Have Cluster Community Development Councils (CCDCs) worked in Afghanistan over the last five years?

A team led by Professor Sultan Barakat and PRDU Alumnus, Ehsan Zia (CEO of Tadbeer Consulting, Kabul), has begun a World Bank-funded evaluation of Afghanistan’s flagship National Development Programme (NSP). This project bears the hallmark of the PRDU – linking theory with practice in post-war recovery – and illustrates its ongoing expertise in the conduct of, training in, and research on, evaluation in conflict zones.

The scale of the programme being evaluated is daunting. It involves 64,000 projects, 30,000 Community Development Councils, and 359 districts in every province in Afghanistan, with a combined budget of over US$1 billion.

The main goal of NSP is to reduce poverty through community empowerment, in particular through improved governance and community-led social, human and economic development. It operates according to the principles of participatory and inclusive decision-making, gender equity, transparency and accountability. Communities make decisions and manage resources at all stages of the project cycle. As such, it promotes sustainable forms of inclusive local governance, rural reconstruction and poverty alleviation.

The programme facilitates the formation of democratically-elected and gender-balanced CDCs, which subsequently identify community needs and mobilise resources on the ground.

The NSP has been responsible for social mobilisation in Afghanistan.
Editorial

Revival is 20 years old! The first issue was published in July 1994, created on an Apple Macintosh computer whose hard drive capacity would not come close to holding the files needed to make up this 31st edition alone. The computer’s 3.5 inch internal floppy disk drive enabled the transfer of about 1MB of digital data. How times have changed!

I’ve been able to look up these technical specifications on the Web in a matter of minutes. Twenty years ago, researching information and facts usually called for half-days at the local library, where microfiche cataloguing was seen as cutting-edge. How times have changed!

To keep moving with the times we are making Revival primarily a digital (pdf) newsletter. A slight redesign creates a better, more interactive, on-screen experience for our readers. Red text hyperlinks help navigate through the newsletter, or link to internal web pages. Grey text hyperlinks take you to external web pages. The ‘CONTENTS’ button at the bottom of each page takes you back to the front cover contents, allowing navigation at the click of a mouse.

Surprisingly, not all technology has moved at the pace we might expect, and so we have found that some e-readers (e.g. Firefox) can’t seem to cope with the interactive elements of Revival. If you encounter such problems we suggest you view the pdf using Acrobat Reader.

What hasn’t changed over the last 20 years – and is unlikely to ever change – is man’s desire to inflict suffering and torture on fellow human beings in his quest for power. It is crucial, therefore, that we continue to link academic research with field-based experience in order to make sure that our humanitarian response to the victims of conflict is as positive and forward-thinking as possible.

To that end, the PRDU’s new independence (see opposite) is an exciting and timely development.

Another milestone:
PRDU officially recognised as an Interdisciplinary Centre within the University of York

The first day of August 2014 marked another milestone in the evolution of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit. On that date, the PRDU officially became a self-standing, interdisciplinary centre of teaching, research, and expert advisory services within the University of York.

This development is an acknowledgement of the trans-disciplinary scope of the Unit’s work. As importantly, it provides the PRDU with the managerial autonomy required to engage effectively in post-war reconstruction and development as a field of research and practice. The PRDU will continue to work with the Department of Politics’ Board of Studies to maintain academic excellence in its two Masters programmes and its PhD programme (www.york.ac.uk/politics/centres/prdu/training/ – see also page 10 ▶)

Having started its life in 1993 within the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, the PRDU was afforded the space to explore and define the field of post-war recovery studies. In October 2000 the Unit was relocated within the Department of Politics, where it flourished with the support of then-Head of Department, Mark Evans.

In an announcement on 1 July 2014 the Registrar of the University, Dr David Duncan, signalled the separation of the PRDU from the Department of Politics. This change was facilitated by an organisational restructuring of the Unit earlier this year, which created an interdisciplinary Board of Governance for PRDU consisting of, among others, an internationally-recognised practitioner, the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, and a senior academic from outside the discipline of politics. Chaired by Professor Sultan Barakat, founding Director of PRDU, the Board maintains oversight of the Unit’s activities, by inter alia, approving forward strategies and receiving reports from the newly-appointed Executive Director of PRDU, Dr Kenneth Bush, Altajir Lecturer in Post-war Recovery Studies.

In response to the new status of the Unit, Kenneth Bush said:

“I am delighted with this development. It is the natural progression of the Unit, which will allow us much greater latitude of action in our work. This is very much the result of the indefatigable work and commitment of Sultan Barakat, whose vision and leadership continues to inform the Unit. We look forward to increasing our engagement with departments and colleagues across the university, and around the world.”

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT UNIT

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New staff bolster PRDU teaching and research

Kenneth Bush (Executive Director) is very pleased to announce the appointment of two new lecturers to the PRDU: Dr Jacob Eriksson and Dr Tom Waldman. Their appointments complement the arrival of Dr Janaka Jayawickrama on 1 July 2014 to take up the post of Director of the MSc in International Humanitarian Affairs. The addition of such qualified academic staff bodes well for continuing PRDU contributions to excellence in research, teaching, and applied work. Erica Cushworth’s arrival in January to assist with the Unit’s ever-increasing administrative duties was another welcome and timely appointment.

Dr Jacob Eriksson will be joining us as a lecturer in Post-war Recovery Studies. Jacob received his PhD from the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS) in 2011. Before joining the Politics Department in York in October 2012, he was a Learning Development Manager at SOAS, primarily working in academic skills development. While at York, Jacob has taught a wide variety of undergraduate and postgraduate modules in international relations theory, Middle Eastern politics, and security and conflict studies. He contributed substantively to the MA in Post-war Recovery Studies, and co-convened the MA field research trip to Sri Lanka in November 2013 (see page 12). Jacob’s research focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, conflict resolution, and the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. He has contributed to edited collections in these fields, and his first book, Small State Mediation in International Conflicts: Diplomacy and Negotiation in Israel-Palestine, is due to be published by IB Tauris in 2015.

Dr Tom Waldman will take up a fixed-term lecturer position in Post-war Recovery Studies. Tom completed his doctorate in International Studies at the University of Warwick in 2009. His thesis interpreted Clausewitz’s theory of war in relation to modern conflict. Tom specialises in security sector issues in post-conflict countries, but has an interest in all issues surrounding contemporary wars, state building and post-conflict reconstruction. His experience working in war-torn countries includes Kosovo, Liberia, and Afghanistan. Tom has been a stalwart member of PRDU as a research fellow for over three years, and recently completed a three-year ESRC/DFID-funded research project studying the impact of DFID-sponsored statebuilding oriented research on British government policies in fragile, post-conflict environments. He has published widely on inter alia statebuilding, intra-state war, the research-policy nexus, and Clausewitz (see: york.academia.edu/ThomasWaldman).

Dr Janaka Jayawickrama is our new Director of the MSc in International Humanitarian Affairs (see also page 10). Janaka comes to us from Northumbria University, where he served as a senior lecturer in Social and Cultural Anthropology, and programme leader of the MSc in Disaster Management and Sustainable Development. Janaka brings great depth of experience to his post, having founded the MSc programme in Community Wellbeing in Disaster and Development at Northumbria, and undertaken extensive research and in conflict-affected settings (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Malawi, Jordan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal). Janaka’s field-grounded approach to his teaching, research and applied work makes him a perfect fit for PRDU.

Brookings Doha Center welcomes Sultan Barakat

Professor Sultan Barakat, founding director of the PRDU, has joined the Brookings Doha Center as the new Director of Research, it was announced by BDC Director, Salman Shaikh, on 24 June 2014. Sultan will focus on issues of conflict management, humanitarian response, and post-conflict recovery and transition in West Asia and North Africa. Responding to the announcement he said:

“The region faces enormous security and development challenges and I look forward to working closely with colleagues in Doha and Brookings offices in Washington, New Delhi, and Beijing to better understand the nature of those challenges and to help devise appropriate and timely policy responses.”

Sultan will continue to provide intellectual and developmental leadership within the PRDU through his role as Chairman of its newly-constituted Board of Governance (see page 2). He will also maintain his role as Special Advisor on internationalisation to the University of York’s Vice Chancellor, Professor Koen Lamberts, working closely with the University’s International Relations Office to establish global partnerships and identify opportunities for research collaboration and consultancy work across disciplines.

Erica Cushworth, Assistant Administrator, joined the PRDU in January 2014 to work with Sally Clark. Erica has previously worked as an administrator for Lancashire County Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and Woldgate College in Pocklington, near York.
Seven distinctions among this year’s graduands

In January 2014 the PRDU welcomed back those students from last year’s (2012–13) MA in Post-war Recovery Studies course who were able to attend the graduation ceremony in York. Of the 30 students who successfully completed the course, seven received Distinctions (D) – a magnificent achievement. Congratulations to them all:

Abir Ahmmed, Edward Ball (D), Benjamin Bartlett, John Bryant (D), Matthew Flynn, Maisie Geelen (D), Beatriz Gudoy, Ian Gough, Tammam Hunedi, Amy Johnson, Mate Juhasz (D), Tomohiro Kontani, Bradley Lineker (D), Catherine Mais, George Padgett, Peggitty Pollard-Davey, Tabitha Poulter, Ahmad Wali Qaderi, Duncan Riddell, Nicholas Rowland, Ghulam Sakhi, Laura Saville, Ana-Maria Seman, Abass Sheikh, Ghulam Sultan, Kristine Te Pas, Shushan Tewolde-Berhan (D), Maria Velasco Nolasco, Danfeng Wang, Arzhang Yusefi (D).

Congratulations also to PRDU associate Rae McGrath, seen here receiving his honorary degree from the University of York. (See revival 30, page 3)

New PRDU book series with Palgrave Pivot

The PRDU and Macmillan Publishers are pleased to announce a forthcoming book series, edited by Dr Kenneth Bush and Professor Sultan Barakat, entitled Palgrave Critical Studies in Post-conflict Recovery. We are honoured that this will be the first series to be published in Palgrave’s innovative ‘Pivot’ format (see: www.palgrave.com/pivot). The series will have the distinct advantages of:

Speed: accepted manuscripts are published within 12 weeks, allowing ideas and arguments to exercise an impact in a timely and responsive manner;

Flexibility: by publishing books of 25–50,000 words in length (i.e. between the length of a journal article and conventional full book manuscript) the series allows for a quicker, more accessible, consolidation and application of ideas and existing research;

Peer review: all titles are subject to rigorous peer review, thereby ensuring quality and relevance;

Wide dissemination: all titles are available digitally as e-books (as well as hardbacks), thus extending the geographic distribution of research, broadening its accessibility, and increasing its potential impact.

If you have a project that may fit with the series, please contact the editors kenneth.bush@york.ac.uk or sultan.barakat@york.ac.uk

Rescuing academics – the HRH El Hassan Bin Talal lecture

In January the PRDU were delighted to welcome Dr Allan Goodman, President of the Institute of International Education (IIE), who delivered the sixth annual HRH El Hassan Bin Talal lecture.

Dr Goodman’s lecture, On the Rescue of Science of Learning, highlighted the importance of the work carried out by the IIE in rescuing academics who find themselves in danger in war-affected areas due to the work they are carrying out.

In a lively discussion following the lecture, Dr Goodman discussed the difficulties faced by the Institute in its daily work, as well as the different methods used to rescue academics. He emphasised the necessity of training experts in this field, and praised the work of the PRDU for helping to make this possible through its PhD research and the Masters programme.

Congratulations to John Bryant (MA in PRS, 2012–13) who won the 2013 Guido Galli Award (a lasting tribute to a former student who lost his life in the 2010 Haiti earthquake) in recognition of his exceptional performance and engagement on the MA.
It is with great sadness and regret that I have to announce that Charles Cockburn, my PhD supervisor, mentor, co-founder of the PRDU and close friend, passed away on 21 April 2014. He had recently marked his 80th birthday with a group of family and friends in one of his favourite restaurants, just outside York.

For the last few years he fought bravely against an aggressive lung cancer, caused by exposure to asbestos as a young man. Charles leaves behind his beloved wife, Susi, who has been a constant source of power, inspiration and stability; his first wife, Cynthia and their two daughters and three granddaughters; together with my own family, who saw him and Susi as a natural extension to our existence in the UK.

A trained architect, Charles lectured in Nigeria in the early 1960s, before becoming Research Assistant at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. Further work in Kenya and Nigeria – together with consultancy work for the UN, ILO and World Bank – preceded his appointment in 1976 as Course Director of the Housing for Developing Countries Course at Newcastle University.

In 1983 Charles came to the University of York as Course Tutor for One World Studies at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies. This one-year MA had no set course; potential students outlined the theme of their proposed area of research. Such a ‘personalised’ course demanded a unique leader, and Charles was that man. He used his wide experience and extensive network of contacts to coax and cajole students from varied cultural backgrounds through their study.

He saw his role as an ‘enabler’, challenging his protégés with advice, views and information, and watching their response with interest. Most of his students have truly developed because of, and despite, his rather off-beat manner.

Beginning in 1987, with Akbar Zargar from Iran, issues of post-war reconstruction were pursued by a number of his students including, in 1988, myself. I stayed on to complete my doctorate, and embarked on the most amazing journey with Charles to establish the PRDU in 1993. Charles retired in 1999, since when he has witnessed with immense pride and satisfaction the phenomenon he helped to create go from strength to strength. He and Susi remained staunch supporters of the PRDU and managed to get to know its staff and students year on year, making them feel welcomed to York with the same enthusiasm they showed to me and other colleagues all those years ago.

Everyone who knew him will miss him desperately.

Sultan Barakat (below), and Gavin Ward, editor of Revival, pay tribute to one of life’s most memorable characters, Charles Cockburn, without whom the PRDU would not exist.


Twenty years ago (May 1994), Charles and Sultan ran a 5-day workshop at the King’s Manor, York. I was one of 60 participants. The workshop was all about Rebuilding Sarajevo, then a city under siege. I was a shy, unemployed graphic designer looking for a new direction in life, and as such I didn’t bring much to the table – happy to sit quietly at the edge and observe.

One afternoon we split into four groups, and on my way to the session I bumped into Charles. He asked if I was enjoying myself, and which group I had chosen. Then he asked if I would be the moderator for that group – the person who records what was said, and by whom. Well, I could hardly say ‘no’, so I said ‘yes’, and trundled off to the room. The Chairman introduced himself and then asked for a volunteer moderator. There was complete silence. I would have remained silent, but Charles’s words were ringing in my ears, so I broke the silence and volunteered. At the end of the session the Chairman informed us that he had to return to London, so would I report back to the full workshop the following morning. From sitting at the edge, I was now to be centre stage. I stayed up most of that night in my B&B room, writing and re-writing the presentation.

I must have done OK, for a few weeks later Sultan phoned to ask if I would like to help set up a newsletter for the Unit (the birth of Revival!). I jumped at the chance and, over the next few months, gradually moved to York. And from that point on, my life blossomed and flourished as never before.

I often wonder what would have happened if I hadn’t bumped into Charles that afternoon. For me it was a pivotal moment of my life. And to sense that moment, and use it to set me a challenge, rather than just exchange pleasantries, was pure Charles. It was what he loved doing, what he was brilliant at. Cajoling and challenging, connecting and supporting, suggesting and inventing – enabling people to discover their potential and realise their dreams. It’s not just my story, it’s the story of many others, all over the world.
The politics and pitfalls of post-conflict democratisation

Since the 1990s, democratisation has been upheld by international institutions, donor governments and development agencies as a means to achieve stability and development in post-conflict contexts. Conceived of as a way in which to make ‘fragile states’ less ‘fragile’, through encouraging greater interaction between individual citizens and the state structure, democratisation has been integral to post-conflict statebuilding programmes.

To date, however, little evidence has emerged to indicate whether or not these programmes have actually facilitated any change in the relationship between ruler and ruled.

Contemporary attempts to conceptualise, measure and practice democratisation commonly focus on the nature of the state-citizen relationship, and in doing so tend to portray the concepts of ‘the state’ and ‘the citizen’ as constant (or ideally constant) across contexts. In conflict-affected fragile states such as Afghanistan, however, standard conceptions of what the state should be or what role it should play, in the predominant Weberian legal-rational sense, are difficult to apply – primarily because these states have not emerged historically as did western European states. Expecting fragile states to fit the Weberian model, or produce a liberal brand of the state-citizen relationship, thus seems untenable. This thesis explores whether democratisation might occur in spaces other than that of this seemingly fundamental relationship.

Using Charles Tilly’s 2007 framework as a basis for enquiry, the research examines the case of Afghanistan through compiling an historical narrative of ruler-ruled relationships, and through analysing a new data set of local perspectives on the state collected from three provinces. The study concludes that alterations to this framework are needed if the nuances of change in the ruler-ruled relationship are to be captured adequately. Developing an alternative, the Comprehensive Democratisation Indicators (CDI) approach, the researcher argues that employing centre-community and state-citizen constructs in parallel provides a much more holistic picture of political change in contexts where the liberal institutions of ‘state’ and ‘citizen’ have not taken hold.

Global analysis of higher education in post-war recovery

My thesis (supervised by Professor Sultan Barakat) examines the role of higher education systems in post-war recovery through the case studies of Iraq and Libya. It argues that higher education systems in post-conflict states have the potential to contribute towards more effective post-war reconstruction and recovery.

While the role of Higher Education in Development was emphasised in the post-WWII era, the specific experience of higher education in post-conflict contexts has escaped the attention of both academics and policymakers engaged in reconstruction. Furthermore, donor policy attention has not been placed upon utilising the resources of higher education in post-war recovery. The overall aim of my thesis is to address this gap in the literature by providing global analysis of higher education in post-war recovery.

Firstly, a theoretical framework of the relationship between higher education and recovery was constructed in terms of the functions that higher education can perform in contributing to recovery, the features of the post-war environment that hinder or enable higher education, and various policy options available to post-conflict higher education.

Secondly, two case studies of Iraq and Libya were examined to explore the relationship between higher education and post-war recovery. Principally through interviews with academics and policymakers from case study countries, the thesis reveals a range of perspectives and voices on higher education during post-conflict recovery and transition.

The thesis concludes that higher education should be conceptualised as an important pillar of recovery:

- the capacity of domestic higher education sectors in post-conflict contexts is an often under-recognised and under-utilised resource of considerable potential value that can connect to a wide range of reconstruction and recovery processes, and effectively drive post-conflict recovery and transitions.

Given the under-theorised and under-studied nature of higher education and post-conflict recovery, the thesis operates in a theory-building mode and offers what is, to date, the first attempt to construct a global theorisation.
Refugee repatriation in post-war situations

Bahbi Malk is a PhD student at the PRDU, supervised by Professor Sultan Barakat and Martin Jones (from the University of York’s Centre for Applied Human Rights). Here, Bahbi argues that the premature repatriation of African refugees has created a loss of confidence in the UN protection system, and a resulting increase in refugees seeking asylum in other continents.

The history of the Horn of Africa has been peppered with war, violence, political tension and repression, making it one of the most refugee-generating regions of the world in recent decades. Historically, this ‘generating’ has often been directly attributable to problems associated with decolonisation, war, ethnic conflict and famine. Refugees were generally well received in the first asylum countries, and returned home willingly post-crisis.

In the 21st century, however, refugee-generating causes have changed tremendously, creating situations that have become more complex and interlinked. Most reasons for refugee flights can be categorised into two sets of factors – primary and secondary.

**Primary factors creating refugees**
The primary set of factors is usually caused by ill-guided policies, including: labour exploitation; unlimited national service (the case of Eritrea); violation of fundamental rights; inequality; injustice; intolerance; oppression; greed; and selfishness of those in power. Primary factors produce secondary factors, which include: deterioration of legal, social, religious and educational institutions; weakening of the economic system and social order; family disruption; war; conflict; and instability.

**Secondary factors creating refugees**
Secondary factors are caused by natural catastrophes such as famine and drought, which have commonly been perceived as more ‘natural’ than ‘man-made’. This is not always the case, because economic deprivation and the withholding of foreign aid can also be used as a politically-designed persecutory policy against sectors of a population, which in turn can lead to famine and poverty.

As part of a post-war recovery, repatriating refugees is one of the most viable solutions to refugee crises. However, the end of war doesn’t always guarantee peace, security and stability, so it is always advisable to examine closely the political nature and human rights records of the country of origin. Failure to do so could backfire, and push refugees towards further migration and continued misery.

In Eritrea – despite the fact that by 2000 the situation had not changed considerably – the UNHCR, along with the Government of Sudan, stepped up their repatriation efforts, assuming that the end of the Ethio-Eritrea wars had created conditions conducive to return. The UNHCR justified forced voluntary repatriation by saying that Eritrean refugees “… who fled their country as a result of the war of independence which ended in May [sic] 1991, as well as those who fled as result of the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea which ended in June 2000, should no longer have a well-founded fear of persecution or other reasons to continue to be regarded as refugees”.

This approach not only exposed refugees to transnational organised crimes, but also created more instability and refugee movements away from first asylum countries and across international borders. Refugees have lost faith in the UN protection system, and have decided to take desperate action to avoid forced repatriation to the country from which they fled.

**This is a simple logic; because the international community failed to bring them justice and protection, they are now knocking on the doors of Europe, Asia and North America in search of sanctuary.**

In the process, they can easily become victims of notorious human traffickers who have been involved in atrocious crimes, including organ extraction, rape, torture and blackmail.

Unfortunately, criminalising refugees and closing borders will simply mean endorsing the human traffickers’ business, and will increase the death of refugees as they cross the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara and Sinai deserts. The death of 369 Eritreans in Lampedusa on 3 October last year, under the watchful eyes of Europe, is a case in point.

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**Mediterranean Sea (17.10.2013)**

- 128 refugees rescued from an inflatable raft are transferred to a Maltese offshore patrol vessel (U.S. Navy photo/Released)

The repatriation of refugees on the assumption that the end of war is the existence of peace has jeopardised human dignity and existence, concealed the unbearable deeds of totalitarianism and tyranny against their own people, and marked the erosion of fundamental principles of moral and legal values of humanity.
needs through an inclusive and participatory approach to produce a Community Development Plan (CDP). Once the community-drafted plan is approved, funds are made available for the implementation of the proposed projects. These projects have focused on clean drinking water, sanitation, small-scale irrigation, roads and structures, schools and village electrification.

The NSP represents a fascinating example of the way in which local communities – even in conflict zones – assert control and ownership over their own development processes when the opportunity arises. During the first phase of NSP there was a spontaneous clustering and pooling of grant allocations by existing CDCs, thus allowing them to implement larger projects that benefited multiple communities simultaneously. Initially clustering was largely informal, with no clear guidelines or procedures for the effective clustering of resources and activities. The result appears to be that the development impacts of collaborative programming were greater than the sum of its parts. Recognising the potential for increased efficiency and developmental impact, the Afghan government launched a pilot project of CCDCs in 2009.

The evaluation challenge for the team is to determine whether or not these clustered CDCs ‘worked’ – in terms of tangible and sustained improvement in socio-economic welfare, social cohesion and governance within rural communities in Afghanistan. However, a particular value-added element of the PRDU-Afghan team is its analytical capacity to answer the next set of questions: if the clustered CDCs did work, why and how did they work, and how might these outcomes be replicated in other, different, cases? Conversely, if they did not work (or worked less well in some areas), what lessons should be gleaned from the experience and applied to future initiatives?

Drawing on its experience in conflict zones, the team must navigate political, logistical, methodological and ethical challenges of working within difficult conditions. The end result will be a net contribution both to theoretically-informed development practice in Afghanistan, and to empirically-grounded research and teaching in post-war recovery studies.

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**Conference shorts**

**Marcia Hamzat**, PhD candidate at the PRDU, attended the 17th International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors and UN Advisors Conference, hosted by the United Nations and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, from the 31 March – 2 April 2014, in Geneva.

**Andrea Varisco**, PhD candidate at the PRDU, participated in the 55th International Studies Association Annual Convention in Toronto in March 2014, presenting a paper entitled, "Retracing Our Steps: Backward Tracking Research in British Security Sector Reform Policy in Sierra Leone."
The field of post-conflict recovery, transition and development. The programme also offers several bursaries to professionals from developing countries.

The high-tech campus of Heslington East (the latest addition to the University of York’s academic landscape) is an ideal setting for the participants’ personal and professional development. The facilities are surrounded by rolling hills and shallow lakes, and include island study pods for group work and discussion. With the city of York and Yorkshire’s wonders at its doorstep, the environment is ideal for learning, sharing and relaxing.

This year’s course explored the cases of Syria and South Sudan in great depth, with the expert insights of speakers including:

- Olivier Bangerter (Lead, Humanitarian Policy Team at Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland),
- Sultan Barakat (PRDU),
- Veronique Barbelet (HPG),
- Martin Barber (ex-UN),
- Kenneth Bush (PRDU),
- Andy Carl (Conciliation Resources),
- Luka Biong Deng (Executive Director, Kush),
- Judy El Bushra (independent consultant),
- Nicholas Haysom (Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Political Affairs in Afghanistan),
- Vesna Matovic (International Alert),
- Nobel Laureate Rae McGrath (Mercy Corps),
- Paul Murphy (Executive Director, Saferworld),
- Sara Pantuliano (Head of HPG),
- Francesc Vendrell (Senior Consultant to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue),
- Kevin Watkins (Executive Director, ODI),
- Radwan Ziadeh (Executive Director, Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies).

The 2015 Advanced Course on Conflict, Crisis and Transition will continue to evolve in response to the needs of students and the state of the humanitarian world. It will build on ten core themes, including: humanitarian action, conflict and post-conflict transitions, issues related to conflict analysis, peace processes, international law, transitional justice, forced displacement, fragile states, and evaluations. For further information please get in touch with HPG at hpgadmin@odi.org.uk
Choose our MA in Post-war Recovery Studies and discover ...

... a melting-pot of ideas
Our MA in Post-war Recovery Studies brings together experienced humanitarian professionals and less experienced students, thus creating opportunities to mix time-served wisdom with new theories.

... world-class teaching
Classes are taught by world renowned academics, policy makers and practitioners.

... that practice makes perfect
Every year, in late November, students undertake a field trip to a post-war region (see page 12).

... a gateway to the future?
In March, all students undertake a 6-8 week work placement, based within an international or national organisation.

... a lasting legacy of words
Each student prepares a dissertation between May and September, under faculty supervision.

... a family of alumni
With over 400 graduates from 60 different countries, the MA alumni have gone on to varied and exciting careers.

Follow in their footsteps
The course is open to all those with a good first degree (2:1 or above) and/or field experience.

Please contact:
Sally Clark, PRDU Administrator
sally.clark@york.ac.uk
tel: +44 1904 322640

“The combination of theory and practice ... gives graduates a solid base to launch or relaunch their careers in this very demanding area of international activity. The teaching is first-rate ... it is the best education I have experienced at any stage in my life.”
Richard Brown, MA Alumnus

Applications are now open for Cohort 3 of our MSc in International Humanitarian Affairs (MIHA), a unique, interdisciplinary postgraduate programme which is offered exclusively online.

This part-time distance learning MSc is delivered in collaboration with the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), one of the world’s leading teams of independent researchers and information professionals working on humanitarian issues.

The MIHA consists of 6 modules, all written by senior practitioners and policy experts such as Dr Simon Robins, Dr Shipra Narang, Sean Healy (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF] Humanitarian Advisor), and Gianni Rufini (an expert in international aid and former Director of VOICE).

We are seeking applicants with at least a 2:1 university degree. Candidates without a university degree may also be considered where they have extensive relevant professional experience.

As a student of the MIHA you will have access to dynamic learning technology, access to the University of York Writing Centre, and the opportunity to attend and participate in online lectures and seminars with academic staff (see also page 3), programme partners and experienced practitioners. Our current cohorts consist of a diverse range of professionals, working for key agencies such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, AusAID and MSF. Once enrolled on the MIHA you will have opportunities to interact with fellow students from all three Cohorts.

The application deadline is 29 August 2014; however, places are limited and it is advisable to apply as early as possible. If you are interested in applying please contact Emma Piercy, MIHA Administrator; emma.piercy@york.ac.uk

Why Study at York?
York is consistently among the top UK universities for the quality of its teaching and research.
York ranked 1st in the UK and 7th in the world in the Times Higher Education World Rankings of Universities less than 50 years old.
The PRDU is an internationally recognised teaching and research faculty, with links to other universities and organisations worldwide.
Eligible students from outside the EU are guaranteed accommodation on or near campus.
York is easily accessible by air, rail, and road.
The city is well connected by major UK railway lines, meaning a travel time of only two hours to London, and two hours fifteen minutes to Edinburgh.
The cost of living in York is considerably lower than other cities in the UK.

“The MIHA course allows me to continue working full-time while pursuing an advanced degree. The MIHA staff are very helpful and it’s obvious how much they believe in the program and its students.”
Michelle Seage, MIHA student
For a week in early May, 2014, the Army’s Northern Educational and Training Services (ETS) Command Group undertook a detailed and intensive training programme for ETS instructors, to engage them with issues related to post-war recovery, humanitarianism, state fragility and conflict studies.

As part of this programme, and to further develop relations with ETS Command Group – located at Imphal Barracks (York) and Catterick (North Yorkshire) – the PRDU instigated an open day on post-war recovery. The purpose was to hone and develop analytical linkages between the functional practice of day-to-day army life in active theatres – like Afghanistan – and the theoretical structures and methodologies of current academic discourse.

The day began with an introduction to post-war recovery by Dr Ken Bush, followed by Dr Tom Waldman’s lecture on Understanding Conflict Analysis. The morning was completed with Kathryn Rzeszut’s lecture on Societies in Transition. After lunch, PRDU alumni and post-war recovery experts Dr Richard Jones and Jamal Abassi spoke about their experiences with DFID and the FCO respectively, which led the way for Christopher Cushing – a seasoned humanitarian expert of 13 wars and two natural disasters, and formerly of Bradford University – to develop on previous understanding about the challenges for humanitarians in-context.

This one day course was seen as a great opportunity for experienced service personnel to build on the practical institutional-focused experience they had accrued in active theatres across the world. However, it was noted repeatedly that more engagement between practitioners and academics – engagement which seeks to link the active, lived reality for service personnel in theatre, with academic discourse in the classroom – was needed in order to further develop understanding of post-war recovery issues, and ensure better implementation of policy in-context.

**Afghan Ambassador visits York**

The student-led Politics Society of the University of York organised a lecture by the Afghan Ambassador to the UK, H.E. Dr Mohammad Daud Yaar. Over 100 students attended Dr Yaar’s lecture on 2 May 2014.

The ambassador drew on his academic expertise, as well as his diplomatic and personal experience. As a diplomat, Dr Yaar has specialised in regional economic diplomacy and is keenly interested in regional economic integration as a strategic tool for promoting lasting peace and stability in the greater Central Asian space. He considers the European integration experience as a valuable model to promote regional peace and economic growth in Central and South Asia. The visit by Dr Yaar was particularly timely, as the PRDU is launching a large impact evaluation of Cluster Community Development Councils in three provinces for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (see cover story).
Learning the cardinal lessons of fieldwork in Sri Lanka

Dr Kenneth Bush, Altajir Lecturer in Post-war Recovery Studies (PRS), reflects on the MA students’ field trip to Sri Lanka which he convened last December. Ken’s in-field coordinator was Dr Jacob Eriksson, Teaching Fellow at the Department of Politics here in York.

“Fieldwork is a gamble, an experience, an education, and something of an adventure as well. One is never the same person at the end of it as one was at the beginning.”

Jeffrey Sluka, Hearts and minds, water and fish: support for the IRA and INLA in a Northern Ireland ghetto (Connecticut: JAI Press, 1989)

Every year, in November-December, our MA students undertake a field trip to a post-war region. Led by experienced faculty and staff, they gain first-hand, ground-level understandings of recovery and reconstruction in the aftermath of war; and develop the methodological, logistical and ethical skills and sensibilities required for any work in conflict-affected settings. The field trip is one of the unique features of the PRDU programme, helping to create a well-rounded graduate able to connect theory with practice in a complex and politically volatile environment.

While this was not the first PRS class to visit Sri Lanka, the trip was substantially different in many ways. Since the 2009 military defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the Sri Lankan defense forces, the country has been described as being in a state of ‘no war-no peace’. One of the fascinating aspects of the field trip was the opportunity to explore an environment in which most of the conflicts of the past continue to wind their way through present-day Sri Lankan politics, economy, and society, even as the overt forms of militarised violence have, for the time being, ceased.

In 2010 and 2011, PRS students visited the Batticaloa District of the Eastern Province, an area which suffered the direct effects of being on the front lines of the Government-LTTE wars. This year’s class was preparing to travel even further afield to Jaffna which was, in some ways, ‘ground zero’ for three decades of war (for a regional map of Sri Lanka, click here). Such a trip would have allowed us to see and assess the impact of the significant investments by the government in the infrastructural redevelopment of the region in an effort to redress the long-standing grievances of Tamil groups within Sri Lanka. I say ‘would have allowed us’ because a week before we were to depart we were informed that we would not be granted permission to travel to the North or East of the country. Part of the reason for this, undoubtedly, was the fall-out from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), at which the media and some heads of state took aim at the short-comings in the human rights situation in the country.

The first lesson of fieldwork: Expect the unexpected and be ready to respond to big challenges with big changes

This sudden change of plan introduced the class to the first lesson of fieldwork. I have to confess that despite the logistical headache, I was not unhappy to shift our focus to the south of the country. During the wars, much of my work in Sri Lanka was an effort to get the international community to appreciate what every Sri Lankan already knows: that the wars affected every child, woman and man on the island. Indeed, the myopic focus of the international community on the Tamil-majority areas – which were unquestionably ravaged by the predations of armed actors of every politico-ethnic stripe – inhibited them from understanding how their own programming inflamed a palpable sense of grievance within the Sinhalese south that its suffering was being ignored.

Focusing on the south also opened up the possibility for us to explore a period of history which has been erased from Sri Lanka’s collective memory: the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) Insurrection of 1987–90. Some 60,000 people were killed in a conflict that pitted a well-organised Maoist Sinhalese group (the JVP) against government security forces. Thus, two decades after this period of intense dirty war, the trip would help us to understand the degree to which, and the processes by which, communities themselves reconstruct shattered lives and livelihoods.

The second lesson of fieldwork: Triangulation – ask 20 people the same question/ ask the same person the same question 20 different ways

Prior to our arrival in Sri Lanka (and again, part of the fall-out from the CHOGM), the government passed a temporary law prohibiting foreigners from meeting government officials. In practical terms, this meant that we were unable to hear from the government directly – its strategic thinking, objectives, the division of labour between ministries, and its sense of impact. (continued on page 13)
Enter lesson number two: the need for triangulation. Working within this constraint – and with the assistance of Sri Lankan friends, colleagues and organisations in Colombo, Galle and Hambantota – we met the widest range of groups and individuals from across the political spectrum, including those who worked closely with the government. These included: community-based organisations; local NGOs; think tanks; internationally-funded project staff; peace advocacy groups; journalists; activists; families of the disappeared; members of the Buddhist Sangha (clergy); community leaders; teachers; and many more. Thus we developed an appreciation of the kaleidoscope of perspectives and experiences in Sri Lanka from the ground up, rather than top down.

The third lesson of fieldwork: With knowledge comes the responsibility to create positive change

The class was exposed to the full range of intense experiences on the field trip. We confronted logistical challenges; experienced ethical challenges; and wrestled with the methodological challenges of field research. But every night we would meet to discuss the challenges we had confronted individually and collectively during the day. For some of the students these sessions were the most crucial component of their learning, because they offered the opportunity to translate the visceral experiences of the day into some kind of intellectual order. I believe that the day-by-day cumulative impact of these sessions led to the realisation expressed by Alexandre Dumas: “There comes a point when words are useless commentary. Immodest babbling beside the hard reality of suffering.” From this realisation the students learned lesson number three: Post-war Recovery Studies is founded on the need both to understand, and to change, those structures and processes which degrade our common humanity.

Tom Leathers, (PRS, 2013–14), found the experience of researching in post-war Sri Lanka to be different to what he had anticipated. Here is his student’s view from the field.

The class split into four groups, each investigating different themes, giving us a great opportunity to delve deeply into the specificities and intricacies of post-war recovery topics, whilst also gaining a more rounded understanding of the past and present conflicts on the island.

Our group looked into the role of the elected local government in post-war reconstruction and development. We focused on: the devolution of power from the central government; the capacities of local authorities; and the relationships between local authorities and other organisations.

On our first day of interviews we learned of the significant limitations and constraints faced by the local authorities in the reconstruction and development process. We found that due to a lack of funds, equipment and experience, local authorities are often side-lined by civil service institutions tied to the central government. Our group looked into the role of the elected local government in post-war reconstruction and development. We focused on: the devolution of power from the central government; the capacities of local authorities; and the relationships between local authorities and other organisations.

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We interviewed a great range of actors, from NGO directors to religious leaders, from academics to military officers. When the time came for us to interview a number of municipal councillors and civil servants in Galle, our group was prepared for a session that would be fundamental to our research. In that session, we learned about the work, challenges, and opportunities confronting local government. We also learned a very important research lesson: what is most important may be glimpsed in what is not said in interviews and conversations in the field.

While the local authorities had been severely hampered by the war, the newly amalgamated central government Ministry of Defence & Urban Development was very conspicuous in its implementation of a massive economic development scheme intended to move the country towards a future of peace and prosperity. As in our meetings with local government officials, we realised that we had to look away from all those examples of physical construction towards what was not there: tangible examples of inter-group efforts to nurture dialogue and reconciliation. We saw the consequences of the ongoing – but non-militarised – conflicts that remained unaddressed. As one of our Sri Lankan colleagues so pertinently said: “Sri Lanka is very much a post-war country, rather than a post-conflict one. The conflict still remains.”
Straight after my graduation I was lucky enough to be accepted for the pilot phase of the new European Union Aid Volunteer Corps for a six-month placement in Uganda. Together with five other recently-graduated Europeans, we worked for a local NGO trying to support its fundraising through the provision of training on Monitoring and Evaluation and fundraising strategies.

To this end, the week-long ‘proposal writing and logframe’ session of the Master’s course at the PRDU proved to be very helpful.

I remember sitting in the classroom during this week, and one of the lecturers said that knowledge on logframes is ideal for entry level jobs in the ‘NGO world’, and that we should emphasise the training in our CVs.

Ever since, I highlighted my expertise on logframes by starting each cover letter with, “I have gained extensive experience on logframes”, and I believe it was because of this that I got accepted for my current job in Pakistan with ACTED, a French INGO.

Now, as a Project Development Officer, my life is only about logframes, overall objectives and specific objectives. Even though the security situation does not allow traveling much to the field and I am forced to stay mainly in Islamabad, the job allows me to gain experience in a range of departments, sectors and areas.

Since ACTED’s programme activities cover a range of sectors it is not unusual that one day I write a concept note for a food security project intended to assist the conflict-affected populations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; and the following day a multi-agency proposal for a women’s rights project in Sindh province.

Depending on the urgency of the submission I usually call a meeting with all relevant departments and potential partner organisations, and with the help of ‘problem and objective trees’ we come up with a project. In urgent cases, however, proposals need to be written within a day or two. This can be rewarding, particularly if it gets through to the implementation stage, but also costs some weekends and a good many coffees.
Statebuilding has risen to the forefront of international donor policies toward the security and development of fragile states, with governments now investing millions in statebuilding research every year. However, no serious study, until now, has examined the ways in which research influences policy in fragile states. Through in-depth interviews with officials and researchers, the picture that emerges is a mixed one, with evidence of extensive use of different forms of research combined with worrying practices and lingering deficiencies in some key areas.

DFID has led the way in attempting to enhance the use of statebuilding research in fragile states and its efforts have clearly paid off in some respects. There is evidence of a strong institutional culture, encouraging research engagement and incentive structures designed to ensure staff ground interventions in a robust evidential base. The research identified significant evidence of use, and a number of organisational innovations aimed at improving uptake are only just starting to take effect. Officials generally maintain strong and active networks with relevant academics, and the department funds a wide range of different forms of research both centrally and in-country.

In sum, British policies and programmes in fragile states have been influenced in both direct and indirect ways by a broad range of different forms of research and evidence. Yet worrying practices continue in some areas. The justificatory use of research is widespread, while there is next to no incorporation of new findings into ongoing programmes. The direct use and engagement with research in-country is severely limited by various practical and organisational constraints. Serious deficiencies are apparent in terms of knowledge management, institutional memory, and the sharing and awareness of research across government departments working in fragile states.

Crucially, there has been a disproportionate reliance on highly-paid Western researchers and not enough has been done to foster local research capacity.

Also, the attributes of some of the research itself can work against its uptake. A major persistent problem relates to the challenge of translating complex and detailed research into a form that is usable and relevant for policymakers.

Beyond these specific issues, the analysis reveals that chance and contingency play a big role in determining levels and forms of uptake. Whether policymakers engage with research can be highly dependent on unique contextual factors or the specific character, background or competencies of individuals. Moreover, there is a limit to how far incentive structures and institutional requirements can promote uptake. Indeed, attempts to over-formalise research use may actually undermine the spontaneous and natural operation of informal networks, or lead officials to adopt ‘coping mechanisms’ such as selectively seeking out research that supports predetermined agendas.

Enhancing uptake is arguably more about identifying and targeting certain discrete areas for improvement which build on existing strengths, encourage dynamic cultures of research use, and promote understanding between the producers and consumers of research. These measures include: developing staff skills and experience in handling and appraising research; improving the research component of inductions and pre-deployment briefings; revamping knowledge management structures, research repositories and institutional memory in-country; enhancing effective intermediary services; supporting formal and informal knowledge-policy networks; building local research capacity; providing opportunities for secondments across the research and policy worlds; optimising the substance and presentation of research; and strengthening the awareness and communication of existing research activities throughout government.

Fragility exacerbates problems common to research use in more stable environments, but also poses its own unique problems. Enhancing uptake is arguably more critical in fragile environments where officials often have to make politically sensitive decisions, face acute policy dilemmas, and need to respond to the typically fast pace of events. In such situations the temptation to seek short-cuts and rely on intuition or gut-feeling is incredibly high, while making informed decisions based on research can come to be viewed as an unrealisable luxury. Understanding better the dynamics of research use in fragile states represents an important first step in addressing this challenge.
This report summarises the findings of a three-year collaborative research project, funded jointly by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and DfID.

‘The Influence of Research and Local Knowledge on British-led Security Sector Reform Policy in Sierra Leone’,
(Conflict, Security & Development, Volume 14, Issue 1, February 2014, pp. 89–123)
A.E. Varisco

Externally-led security sector reform (SSR) in conflict-affected countries may require different and timely interventions to restructure the whole security architecture of a state. Because of their urgency, there is seemingly little or no room for research to influence the implementation of these activities. Nevertheless, academic studies on SSR have flourished in recent years, and case studies, ‘lessons learned’, and recommendations for policymakers now enrich this literature. This paper analyses an early, externally-led SSR intervention – the UK assistance programme in Sierra Leone – and seeks to understand whether, and how, research and knowledge on topics relevant to SSR influenced the development and implementation of this programme. It then examines general issues and themes, which characterise the use of research in SSR policy in conflict-affected environments.

‘The Use of Statebuilding Research in British Policy: Evidence from British Policymaking in Afghanistan, Nepal and Sierra Leone’
(Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 10 March 2014; pp. 1–24)
Dr Thomas Waldman

Based on in-depth interviews with officials and researchers, this article begins to shed light on the central dynamics pertaining to research use in statebuilding by exploring the experience of British in-country policymakers in three countries.

‘Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan: Elections in an Unstable Political Landscape’
Anna Larson & Noah Coburn

Based on extensive fieldwork and interviews in provinces across the country, this book builds an in-depth portrait of Afghanistan’s recent elections, and reveals how they have undermined the prospects of democracy in Afghanistan. The authors retrace presidential, parliamentary, and provincial council elections over the past decade and expose the role of international actors in promoting the polls as one-off events, detached from the broader political landscape. Merging political science with anthropology, Coburn and Larson document how political leaders, commanders, and the new ruling elite have used elections to further their own interests and deprive local communities of access to political opportunities. Western powers, the authors argue, need to re-evaluate their most basic assumptions about elections, democracy, and international intervention if they hope to prevent similar outcomes in the future.