Editorial

The PRDU, founded in 1993, was the vision of Charles Cockburn and his student, Sultan Barakat, whose MA and PhD studies at York were in the then relatively unpublished and unfashionable subject of post-war reconstruction. In those early days Sultan was, to all intents and purposes, the PRDU. Over the last 20 years he has moulded a Unit that has played a key role in developing the discipline of post-war recovery studies, and continues to provide ground-breaking expertise in the field. Because of this, the PRDU influences the way decision-makers think about modern conflict and the manner in which peacebuilding programmes are organised and delivered across the globe.

With over 400 former students and associates now established throughout the world, and 20 staff based in the Department of Politics, the Unit has the roots of a mature organisation – some achievement in just two decades. The launch of a new online MSc in International Humanitarian Affairs (see page 9), in collaboration with the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute, is an illustration of the PRDU’s development and its innovative approach. As the PRDU grows upwards, so its roots grow outwards, providing stability and sustainability as it looks forward to the next 20 years.

Gazi M. Wad

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Celebrating the University of York’s 50th and PRDU’s 20th Anniversary

On 9 October 1963, a group of 230 students registered for courses in Economics, Politics, English, Education, History and Mathematics at the fledgling University of York. In just 50 years, York has powered its way to a position as one of the world’s leading universities for excellence in research and teaching, and the application of knowledge to benefit society.

York has become one of the top ten universities in the UK for teaching and research – and is first in the UK and eighth in the world in the Times Higher Education world rankings of universities less than 50 years old.

The University is in the middle of an unprecedented period of expansion and renewal. Since 2000, it has invested in 20 new buildings on the original Heslington West campus, and completed the first two phases of a £750m campus expansion at Heslington East. This investment in new colleges, teaching and learning space, laboratories and research facilities means there are now over 30 academic departments and research centres, and student numbers have expanded to nearly 16,000.

The University website includes a section – www.york.ac.uk/50/ – which reflects on these achievements and the people who have made them possible. It also highlights some of the celebratory events which will be taking place throughout the year, in York and further afield.

One such event is a PRDU conference in New York City. As part of a joint initiative – Education in Conflict & Emergencies – with the University’s Institute for Effective Education, Voices from Fragile States continues to explore the links between fragility and education. It will be hosted by Columbia University in April (see page 3 for more details).

In June, the PRDU will also be holding its own 20th Anniversary celebrations, beginning with a presentation introduced by Baroness Harris of Richmond, at the House of Lords, London, on Thursday 20 June. The topic of The influence of state building research on British policy in fragile states is part of ongoing research being undertaken by the PRDU (see page 7). The days following this presentation will see the PRDU host numerous events including a workshop/lecture and celebration dinner to be held in York for our alumni, further details of which will be available shortly. All alumni are invited, so if you are interested please contact Sally (sally.carter@york.ac.uk) for further information.
Old York
in New York City

Columbia University hosts University of York for ‘Voices from Fragile States’

There is a growing recognition of the role that education can play in recovery for countries experiencing conflict and fragility. Education is vital in building bridges between conflict-affected communities, giving hope and opportunity to young people, and providing a safe space and sense of normalcy during situations of instability and the cessation of violence. Education can also contribute to the physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection of children, adolescents, and adult learners during times of crisis. Schools and educational institutions can serve as a central point of coordination during emergencies, becoming sites for government and inter-agency collaboration and harmonisation of relief efforts, with long-term impact through the development of capacity in the public and private sector.

In order to further explore the links between fragility and education – through their joint initiative Education in Conflict & Emergencies – the PRDU and the Institute for Effective Education (IEE), along with their partner, Columbia University, will be organising the ‘Voices from Fragile States’ conference in New York City on 15-16 April 2013. The conference will bring together a coalition of academics and practitioners representing fragile states, donors, UN agencies, and academic experts. It aims to facilitate discussions between policy makers and academics from fragile and conflict-affected countries in a non-politicised context, while providing a forum for their engagement with a wider range of academics and policy leaders from around the world. Building an evidence-base for the contribution of education to peacebuilding will be a central feature of the conference.

The conference will be chaired by Greg Dyke – Chancellor, the University of York – and Professor Robert C. Lieberman – Interim Dean, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. It forms part of the University of York’s 50th Anniversary celebrations, which will take place throughout 2013.

For more information about the Education in Conflict & Emergencies initiative, please visit: www.york.ac.uk/iee/eice/index.htm

NEWS

Conflict analysis & programme design for UNICEF Somalia

The PRDU has been commissioned to conduct a two-part study on behalf of UNICEF Somalia as part of UNICEF’s Peace-building, Advocacy and Education in Conflict-Affected Contexts programme. The four-year programme, which runs from 2012–15, aims to bolster social cohesion and human security through strengthened education policy and practices in 10 conflict-affected countries.

The first stage of the project will consist of a situation analysis in Somaliland, Puntland, and South-Central Somalia. The largely field-based analysis will focus on the community-level education system, providing context-specific information about the three unique zones. This analysis will become the cornerstone of future interventions within the broader UNICEF programme.

Building upon the situation analysis, in the project’s second stage the PRDU team will work in close collaboration with UNICEF staff, the Ministries of Education, and other stakeholders to design and present the final Education & Peace Building Programme for implementation in 2013–15. The research team is led by Sultan Barakat and includes Frank Hardman from the University of York’s Institute for Effective Education, Professor Ken Menkadaus of Davidson College (North Carolina, US), Sean Deely, Kelsey Shanks, Kathryn Rzeszut, David Connolly and local partners.

Annual Lecture addresses the “seemingly endless cycle of war”

The Prince El Hassan Bin Talal Annual Lecture 2012 was given by Mr Rae McGrath on 16 November. Rae was the co-recipient of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for co-founding the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). He is a PRDU Associate, and a long-standing lecturer on the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies.

In his talk entitled, Humanitarian response to conflict: re-thinking priorities, Rae reflected on more than 30 years of experience working in emergency relief, and on his recent role as Save the Children’s International Manager at the Za’atari refugee camp in Jordan.

The lecture highlighted five core weaknesses in the international response to conflict. The first has been spending too much time on “theoretical lesson-learning” and a “failure to transform those lessons into reality”. As an alternative, he called for “a root and branch review of how we set out to protect and respond to the urgent needs and rights of non-combatants, refugees, the internally displaced”, and following on from this how we “prioritise the specific needs of young people and children, the physically and mentally disabled, women, war-injured, the elderly and specifically those who are mentally damaged by war.” Towards fulfilling this approach, Rae reminded us of the international duty to respond with professionalism.

In addressing a second weakness, and drawing upon his insights as a field manager, Rae emphasised the necessity of responding with adequate resources and organisational capacity. This included the need to rebalance human resource expertise from home and country offices into the field and to operate using full deployments rather than short visits.

Accordingly, this would shift decision-making and policy formulation closer to the field level, which was presented as a “positive step” in responding to conflict.

With an insightful example from Liberia, the third weakness concerned the challenges to “making sure policy remains relevant to the local context and needs”. Moving forward, it was proposed that we needed to strengthen the relationship between research and practice – a lesson that spoke directly to the many students and academics sitting in the audience.

The “role of education in conflict and peacebuilding” has become a major programme of teaching and research at the PRDU since 2008. It was not surprising that “neglecting the needs of youth” was raised as the fourth challenge. Drawing upon extensive insights with Save the Children, Rae argued that this age group “is more at risk than any others” and that sustainable solutions must occur upstream with major changes to fundraising profiles and donor priorities.

Rae’s final challenge called for a better understanding of ‘war’, including the root causes and triggers, the hardware, the laws, the command and control, and, most of all, the impact.

Beginning in 2008, the Annual Lecture has brought high-profile speakers to York to engage with some of the key issues relating to post-war reconstruction. By prompting us to think more critically and ambitiously, Rae has undoubtedly extended this tradition.
New faces

Dr Mark Clegg is a newly arrived PRDU Teaching Fellow. Before coming to York, Mark worked for ECHO the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and UK Cabinet Office as the national course director for the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism education programme. This role involved directing an academic programme, in collaboration with representatives from 32 participating states. Its focus was to draw clear linkages between theory and practice for post-graduate learners and practitioners in response to natural disasters and complex emergencies. Prior to this, Mark served for 22 years as a senior military officer in the UK Ministry of Defence, gaining practical and policy experience in international intervention issues, including operational deployments to the Balkans and wider-Middle East regions.

Kelsey Shanks joined the PRDU as a Research Fellow in January 2013 and is currently working on a number of projects, with a primary focus on an evaluation of peace building education for UNICEF Somalia (see page 2). Kelsey’s research interests include post-conflict education reconstruction and the politicisation of religion and ethnicity through formal education structures. She is due to submit an ESRC-funded PhD in Political Science to the University of Exeter.

To complement her academic exploration, Kelsey also has experience of mapping needs-assessment in fragile environments, having worked as a Technical Education Consultant for the Political Affairs division of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq.

Emma Piercy is the Programme Administrator for the new online distance-learning MSc in International Humanitarian Affairs (see pages 9–11). She has been at the University of York since 2009, previously working in the Professional and Organisational Department. Emma has been studying International Studies and Politics through a distance learning course at The Open University and is due to graduate later this year.

Emma McShane, Assistant Administrator, joined the PRDU in February 2013 to work with Sally Carter. Emma moved to York from Belfast in 2008 to study a degree in Film and Television Production, during which time she decided to pursue a career in higher education. She has spent the last year working at the University of York in the Continuing Professional Development Unit.

Alexandra Lewis has been appointed as a Research Fellow at the PRDU, specialising in the territories surrounding the Gulf of Aden, specifically Somalia and Yemen. Over the past seven years she has been researching underdevelopment and conflict in the Middle East. A former MA student (2008–9), she has recently submitted her PhD on violent young offending in fragile states, for examination at the University of York. Alexandra has field work experience in Jordan, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Russia and Yemen. She is Assistant Editor for Stability, the International Journal of Security and Development (see page 8).

Alumni win awards

Richard Jones – former PRDU PhD student and Research Fellow – was awarded an OBE in the Queen’s birthday honours list, 2011, in recognition for his work in Afghanistan. As a member of staff at the Stabilisation Unit, the UK government’s centre of expertise in helping fragile or conflict states, Richard was one of the first civilians to be deployed to Helmand Province, where he lived and worked for 18 months as a stabilisation advisor in Musa Qala District. His more recent work as a conflict advisor with the Department for International Development in Kabul was also recognised, in particular his part in helping to establish the Afghan Peace and Integration Programme.

Richard Brown (MA student 2000–01) has been awarded the Queen’s Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS) for his work with NATO in Afghanistan over 10 months in 2011. Richard had a particularly influential job within Headquarters ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in Kabul as Strategic Infrastructure Adviser within the HQ’s Development Group. His brief covered all major economic infrastructure in the Power, Water, Road & Rail Sectors. He made a point of working alongside ministers associated with these sectors, thereby ensuring that ownership of ANDS (the Afghanistan National Development Strategy) was retained where it belonged and that international support was in line with this Strategy.

Richard was particularly forthright in assessing the relative socio-economic benefits deriving from infrastructure proposals, and addressing matters of ‘equity’ across the country (in line with the principle of ‘Do No Harm’). In 2005–6, Richard was a member of the PRDU team undertaking the mid-term evaluation of the ‘National Solidarity Programme’.

Congratulations to John Skelton who won the 2012 ‘Guido Galli Award’ (a lasting tribute to a former PRDU student who lost his life in the 2010 Haiti earthquake) for his exceptional dissertation, performance and engagement on the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies last year.

John is now working as a PRDU Research Assistant on various projects.

The 2012 Cedric Smith Prize for Peace or Conflict Research has been awarded to Simon Robins, who completed his PhD thesis at the PRDU in 2011 under the supervision of Professor Sultan Barakat. Simon’s thesis, Addressing the needs of families of the Missing: A test of contemporary approaches to transitional justice, used a participatory methodology to understand the needs of families of persons missing and disappeared in conflict in Nepal and Timor-Leste. Based on the perspectives that emerged from the everyday lives of victims of conflict, the thesis challenged the established approach to addressing legacies of violence as being too prescriptive and elite-driven. The judging panel said: An impressive piece of work. Methodologically sophisticated and innovative, it adds much value to the literature in its advocacy of a victim-centered approach, not least because it shows through case studies [...] how such an approach can be developed. The author’s recommendations [...] are clearly important and need to be understood within wider peacebuilding circles. The 2011 Cedric Smith Prize for Peace or Conflict Research went to PRDU alumna Suda Perera (MA student 2007–8).
PRDU/HPG Summer Course

The PRDU and the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute continue their successful partnership to offer the fourth Advanced Course on Conflict, Crisis and Transitions; a week-long programme which will take place in York during the period 16–23 July 2013.

Amongst the many distinguished speakers we have: Air Commodore (Retd) Steven Abbott CBE FCMI; Professor Nicholas Haysom (Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Political Affairs in Afghanistan); Nicholas Hopton (British Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen); and Francesc Vendrell, CMG, former Head of UN Special Mission to Afghanistan.

The Course is targeted at mid-career and senior professionals with at least seven years’ experience in humanitarian assistance, international development, post-conflict recovery, disaster management, foreign policy and/or the military. Participants will come from bilateral and multilateral policy-making and aid-financing institutions, foreign ministries, the military, UN agencies, NGOs, research centres and private firms.

If you are interested in attending the Course the deadline for application is Tuesday 30 April. Application forms can be downloaded from the ODI website at: http://www.odi.org.uk/programmes/humanitarian-policy-group/advanced-course

New partnerships in Beijing

In November 2012 the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute launched an Advanced Course in Crisis, Recovery and Transitions, in Beijing. This marked the beginning of a new and exciting partnership between HPG and the Chinese Academy of Governance (NIEM-CAG) – the country’s primary public administration training and policy research institute. The Course was supported by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and the PRDU, which was represented in Beijing by Sultan Barakat who gave a number of lectures during the week-long event.

The past decade has seen a sharp increase in the number of countries affected by, and recovering from, large-scale disasters, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. A parallel growth has occurred in the number of professionals working in the fields of humanitarian assistance, post-crisis recovery and development. Policymakers and practitioners face a myriad of challenges, yet rarely do they have the opportunity to reflect upon the critical concepts, practical challenges and policy dilemmas involved in supporting effective transitions.

This Course brought together mid-career and senior professionals to facilitate learning and guided reflection on these crucial issues and the dynamics they are subject to in the Asia-Pacific region. For more details visit the ODI website: http://www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/humanitarian-policy-group/work-advanced-course.asp

Disability and humanitarian aid

Despite the increasing use of the language of inclusion by humanitarian organisations, people with disabilities remain a low priority in emergencies. However, conflict brings the potential for change through the destruction of old systems and the injection of new ideas and funding, leading to a more inclusive and resilient society, according to PRDU Research Fellow Brigitte Rohwerder.

Older people and people with disabilities are amongst the most marginalised and neglected elements of the population. In conflict and crisis, this can lead to a disproportionate impact upon them, but so far there has been little consideration of their specific needs and capabilities.

In April 2012 the Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action (IECAH) in Madrid, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) and with the collaboration of La Casa Encendida (LCE), organised the Seminar Taking a look at the most vulnerable: older people and people with disabilities in humanitarian action for the Spanish humanitarian community.

Speakers came from a range of different organisations, including: Handicap International, Help Age International, International Disability Alliance, Disabled Peoples International, and UNICEF. Brigitte Rohwerder (PRDU) was invited to speak about her research into armed conflict experiences of people with intellectual disabilities. These people often have problems understanding and being understood, leaving them marginalised and facing discrimination.

Humanitarian organisations face the risk of failing to address the issues needed to ensure that the basic needs and rights of people with different types of disabilities are met, despite the increasing use of the language of inclusion.

The seminar was part of a bigger project by IECAH aimed at raising awareness of these issues, which has led to the publication of a Practical Guide for humanitarian organisations Nothing about me, without me – Taking a look at the most vulnerable: older people and people with disabilities in humanitarian action (http://www.iecah.org/web/images/stories/publicaciones/libros/descargas/libro-COLECTIVOS.pdf currently only available in Spanish).

In addition to speaking at this seminar Brigitte Rohwerder’s research is being published in a chapter of the book Conflict, Disaster and Disability: Ensuring Equality, edited by Valerie Kerr and David Mitchell, due out in March 2014 (Routledge).
Cultural Heritage at risk

Structure in Sharjah

Following recent social and political upheavals in parts of the Arab region, that have damaged and threatened cultural heritage resources, the newly established Sharjah-ICCRM ATHAR Regional Conservation Centre hosted an international symposium on Protection of Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (Sharjah, UAE, June 2012). The first of its kind in the region, its objective was to develop an Arab regional framework to guide national policies for heritage protection in relation to emergency planning, infrastructure, law and public awareness.

Specialist participants, representing 12 Arab countries, together with international organisations and other experts working in this field, including PRDU Director, Sultan Barakat (see photo below), addressed the following critical issues:

- Types of cultural heritage that have been most vulnerable, threatened or damaged;
- Weaknesses in current heritage protection systems including legislation, inadequate records, lack of manpower, emergency preparedness and physical protection;
- Roles to be played by governmental and non-governmental organisations to minimise damage to cultural heritage; and
- Opportunities that cultural heritage can play in post-crisis recovery and reconciliation.

The participants expressed their gratitude for this significant and timely initiative, under the patronage of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah, Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, and agreed the following actions, to be led by the newly established Centre under the leadership of Dr Zaki Aslan:

1. Review existing national laws and assist to develop model legislation on conservation of cultural heritage in the region, importantly to include provisions for emergency planning;
2. Develop guiding principles for the Arab region in relation to relevant international conventions, especially where countries may not yet be signatories to these;
3. Recommend and advise on the establishment of mandatory GIS based inventories of all cultural assets on a national basis;
4. Conduct courses and training modules for Risk Preparedness, Assessment and Emergency Planning to provide the means to protect cultural heritage in times of crisis.

Role play in Rome

On 26 October 2012, the third International Course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict concluded successfully at ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property). The five-week course, based in Rome, aimed at building capacity for cultural heritage protection in areas of the world affected by conflict. It included hands-on training sessions, emergency simulations and site visits. The course concluded with discussions on the role of cultural heritage in post-war recovery and its potential for building lasting peace, led by Professor Sultan Barakat from the PRDU.

At the end of the fourth week, the participants undertook a study visit to Emilia, a region in northern Italy that was devastated by a massive earthquake in May 2012. Here, participants were able to survey the response and recovery efforts initiated by Italian institutions.

The final week centred on the themes of early recovery of cultural heritage, and monitoring and evaluation of cultural projects in post-conflict countries. A highlight of the week was a simulated exercise organised in collaboration with a group of Italian Red Cross volunteers called the Pionieri di Roma.

As part of the simulation, the premises of the Red Cross were converted into the scene of a bomb explosion, where there were human casualties as well as damaged collections. Participants worked in teams to salvage the collection of culturally sensitive objects, prioritise treatment, and document and pack the items, whilst having to deal with the international media, representatives from the government and the army.

During the course, 18 participants from 17 countries made ICCROM their home. Participants received their certificates from the Director-General of ICCROM at a moving farewell ceremony in the presence of representatives of the Italian Red Cross and ICCROM staff. They built on their diverse experiences to create new knowledge. It was a powerful and inspirational experience for all who were involved.
History shows Syria needs a bold ‘regional’ response

Sultan Barakat and Sansom Milton argue that intervention in Syria is being driven by Western self-interest and external security issues, with little thought for the Syrian people. Such action, including the sidelining of Iran, is detrimental to finding a sustainable solution to the crisis, and can create conditions ripe for recruitment into violent struggle. Instead, support of a bold and innovative regional approach offers an opportunity to coalesce regional efforts and capacities around peace-making and mediation that could enable progress on the wider Middle East peace process.

Too much analysis of the Syrian crisis is conducted through the lens of external security, seeking to protect Western interests and advance ‘our’ security in any eventual outcome. It is time that the Syrian security perspective took centre stage in debates about the conflict and its resolution.

The West views intervention in Syria’s nascent civil war as a way to give Iran a bloody nose, but people in the Middle East have had enough of being subjected to political battles over a threat that has never materialised. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution the Iranian state has not seriously threatened Western security, yet has been at the heart of obsessive security and foreign policy. This has only served to strengthen the domination of Iran and Israel over Middle Eastern politics.

It is now clear that it was a mistake to fan the flames of conflict in Syria at an early stage. However, the situation has morphed into a civil war, and in finding a path to peace it is vital that a holistic view of the region is taken. Taking account of the perspectives of all regional actors will be critical to an effective and comprehensive mediation effort. While only the loudest voices are listened to there is a risk of being hijacked by the off-putting (such as Iran), or the cunning (such as Israel).

A bold and innovative regional approach based on cooperation, and upholding the dignity of Syrians, is needed. Moreover, the Syrian crisis is bound closely with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and offers an opportunity to coalesce regional efforts and capacities around peace-making and mediation that could enable progress on the wider Middle East peace process.

Western handling of the Syria crisis has lost sight of the craft of diplomacy. Paid diplomats should be expected to talk and sustain dialogue; instead, Western diplomats have been under the thumb of 24-hour media, looking for big and bold statements while employing bullying rhetoric. As the UN searched for a solution to the crisis they initially rolled out failed personnel who are not suited to resolving conflicts in the region. Effective mediation requires strong leadership and political will. Moreover, there is an acute need for leaders with moral authority in the region who are able to speak the language and understand the mind-frame of key actors to the conflict.

Outsiders to the region who have been deployed to Syria have described the situation in simplistic terms, relying on notions of ethnicity and sectarian identity that divide the country and delimit the possibility of a unified opposition and national response. A similar dynamic was played out in Iraq, where the ethno-sectarian framing of post-conflict intervention contributed to the violence that engulfed the country. Outside intervention in Syria runs the risk of making a bitter ethno-sectarian civil war a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Regional forums and institutions should be at the centre of dialogue and mediation in Syria. The sidelining of the African Union peace plan for Libya was symptomatic of an international approach to conflict mediation and prevention that disregards regional and local efforts. There is a need for the international community to make any Syria contact group inclusive. This requires broad regional support.

There is also a need to learn lessons from the past to prevent history from repeating itself. Russia and China will not easily forgive and forget after the mandate for intervention in Libya was stretched beyond recognition and all diplomatic channels and contacts were suspended. A more humble, inclusive, and cooperative approach to mediation in Syria could help rebuild these bridges.

As the Arab Spring protests have forcefully demonstrated it is very difficult to predict the future. However, there are a number of concrete options that may be taken to empower and enlighten people. These could enable better prospects of a positive outcome to Syria’s transition.

At a refugee camp on the Syria-Jordan border Sultan Barakat witnessed first-hand the dire situation facing hundreds of thousands of displaced Syrians. Young men and women roaming the streets of the camp with nothing to do signalled the humiliation and wounded dignity that has been experienced by many. While youth remain marginalised and forgotten, conditions ripe for recruitment into violent groups are created and the area transformed into a powder-keg.

While these school- and university-age young persons are resident in the camp, a Jordanian university lies only four kilometres away yet has nothing to do with the refugee situation in terms of assessment, assistance, or educational access. It is surely not beyond the capacity of the institution to overcome the obstacles to working in a constructive manner that can address humanitarian or even educational needs of Syrian refugees. This is but one example of an opportunity for a bold and innovative regional response to the Syrian crisis.

Before deciding to punish Iran in Syria, it is worth asking, is it worth paying the cost in terms of human lives, spillover effects into the region, and inevitable unintended consequences?
Voice of the People

culture, conflict and change in North Africa

On the 13 December 2012, Professor Sultan Barakat attended a working session hosted by the British Council, held at London’s Royal Festival Hall, and a follow up regional event in Jordan on the 27 December.

The working session built on a ground-breaking research report Out in the Open, commissioned by the British Council, looking at artistic practices and social change in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, which was produced by Sultan Barakat and his team – Dr Chad Elias (History of Art), Dr Luisa Gandolfo (PRDU), and Craig Robertson (Musician). The British Council has prepared a publication entitled Voices of the People. Art and social change in North Africa summarising the findings of this report (see page 20 of revival). The text below is extracted from the publication:

A tide of change has surged through the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) since 2011 ... an explosive release of pent up frustrations after decades of injustice, inequality, poverty, corruption, repression, and assaults on the dignity of the individual.

Rapid change is not something new to the region. Over the last generation MENA has had the fastest rate of population growth of any region in the world. The demographic realities are startling. One third of the population of this region is under the age of 15 and 70 percent are under the age of 30. Their concerns are similar to those of the next generation all over the planet: to have a good education, to find valuable work, to be respected and listened to, to have a meaningful voice in shaping their own futures.

The loud explosion of creative expression that spread rapidly across MENA ... placed art and culture at the heart of the ongoing protests and the vociferous demands for change. There is an echo here of the shortlived Prague Spring of 1968, when human rights and a free press were encouraged, and civil society briefly flourished. The brutal response of the Soviet Union drove dissent underground and opposition to the regime became primary culturally, rather than political: the symbolic and metaphorical power of theatre and music kept dissent alive and drove the changes that finally arrived with the election of the playwright Václav Havel as President 20 years later.

The research did not try to account for everything that happened and is happening in the region. It was a snapshot of a moment in time, taken between winter 2011 and autumn 2012, and the telling of a story of what this could mean for cultural relations. The voices we heard belonged to poets, activists, bloggers, artists, comedians, soap stars, photographers, writers, storytellers, philosophers, actors, satirists, musicians, film-makers, sculptors, architects, graffiti artists, designers, choreographers and playwrights, all engaged in this historic period of change-making. They belonged to gallery directors, curators, festival organisers, administrators, television and radio producers and educators working both within, and outside, the state-sponsored system of artistic, cultural and creative production.

The snapshot points to an important role for independent cultural actors and institutions in the vital task of building and strengthening civil society in the region. It also points to the fragility and the volatility of these transitions. Whilst the tide of change has slowly begun to sweep away decades of injustice, persecution and inequality, there is still a very long and difficult journey ahead. The reality is that the tide may quickly turn back with the potential rise of social antagonism, sectarianism and intercommunity strife. There is thus a need for us all ... to act now. We need to engage rather than observe.

The UK has the unique chance now to participate, assist and enable without dominating or dictating. We can pledge our support of all artistic voices, free expression and cultural internationalism. We can offer practical expertise and contacts with established organisations to create helpful links, not only amongst artists, but between artists and producers, commissioners, editors, curators and established figures and institutions internationally.

In this way, the UK can bring the best of itself to participate in building a richer world community, supported not by diplomatic patronage but by joint creativity, the interchange of opportunities, artistic friendship and mutual cultural inspiration.
New PhD research

My research – Indigenous Landmine Coping Strategies: A three-country study – is concerned with the Global Landmine Problem, and will focus on ‘vulnerability’, ‘coping’ and ‘resilience’ in the field of Humanitarian Mine Action. It will explore home-grown and locally devised solutions to the multidimensional nature of problems caused by landmines, and the barriers they pose to development, by investigating coping strategies employed by mine-affected communities in mine-contaminated countries.

Marcia Hamzat United Kingdom

My PhD research focuses on the psycho-political challenges of the reintegration of former child combatants into the civilian society in the post-conflict period, and the possible methods which could be used to address these issues more sustainably. The situation of child combatants in the Colombian context will be the primary target of my thesis. My ultimate goal is to work in the field of policy-making; to help those who left their childhood on the battlefield and struggle to (re)adjust.

Alexandra Mária Kiss Hungary

Foundation laid for building a ‘culture of resilience’ in Eastern and Southern Africa

An evaluation led by the University of York found that the UNICEF capacity building programme in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness response (EPR) for the education sector in the Eastern and Southern Africa region had laid a foundation for building a culture of resilience in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) experiences repeated natural disasters, including droughts, floods, severe storms, and cyclones. Additionally, conflict, political unrest, large-scale population displacement, economic crises, and disease epidemics combine with each other and the above natural disasters to create complex emergencies. These emergency situations can have devastating impacts for the already vulnerable population in the region, many of whom are affected by chronic levels of poverty and underdevelopment. A University of York team made up of staff from the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) and the Institute for Effective Education (IEE), was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of a UNICEF/Save the Children capacity building training programme in emergency preparedness response/disaster risk reduction (EPR/DRR) in ESAR. The venture was aimed at strengthening education sector preparedness and responses to such complex emergencies within 21 countries across the region.

The York team conducted evaluations of the programme in five countries – Burundi, Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, and Rwanda – from December 2011 to the end of February 2012. While in Madagascar they were able to see the impacts of the training in action as Cyclone Giovanna unexpectedly hit the country and devastated a large swath of the eastern part. Over 351,000 people were affected, 16 died, and 66,000 children were in need of an emergency education response.

The cyclone preparedness and response activities witnessed by the Evaluation Team before, during, and after Cyclone Giovanna served as a powerful testament to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the capacity building in the DRR/EPR initiative. Dr Sean Deely and Charlie Walker reported that in areas they visited where DRR/EPR training had been provided “authorities were well informed, organised and prepared. Teachers and schoolchildren knew about the various types of disasters and what should be done both at school and home before, during, and after a cyclone”.

The evidence gathered in the other countries also reflected the difference the capacity building training had made. The York team found that despite the enormity of its task and the relative lack of resources, the capacity development training has managed to train a critical mass of practitioners, decision-makers, and key education stakeholders in its initial phase, and lay the foundation for building a culture of resilience across ESAR. However, there is still room for improvement.

The final report is available at: https://www.york.ac.uk/iee/assets/Building_a_culture_of_resilience_UNICEF_EvaluationReport.pdf
Evaluation for World Bank in Sudan

Professor Sultan Barakat and Kathryn Rzeszut were part of an evaluation team led by London-based ICF-GHK for the World Bank’s Multi-Donor Trust Fund-National (MDTF-N) in Sudan. With the fund scheduled to close in 2013, its Oversight Committee commissioned this evaluation to examine the fund’s institutional, organisational relevance in Sudan, its cost-effectiveness, and its impact on development.

Established in 2006 following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which ended the decades-long Sudanese civil war, the MDTF-N supports a reconstruction and development portfolio of US $894.65 million. Its primary aim is to consolidate sustainable peace and pro-poor growth in order to help Sudan reach the Millennium Development Goals. Ten bilateral donors have contributed to the fund, with the Netherlands, the UK, and Norway providing nearly 80 per cent of the total. Through a counterpart funding arrangement that is unique for most MDTFs in conflict-affected contexts, the Government of Sudan provided nearly 60 per cent of the MDTF-N’s total budget.

The MDTF-N has supported 15 development projects, eight of which are now closed. The majority were implemented by project implementation units (PIUs) comprised of staff from the Government of Sudan, a design element that has had a profound positive impact on the capacity of the Sudanese government to respond to the development needs of its people.

This evaluation examined seven projects in education, transportation, rural development, livelihoods, public sector reform, and emergency projects. The team spent nearly six weeks conducting field research throughout Sudan, including Blue Nile, Kassala, North Kordofan, Red Sea, and Sennar states, and the capital, Khartoum. The findings of the evaluation’s final report were presented during the Oversight Committee meeting in December 2012.

MDTF-N trained blacksmiths and farmers in the production and usage of agricultural tools, Blue Nile State.

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Since 2001 I have been Executive Director of the Christian Communication Centre, a charity based in Northern Uganda. Prior to this I was its National Youth Director for six years. I am very optimistic that this graduate programme will enhance my professional career development, and my transformational leadership development. This will allow me to better manage humanitarian affairs, economic governance and social research for social change in order that the needs of the least advantaged communities in Northern Uganda, Uganda, and Africa are met.

I obtained a BSc in natural resources management from the University of Zambia in 2006, and later joined World Vision as a District Coordinator, rising to Program Manager. I was a ‘Trainer of Trainers’ in the SPHERE Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response in Johannesburg. I was also a member of World Vision Zambia’s rapid regional response team for the Northern region, tasked with training communities in disaster risk reduction and mitigation. In 2011 I joined Family Health International (FHI360) as a Provincial Program Officer.

Following an MA in International Affairs I have worked across East Africa, most recently in South Sudan with the NGO Save the Children – managing emergency programming in remote locations and developing new projects as part of an advisory team. I am currently pursuing a short-term contract with the International Development Research Centre’s Think Tank Initiative, before moving to Mali in the summer of 2013 to continue work in the field. I have joined the MIHA programme to engage in a period of critical reflection on the humanitarian sector.

I am an experienced human rights advocate dedicated to social justice and supporting the most vulnerable and/or marginalised groups in society, including those lacking formal education, minority communities and women/girls. Having spent the last seven years growing a successful human rights project, helping its transition into a flourishing organisation that supports democracy-building in conflict areas, I am now looking to combine previous experience with the academic framework provided by this MSc in order to pursue a career in international relief and recovery.

As an Air Operations Manager for the International Committee of the Red Cross, I have spent the last four years in Chad and the Central African Republic, planning ‘humanitarian air campaigns’ in the context of real crises. A former Uruguayan Air Force Officer (Pilot), ranked as Major (Wing Squadron Commander), my introduction into the humanitarian world started when I served as a UN peacekeeper – an Air Medevac Team Coordinator in Erithrea and Ethiopia, and later as Airfield Support Unit Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I am currently working for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Prior to joining AusAID, I was employed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in protection roles in China, Kosovo and Liberia. The reason for undertaking this University of York Masters in Humanitarian Affairs is as an opportunity for in-depth study of contemporary humanitarian challenges.
MIHA STUDENT PROFILES 2012–13

Maxwell Madzikanga
Zimbabwe

I hold the following qualifications: BSc in Politics and Administration, BSc Special Honours in Psychology, Master of Public Health, and a Master of Bioethics degree. In January 2013, I completed a Quantitative Methods in Health and Clinical Research programme conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health. I have worked in the voluntary sector for 20 years and cannot imagine anything as challenging, exhilarating and rewarding as being a humanitarian worker. The MIHA will hopefully take me through a journey of discovery and experiential learning.

Atta-ur-Rehman
Pakistan

Having completed my post-graduate degree in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Peshawar, I am currently working with UNDP for its parliamentary development and good governance project in the North-West region of Pakistan. I am also engaged with Coffey International Development to carry out assessment and research studies in FATA/KP region of Pakistan, for its peacebuilding support project. Research, monitoring and evaluation remain my key focus areas in the humanitarian sector.

Michelle Seage
USA

As Defense Liaison Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I work directly with the Tanzanian military to facilitate capacity building training and exercises in Maritime Domain Awareness and counterpiracy efforts. I also interact with many government agencies and NGO’s that provide humanitarian assistance in areas such as education, nutrition and refugee issues. Prior to Tanzania, I worked in Afghanistan and Brazil, gaining first-hand exposure to humanitarian assistance efforts in difficult, often dangerous, environments.

Mr Alik Nijimbere
Burundi

I am a young humanitarian professional, and since 2009 I’ve worked in East of Chad, West of Cote d’Ivoire and recently in Sierra Leone. My expertise is in communication and advocacy, areas I have been in charge of for NGOs like Oxfam GB and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). I am also a specialist in Education for Emergency (EiE) and have worked in that position as a member of Unicef staff coordinating an Education Cluster. Because of these roles, I have developed some additional expertise in health (health promotion), protection, child soldiers, IDPs and refugee issues.

Daniella Ritzau-Reid
United Kingdom

I completed my undergraduate degree in Social and Political Sciences BA (hons) at the University of Cambridge, with a particular focus on contemporary world politics and the intersection between religion and conflict. My professional background is both operational and theoretical, having worked in human rights research at The Centre of Governance and Human Rights, and in emergency response with Save the Children. I am happiest when based in the field, and have been privileged to work on humanitarian responses in South Sudan and Myanmar.

Kengatharan Shandralingam
Sri Lanka

I am currently working as a Humanitarian Affairs Officer in Bangkok for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), focusing on relief, resettlement programmes and humanitarian coordination. I also have work experience with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and KNDO – a local NGO in Sri Lanka. With a BA in Political Science and an MA in Peace and Conflict Studies, I hope this MIHA course will enhance my understanding and knowledge of humanitarian affairs from an academic viewpoint.

Moses Ray Owang
Uganda

I am a Public Health Specialist with a degree in Environmental Health Science from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. After a spell as a teacher I joined my first humanitarian agency, ACTED, as Public Health Officer, and have since worked for a few prominent NGOs. In 2009/2010 I studied for a MSc in Public Health for Professionals at Maastricht in The Netherlands. I was then employed by Abt Associates Inc. as Field Coordinator implementing the Uganda Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) project. I am currently at home taking care of my two lovely children.

Muhyadin Saed
Somalia

A Project Coordinator at Finn Church Aid (FCA) Somalia, I have been working in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Somalia for the last five years. I am currently with the FCA grass roots Peace Initiative Program which works with traditional and religious leaders, together with women and youth, to transform some of the pastoral and urban conflicts arising from multiple factors including sharing land and water, and structural causes of conflicts. Before joining FCA, I was a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Hargeisa.

Inna Yunusova
Tajikistan

I graduated from the Intercultural Communications Department of the Russian-Tajik (Slavonic) University in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in 2002. My career started thereafter with commercial projects implemented and stationed in Tajikistan and the Russian Federation. In 2006 I had a career shift towards humanitarian and development cooperation when I started to work for Oxfam, with a focus on humanitarian/relief issues and post-conflict development. Since 2008 I’ve been employed by the UNDP Country Office in Tajikistan.
Mindanao – reviewing organisational behaviour

The Mindanao Rural Development Program (DA–MRDP) – under the auspices of the World Bank and Department of Agriculture, Government of Philippines – is a World Bank-sponsored programme targeted at the rural communities in Mindanao, southern Philippines. It aims to reduce poverty by improving incomes and food security through the disbursement of its development aid fund. My placement was with the DA–MRDP office in Davao City.

My task was to conduct a technical review of the current organisational behaviour, particularly the institutional arrangements and business plan management of two departments within DA–MRDP. This included recommending possible improvements in the implementation activities, processes and timeframes following a thorough analysis of programme implementation patterns. The review required interacting with various individuals, I experienced first-hand the working culture of a development agency. In terms of producing recommendations for improvement, there were many similarities to the work I had done in my previous occupation. Despite the given timeframe, I was able to achieve all of the tasks as set out in the Terms of Reference.

This was my first internship with a development agency operating in a current conflict zone. The Filipino staff were warm, collegial and sincere. By learning basic Visayan words (for example, greetings, salutations and words of appreciation) I was accorded the respect of an abay (translated: friend). Perhaps the most humbling observation was the tenure of the staff – almost all had spent their professional careers in development, a testimony to their perseverance and dedication.

Jerel Lee  Singapore

The lure of South Sudan

For my field placement I travelled to South Sudan to work with the Danish Demining Group’s (DDG) Armed Violence Reduction Team. Over the two months I was there I helped conduct a baseline assessment for a project which aimed to assist communities subjected to attacks by the Lord’s Resistance Army. This involved using many of the skills I learnt on our Field Visit to Sri Lanka, such as question design, interview technique and data analysis. We identified a number of challenges the communities faced (including domestic violence, alcohol abuse and small arms proliferation) and then developed activities to target these issues.

Overall the field placement was an excellent opportunity to consolidate what I had learnt in the classroom, ranging from the post-war challenges discussed in module three, to the project design and management in module four of the MA course. All this took place within the relevant, interesting and challenging environment that is post-independence South Sudan.

During my placement I faced many challenges: malaria, five day journeys on dirt roads, and a lack of access to good quality cheese and tea to name a few. Yet the experience of working in a country in the first year of its existence was one I will never forget. So much did I enjoy it that I decided to return – I’m now working with DDG, managing the project on which I assisted!

Tom Dawes  United Kingdom
Evaluating education in Uganda

I arrived in Gulu, Northern Uganda, in the immediate aftermath of Kony2012 (a viral video by the NGO, Invisible Children, Inc. with over 34,000,000 views on the first day of its upload on 5 March, 2012). Taking the media phenomenon at face value I half expected to be surrounded by child soldiers (‘invisible children’), AK47’s, and jungle militias. The reality is far removed from this image: Gulu is a calm, sleepy town with an abundance of cows, motorbikes, chickens, and mangoes by the bucket-load.

My time in this dusty little oasis was spent working for the education department of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). With my new boss away on leave there was little idea of what to do with a keen fresh-faced intern, so I was tasked with giving some personal ‘TLC’ to the education database. I groaned silently, made some tea, and set to work. After two solid days of rather mundane data entry I decided to take the proverbial bull by the horns and present my new boss with a quickly drawn-up evaluation matrix, and very little choice to turn down my request for a slightly more gripping task. I spent the next seven weeks conducting a mid-term evaluation of NRC’s education programmes in the Acholi sub-region. Along with this I was given almost unconditional freedom to conduct my own research – interviewing at will, attending trainings, conducting workshops, visiting refugee camps and giving speeches. After taking the initiative, working for a large NGO certainly had its perks!

Being given the opportunity to coordinate an internal evaluation team and write an evaluation from scratch was one of the steepest learning curves of my life. It gave me the chance to really get under the skin of the work that NRC were doing – to witness their internal mechanisms, projects, interactions, relationships, successes and challenges. The experience allowed me to think for myself, to analyse NRC’s role and impact and begin to understand the role that I, as an NGO worker, had – and will continue to have – within this dynamic. What difference was I really making? How could I best put my skills to use? How could I make sure that, upon leaving, my work was utilised and not left by the wayside, yet another pointless intern that had to be kept busy? Needless to say, the experiences and lessons I learnt during the short time I was in Northern Uganda will stick with me and will hopefully continue to serve me well in all that I do from here onwards.

Vanessa Fortune
Ireland

To encourage peace, communication and cooperation, AHRDO perform a symbolic play about the cyclical nature of violence and war, in a local co-education Hazara school.

Theatre as therapy in Afghanistan

The field placement was an opportunity to experience in person what I knew about in theory; the use of theatre as tool for healing. Such individual and community therapy is common in Europe and North America, but remains an under-utilised resource in post-war recovery, which is a shame as it is a low-cost and easily accessible tool for community reconstruction. I was intrigued at its potential as a tool for peacebuilding.

Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO) is a pioneering NGO working in Afghanistan and is the first of its kind operating in the country. It works with participatory theatre techniques, including Theatre of the Oppressed, Forum Theatre and Legislative Theatre to improve women’s rights and provide a form of transitional justice for some of the survivors of Afghanistan’s decades of conflict. Women from different ethnic groups who have lost family and loved ones under various regimes are brought together to open grassroots levels of communication, creating space to realise that everyone suffers from conflict, which in turn can break negative preconceptions of the ethnic ‘other’.

Speaking to beneficiaries I heard how, despite the laughter and smiles in workshops, there were still many challenges in their personal and public lives. While working with AHRDO I saw women acting out the challenges and fears they have regarding the public sphere, highlighting the experiences they have had with authorities in positions of responsibility who rather than protecting civilian women chose to exploit them. While there I saw how my female colleagues overcame personal challenges and public pressure to continue their work as activists and theatre practitioners.

I anticipated the experience to be challenging, not only because this was my debut into the field, but also because Afghanistan is notorious in the media for violence, shootings, bombs and kidnappings. Despite being in Kabul for the start of the Spring offensive, I can honestly say I did not have a single negative experience for the duration of my internship.

I have hardly met such kind and caring people in my life. My colleagues at AHRDO welcomed me into their homes, offices and lives. I doubt I will learn as much, or see as much, in such a short period of time again, and I hold what I have learnt very highly.

Vanessa Fortune
Ireland

Theatre as therapy in Afghanistan
I have just completed my BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of York. During this time I studied some of the contemporary debates in the fields of development, conflict and state building. Whilst studying at the PRDU I hope to both further develop my theoretical knowledge; and to gain crucial practical skills through the fieldwork and placement, in addition to learning my colleagues’ experiences. I am particularly interested in investigating the concept of social capital in post-war contexts.

I graduated from the University of York with a BA in Historical Archaeology. My thesis concerned the role of cultural heritage in restoring Cambodian identity following a century of diverse conflict, a topic I found almost entirely undiscussed. Although my background studies are in heritage and Southeast Asia (and this has been where my two overseas placements have taken me), I am interested in reconstruction in its broadest scope; both geographically and regarding the field of study. I’m looking forward to this MA providing that scope, and the opportunity to apply it.

I’ve just completed my undergraduate degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of York. During this period I was particularly drawn to the topics surrounding post-conflict societies; both through the modules I did and my experiences of volunteering in Rwanda and South Sudan. Through my Christian faith I’m particularly interested in the role that religion plays within the context of post-conflict societies. I’m looking forward to learning more about the practical and theoretical elements that encompass post-war reconstruction.

I have been working internationally for the past 10 years with the United Nations (core organisation, UNOPS) in a variety of situations – Afghanistan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Haiti, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan – primarily in post-war reconstruction and emergency response as head of operations/project/programme management. I have been seeking a Masters that is relevant to my current experience and future aspirations, and am very much looking forward to the next year of study – to reflect, dissect and construct fresh inputs.

I graduated this year with a BA in Politics with International Relations from the University of York. The tantalising insights into the more specific field of post-war recovery were undoubtedly the highlights of my degree, and this year offers an exciting balance between learning first-hand and from those far more experienced, whilst pursuing my own academic interests. I hope to develop my studies of the dynamics between human conflict and the wider environment – be it natural resources or the growing dangers of climate change.

I graduated in 2012 from the University of York with a BA in Archaeology in June 2012. One aspect of archaeology that has influenced my decision to study conflict was the ethical issue of contested identity and the destruction/protection of physical heritage. That said, I am also attracted by the MA’s multi-disciplinary approach to peacebuilding. I hope the course, and work placement with a humanitarian organisation, will provide me with an opportunity to apply these skills in practice, and develop a career in countries requiring reconstruction after war.

I graduated from the University of York with a BA in Archaeology in June 2012. My interests in the impact of education in pre- and post-war contexts began when co-leading a project for Peace Child India in 2007. Later, my research focused on the role of education in conflict creation and resolution in Afghanistan. In 2011 I graduated from Glasgow University with an MA in Classical Civilisation and Politics, and started interning for the International Association of Community Development. I hope to assess feminism in peace education, particularly the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan.

I graduated in 2012 from the University of Glasgow with an MSc in Economic Development. Following the popular uprisings that have emerged throughout the Arab World, my hope is that Syria now faces a devastating civil war characterised by religious fragmentation and political division. The inability of the international community to come up with a solution for the situation has further increased my interest to understand the dynamics of conflict, and encouraged me to study the post-war recovery process in general, and that of Syria in particular.
MA in POST-WAR RECOVERY STUDIES
STUDENT PROFILES 2012–13

Amy Johnson
United Kingdom
Background in politics and philosophy

Having graduated with an MA in Politics and Philosophy from Glasgow University, I have spent the last year working for the University in a student support role. My studies thus far have focussed on the means and causes of war, specifically the roles played by individuals through conscription and conscientious objection. I am excited to explore alternative methods of aid distribution using a community’s existing infrastructure, distribution channels and local markets as drivers to economic recovery after conflict.

Bradley Lineker
United Kingdom
Background in history and politics

I graduated from the University of York in History and Politics with an emphasis on conflict analysis — as seen in my thesis on the contours of the Angolan civil war during the 1990s. My father’s career as a Royal Marine, and my Uncle’s time with the Grupos Especiais, has shaped and honed my interest in the patterns of large-scale conflict. More recently, my work has focused upon correlations between the abundance of certain natural resources and particular patterns of conflict.

George Padgett
United Kingdom
Background in war studies

I graduated with a degree in War Studies in 2007 and, during the past five years spent working in foresight research and with an international anti-human slavery charity, I’ve retained a deep interest in the politics and practicalities of conflict and reconstruction. I have seen, first-hand, the long-term problems and difficulties of reconstruction in post-conflict states, whilst travelling in the Balkans and Bangladesh, and hope to build on these insights during my time at York. I was particularly drawn to the vocational nature of the course.

Mátyás Juhász
Hungary
Background in conflict analysis

I graduated from the University of Kent in 2012 with a BA in Conflict, Peace and Security. I am interested in the efficiency of aid programmes, conflict analysis and resolution, so my dissertation focused on the effectiveness of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, and during my last internship I was analysing the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan. I believe that this MA course will help me to widen my knowledge about post-war reconstruction, through the unique combination of the theoretical and practical modules.

Andika Mais
United Kingdom
Background in social policy/social work

The main factor that led me to this MA is that having lived in Kenya (my birthplace), I have witnessed large numbers of refugees fleeing wars in neighbouring countries, seek refuge in my country. Another factor is that I have always been interested in working with marginalised children and young people, which was the reason I undertook a BA in Applied Social Science (Children and Young People), at the University of York. This MA, I believe, will further equip me with the tools to work within the humanitarian sector in which my interest lies.

Kristine te Pas
Netherlands
Background in international relations and conflict resolution

I graduated from University College Maastricht last year, where I focused on international relations and conflict resolution. My interest in post-war recovery has further developed through my dissertation on sexual violence against women during the conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda, and how the UN has dealt with this. I would like to pursue a career in post-war recovery, and this MA is a great opportunity for me to gain an enhanced understanding of the theoretical framework, and to acquire the practical skills necessary to work in developing countries.

Tomohiro Kontani
Japan
Background in international communication

I graduated from Aoyama Gakuin University (Tokyo) in 2012 with a BA in International Communication. However, my major was on International Security in the post-Cold War World, and my thesis dealt with the promotion of local ownership during the United Nation’s transitional administration in East Timor (Timor-Leste). I am looking forward to expanding my mind on issues of post-war recovery studies, both theoretically and practically, and believe this year could be the best moment in my life so far.

Maria Rebeca Velasco Nolasco
Mexico
Background in international relations

I have just graduated from the Universidad de las Americas A.C. (Mexico City) with a BA in International Relations. Most of my university courses, my dissertation, my social service, and some of my volunteering experiences have helped me to understand the consequences and effects of the relationships among state and non-state actors in conflict-affected societies. These experiences have motivated me to seek a career participating in humanitarian aid projects and helping to rebuild post-conflict societies.

Peggyt Pollard-Davey
United Kingdom
Background in literature and cultural studies

Since graduating in 2008, I have volunteered with a number of international organisations whose focus is young people, education, cultural exchange and health. In 2004 I worked in Nepal for seven months, and there experienced first-hand some of the challenges of working in countries in conflict. I am currently interested in North Africa and the Middle East, and hope the MA will enable me to bring together these various interests, and provide practical skills for employment in the field.
I graduated from the University of Southampton in 2012 with a BA in History. As part of my degree I studied conflict and its effects – focusing on the events of a conflict itself, rather than the consequences of war. I was attracted to the PRDU by the opportunity to further this study of conflict whilst also being able to put this knowledge into positive effect in post-conflict recovery. The combination of theory, fieldwork and placement is a unique feature of the course that goes beyond the textbook in giving me practical skills that can be used in real-world situations.

I graduated from the American University of Afghanistan in 2010 with a Bachelor’s degree in Business. During the past five years I have worked as a researcher, project officer and consultant in NGOs, the United Nations and the Afghan government. I have a strong interest in involving youth in development and reconstruction. I was linked to the PRDU by the opportunity to further my knowledge about post-conflict and its effects – focusing on the quality and provision of education, as well as the ‘conscription’ of minors into armed forces.

I graduated from the University of York in 2008 with a degree in International Relations. My dissertation reported on whether the 2004 Tsunami had been a missed opportunity for peace for Sri Lanka. Since then I’ve been at an educational international volunteer charity based in the Inner Hebrides, Scotland; working and volunteering in South & East Africa, South & Far-East Asia and the Middle East. I have a particular interest in how conflict affects the quality and provision of education as well as the ‘conscription’ of minors into armed forces.

Since graduating with a Bsc in Politics and International Relations from the London School of Economics, I have been engaged with national and international organisations in various aspects of the political reconstruction of post-Taliban Afghanistan. My work has covered reconciliation, security and justice sectors reform, communication warfare and counter-insurgency, reintegration and transitional justice. Having worked for years in a conflict zone, I have a fostered interest in the broader theoretical underpinnings of post-conflict development.

I graduated from the University of Leicester in 2008 with a degree in International Relations. My dissertation reported on whether the 2004 Tsunami had been a missed opportunity for peace for Sri Lanka. Since then I’ve been at an educational international volunteer charity based in the Inner Hebrides, Scotland; working and volunteering in South & East Africa, South & Far-East Asia and the Middle East. I have a particular interest in how conflict affects the quality and provision of education as well as the ‘conscription’ of minors into armed forces.

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I graduated from the University of Toronto in 2012 with a MA in Political Science and Sociology. I have worked with various organisations in Kenya, and most recently have been working with an International Organisation promoting democracy and peacebuilding in Somalia. I am optimistic that this MA in Post-War Recovery Studies will provide me with an opportunity to share my past experiences and also gain the skills needed in reconstructing Somalia and other war-torn countries.

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Helping to save the children in Afghanistan

It’s -8°C, a relatively warm night for mid-January in Kabul. Last winter temperatures plummeted to -17°C and families living in informal settlements around major cities like Kabul, many displaced due to conflict or in search of better economic opportunities, struggled to survive the winter in makeshift shelters.

I am currently working for Save the Children as a Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response Programme Officer. I have been working in Afghanistan since September 2011. After finishing the MA at the PRDU in 2010, I began a training scheme with Save the Children – spending six months getting experience in humanitarian response in the London head office, followed by a six-month placement in Afghanistan. Since then I have been supporting emergency preparedness and response activities across the country. My job has involved conducting needs assessments, designing interventions to support households affected by emergencies such as drought, fundraising, reporting to donors on how their resources have been used and what the impact of our activities have been, as well as coordinating our interventions with other humanitarian actors, putting appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems in place and building the capacity of our staff who are on the front line of delivering assistance to communities. Working in a context like Afghanistan, with a complex history of conflict, ongoing vulnerability to natural disasters and a plethora of external actors, is challenging. Security constraints mean it’s often difficult to see firsthand the real effect of your work. My time at the PRDU, however, has done much to prepare me for working in Afghanistan. In my daily working life I consistently battle with many of the issues we spent hours discussing in the classrooms of York, and although I have a lot to learn, I feel my work has benefited because of the MA course I studied.

Jennifer Weatherall United Kingdom (MA class of 2009/10)

Project managing at the Foreign Office

Shortly after graduating from the PRDU I was hired as a Deployable Civilian Expert by the Stabilisation Unit. The tri-departmental unit (DFID, FCO, MOD) was established to respond to the complex challenges of fragile and conflict-afflicted states, and works with countries to enhance their capacity for self-governance. My first deployment was as the Stabilisation Advisor for Sangin in northern Helmand, Afghanistan – one of the most hostile districts in the country at the time. As daunting as this was at first, I found that my time at the PRDU brought to life many of my past experiences with the NGOs and the military, and provided me with the conceptual understanding required to face some of the uncertainties that lay ahead.

Over the course of a year my team, working closely with the US Marines, were able to leverage development projects to demonstrate the effectiveness of the incumbent government. We helped the local people to create a functioning District Community Council, the election for which was the highest attended ever in Helmand at the time. These changes came at a significant cost of blood and treasure and progress has been slow since; however, the District bazaar is now bustling and the people are more positive about what the future might hold.

Since returning home, and in light of the worsening crisis in Syria, I was hired at short notice as the Project Manager within the Syria Team at the Foreign Office, and have since been working on a £9.4m portfolio of UK Conflict Pool projects. The programme is designed to strengthen the opposition and civil society; support human rights and accountability; prevent regional overspill of the conflict; and prepare the country for transition. The situation in the country is dire and the UK is working with the new National Coalition and international partners to secure a political settlement which will be satisfactory for the people of Syria.

Jamal Abbasi United Kingdom (MA class of 2009/10)
Syrian refugees in Jordan:
Research in a live and fluid environment

In December 2012, PRDU lecturer, Dr Luisa Gandolfo led this year’s MA in Post-war Recovery Studies students on their Field Visit to Jordan, accompanied by Dr Claire Smith and Dr Mark Clegg. Here, Mark Clegg introduces the 12-day visit, which is a central pillar of the MA course. The group of 30 students was split into four research themes, as outlined below, and a precis of the students’ reports on their experiences of putting classroom theory into first-hand practice are shown on these two pages.

The main purpose of the visit was for the students to gain a first-hand view of the complexities surrounding Syrian refugees located in Jordan. Jordan provided a useful case study due to its history of hosting fleeing refugees from other regional conflicts. With the conflict in Syria still developing, this visit promised to be a challenging endeavour. Consequently, PRDU’s hosts in Jordan played pivotal roles in assisting the students during the visit. The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation, led by its President, His Excellency Ayman Al-Mufleh, facilitated our access to Za’atari refugee camp throughout. Further, sincerest thanks must go to Al al-Bayt University, including the Vice President, Dr Osama Nusier and the UNESCO Chair at Bayt al-Hekmah, Dr Hani Akho Rashida, for their kind support and collaboration.

During the visit, research was conducted in Za’atari refugee camp, as well as in nearby urban areas including the town of Mafraq, just a few kilometres from the Syrian border. PRDU students met and spoke with Syrian nationals, Jordanian academics, international and local NGO representatives, and UN agency staff. The students used their time to study four distinct but interlinked research themes. One group concentrated on the coordination of humanitarian assistance to refugees. The second group focused on the coping mechanisms being used by Syrians. A third group examined education, protection and youth programmes, while a fourth group explored notions of social cohesion.

The students delivered their preliminary findings to a selection of Al al-Bayt University staff members and students, as well as to His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman, prior to departing from Jordan. A further presentation was delivered by PRDU students at the University of York in February 2013.

Special thanks are also due to Sally Carter and Jo Freer for their crucial administrative support back in York, and to Professor Sultan Barakat for his direction and guidance throughout.

Our group researched how bilateral, multilateral and NGO humanitarian assistance is coordinated within the Za’atari refugee camp. Due to the complexity of the research question the group decided to focus on the three aid provision sectors of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), Food and Shelter, as well as refugee involvement within this delivery mechanism.

During the research process we came to realise that within the camp there was a parallel aid delivery mechanism in operation. One aid delivery channel was administered by the local NGO that manages the camp and the other by the UN cluster sector leads. As camp managers, the local NGO received large aid donations from private donors as well as regional powers that it distributed directly to the camp inhabitants.

To help increase the effectiveness of aid delivery, the refugees, with the help of the camp managers, had set up a camp organisation structure with streets functioning as the basic unit of social organisation. Each street had a street leader and each zone a committee. Despite this structure being in place, the community leaders and refugees felt that they were in effect powerless when it came to having their needs addressed. The parallel aid delivery mechanism in effect had some refugees receiving more while others felt left out. This general feeling of being powerless and ignored by camp management led to raised tensions amongst camp inhabitants, who felt sometimes that the only way they could be heard was by protesting.

The artificial environment of a refugee camp is not an ideal solution to a crisis, but if the refugees had a greater participatory role, being able to make decisions concerning their life, this would go a long way to giving them back their sense of worth and belonging.

Being in the ‘live’ environment of the Za’atari camp was an invaluable experience in which we had the opportunity to witness first-hand the effects of war on people’s lives.

Andika Mais United Kingdom
The stresses of refugee life

We assessed the varied coping mechanisms used by Syrian refugees in Za’atari refugee camp, and the surrounding local environs, to deal with the chaotic environment of the camp and the stresses of their new lifestyle. Our aim was to analyse how these coping strategies could be further facilitated by the relevant authorities to maintain the welfare of those refugees in the area of study. In doing so, we came to appreciate the difficulties faced by researchers and practitioners in the field.

One of the guiding premises of this study is that culture forms an important method of explaining uncertain environments to the individual. Subsequently, it unsurprisingly underpins many of the coping methods that we found evidence of. The findings of this study were broken down into three constituent elements:

1. Refugee Resilience: the ability to ‘bounce back’ from a traumatic experience. In this case we witnessed the alteration of social space and the overall determination to avoid dependency.

2. Hospitality: the pro-active assertion of control over the environment around the refugee in a way that makes sense to them culturally.

3. Social Interaction: this includes the ways that refugees vent their frustrations and their need for information about the uncertain situation around them.

Overall, refugees in the area of Mafraq utilise their own cultural understandings of the world to base their methods of coping against the turmoil around them. By understanding the contextual background for these methods, the international community can be better placed to constructively intervene in ways that make sense to the refugees.

Amy Johnson United Kingdom

Growing numbers put pressure on the Jordanian-Syrian ‘brotherhood’

Our group researched the social cohesion between displaced Syrians and the Jordanian host community, both inside the camp and in the surrounding urban areas. As the exclusionary nature of a refugee camp acts as a barrier to social integration, and as social cohesion itself is such a long-term and subjective concept, we chose to focus on three clear points of interaction between the two communities: internmarriage, trade and employment. These points of interaction acted as a framework for our research, informing our methodology, objectives and respondent selection.

The group carried out interviews with international and local NGOs, government officials, Mafraq residents and displaced Syrians, both inside and outside the camp. We were struck by the receptivity and hospitality of the respondents, and their willingness to share their experiences. We found strong evidence of already existing social cohesion and networks between the two communities due to shared culture, history, religion, language and values. Almost every individual interviewed – both Syrian and Jordanian – spoke of the ‘brotherhood’ that exists between the two groups.

The findings of our research suggested that the relatively successful handling of the Syrian migration and the welcoming nature with which this has occurred is due to the pre-existing social cohesion between the two nations.

However, we also encountered evidence that perceptions are shifting as the number of refugees increases and Jordan’s resources are further pressured. We therefore recommend more emphasis on community impact projects designed to benefit both Jordanians and Syrians. The trip was an eye-opening experience in terms of the reality of the Syrian forced migrancy, and the challenges and complications of conducting academic research in conflict-affected areas.

Amy Johnson United Kingdom

MA in POST-WAR RECOVERY STUDIES
FIELD VISIT 2012–13

11 Distinctions among Graduands

In January 2013 the PRDU welcomed back those students from last year’s (2011–12) MA in Post-war Recovery Studies course who were able to attend the graduation ceremony in York.

Of the 29 students who successfully completed the course, 11 received Distinctions (D) – a magnificent achievement. Congratulations to them all: Louise Cotter-Gibbons (D), Chelsea Cowan, Thomas Dawes (D), Francesca De Marco, Johanna Deming (D), Christina Dimakoulea, Thomas Evans (D), Vanessa Fortune (D), Ramona Grützner (D), Heather Harden, Thomas Jarvis (D), Yosuke Kubota, Aman Kwatra (D), Jerel Lee, Márcia Lima, Kyra Mills, Jawid Najumyar, Jennifer Navarro, Luigi Niccoliti, Philip Randall, Huw Randall-Smith (D), Clare Sadler (D), Ramin Shirzay, Laura Simpson, John Skelton (D), Linda Sánchez Avendano, Andrea Trevisan, Yasser Waris, Julian Zakrzewski.

Honorific Degree for Chairman of the Nippon Foundation

In January, Yohei Sasakawa, who has strong links with the PRDU, received an honorific degree from the University of York in recognition of his significant contribution to society. As Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, Yohei has a long track record in philanthropy and the advocacy of social justice. He has promoted social development around the world, striving to improve public health and education, alleviate poverty, eliminate hunger, and help the disabled.
OUR VISION
IS TO EXCEL AS A WORLD-CLASS CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION THAT LINKS THEORY TO PRACTICE FOR THE ENABLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF WAR-AFFECTED SOCIETIES.

OUR RESEARCH AGENDA
IS SHAPED BY FIVE UNDERLYING COMMITMENTS THAT INFORM OUR WORK ON CONFLICT AND POST-WAR RECOVERY (TRANSITIONS). IT IS:

1. **PROBLEM-FOCUSED**, COMBINING STATE-OF-THE-ART CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS WITH EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED RESEARCH;
2. **DIVERSE** IN ITS THEORIES, METHODS AND SUBJECTS OF STUDY;
3. **OPEN TO INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES**;
4. **INTERNATIONAL** IN ITS CONCEPTION OF THE SUBJECT, DISSEMINATION, ACADEMIC INFLUENCE AND POLICY IMPACT;
5. **EMBRACING THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**, USER ENGAGEMENT AND THE DISSEMINATION OF OUR WORK TO NON-ACADEMIC AUDIENCES.

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**Voices of the People**

Culture, Conflict and Change in North Africa

(British Council, 24pp)

This publication presents the key insights from a detailed research project carried out for the British Council by the PRDU (see page 7 of Revival). The research, led by Professor Sultan Barakat, comprised 112 interviews with individuals or groups of artists, cultural activists and civil society representatives in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, plus responses gathered in subsequent discussion groups with interested stakeholders and partners. This publication, and the research on which it is based, offer a snapshot of a particular moment at a time of rapid transformation. It looks into the many possibilities for future relationships between the UK and the region.

The publication is available for download, in English or Arabic versions, from the British Council website: www.britishcouncil.org/about/publications

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**War, Clausewitz and the Trinity**


This book explores Clausewitz’s central theoretical device for understanding war – the ‘remarkable trinity’ of politics, chance and passion. By situating the great Prussian in historical context, the author presents a conception truer to Clausewitz’s intention. Seeking to achieve this through an in-depth reinterpretation of On War and Clausewitz’s other writings, the book draws on existing studies but argues that there is room for clarification. It presents fresh perspectives into aspects of Clausewitz’s thought, and emphasises elements of his theory that have often been neglected. Furthermore, it provides a solid basis from which debate on the nature of modern war can move forward.

"... no-one has unpacked Clausewitz’s theory of war more convincingly than does Dr Waldman here.”

Professor Colin S. Gray, leading strategic theorist.

**Recent Publications**

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  - John Chan

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**Revival**

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