Editorial

Recent research by the PRDU (see this and the last issue of revival), and other bodies, has highlighted the fact that education can play an important, immediate role in post-conflict recovery. It should not be seen as a longer-term issue, to be dealt with once security and relief efforts near completion.

Within this context Higher Education (HE) has often been seen as a luxury. Whilst acknowledging its own (relatively privileged) experience as part of the UK’s HE sector, the PRDU is keen to show and promote the significant potential for sustainable, grassroots rehabilitation and recovery that HE can bring to war-torn societies.

Around the world, universities are places where many students meet “the other” for the first time. Those from opposing sides may now sit in the same classroom, and universities promote an atmosphere in which campus-level reconciliation is encouraged – even demanded. In post-conflict societies, interaction between people from different ethnic, racial, religious, or ideological backgrounds can help to foster new inclusive identities, and bridge communal divisions based on propaganda and tribal hatred.

In a world of uncertainty and conflict, education can be a force for stability. Unlike wealth and possessions, once given it cannot be taken away.

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Arab awakening: Art in social and political change

**Out in the Open: Artistic Practices and Social & Political Change in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia** is a seven month study exploring the role of arts in – and as an expression of – revolution, and the manner in which citizens utilise art as a medium of documentation, expression and mobilisation in times of change.

The research aims to expand our understanding of how, and by whom, art is used in times of political and social change, and provide a foundation to facilitate discourse on the role of arts in society, cultural relations and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa.

Incorporating arts and culture in everyday life, the research will explore the political symbolism within cartoons, songs and street art, as well as the role of museums and galleries in the documentation of social change in the course of the Arab Awakening.

Under the auspices of the British Council the project is being conducted by a team from the University of York – Professor Sultan Barakat (PRDU, Primary Investigator), Dr Luisa Gandolfo (PRDU), Dr Chad Elias (History of Art) and Craig Robertson (Musician), in close collaboration with members of staff in the various case-study countries.
Put down arms ... Pick up books

Following Sultan Barakat’s invitation to Tripoli late last November, we report on the PRDU’s proposed support for the Higher Education (HE) community in Libya as the country builds towards a democratic constitution. Years of experience in post-war reconstruction has shown that HE is far too often ignored. Considering the energy, initiative, and enthusiasm displayed by youth in the Libyan revolution, it is imperative now to harness these forces in a positive direction. No doubt, university students will lead and shape both society and government in the very near future. Investing in their education today to encourage responsible citizenship will make a significant difference to the development of democracy in Libya.

Setting the scene – talks in Tripoli

The new Libya is founded on a commitment to conduct an election by June 2012 to establish a National People’s Council. This new legislature will form an interim government and establish a body to draw up a new constitution for Libya. The constitution-making body will have 60 days to produce a draft which will be submitted to the National People’s Council for approval and subsequently put before the people of Libya in a referendum requiring a majority of two-thirds of the electorate.

Youth activism – civil and military – has been at the heart of the revolution, and there is a huge demand amongst youth for the freedoms and rights that come with democracy. Many young people have idealistic expectations of a rapid transformation of the country and expect marked and immediate improvements in political and economic inclusion. Young people have significant responsibilities in the National Transitional Council and thousands of young men have been on the front-line in the fighting and are experienced fighters and providers of local security to towns. Their constructive engagement in the transition process is critical if they are not to become spoilers and threaten the legitimacy of the process itself. About 88 per cent of the population is urban and university campuses are central to youth mobilization and organization.

Professor Barakat was invited to Tripoli by UNDP at the request of the President of Tripoli University to advise on how higher education could play a key role in engaging Libya’s youth in the reconstruction of the country. During a five-day stay he gave three lectures on reconstruction – the reconstruction of HE; the role of youth in reconstruction; and civil society post conflict – as well as undertaking meetings and workshops with UNDP staff, officials from the Ministry of Higher Education, and students.

The challenge of transition

All too often assistance in conflict-affected areas is dominated by short-term security and humanitarian relief. Having studied the reconstruction of HE in Iraq, our experience suggests a need to move away from this hand-to-mouth approach. If properly supported, universities can play a crucial role in empowering individuals and communities, by providing the advanced capabilities necessary for societies to assume genuine ownership of the recovery process. HE in Libya has the capacity to:

- help demobilise and reintegrate former combatants;
- provide campuses where diverse populations mix, and minds can be opened towards ‘the other’;
- send positive signals to the Libyan Diaspora who may be encouraged to return and participate in the rebuilding of the new Libya;
- catalyse post-conflict recovery by contributing towards the emergence of a knowledge-economy – producing innovative research, strengthening links with industry, and supplying highly skilled graduates in critical disciplines.

Unlike many recent war-torn states, Libya is well poised financially to embark on an ambitious recovery strategy. In 2007 the country started large-scale plans to become a leading knowledge-economy and pledged to invest $9-billion in domestic HE. While there may be a temptation to reject these plans due to their association with the previous regime, it would be wise not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The plans should be revised to ensure that they are transparent, accountable, and promote job creation for Libyans.

Libyan society and HE must move out from under the shadow of Gaddafi. In the transitional period until the constitution of Parliament (the middle of next year at the earliest) the HE Community could provide the strength and continuity which is understandably missing from Libya’s civil society at present. This Community would include students, academic faculty, support staff, and the immediate ‘host’ community around each university campus.

We are delighted to announce that Dr Sean Deely has been appointed Deputy Director of the PRDU. Over the past 18 years Sean has worked in development assistance, humanitarian aid, and political affairs programming in the Balkans, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. He specialises in the design and planning of post-conflict recovery strategies and programmes.

Dr Deely has a wide experience in teaching and training on humanitarian and development programming. He has lectured at the University of York, the Instituto de Empresa, City University of New York (CUNY), and Spain’s School of Industrial Organization (EOI).

Before joining the PRDU he worked for the United Nations, most recently as Senior Recovery Advisor in Libya. From 2005-09 he headed UNDP’s Peacebuilding and Recovery Unit in Nepal, establishing a range of programmes on constitution building, registration and demobilisation of Maoist combatants, civic education and engagement, and electoral reform to support the implementation of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. From 2002–04 he led an IFRC-World Bank research and development programme in Somalia to identify and strengthen local capacities to plan, manage and sustain primary health care facilities in Puntland and Somaliland. Between 1998 and 2002 he was Senior Officer for Post-Conflict Recovery at the Geneva HQ of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Sean is an alumnus of the PRDU, taking the MA course in 1997–98 and gaining his PhD at the Unit in 1995. Current research interests include ethics and accountability; youth participation in political transitions; and the relationship between elitism and inequality in conflict-affected states.

In October 2011, Sultan Barakat participated in the 15th annual Forum 2000 meeting in Prague, Czech Republic, hosted by the late Václav Havel and Yohei Sasakawa (see www.forum2000.cz/). Professor Barakat spoke in a panel discussion on the role of social media in the Arab Spring. His presentation addressed the positive potentials opened up by new media, but he also spoke about the limitations of social networking sites in supporting in-depth dialogue about long-term developmental issues facing the region.

Hats off to our Graduands

Congratulations to the following students who have successfully completed the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies and were awarded their degrees at ceremonies in York.

(D) denotes distinction

**2009–10 (pictured left)**

Jamal Youssuf Abbasi (D), Sayyid Hashim Alavi, Eileen Elizabeth Carlson, Bertram Douglas Chambers, Samuel John Donaldson, Hugh Leonard Frere-Cook, Michael John Hands, Michael John Irish’ Stephenson, Eirk Hjulstad Iversen, Simon Charles Le Tocq, Charles Edward Martell, Nicholas Jon Martin (D), Todzhdin Nadzhmednov, Rory Duncan O’Toole, Philip Stanley Owens, Ajmal Poya, Kathryn Marie Razsutz (D), Tomoko Shimada, Julia Lynn Smith (D), Peter Owen, Ajmal Poya, Kathryn Marie Razsutz (D), Yuki Urnkeage, Jennifer Weatherall (D), David James Willey.

**2010–11**

Edmund John Addington, Nicoletta Antonini, Rana Baeal Arafat, Simon Calvert Boorman, Sisse Budolfsen, Jonathan Virgil Bunting-Williams, John Han-Chung Chan (D), Tsztoru Date, Nairz Ahmad Ebrishinkhall, Mahmouda Sonia Eqbal, Pawit Habib, Nancy Abdin Hamad, Mahboobullah Iltaf, Ahmad Haris Jahangeer, Dai Jing, Patrick Francis Keating, Alan Lloyd (D), Richard Alexander Milburn, Majida Rasul, Ines Roeleke (D), Edmund John Addington, Nicoletta Antonini, Rana Baeal Arafat, Simon Calvert Boorman, Sisse Budolfsen, Jonathan Virgil Bunting-Williams, John Han-Chung Chan (D), Tsztoru Date, Nairz Ahmad Ebrishinkhall, Mahmouda Sonia Eqbal, Pawit Habib, Nancy Abdin Hamad, Mahboobullah Iltaf, Ahmad Haris Jahangeer, Dai Jing, Patrick Francis Keating, Alan Lloyd (D), Richard Alexander Milburn, Majida Rasul, Ines Roeleke (D), Edmund John Addington, Nicoletta Antonini, Rana Baeal Arafat, Simon Calvert Boorman, Sisse Budolfsen, Jonathan Virgil Bunting-Williams, John Han-Chung Chan (D), Tsztoru Date, Nairz 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PRDU launch Working Paper Series

The PRDU is pleased to announce the launch of its new Working Paper Series, edited by Research Fellow, Dr Tom Waldman (see page 16). The series will publish original and engaging papers by PRDU Masters students, scholars, fellows and associates on a bi-monthly basis. The papers will cover a diverse range of issues concerned with post-conflict and post-crisis/disaster reconstruction, state building, fragility, peacebuilding, development, conflict resolution and humanitarianism.

Papers in the series can be downloaded from the PRDU website by going to: www.york.ac.uk/policy/centres/prdu/report-amp-publications/

Guido Galli best dissertation award

Congratulations to Alan Lloyd who has won the 2011 ‘Guido Galli best dissertation award’ (see revival 27) for his exceptional dissertation, performance and engagement on our MA in Post-war Recovery.

The first issue of the new PRDU Working Paper Series is published as part of the 2010 Guido Galli award which went to PRDU MA graduate, Julia Lynn Smith – currently program assistant with the International Migration Organization’s Mission in Iraq’s Integrated Capacity Building Program.

Mainstream disability into every stage of humanitarian assistance, concludes Forum

Established in 1999 in Doha, Qatar, the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs provides diagnosis, evaluation, training and development services for children with all forms of disabilities. With the 5th International Shafallah Forum, 22–24 January 2012, focusing on “Crisis, Conflict, and Disability: Ensuring Equality”, the Center was aiming to make sure that the disabled will no longer be the forgotten ones during emergency relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts. Under the patronage of Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the Shafallah Forum gathered together UN personnel, government officials, disability and disaster experts, and NGO representatives to discuss, debate and exchange ideas and best practice as to how to make responses inclusive.

Brigitte Rohwerder (PRDU research assistant and MA graduate) was invited to speak at the Forum, sharing her dissertation research on the consideration of persons with intellectual disabilities in humanitarian assistance policy and practice.

It was acknowledged that persons with disabilities were disproportionately vulnerable in times of emergency and had thus far been largely neglected despite making up 15 per cent of the world’s population. Under Article 11 (Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, countries party to the Convention and the international community must take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities during armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and natural disasters.

There was a call to mainstream disability into every stage of humanitarian assistance – including disaster preparedness, early warning, emergency response, and post-conflict recovery and rebuilding – as well as to fully harness the abilities and potential of persons with disabilities. The Forum also called on stakeholders to promote and support research efforts to help compile more comprehensive data on people with disabilities around the world and in different crises.

First aid to cultural heritage

September 2011 saw the start of the second short course organised by ICCROM on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict, in collaboration with UNESCO, the Italia Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Blue Shield. Sultan Barakat participated in the initial design of the course and delivered two components: the first on Cultural Heritage Assessment, identifying and anticipating the specific threat faced by cultural heritage in terms of conflict; and the second, on the last week of the course, explaining ways of integrating cultural heritage into post-conflict recovery.

Saferworld – Qatar

Saferworld is an independent NGO that works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote cooperative approaches to security. In early 2012 it will publish the results of a research project, commissioned from the PRDU, on the role of Qatar in peace engagement in the Middle East, with a specific focus on conflict mediation.

The small Gulf emirate has been active in mediating conflicts in the Arab and Muslim world – the 2008 Lebanese political crisis, the Houthi conflict in Yemen, and the Darfur conflict in Sudan.

The report, which will be available at www.saferworld.org.uk, offers an overview of Qatar’s post-war reconstruction and humanitarian efforts and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of its conflict mediation.

Support for Afghanistan from NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Professor Sultan Barakat, one of the international experts invited to the 57th Annual NATO Parliamentary Assembly (7–10 October 2011), contributed through a paper addressing post-conflict development in Afghanistan.

Held in Bucharest, Romania, the Assembly explored the civil aspects of security, defence, economics and politics. A main topic was the role of women in post-war Afghanistan. Samira Hamidi, country director of the Afghan Women’s Network, concluded that women must be given the same rights as men to participate in building peace and stability in the country.

Maj. Gen. Karl Engelbrektson, the Swedish Military Representative to the EU and NATO, said that UN resolutions demanding an immediate and complete halt to acts of sexual violence against civilians in conflict zones “serve as orders for us in the military community from the highest political level” and have to be implemented at all levels. He proposed the naming of a strong gender adviser close to the commander of all international military missions.
Course Coordinator, Dr Claire Smith, reflects on the 2011 event and says that this summer’s Course will build on the success of the first two years.

The PRDU/ODI Advanced Summer Course enters its third year this coming July. Established in 2010 through a joint partnership between PRDU and the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) – the UK’s premier international development think tank – the course targets mid- to senior-career global professionals from the humanitarian and development sectors.

The short summer Course provides a unique opportunity for professionals seeking a moment’s respite from their busy working lives to engage in advanced learning and reflection with a range of high-level international speakers. The green York campus with nearby attractions including ancient city sights and hill-walking in the Yorkshire dales, both of which are offered during the course, provide an ideal setting for discussion and contemplation.

Last year we attracted participants from the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast and South Asia, the US, UK and Europe; from international agencies including IOM, UNDP, World Vision, IMC, the EC, World Bank and Oxfam. The joint PRDU/ODI programme also offers several bursaries each year to professionals from developing countries. In 2011 we sponsored Muhammad Syahril Sangaji, an Indonesian peace activist, and Joelle Bassoul, a Lebanese journalist based at Columbia University’s Earth Institute.

The Course focuses on enabling participants to explore the everyday challenges faced in their work in light of contemporary theory and concepts on the key issues in current conflicts, crises and transitions. In 2011, the case of Afghanistan and the role of the military in transitions were explored in depth, with the expert insights of Major General Mike Smith, His Excellency Mohammed Haneef Atmar and Francesc Vendrell CMG. Professor Mark Duffield also gave a keynote lecture on the challenges of security to humanitarian action.

The July 2012 Course builds on what we have learned over the past two years, and will cover 10 modules bridging humanitarian action and post-conflict transitions, including conflict analysis, peace processes, international law, transitional justice, solutions to forced displacement, stabilising fragile states and learning from evaluations. It will focus on exploring the cases of Somalia and Libya, bringing in experts on these regions to inform and challenge the participants. Among the distinguished contributors will be Ian Martin (Special Representative of the Secretary General for Libya) who will be speaking about Stabilising Fragile States.

Register now for Summer 2012
Entry deadline: 31 March 2012
Dates/venue: 17–25 July / University of York
More details and information at:
www.york.ac.uk/politics/centres/prdu/
training/short-courses/
and at
www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/
humanitarian-policy-group/
work-advanced-course.asp
where you can watch a five minute promotional video about the Course.

Sultan Barakat and Claire Smith with the 2011 Advanced Summer Course participants.
New lecturers join Department

Dr Luisa Gandolfo was appointed the Altajir Lecturer in Post-war Recovery Studies at the University of York’s Department of Politics and the PRDU last September. Luisa came to York from Durham University’s Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies where she was a CASAW (Centre for Advanced Study of the Arab World) Post-doctoral Research Fellow, studying the online activism and identity construction in the Arab blogosphere. Dr Gandolfo’s research interests reside in the Levant and North Africa, with particular foci on identity, nationalism, online activism, conflict and inter-faith relations in Palestine/Israel, Jordan and Tunisia.

Since 2008 Luisa has published within Mediterranean Politics, Middle East Journal, Radical History Review, Middle East Quarterly and the Arab Studies Journal.

Dr Nina Caspersen will be joining the Department of Politics as Senior Lecturer in September 2012, and will be linked to the PRDU. Nina’s research focuses on the dynamics of conflict and strategies for conflict resolution. She is currently working on two main projects: one on unrecognised states; and the other on democratisation and conflict resolution. Her most recent book is Unrecognized States (Polity 2012).

Nina’s work is comparative in scope but with a particular interest in the Balkans and the Caucasus where she has conducted extensive field research. Her work has specific policy implications and has been used by a number of international organisations.

New administration assistant

Wendy Cattle has joined Sally Carter in the PRDU administration team. Having worked in the insurance industry for the last few years, Wendy wanted to have a complete change of career and, after spending the last six months visiting universities with her son, decided that she too would like to get involved in University life, complete with its exciting and new opportunities.

Evaluating UNICEF Capacity Development

An evaluation of UNICEF’s emergency preparedness and response (EPR) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) capacity development efforts in the education sector, in five countries in the east and southern Africa region (ESAR), is being conducted by a team of researchers led by Sultan Barakat and Frank Hardman from the University of York’s Institute for Effective Education (IEE). The core team includes Dr Sean Deely, Gianni Rufini and Kathryn Rzeszut. This is part of UNICEF’s global Education in Emergencies and Post-crisis Transition Programme (EEPT), which was the subject of a review and evaluability study conducted by the PRDU in 2010 (see review 27).

This current evaluation analyses the extent to which UNICEF’s capacity development training targeting the education sector has contributed to better protection, prevention, and preparedness for emergencies arising from natural disasters and conflict. It also aims to provide UNICEF with actionable recommendations with the goal to support evidence-based policies and appropriate programming strategies in education within post-crisis contexts.

The team has already concluded field visits to Malawi and Burundi, with upcoming field work scheduled in Rwanda, Madagascar, and Comoros. The final evaluation will be submitted to the UNICEF ESAR office in Nairobi in March 2012.

ESRC–DFID project progress

The PRDU is leading a three-year research project, The influence of DFID-sponsored state building-oriented research on British policy in fragile, post-conflict environments, funded through the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council)–DFID (Department for International Development) Joint Scheme.

The project has entered its second year with the first phase of the methodology completed. The main task has been to map and identify relevant DFID-sponsored state building research. An initial review has produced three ‘research clusters’, which will serve as case studies.

On 12 December 2011, Professor Sultan Barakat and Dr Tom Waldman met DFID personnel in London to update them and present the first outputs of the project, which were positively received. DFID also approved the team’s plan for future activities, which will entail surveys and interviews with personnel from DFID, FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), and the MoD (Ministry of Defence), as well as field research in Afghanistan, Nepal and Sierra Leone.

To date, the project has published a Project Concept Paper which outlines the aims and objectives, its conceptual and theoretical base, and methodology; and a Project Progress Paper which outlines the first stages of the research (both available on the PRDU website).
A new systematic review, commissioned by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), sees the PRDU team up with colleagues from the University of York’s Institute for Effective Education. This is the second commission that the PRDU have received from DFID, following the success of our systematic review of multi-donor trust funds (see revival issue 27). Here, PRDU Research Fellow, Kathryn Rzeszut, outlines the facts behind the current review, which will explore evidence to support the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private primary schools, mainly in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In March 2010, DFID launched its education support strategy, Learning for All, with the goal to focus half of all of the UK’s bilateral education support on fragile and conflict-affected countries. As part of the overall pledge to help developing countries meet the UN’s Millennium Development Goals deadline on education by 2015, the UK has committed to spend at least £8.5 billion on education in developing states, with annual expenditure in this sector projected to be £1 billion per annum between 2010–15. While nearly half of this aid will go to Africa, a significant portion is also being channelled to South and West Asia.

Recently, DFID increased its support to Pakistan, with overall UK assistance to that country projected to double, averaging £350 million per year until the 2015 deadline. Much of that will target the education sector. With 17 million children out of school and a 50% adult literacy rate which declines to 33% for adult women, DFID’s strategy aims to strengthen Pakistan’s education system by educating four million more children, supporting teacher recruitment and training, providing six million textbooks, and constructing over 40,000 classrooms. In Afghanistan, DFID is projected to provide an average of £30 million per year, from 2011–15, to the education sector indirectly through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Through this support, DFID seeks to increase primary school enrollment by 211,900 children (95,355 of whom are girls) by 2015.

The education sector is a cornerstone in DFID’s overall aid strategy and is a main focus area in South and West Asia, particularly in Pakistan; therefore, the Department seeks to compile information on best practices for education-sector interventions in order to provide a foundation for the development and implementation of appropriate policies and programmes. Recent research in developing countries such as India, Pakistan, and Nigeria indicates that private schools catering to the poor are an emerging trend, even describing them as a “global growth industry”. These do not solely comprise of charity- or NGO-funded schools, but also include for-profit schools. An increasing awareness of the various types of schools available to students in developing countries has led to interest in the role that low-cost private schools can play in education service delivery through either public-private partnerships or private-led development.

Despite this increasing awareness and popularity, private schools in developing and fragile states are still viewed with some suspicion. Private funding and delivery of education services are often perceived as a threat to state authority, rather than complementary or agents of government programmes. In the case of for-profit institutions, the profit motive is often viewed as incongruent with the perception of education as a social rather than commercial good. This has resulted in reluctance amongst some governments and NGOs to support private schooling. Despite these constraints, registration rates of low-cost private schools are generally quite high, especially in places where they face legal or regulatory hurdles which limit their operations. In light of this and it’s stated commitment to using “flexible and responsive approaches to education in fragile and conflict-affected countries, including through partnerships with non-state providers”, DFID is committed to seeing what role low-cost private schools can play in ensuring the provision of education for all.

To examine more thoroughly the research conducted on low-cost private schools in order to inform the policy decision-making process, DFID has commissioned a team from the PRDU and the University of York’s Institute for Effective Education (IEE) to conduct a systematic review on the topic. Led by Professor Sultan Barakat, the team also comprises Professor Frank Hardman (Director, IEE), Professor Bette Chambers (IEE) and PRDU researchers Kathryn Rzeszut and Brigitte Rohwerder.

The review will explore evidence that would support sustainable scale-up of low-cost private primary schools in South and West Asia, with a focus on Pakistan and Afghanistan. Employing replicable and transparent search methods – key characteristics of any systematic review – the search team will conduct a meta-analysis of the most relevant and methodologically rigorous studies related to three key concepts: (i) low-cost private schools; (ii) the sustainable scale-up of education interventions in fragile states; and (iii) the context of South and West Asia. The results of the meta-analysis will allow the research team to formulate conclusions and recommendations following a thematic synthesis approach. With the view to provide DFID with actionable policy recommendations, the conclusions drawn from the systematic review will answer these questions:

1. What factors affect the sustainability of low-cost private schools?
2. In what way can development projects – particularly private-led or private-public partnerships – be scaled-up to ensure sustainability?
3. What are the particular challenges in scaling-up education sector interventions in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

The review is currently in the pilot search stages and the final report will be published in August 2012.
Seeing how conservation can drive post-war recovery in central Africa

Conflict and biodiversity share an unfortunate geographical link. Over 80 per cent of major armed conflicts between 1950 and 2000 occurred within biodiversity hotspots, and 90 per cent of conflicts occurred in countries containing biodiversity hotspots. Jeffrey McNeely, one of the world’s leading experts on biodiversity and conservation, has also noted that “while war is bad for biodiversity, peace can be even worse”.

With issues of climate change high on the world agenda, and with many of the world’s poor being subsistence farmers who are dependent on ecosystem services for their survival, effective conservation of environmental resources is a crucial, but often overlooked area of post-war recovery.

For my placement, I spent two months with the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) – one month based in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the other in Musanze, Rwanda. Here I was able to see how the work being done to conserve the mountain gorillas not only benefited the gorillas but also the communities living around them, and the three nations (including Uganda) as a whole.

The regional collaboration over gorilla conservation has helped to bring the three countries’ wildlife agencies and governments together to cooperate over conservation, helping to improve relations between countries previously involved on opposite sides in ‘Africa’s world war’. Simultaneously, IGCP has worked to improve the socio-economic situation of the communities living around the gorilla habitat, and encouraged the introduction of tourism in order to bring in revenue for conservation and national development, which has proved a huge success.

Though many people might wonder what gorillas could possibly have to do with post-war recovery, my time with IGCP has shown the huge benefits that conservation can bring to post-conflict reconstruction. Its uses for peacebuilding and development mean that conservation should at the very least be a ‘tool in the post-war recovery toolbox’.

Richard Milburn United Kingdom

Richard with the Kwitonda family group of gorillas, which crossed from DRC to Rwanda years ago, prompting the finalisation of a transboundary agreement on mountain gorilla tourism.

You can read more about Richard’s experiences at IGCP on their website: www.igcp.org/post-conflict-conservation-a-students-perspective/

Mine Action in Colombia

My work placement was with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Bogotá, Colombia. I was happy to explore a country I had not been to before and a field – Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) – I had little previous knowledge of.

Colombia is probably not thought of as a ‘typical’ conflict country, especially since the last government actively promoted the idea of “democratic government combating terrorism”, instead of acknowledging the deep-rooted grievances amongst the population. Nonetheless, while I was in Colombia, the presence of an internal conflict was officially announced and the political situation was always a topic of conversation. Night-long discussions with people inside and outside the Mine Action community made me understand the controversies of the country a little better. During my eight weeks in Bogotá, I learned a lot about Mine Action and about Colombia, improved my Spanish language skills and met amazing people.

The main purpose of my placement was to conduct research, as UNMAS was interested in an academic analysis of HMA in Colombia. The knowledge I acquired at the PRDU helped me to fit the topic of Mine Action into a bigger picture of the overall situation in the country.

Besides researching the impact of HMA on peacebuilding, I was asked to help out at the Presidential Program for Mine Action. The government had, just before my arrival, passed a law allowing civilian organisations to conduct humanitarian demining. It was therefore a unique experience to contribute to new developments through the tasks assigned to me, and to talk to different kinds of people about their hopes for, and opinions of, a country that has suffered from protracted conflicts for too long.

Ines Roeleke Germany

Put yourself in the victims’ shoes. Remangate! – an international demonstration against the use of land mines, promoted by the United Nations, was held at the Plaza of Bolivar in Bogotá on Anti-personnel landmines Day (4 April 2011). Over 9,000 shoes depicted the people who have lost limbs because of the use of land mines in Colombia – the second most landmine-affected country in the world after Afghanistan.
Working on a landmark conference in Afghanistan

“‘You are a courageous woman travelling to Afghanistan’ – a repeated mantra from friends and family about my work placement destination. What they didn’t know was that my courage was mixed with huge fear – fear of going to a place where explosions and death are all that we hear about. What I didn’t know was that this placement was going to be an eye opener – a life-changing journey.

I worked with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development on the first National Conference of District Development Assemblies (DDA). This event brought together over 400 DDA Executive Board members, along with representatives from line ministries and departments, international donors, and government institutions.

At the Community Empowerment Unit, my work started with a ‘simple’ task – to create a Rapid Survey Questionnaire in 24 hours. Having worked overnight I completed the survey and conducted training for senior employees at the ministry. After passing this small test my involvement in the Conference amplified – from travelling to provinces and field missions, to finalizing concept notes and agendas; from writing reports and making videos, to designing booklets and documents; from setting a security system plan to writing declarations and producing a comprehensive report.

In this work placement I learned how organisations function in an on-going conflict. It was a great opportunity to gain practical work experience, understand the dynamics between internationals and locals, expand my professional contacts, and apply classroom concepts in practice. I won’t deny that working in Afghanistan was hard, but to live this intense life is part of the experience. To work closely with people who are struggling with everyday obstacles, challenges, and security, believing that they can make a difference, was an enriching experience.

I was surrounded by amazing people who made me feel safe and welcome. Whether I was in Kabul or the Provinces, during office hours or weekends, they’d call each other and ask: “Is Nancy in our Radar range?”

Nancy Hamad
Lebanon
I graduated from the University of York in 2011 with a BA in Sociology. This was a predominantly theoretical course and so the prospect of approaching a real post-conflict scenario from all angles, be they economic, political or psychological, is very appealing. The opportunity for a field trip and a placement is particularly exciting to me as it will be a very new experience and no doubt a huge challenge. I am keen to gain an insight into the reality of working in post-war reconstruction and development, and to acquire the skills required to make a positive impact in the field.

I graduated (2011) from the University of Perugia, Italy, in International Relations with a course in Cooperation and Multicultural Society. I have a strong interest in cooperation, human rights and conflicts. My thesis in Development Economics gave me the chance to research civil wars, especially African, and their economic, social and political implications. My main interest concerns the exploitation of natural resources and its correlation with violence – how the natural resource abundance makes conflicts more likely, longer and more difficult to resolve.

I graduated from George Mason University (Virginia, USA) with a BA in Conflict Analysis and Resolution in 2009. During my studies I visited Egypt to intern with a refugee services organisation, returning to Cairo after graduating to teach in a variety of educational institutions. I also serve as a facilitator and mentor for youth from across the Middle East and North Africa through the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program. I look forward to learning from my colleagues’ expertise, and focusing my studies on political crisis and effective interventions.

During my BA in Education in Denmark I had the opportunity to experience the work of educational and humanitarian projects in developing countries. Placements in Mozambique, India and Bolivia helped me decide to further myself in the field of development, conflict management and peace building. So far I have only had the chance to witness the positive impact education can have in the context of development. I am looking forward to broaden my mind with other examples of sustainable and effective development and recovery.

I completed my undergraduate degree at University College Dublin, attaining a joint major BA in Sociology and Drama. Throughout my academic career my module choices have exhibited a naturally occurring pattern towards the study of social justice. Post-war Recovery Studies is unique in its practical and academic approach to learning; it is this mix of theory, fieldwork and placement that had me eager to enroll. I hope it will enable me to better understand the social and structural consequences that extreme conflict has on a nation and how recovery begins.

I did my undergraduate degree at the University of York, reading Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE). Its multidisciplinary nature triggered my interest in post-war recovery. Topics of attention include spoiler behaviour, the role of religion and ethnicity in conflict and reconciliation, and geopolitics – especially the role that countries such as China and India can play in the process of fostering human rights in conflict-affected environments in South East Asia. I am particularly interested in the areas of Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Lebanon and South Sudan.

I have always had a major interest in international cooperation and peace projects, working with European organisations such as Comenius. Throughout my BA in Education I had the chance to specialise in teaching in post-war countries, including a position at a training college for primary school teachers in rural Angola, and the development and implementation of a curriculum to a project called Academies for working children in Rajasthan, India. I am very interested in recovery and reconciliation issues and was attracted to this course by its practical approach.
While interning with the Canadian International Development Agency in Nicaragua, municipal elections took place that left Nicaraguans without a voice. Adding to my recent experience in Egypt, where I worked with Sudanese refugees, I was beginning to see a trend. Human dignity was being globally overlooked. This prompted me to think more about the underlying issues in states, post conflict. After this MA, I would like to help develop new ways of tackling difficult foundational issues in fragile states, and working to implement change from the bottom up!

I graduated in 2010 from the University of Bristol with an MSc in International Relations and have since taught Public Opinion and International Affairs at the University of Mumbai. My dissertation at Bristol focused on the Kashmir dispute and the role played by the international community, particularly from a neo-realist perspective. At the PRDU, I hope to further my research interests pertaining to the nature of war in the modern world and use such knowledge towards creating an effective nexus between security and development.

I graduated from Lancaster University with a BA in History, Politics and Peace Studies. Whilst studying for my undergraduate degree, I completed a module in Women Studies which sparked my interest in gender issues in post-conflict states. My final dissertation was centred on reconstruction in post-genocide Rwanda, a topic I found to be interesting and rewarding. I hope this course will both inspire me and give me the practical skills I will need to work in developing countries.

I have just graduated from Bishop’s University, Quebec, with BA (Hons) in International Political Economy, with a Minor in International Studies. Living in various regions of the globe has developed my interest in international relations. While doing an internship for the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations in Beirut in 2009, I was able to experience firsthand what a post-war theatre is. I realised that this was the field to which I wanted to dedicate my career, and so I have come to York to take this MA and further my knowledge.
I had my first volunteer experience in Sierra Leone in 2004. After that I took a degree in International Development Co-Operation – University of Padua (Italy) and Université Panthéon-Sorbonne (France) – with an internship in Tanzania. In 2010 I achieved an MA in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies at the Universidad Jaume I (Spain). I’ve spent the first half of 2011 working in north-eastern Uganda for an Italian NGO. I hope the PRDU will provide me with the practical tools and theoretical foundation to work in war-torn countries with professionalism, integrity and efficiency.

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I have a keen interest in forestry and agriculture, having studied both subjects at college and university. I have spent seven years working as a forestry contractor in the UK, predominantly working in the South West of England and North Wales. I have recently served in Afghanistan, and I would like to pursue a career in forestry and agricultural development abroad, particularly in regions affected by war or conflict.

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I graduated in Political Science in 2008 at the National University of Colombia, and in 2009 I studied a specialisation in armed conflict and peace at Los Andes University. I have been working with victims of the armed conflict who have suffered serious human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law. I have worked in different fields and think tanks, NGOs and in the Colombian Government as a researcher, analyst and consultant. I chose this MA because participating in discussion and feedback will facilitate a holistic approach to my studies.

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While studying philosophy at The University of York I became interested in the application of ethical theory on a global scale and the moral questions that arise during conflict. The philosophical framework of my study meant that I did not have the opportunity to investigate the more political issues involved, which led me to PRDU. This MA stood out as a chance to experience first-hand the consequences of war, and learn about the practical skills needed for reconstruction, while also furthering my academic interest in global governance, conflict and humanitarian efforts.

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After completing a BA in English Literature at the University of Leeds (2008) I spent a year in Peru, then Jordan; teaching, working for local NGOs and volunteering for the ‘Palestine Children’s Relief Fund’. Working closely with refugees at Gaza Camp introduced me to the issues concerned with post-war recovery and gave me the desire to further my studies and gain a base of knowledge and practical skills on which to build a future career in this sector.

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Three main factors led me to this MA. Firstly, my Quaker background has given me a sustained interest in peace-building. Secondly, my degree at the University of Leeds in International Relations and Asia Pacific Studies provided a basis from which to develop areas of interest such as inter-ethnic conflict, which I explored in my dissertation on the complex chiefly hierarchy in Fiji. Lastly, the unique blend of practical placements backed up by a sound theoretical basis will develop my understanding in an area I hope to pursue a career in.

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Being interested in politics and humanitarian operations I left my background in chemistry behind and started working with NGOs. During my professional experience, mostly in Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi, I developed an interest in conflict and conflict resolution, and I joined the course to look further into the role of politics in these fields.

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After graduating from the Political Science Faculty in Mazar-e-sharif, Afghanistan, I worked with a number of USAID- and ECHO-funded projects providing humanitarian relief, economic growth and governance. As a peace activist, I have written a number of published articles for publications and prominent websites in Afghanistan. This MA will make me better qualified to play a constructive role in the stabilisation and development of my country. I dream of a world where flowers are planted instead of mines and the sky is colored by rainbows instead of ‘bomb-smoke’.
Sri Lanka Field Visit
An intense learning curve

In December 2011, PRDU lecturer, Dr Claire Smith, led this year’s MA in Post-war Recovery Studies students on their Field Visit to Sri Lanka. They were following in the footsteps of the previous year’s students who had also visited Sri Lanka in December 2010, led by Dr Rajesh Venugopal. This first trip had been so successful that it was decided to return in order to build on its research experiences, and to deepen the PRDU’s relationships with our Sri Lankan partners. Here, Dr Smith introduces the 10-day visit. The following two pages carry students’ reports on their experiences of putting classroom theory into first-hand practice.

The main purpose of the visit was for the students to gain a first-hand view of Sri Lanka’s experience in recovery and reconstruction in the aftermath of over 30 years of civil war. The Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), one of the leading national humanitarian actors in Sri Lanka, hosted and facilitated our trip. Thanks to the tireless efforts of CHA’s Executive Director, Jeevan Thiagarajah, a long-standing friend and colleague of the PRDU, we experienced a fascinating field visit to the Eastern district of Batticaloa.

Prior to their visit to the communities of the East of the country, the students were able to meet with a number of people in Colombo who had studied at the PRDU as Fellows and MA students. They also met and spoke with a number of national government officials, Sri Lankan academics, international and local NGO representatives, and UN agency staff. The York students used their time in the field to study four aspects of the recovery and reconstruction process. One group, led by Philip Randall, concentrated on examining the role of local government in post-war reconstruction. The second group, led by Tom Dawes, focused on studying the return and reintegration of IDPs. A third group examined reconciliation and recovery at the community level, led by Tom Jarvis. Laura Simpson led the fourth group in exploring the employment and education situation for youth. These four dimensions of post-war recovery are some of the most critical for the success of long-term reconstruction and development in Sri Lanka, and the students found their research both challenging and stimulating.

The students visited some of the most seriously affected parts of the country in the East, where they met lead agencies and actors involved in the reconstruction process. Through direct exposure to war-affected communities, they were able to explore the main challenges faced by villagers, to evaluate the progress of reconstruction efforts to date, and to examine the lessons learned so far. Their preliminary findings were presented at a workshop in Colombo on 12 December 2011, and will be presented to the Politics Department staff and students here at York in February 2012.

The Field Visit is a central component of the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies course, and it would not have been possible without the PRDU’s many friends and colleagues in Sri Lanka. I am particularly grateful to Jeevan Thiagarajah and his able staff at CHA. Thank you also to the Sri Lanka Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Sri Lanka High Commissioner’s Office in London and, especially, the Ministry for Resettlement for facilitating our visit. Here at the PRDU, special thanks are due to Andrea Varisco, PhD Candidate, for his excellent assistance during the Field Visit, and to Sally Carter, PRDU Administrator, for her tireless and enthusiastic support in preparing for, and seeing us through, the trip.

Sri Lanka has suffered over 30 years of civil war.
Exploring the truth of community reconciliation

We arrived at the Tamil village mid-afternoon. Having spent several days acclimatising to Sri Lanka in the relative comfort of Government and NGO offices, we were ready. It was now time to gain the local-level perspective on our research topic – community reconciliation.

We were greeted in the garden of the first house by nine or ten children. Excitedly, they told us that their parents were not at home. As we were turning to leave however, their mother emerged from the house. Our translator enquired why the children had not told the truth. “They were frightened, and protecting me”, was the woman’s reply. Fear of the Government, fear of strangers, or an engrained fear due to LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) occupation – we did not know.

In many ways this incident encapsulated our experience of community relations: while there is no clear quantifiable barometer for reconciliation, there were certainly signs of deep divisions. A pertinent example is the segregation of land along ethnic cleavages. In some ways symptomatic of land-related grievances, which we discovered constitute a key barrier to reconciliation, ethnic segregation was highly visible. While the Tamil population constitutes the majority, entire towns were inhabited only by Muslims. Especially outside of the large towns, we observed that the local level is relatively ethnically homogenous.

Thus in the course of our ten days, we discovered that observation, more so than quantitative data, was the most valuable asset of the field visit. Even within our qualitative approaches, how a question was answered was equally or more important than what was said. For example, projections about government assistance could have been found in supporting literature. However, this data would be unlikely to include the fact that people often laughed at these projections when they were brought to their attention.

In exploring the issue of reconciliation, fear was not an element that was explicitly listed in our assessment. However, through observation it emerged as a display of fractured relations between communities, as well as between society and the government. This became increasingly apparent as the vast majority of individuals who contributed to our understanding of intrastate relations wished to remain anonymous. In most cases, commentary was offered on the condition of being off the record. Many respondents surveyed their environment before responding, and were reluctant to speak frankly.

Some of the causes of such fear are readily evident: paradoxically, the securitisation of society, especially indicated by the highly visible presence of police in the community, in some ways seems to have exacerbated insecurity. A consequence is that people are often afraid to talk freely and so, from a researcher’s perspective, the truth is sometimes hard to establish. More accurately, we observed that truth is a very disputed commodity.

Chelsea Cowan and John Skelton UK

How IDPs survive in Batticaloa

The research topic of our group was the economic reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Batticaloa. We investigated the ways in which returnees cope with meeting their daily living needs, and in which ways government policies and humanitarian actors support their search for stable livelihoods.

Soon after we reached Batticaloa and started our fieldwork we realised the enormous difficulties people face – people who had been obliged to leave their homes, sometimes several times, but who are now willing to return and attempt to rebuild a normal life after years of war.

What we found is that nothing is like it was before: houses are destroyed, fields are no jungle and filled with mines, roads and water-channels are in a very poor state. State authorities seemed to look more at the macroeconomic development of the district returnees. Those returnees who needed specific projects to re-start their lives had to rely mostly on the intervention of humanitarian actors, such as local and international NGOs. Some people have been able to recover the properties they left, land in particular; but others have had to adapt and work as contracted non-skilled laborers with many uncertainties for their future. Finally, the most vulnerable, unable to succeed in finding a sustainable source of income locally, have had to leave the country and head to the Arabian Gulf to look for work in hotels and mansions. We found that those people who returned to the coast had a slightly better chance, with more support from the galaxy of agencies that arrived following the Tsunami that hit the Sri Lanka in 2004. Only a few returnees have managed to be independent from external aid.

Interviewing people in villages allowed us to have an insight into the disruptive effects of the war, not only on infrastructure, but also at the social and human level. Two generations have been lost and people still find it very difficult to have positive expectations of the future. They are putting all their efforts into ensuring adequate education for their children, to give them the opportunity to live a better future. The field visit was an invaluable personal and professional experience as it undoubtedly made us realise the importance of working in post-war recovery situations.

Andrea Trevisan Italy
**Over-prepared and overwhelmed**

Although I am a relative newcomer in both the humanitarian sector and the field of academic research, I believed I had every angle covered for our meeting with a local NGO in Batticaloa. However, the naivety of my assumptions would soon become apparent.

Following a successful meeting with a local government minister, my colleague and I felt as though we were making real progress in our investigations into our assigned research project – Education and Employment for Youth – as we entered the office of the NGO shortly after lunch time, on our very first day of interviews. We had prepared meticulously and had a list of more than ten straightforward questions that we believed could provide a great insight into our field of study. What could possibly go wrong?

My first impression of the office was that it was particularly small, exceptionally crowded and incredibly noisy as there were over 30 people all involved in different projects. It was no easy task to find the person we were supposed to be interviewing, especially as he was out for lunch.

Fortunately, we were offered the chance to meet with his deputy. Almost shouting, he explained to us that the NGO were getting ready for a special day of celebration and that the people were busy preparing decorations and activities for this event. Moreover, it was stressed that this was possibly the worst day that we could have come – but that they were willing to meet with us for a maximum of 15 minutes. So before we even began the interview our meticulous list of questions had been reduced by half.

Due to the noise the process of conducting the interview, through a translator, proved to be even more of a challenge. All in all, we touched on very few of our questions and received little useable data.

Nevertheless, I would argue that this was the most valuable experience of the whole field trip. I came out with dented confidence, but with an increased sense of spirit and desire to work in the humanitarian field. Although it had been mentioned countless times within my lectures, it was only at this point that I realised that we can never be fully prepared in this sector and that we must always adjust to surroundings and situations we find ourselves in. That one memory, more than any other from my time in the field, will remain with me.

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**The role of Local Government**

A quick glance at Batticaloa’s idyllic setting – its loaded palm trees and lush paddy fields – leaves you feeling as though you have surreptitiously stumbled into paradise. Unfortunately, the nature of our research and a hectic timetable meant that over four long, hot, busy days, a slightly different picture began to come into focus.

The primary aim of our study group was to research the role, autonomy, and capacity of the Local Government in post-war reconstruction and development in the Batticaloa region. Numerous presentations, seminars and interviews with government officials, military representatives, NGOs, and local communities allowed us to explore the nuances of the relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries, and the aids and obstacles that these relationships pose to the recovery of the area.

The overriding feeling that we encountered within communities was one of frustration. Although local communities highlighted a plethora of needs, both immediate and long-term, government implementation of development projects often does not correlate with reality and these needs frequently go unmet. Local authorities expressed a strong desire to assuage these needs, but limitations of autonomy, capacity, and unclear mandates prevent these desires from becoming real, and necessary assistance is often unable to be delivered.

Despite a history of turmoil and hardship, community attitudes, ideas and ambitions were forward-looking, and an entrepreneurial spirit was present in abundance. Accessing the tools with which to turn such positivity and ambition into reality provides a significant obstacle to reconciliation, and talk of future hopes were underlain with disillusionment and disappointment. The need for a channel through which to express such frustrations is manifest and the unexpected presence of a sympathetic ear led to an outpouring of emotion and appreciation. The primary channel for community reconciliation, participation and enablement should be through the local government system; however, as the current situation stands, this channel remains closed and frustrations are festering. This route must be reopened to connect local communities with the central government so that trust can be reborn and a truly participatory development process can flourish.

Such a brief description of our findings doesn’t do justice to the indescribable experience that we all shared in Sri Lanka. The field trip was, for all of us, an intense learning curve that was difficult to control – the more we learned, the more we wanted to know; the more we looked, the more we found; the more we found, the more we wanted to look ... and so it goes on. Time was against us and, although we emerged from the experience with a wealth more knowledge than we went in with, many curiosities were left unsatisfied and many doors left unopened. One day, perhaps, we will be able to return and venture beyond some of those unexplored thresholds.

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**Tom Evans** United Kingdom

**Clare Sadd** United Kingdom
Use the Head and the Body Will Not Suffer
Dependancies and Adaptations by Households in Liberia's Informal Economy
Julia Lynn Smith

This fascinating and rigorously researched paper explores the wide array of coping mechanisms employed by the rural moderately-poor in Liberia's informal economy. The author carefully demonstrates the way in which indigenous cooperatives reflect the changing societal structures of the communities they are situated in – serving as the backbone of the informal economy – and, as such, constitute more accurate indicators of development than formal economic indicators.

The paper can be downloaded from the PRDU website at the following address: www.york.ac.uk/prdu/publications/working paper

The Transformation of the Gulf
Politics, Economics and the Global Order
Edited by David Held and Kristian Ulrichsen

This book examines the political, economic and social transformation of the six member-states of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the ways in which they are both shaping, and being reshaped by, the processes of globalisation. Contributions from experts in the field provide cutting-edge snapshots of a region in flux, and collectively offer a roadmap of its repositioning in the global order. This volume will hold particular appeal to theorists of globalisation as well as to scholars of comparative politics, international political economy and area studies.

Education in Peace Building
Edited by Professor Frank Hardman (Institute for Effective Education – IEE), Professor Sultan Barakat (Director of the PRDU) and Dr David Connolly (PRDU Lecturer), all at the University of York

This special issue will critically examine the diverse role of education in peace building through peer-reviewed papers from international conferences and workshops which involved some of the leading researchers working in this field. The articles will provide rigorous evidence on, and insight into, country-level and local contexts, the relationship between evidence and policy and practice, the application of international standards, and the sustainability of education in conflict. The Journal will debate the role education can play in rebuilding communities following conflicts, with a view to contributing to long-term stability and development.