

Conflict & Development

Institution: University of York

Year: Year 2

Course type: Track specific course

ECTS: 10

Brief description (including learning outcomes)

The module examines understandings of development and the intersections of development and conflict. Through most of the Cold War period conflict zones were effectively written out of development and development theory did not engage with conflict theory. In the post-Cold War period the greater visibility of civil wars has led to a focus on development as a form of conflict prevention and resolution. However, patterns of economic and political development remain potential causes of conflict.

The definition and measurement of development remains contested but has significant implications for contemporary development practices. We examine a range of approaches to the definition of development as involving “needs”, “capabilities”, and “rights”. Contemporary practices emphasise development as a process involving the participation of the poor, we examine the potential for and limitations on the participation of the poor in development, in general as well as contexts of post-conflict reconstruction and development.

At the end of the module students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is development?
 - a. What are the implications of how we define or measure it?
2. What are the implications of current theories for development practice?
 - a. How participatory can development be?
 - b. What role for civil society?
 - c. How do we understand power in development processes?
3. What are the relations between development and conflict?

- a. Are there correlations between patterns of development and violent conflict?
- b. How do we understand the dynamics of violent conflicts and their relations with development?
- c. How are inequalities of power and wealth related to conflicts?
- d. Can development aid contribute to conflicts? How can these risks be mitigated?