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JOURNAL OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Special Issue
with Community Development Journal:
"conflict management & peace-building through community development"

Editorial
The Tlhabologang Experience
Buks Greyling

Building Cultural Synergy and Peace in South Africa
Anna-Marie du Toit

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The Elim Care Group: Conflict in Community Development Styles
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“A More Excellent Way:” Developing Coalitions and Consensus through Informal Networking
Alison Gilchrist

Book Reviews

Volume 13 No 1 1998
The Journal publishes critical analyses of social development issues as they affect the poor and marginalised in society. It deals with concerns, especially, but not exclusively, relevant to southern Africa, and is addressed to development practitioners, social workers, planners, policy makers and academics in a variety of fields such as economics, geography, politics, sociology, psychology, social administration, and to other concerned individuals.

Published twice annually, the Journal seeks to enhance understanding of the social development processes that contribute to the planning and implementation of appropriate intervention strategies at different levels. Its goal is to discover how best to target relevant and successful projects to those most in need, and how to maximise popular participation, thereby creating egalitarian and productive communities.

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Editorial

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Abstracting Services & Index
The Journal of Southern African Studies is organising a conference on African environments, past and present. The geographic focus is not restricted to southern Africa, and we would welcome contributions on other parts of the continent, as well as papers which explore comparative contexts and wider international linkages. A rich body of research which examines the interaction between social and environmental change is accumulating. The conference is designed to stimulate dialogue between different approaches and disciplines, following some productive recent encounters.

Historians and social scientists of Africa are increasingly focussing their attention on environmental change and regulation; one purpose of the conference will be to draw together some of this work. But we hope also to engage with natural scientists both in discussions of the history of their disciplines, which have been so important in building an understanding of environmental change in Africa, and in an effort to keep pace with rapid scientific developments and their impact on policy. Natural scientists in turn might find value in approaches which seek to be sensitive to African practice and the political implications of environmental controls. With reference to specific issues and areas there is often a good deal of common ground. It is important to explore this, not only in order to understand environmental change, but because access to and conservation of natural resources remain critical questions for African people and governments.

This is an open conference for which we invite papers and proposals for panels by the end of February 1998. Topics covered could include:

- African ideas and local knowledge
- Climate and desertification
- The impact of introduced species
- The impact of property regimes
- Timber, forestry and fuelwood
- Disease and environmental change
- Urban environments and pollution
- Biodiversity, degradation and sustainability
- Colonisation and conflict over natural resources
- History of Commonwealth forestry (convened by Prof. J. Burley, Oxford Forestry Institute).
- The history of natural sciences
- Hunting and wildlife conservation
- Parks and people
- Water and its control
- Fire
- Migration and conservation
- Vegetation change and rangeland management
- Markets, commoditisation and environmental change
- Literature, film and conceptions of landscape
- Colonisation and conflict over natural resources
- History of Commonwealth forestry (convened by Prof. J. Burley, Oxford Forestry Institute).

Proposals for papers should be about 300 words; panels should consist of two or three papers and a discussant. We plan to precirculate papers so that the bulk of time can be devoted to discussion. We cannot undertake to accept all proposals. Participants should plan to raise their own fares, but let us know if this will be impossible.

All correspondence and proposals to JoAnn McGregor, St. Antony's College, Oxford, OX2 6JF, fax 01865-554465, email joann.mcgregor@sant.ox.ac.uk.
Managing conflict through community development

The JSDA and the Community Development Journal have both featured special issues previously on the question of conflict, refugees and civil disorder. With this issue, we return to the question of conflict in local communities and between nations, and the place that community development has in preventing conflict, managing it when it occurs and ameliorating its consequences.

In May 1997, the International Association for Community Development held its biennial colloquium in Pretoria, South Africa, on the highly appropriate theme of "conflict management and peace-building through community development." Although the majority of delegates attending the conference were from South Africa itself, searching for ways to use community development as a tool for reconciliation and nation-building, there were also many delegates from other parts of the world drawn to discuss their own experience of conflict management within very different national contexts. The CDJ and the Journal of Social Development in Africa, were invited to organise an afternoon panel discussion on the theme of the conference and some of the papers included within this CDJ/JS DA Special Issue were first presented as part of that panel. The author of one further paper, from Afghanistan, was prevented from attending by precisely the issue on which the conference focused: the impact of local conflicts. The remaining papers and case studies in this special issue are based on presentations made by participants at the conference, in some cases revised for publication after the conference.

The JSDA and CDJ have sought ways of collaborating over the past few years which would be of benefit to both our readerships and this represents another such collaboration. The total pool of papers made available after the conference have formed the basis for parallel special issues of each Journal, published as close together in time as respective publication cycles will allow. Some papers appear in both special issues, some (for reasons of space or for local considerations) in one journal only. However, the parallel publication venture indicates both the importance each journal attaches to the substantive issues discussed in the papers, and also the collaborative approach which each journal is keen to foster and will continue to do so. This is a joint editorial and the editors in particular wish to thank those participants who quickly provided revised versions of their papers and case studies, often in difficult circumstances, to enable us to produce these issues very rapidly.

The CDJ last produced a special issue on conflict in communities four years ago, while the JSDA produced a special issue on conflict and refugees five years ago. Neither journal makes an apology for returning to the question so soon. In one
week in 1996, thirty-seven civil wars and five cross-border conflicts were being fought. Conflict is becoming a "fact of life" for increasing numbers of communities and, as pressure on the world's resources grows, is likely to become more so. It is therefore an increasingly urgent task to examine the role that community development, based on values of co-operation, on democratic involvement and on a needs-led approach to working with people, can play in addressing the growth of conflict.

The CDJ panel set the context for exploring such an approach to working with conflict. Conflicts within and between communities can be conceptualised (and typically are conceptualised within the dominant development paradigm) in relatively limited ways, as problems which need to be managed. Within this dominant development paradigm, focusing as it does upon the promotion of market-led development, on a global scale, conflicts may be viewed, then, in terms of their potentially disruptive effects on development. From this perspective, community conflicts need to be contained. Otherwise, investment may be discouraged in the local context - not to mention the additional risk that conflicts may spill over into neighbouring areas and beyond.

The CDJ panel fully recognised the importance of working to manage and contain divisive conflicts within and between communities, where these conflicts were damaging the development process. But the panel went on to raise a series of further questions about the importance of analysing the structural reasons for such communal divisions. Community conflicts could be and all too often were indicative of deeper underlying causes. Community conflicts may be symptomatic of long-standing structural inequalities and oppression (as in the case of community conflicts in Northern Ireland, the local UK example which was explored in the previous CDJ special issue). Conflict and violence may be the result of state policies to contain opposition (as the article on Zimbabwe in this issue demonstrates). And community conflicts may be caused and/or exacerbated by external interventions, as in the case of British, Russian and more recently American interventions in Afghanistan. In the current development context, the economic, political and ideological interests of these external forces become more relevant than ever.

The JSDA Board also recognised the value of this collaboration with CDJ and considered the topic of conflict resolution to be of such relevance to the African context that a special issue should again be devoted to it. The many-faceted structural roots of conflict are well-known within Africa and the legacy of colonialism, marginalisation, exploitation and underdevelopment of the continent are testimony to this.
From this alternative perspective, the question cannot simply be how to manage and contain community conflicts. On the contrary, community conflicts neither can nor should be effectively resolved, without addressing the underlying structural factors, as well as the presenting causes. Community development has a vital role to play here, empowering individuals and communities to analyse the roots as well as the immediate symptoms of their differences, promoting critical consciousness (or “conscientisation” to use Freire’s terminology) to enable communities to develop their own strategies within a more transformative development paradigm. In contrast with the dominant, market-led development paradigm, this transformative model rests upon alternative values – values which have particular relevance for community development – emphasising needs-based approaches to development, aimed at promoting solidarity and social justice.

The CDJ panel also raised questions about the potential implications for the role of the journal itself. As an international forum, over more than thirty years, CDJ has provided the space to exchange experiences and to reflect upon these experiences critically, across national boundaries and between NGOs in First and Third Worlds, in both North and South. This special issue provides a range of such reflections, from the specific experiences of particular community-based projects to manage conflicts and build peace, through to the experiences of community-based initiatives to heal the wounds of violence and trauma. Correspondingly the JSDA, with twelve years focusing on social development and social work within Africa, is particularly interested in exploring critical areas relating to peace, development and community participation.

In addition, too, this special issue raises further questions about the role of international journals such as the CDJ and JSDA, in stimulating debate about the global dimensions of conflicts within and between communities. A number of the articles raise questions about the types of external factors which can cause and/or exacerbate community conflicts. And between them, the articles raise questions about the wider failures to manage, let alone to resolve, community conflicts. As the article from Rwanda reflected, it was, “with great difficulty that we forgive the international community for remaining silent and turning a blind eye to the genocide which threw Rwanda into mourning. But we blame it more for not having helped us to reconstruct our country.” Lasting peace, this article argues, requires taking care of the victims, the widows and orphans lacking food and shelter, whilst tackling the underlying structural causes of past conflicts, working for development based upon social justice.

Gary Craig, Nigel Hall and Marjorie Mayo
December 1997
The journal is produced to a very high standard, and should be a very useful source for all libraries and information users concerned with Islamic issues. Information Development (London), Volume 7, Number 4, pages 241-242

This journal is doing a singular service to the cause of the publicity of periodical literature on Islamic culture and civilization in all its diverse aspects. Every scholar of Islamic Studies should feel indebted to you for this service.

PROFESSOR S.M. RAZAULLAH ANSARI
President, International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS) Commission for Science and Technology in Islamic Civilization, New Delhi, India

(Periodica Islamica is) an invaluable guide...

PROFESSOR BILL KATZ
Library Journal (New York), Volume 118, Number 21, page 184

Periodica Islamica is a most valuable addition to our reference collection.

PROFESSOR WOLFGANG BEHN
Union Catalogue of Islamic Publications, Staatsbibliothek Preussicher Kulturbesitz Berlin, Germany

It is recommended for all research libraries and scholars of the Islamic viewpoint.

DR. RICHARD R. CENTING
Multicultural Review (Westport, Connecticut), Volume 2, Number 1, page 40

You should be congratulated on Periodica Islamica which should prove to be a valuable journal to persons interested in Islam and the entire Muslim World.

AMBASSADOR (RTD.) CHRISTOPHER VAN HOLLEN
The Middle East Institute, Washington DC, USA

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