is hugely important and relevant. I hope with the experience gained from the course I can pursue a career in related fields.

Rory O’TOOLE  
United Kingdom

Background in history and politics

In 2008, I graduated from the University of Liverpool with a BA (Hons) in Modern History and Politics. My studies concentrated on international relations; Eastern Europe; the EU; and politics, violence, and identity in post-war states. Having acquired a general appreciation of the intricacies of international development because of my personal experiences and my dissertation, which assessed democracy promotion and EU enlargement, I decided to join the PRDU to gain both a theoretical and a practical knowledge of post-war recovery.

Philip OWENS  
United Kingdom

Background in engineering

Since graduating in engineering 10 years ago, I have worked as an engineer and have become interested in how industry grows in developing countries and how industrialisation is implemented. Whilst working in Afghanistan, I met previous students of this MA who recommended I do the course to put my experiences into academic context. I have followed their advice, and hope to move into this area of development after graduating from the University of York.
In 2008, I finished my BA degree in politics and economics from India, which was indeed an agglomeration of my interests in the field of politics. Prior to my bachelor’s degree, I held positions with the UN and the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) of Afghanistan, working in the process of democratisation. With a background as such, I expect that my education at York will equip me to promote democracy in my country with a new theoretical and practical approach.

My interest in post-war recovery has developed through the experience at university: participation in an emergency relief internship programme in the former Yugoslavia for one year. After graduating, I chose to work for a governmental organisation called the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). I was dispatched to JICA Rwanda from 2006–08, where I worked in the human resources development sector. I am hoping to go back to the field with a better understanding of post-war recovery and become part of the network of professionals in this field.

I became interested in human rights and security issues faced by victims of war and displacement through research in a refugee camp. A graduate of the Friends World Program, I have since been working and volunteering with FINCA, Project Enterprise, the Center for Microfinance, and Pro-Microfinance International, and have realised the impact of livelihood assistance on standards of living. I hope to utilise the perspective from this course to practice more realistic and methodical initiatives for economic development for both refugee and IDP populations.

My interest in post-war recovery has sparked after taking a course in South Africa. Through this course, I am keen to develop my knowledge of the issues involved in securing peace and stability in post-conflict societies, as well as developing the practical skills needed to contribute positively to this sector.

I graduated from Fukuoka University of Education with a MEd degree in 2008. Through the experience of writing my graduate thesis I explored the reasons for conflict in the world, and this brought me to thinking about how we can build a practical peace. I am particularly interested in building peace through education regardless of whether in developing or developed countries. Having this practical PRDU course, my hope is to further pursue a career teaching knowledge to children, in order to contribute to creating a peaceful world.

I graduated from York University in 2008 with a BA in Philosophy and Politics. My interest in the humanitarian sector was sparked after taking a number of modules that touched on issues of development and reconstruction, and the experience of spending a summer volunteering in a school in South Africa. Through this course, I am keen to develop my knowledge of the issues involved in securing peace and stability in post-conflict societies, as well as developing the practical skills needed to contribute positively to this sector.
The Post-war Recovery Studies MA students from PRDU went to Lebanon this year for their field study visit. Lebanon has experienced repeated cycles of violence and reconstruction in the past three decades, the most recent of which was the Israel-Hezbollah war of 2006 and its aftermath. Hosted and facilitated by UNDP Lebanon, our team of 24 students and three staff members visited Lebanon from 5–15 December 2009 to get a first hand view of the economic, social and infrastructural damage inflicted by the war, and to gain insights into the challenges and experiences of reconstruction.

After three days in Beirut, where we organised a workshop in which government agencies, INGO staff, members of parliament, municipal and community leaders discussed their experiences, we visited some of the heavily bombed areas of the city’s southern suburbs and were introduced to some of the projects sponsored by the UNDP. Next, the team moved to Tyre, in the south of Lebanon, which was the most heavily affected by the bombing. The students were divided into three teams charged with investigating the impact of the conflict and reconstruction on social cohesion, infrastructure, and economic livelihoods, and fanned out across the villages and towns of the south to do ‘live’ research. Each team collected and presented its findings which were presented in a concluding workshop in Beirut. These findings have since been published in a report edited and collated by the students themselves.

We are very grateful to the many institutions and individuals who facilitated the visit, particularly our partners, UNDP Lebanon. We were all struck by the warmth, generosity and kindness of the Lebanese people, and by their resilience in the face of repeated cycles of violence and destruction. One of the highlights of our visit was the wonderful evening we spent as the guests of a mayor, who invited our entire team to dinner with his community. Finally, we would like to recognise and thank the Association for Cultural Exchange (ACE) for their generous funding that made this trip possible.

Economic livelihoods
David Willey

How effective were the various attempts at rebuilding livelihoods in Southern Lebanon after the 2006 hostilities? To address this question we combined high-level interviews with heads of government administrative departments, municipalities, IOs, and NGOs; focus group discussions with project beneficiaries; and a questionnaire for small business owners.

As we were hosted by UNDP, our research adopted the organisation’s approach to livelihoods, which focuses on ‘re-establishing, reinforcing or preserving the underpinning of economic systems’. However, the group discovered that in Southern Lebanon, an area which historically has suffered from a poor economy, the focus on re-establishing existing systems after a conflict is not sufficient. Our research showed that despite initial success in the rehabilitation of the various livelihood sectors adversely affected by the hostilities, long-term growth and development remains an issue yet to be fully addressed.

For instance, although women’s cooperatives had their buildings and machinery quickly restored, they were still unable to manage issues of marketing or finance without external support. Some cooperatives were operating at a loss and faced closure once their supporting NGO left. Likewise, whilst mine action has been a successful (although prolonged) intervention working to restore the agricultural sector, there are greater underlying problems inhibiting the sector’s sustainability, including a lack of governmental support and effective policies for farmers. For example, the government fails to impose tariffs on olive oil, one of the South’s primary products. As a result, most Lebanese consume imported olive oil because it is cheaper than domestic olive oil.

Furthermore, the issue of security permeates every aspect of life in Southern Lebanon. Almost every person we met perceived a 5-year cycle of conflict with Israel in which agriculture is a direct target. As such, farmers are unwilling to invest in long-term sustainability and focus only on day-to-day survival. Finally, the group considered that the global decline of small-scale agriculture indicates that efforts to restore this sector may be fighting an uphill battle, thus more investigation is needed into viable alternatives.

Given the results of our research, the group concluded that a more appropriate attempt to alleviate poverty in Southern Lebanon should seek for the transformation rather than the restoration of livelihoods. Such efforts could focus on the tourism sector, which currently is exceptionally under-utilised in the region. Whatever the solution, as with all issues permeating Lebanese society, the complex and confrontational political system only exacerbates the problems facing the region and the country as a whole. It is only when the political issues are resolved that the problems of livelihoods in the South can be meaningfully addressed.

The group would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their experiences and knowledge, especially the UNDP staff. We remain optimistic that the spirit and resilience of the Lebanese people will bring them a successful and enriched future.
The July 2006 war caused massive physical destruction of civilian infrastructure and damage to public services and utilities. The hostilities displaced more than a quarter of the population, and reconstruction costs were initially estimated at $4 billion.

A main overarching research question was decided: What have been the successes or weaknesses in housing and infrastructure reconstruction? Research indicated that there was a significant failure by the central authority to provide sufficient support. This served to delay the reconstruction process and compound the already volatile political situation between the government and Hezbollah. We visited Aya al Chaab, a village two kilometres from the Israeli border. According to the Mayor, the reconstruction was fast despite the lack of government support. Qatar had adopted the village and as of December 2009 the reconstruction was 90 per cent complete. The Mayor highlighted the will to rebuild, to be independent and survive as key to the rapid reconstruction. He also criticised the government for lack of aid, planning and support – ‘the government did nothing’.

Our research also indicated that there was a lack of nationally recognised standards for needs and damage assessments as well as poor quality of construction work. This led to the unequal distribution of damage compensation and reconstruction assistance, and added to the perception of the local population that the government was disinterested in aiding the people of the South.

Gaps still remain in the reconstruction response system, but it is important to remember that after the July 2006 war Lebanon had a central government which played a decisive role despite its reputed weaknesses. Our efforts suggest that these efforts should have been more visible to the people. More visible infrastructure reconstruction and development efforts along with improved service delivery from the government could still create lasting improvements for the people of South Lebanon.

The government needs to take a holistic approach to the recovery process with active planning and coordination with other reconstruction actors, and participation in the implementation of recovery on a local level. Accountability and transparency of the process are key. There is a need for the reconstruction process, and concurrent development efforts, to aim to support local capacities for peace by infrastructure and housing recovery that delivers real results on the ground.

There is a need to focus on the relevance and legitimacy of the actors delivering aid and services – for example, positive reconstruction efforts could help to reconnect the central government with the local communities. It is not too late in taking steps towards a more visible role in the ongoing reconstruction in the South, and crucially, by doing so, the government can take a leading role in the post-war recovery and future development of South Lebanon.

Social cohesion
Eileen Carlson

How does the current political structure in Lebanon impact social cohesion on a community level?

Horizontal cohesion seemed to exist in the South among communities of different sects. Though some interviewees indicated that this cohesion may only be skin deep there seemed a general willingness to interact and a deep respect for the ‘other’ in society. We found that a major limiting factor though, came from the vertical interaction with the political system which reinforces and maintains sectarian divides. Community members seemed very aware of how quickly the political climate changes in Lebanon and how that could affect their relations with others.

How deep do social divisions run at the community level, and how are they manifested?

Though our research focused on the July 2006 war we found that many respondents wanted to talk about social divisions based on historical physical demographics. The south of Lebanon was occupied by Israel from 1982–2000, with travel restricted between villages and other parts of Lebanon. Villages of different denominational groups were cut off from each other. Remarkably, the July 2006 war actually seemed to help social cohesion. Those who did not stay with relatives evacuated to villages of a different denomination and were taken in by families of a different religion. All interviewees asked had a positive experience and most had maintained contact with their hosts to that day.

What do the governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental institutions and actors do to build positive peace and social cohesion? We found many examples of non- and inter-governmental initiatives in peacebuilding through the likes of UNDP, UNICEF, ILO and USAid. Some mayors had also been proactive, fostering events that bring all members of the community together. We had a more difficult time assessing the government’s actions as they were mainly based in Beirut with very little presence in the South, and there was very little evidence there was any consideration of peacebuilding in their actions.

Have the mechanisms and processes of reconstruction had a deconstructive effect on Lebanese society, and if so how? This was one of the most difficult questions to answer and one that we finally responded positively to. The government’s inability to respond quickly and effectively left a void filled by non-state actors that can manipulate the communities they are aiding and ultimately undermine the people’s fragile faith in their own government. A strong central government is needed to unite a people so easily fractured along religious divides. Even here though there are problems. The very nature of the political system reinforces sectarian divides and unless they are willing to work towards social peace and integration amongst the other sects, people have to abide by the sectarian institutionalisation of public jobs. We found over and over again, that people are tentatively socially cohesive, unless disturbed by the higher levels of society.
New PRDU lecturer, Dr Janine Natalya Clark, has two recent publications in peer-reviewed journals. The first, in African Studies, examines the International Criminal Court’s controversial intervention in northern Uganda and asks whether the Court should withdraw its arrest warrants against five leaders of the Lord’s Resistance Army. The second, in International Peacekeeping, centres on Brčko District in the far north-east of Bosnia. Based on fieldwork in Bosnia, it seeks to establish whether Brčko’s image as a successful multi-ethnic society is similarly sustainable when the focus of analysis shifts from the macro, institutional level to the micro level of inter-ethnic relations and everyday life.


The PRDU has maintained its research on Afghanistan and made direct contributions to the key policy debates at the international level. PRDU Director Professor Sultan Barakat and Research Fellow Steven A. Zyck published an article on the ongoing insurgency and the possibilities for a negotiated political settlement in the journal Studies in Conflict and Terrorism.

Sultan Barakat’s article in Policy Studies looks at multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs), examining a prominent one, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, and its impact upon the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) and its governance objectives. This critical case study shows the MDTF concept to be fundamentally and theoretically sound but at odds with donor countries’ primary attachment to the strategic rather than development impact of post-conflict reconstruction assistance. Such priorities limit aid effectiveness, hamper coordination and sideline the recipient state in the post-conflict reconstruction process. The failed promise of multi-donor trust funds: aid financing as an impediment to effective state-building in post-conflict contexts, Policy Studies, Volume 30, Issue 2 (April 2009).