
Preface:

Innovation and Analysis in Development and Conflict

The 2004 issue of PRAXIS explores broad-based questions regarding the interaction of development efforts and conflict—answers to which can both initiate and transform development interventions. Recent efforts in conflict mediation and peacebuilding are also re-examined, drawing out important lessons for the future.

In the first section, *Understanding the Roots of Conflict*, we bring you cutting-edge research re-conceptualizing the causes of conflict and investigating new models through which to address hostilities on the local and global levels. Jennifer Leaning, Sam Arie, and Elizabeth Stites suggest that expanding the concept of human security beyond the provision of material needs will allow actors and institutions to better measure its presence or absence, improving early warning efforts and guiding humanitarian interventions. Stacy Heen continues the examination of the roots of conflict and considers these dimensions on a community level through a case study assessing the abilities of a microcredit service provider to mediate conflict in a rural village in Cameroon. In the third piece in this section, Ahsiya Posner presents an original model using education to improve cross-cultural understanding and mitigate some forms of conflict in the long term. This article situates such a role for education in both a historical context and in the context of international conflicts post September 11, 2001.

The second section of this year's journal focuses on the first annual Fletcher Conference on Innovative Approaches, with the theme of *Rethinking Interdisciplinary Action in Conflict*. The conference address, presented by Louise Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, introduces the discussion. A summary of the conference follows, continuing the PRAXIS tradition of providing discussion and analysis of the practical exercise of development strategies.

The third section, *Institutional and Social Capacities for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*, analyses the difficulties faced by local and international actors in their attempts to address and minimize conflicts. Tony Verheijen and Lisa Smirl examine civil society's capacity to provide early warning in the context of the crises in the Balkans, with repercussions for the whole of South East Europe. The piece by Craig Cohen, meanwhile, critiques international efforts to repatriate and reintegrate refugees in post-conflict Rwanda. Finally, *Views from the Field* presents interviews with four practitioners, who share their perspectives and experiences, providing further context for the theoretical and practical innovations presented in this issue.

The staff of PRAXIS looks forward to continued discussion in future editions and we invite you to contact us at editors@fletcherpraxis.com.

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