

## FOREWORD: THE DEVELOPMENT, CONFLICT AND SECURITY NEXUS

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On behalf of the Development Studies Association of Ireland I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce this special issue of *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, which arises out of our conference on 'The Development, Conflict and Security Nexus'. The relationships between poverty and conflict are contextual and multi-dimensional, but nonetheless have patterns. Low income countries are more likely to suffer from armed conflict for a variety of reasons. Chief amongst these is that extreme poverty may foster resentment against the existing social order, particularly if this is combined with what sociologists call horizontal inequality between different social groups. The so-called opportunity cost of conflict is also low in contexts where poverty is endemic as people may not be risking their jobs, for example, but may be paid by militias, such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia, in order to join them. Processes of marginalisation and immiseration then may feed conflict, particularly when combined with a sense of injustice based on identity.

Low income country governments may have few resources to redress the causes of conflict and if they are not delivering adequate and necessary public goods effectively, efficiently and transparently or are perceived to be corrupt or biased, they may be a cause of grievance themselves. Economic marginalisation and poor governance often co-occur and, by virtue of the dynamics described above, may provide fertile ground for conflict to breed. Under-resourced governments may not only be a source of grievance, but also lack the capacities to effectively deal with conflict dynamics. This may result in what some have referred to as conflict traps. Effective conflict resolution depends on both addressing proximate and structural causes. While negotiation, mediation and other mechanisms may

help reduce conflict it may risk recurring if underlying deprivation and other grievances remain unchecked or under-addressed.

The 2018 Development Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference explored such issues. It brought together both practitioners and theorists of development and conflict. Many of the articles in this special issue were also presented at the conference and cover a variety of vitally important topics, ranging from addressing the legacies of conflict and the importance of memory in post-conflict contexts to assessing the human development and capabilities approach (HDCA) as an ethical lens for assessing neoliberal securitisation.

The development-conflict-security nexus will become an increasingly important lens through which to understand future developments. There is a substantial debate in the literature on the extent to which climate change will feed into conflict, and the ways in which its fallout is being securitised. Informed, evidence-based policy and research can play a vital role in illuminating pathways from what otherwise might be a dystopic future. The articles in this special issue make a valuable contribution in shedding light on the issues and creating hope for the future.

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