

The Research Council of Norway

Research on Poverty and Peace

Programme Plan

May 2005

Preface

The Research Council of Norway is hereby launching a new research programme focussing on international poverty reduction and peacebuilding in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The new programme is intended to help build expertise, inform public debate and provide input into policy-making both in Norway and internationally. The following programme plan sets the priorities and focus of the programme and was developed by a committee appointed in October 2004.

The programme plan committee was asked to set the research priorities within the following themes: welfare, growth and distribution; institutions and rights-based development; and war, peace and development. Resource management and environment, welfare, work life, and trade and industry were stated as important cross-cutting sub-themes. The programme plan committee was comprised of Carl-Erik Schulz (professor, University of Tromsø, and chair of the committee); Rachel Brett (representative for human rights and refugees, Quaker UN Office, and fellow, Human Rights Centre, Essex University); Tone Fløtten (research director, Institute for Applied Social Science Fafo); Bente Herstad (director, Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo); Asbjørn Løvbræk (senior adviser, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation); Thandika Mkandawire (director, UNRISD, Geneva); Karl Ove Moene (professor, University of Oslo); Diane Stone (professor, Central European University, Budapest); Astri Suhrke (senior researcher, Chr. Michelsen Institute); and Else Øyen (scientific director, Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, University of Bergen and International Social Science Council). The committee has met twice. In addition, there has been extensive email correspondence in order to finalize the programme plan.

The programme plan was approved by the Division Board in May 2005. The Board decided to organise it as one programme (administered by one programme board) with two specified themes (i.e. poverty and peace). The programme board to be appointed will be asked to further concretise the priorities and goals set out in the following plan and elaborate ideas for coordination between this research field and other relevant research programmes in the Research Council. Funding for the programme will be determined through the annual budget allocations of the Research Council.

The programme will serve as the main focus area of the Research Council's development research over the next ten-year period, its purpose being to develop knowledge that can provide a basis for poverty reduction and the advancement of human rights in countries in the South. We hope that Norwegian researchers, in cooperation with international researchers, will find the initiative interesting as a basis for the development of specific research projects, thus ensuring the success of the programme.

The Research Council of Norway, 24 May 2005

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1. Background and Mandate

Poverty and peace have become subjects for the foreign policy of most national governments in the past few years. 1.2 billion people live on less than a dollar a day. Six million children under the age of five starved to death in 2004. At the current rate it will take 130 years to eradicate hunger. Progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals is slow and uneven, with Sub-Saharan Africa continuously falling behind the rest of the world. At the same time, violent conflicts are riveting the world, with six million people being killed in the 1990s. 40 million people currently live as refugees or internally displaced, 300,000 as child soldiers. While official development assistance amounts to USD 60 billion (2002), UN statistics indicate that the world's total military spending amounts to USD 850 billion. To meet these challenges, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has given increased priority to international poverty eradication in Norwegian development assistance, as well as in several policy papers and strategy documents¹ setting the focus and strategies for development policies and other aspects of foreign affairs policies. At the same time, Norway has long played an active role in peacemaking and peacekeeping operations.

With this as background, research on poverty and the conditions for peace has achieved heightened importance for the Research Council as well. Poverty became a principal theme for development research starting in 2002,² when, among other initiatives, a committee was appointed to examine in depth the research needs and requirements.³ Its report "*Breaking the Circle: Which Way Out of Poverty?*", along with the comments offered by government departments and the research community, and input given at a roundtable meeting organized in April 2004, provided the basis for the follow-up work at the Research Council. At the same time, CMI and PRIO had finalized a "State of the Art" report commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on research into conflict and development.⁴ Bringing these two priority areas further, a programme plan committee was established in October 2004 in order to set the priorities for future research on both themes. The following programme plan contains the research priorities as formulated by the programme plan committee.⁵

The plan sets out the goals and academic priorities, as well as strategic initiatives and plans for implementation, for poverty research and research on conflict/peace. The plan also outlines the advantages and disadvantages of integrating research on conflict and peace with poverty research.

2. Focus and Priority Research Areas

The overall aim of the following plan is to strengthen Norwegian research in key areas as a basis for improved understanding of how to achieve poverty reduction and peacebuilding. Problems linked with development are, however, not geographically confined to countries in the South. Challenges faced by

¹ See: Fighting Poverty. *Norway's Action Plan 2015 for combating Poverty in the South. Executive Summary* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002); *National Strategy for Sustainable Development*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2002), see also: <http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/171847/nsbu.pdf> & *Fighting Poverty Together: a Comprehensive Development Policy*, White Paper No. 35 to the Norwegian Parliament, 2003-04, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Action Plans have also been developed in several areas of development assistance, including with a focus on children. An action plan for environmental concerns in Norwegian development assistance is also being finalized in 2005.

² The Strategic Plan (2002 – 2006) of the former Environment and Development Division of the Research Council sets poverty as a priority area.

³ The committee was chaired by A. M. Jerve (Chr. Michelsen Institute in Norway).

⁴ *Conflict and Development: Framework for a Proposed Research Area*, CMI & PRIO, March 2003

⁵ The plan has been developed within the mandate of the committee, keeping in mind the overall Strategy of the Research Council (*Research Expands Frontiers, Strategy 2004- 2010 Research Council Norway*) as well as priorities set by other research programmes, such as Marginalisation and Globalisation (Research Council, *Programme Plan, Marginalisation and Globalisation* on <http://www.rcn.no>)

developing and transitional countries are similar in several respects to those experienced by countries in the developed world. Hence, the following research initiative should take advantage of broad and multidisciplinary expertise and experience assembled in Norway in order to provide a coordinated, integrated and innovative effort. At the same time, goals of internationalization require cooperation with international expertise and researchers in both the North and the South; support for Norwegian researchers to enable them to access global networks, policy makers and funding sources, and high expectations to international publishing. All in all, future development research as promoted by this plan should aim to meet high academic international standards and relevance for development policies both in the North and the South.

The research initiative outlined below should focus on innovative, academic research, including high quality applied research. The selection of thematic areas and strategies is based on an assessment of the status of international knowledge, areas in which Norwegian researchers have expertise and comparative advantages, and fields in particular need of policy interventions. The thematic areas are relevant for both "traditional" development research as well as for researchers in the fields of welfare and poverty, labour markets, research on institutional conditions and human rights, access and control over natural resources, environmental management, etc.

The new research initiatives on poverty and on conflict and peace welcome research projects within the research themes and priority areas suggested below. While giving specific focus to certain themes, we are also open to high quality projects outside these themes. Applications relating to conceptual issues and methodology will be viewed in a positive light. The committee also welcomes strong inter-disciplinary and comparative research. Projects identifying gender problems, vulnerable groups and policy interventions (including the sequencing of interventions) will be looked upon favourably. Finally, institutional and rights based development is central to both poverty reduction and peacebuilding processes and will therefore be integrated into both thematic areas below. In the following, we have addressed our two main topics under the headings '*Poverty and welfare*' and '*War, peace and development*'.

Poverty and welfare

The last decade has seen a blossoming of research into poverty-related topics and a rush of attention toward the issue of poverty reduction among international institutions, national governments and scientists. Poverty is a concept with many facets. We focus in the following on 'large-scale' poverty in poor countries, embedded in social, political and economic relations, as distinct from individual misfortune. We understand poverty as individuals' lack of freedom and ability to meet daily needs for themselves and their dependents. Poverty encompasses failure to attain minimum living levels, welfare attributes as well as the resources that may enable people to improve their conditions.

The research community has an important role to play in the international struggle to eliminate poverty. While considerable controversies remain in the development field, fierce debates throughout the past decades may also have obliterated emerging areas of agreement concerning development issues. A large number of studies has emerged internationally on poverty, the causes of poverty, the relationship between poverty and growth, poverty and distribution, etc. Considerable agreement has emerged concerning, for example, the major role of institutions and policies in poverty reduction. At the same time, serious deficiencies and gaps remain in our knowledge about the mechanisms that produce poverty, and the means and policies necessary to reduce it. The committee has built on the considerable theoretical contributions on poverty in recent years and an assessment of the competence of the Norwegian research sector.⁶

⁶ For an overview of the Norwegian research sector, see the mapping conducted for *Breaking the Circle* (2004) and comments to the report. For overviews of development approaches, the World Bank (2004): *Development and Poverty Reduction. Looking Back, Looking Forward*; the ILO *Report on the Social Dimension of Globalisation* (2004) as well as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005 (see: <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>) provide useful background. The committee has also heard presentations from the project on the "state of the art" of poverty research and the role of institutions, which was commissioned by the Research Council as input for the work of the programme plan committee. The project has been carried out by CRIP and has the title "The Polyscopic Landscape of Poverty Research". The final report will be available May 1st 2005.

The committee supports the argument presented in *Breaking the Circle* (2004) that there is a need for systematic and reliable analyses of the effects on the poor of different national and international policies and development trends, including the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, we need in-depth studies of policy interventions that have resulted in reduction of poverty. And finally, there is a need for independent voices that critically examine basic assumptions and contribute with new insights to the international development debate.

The research programme on poverty aims to contribute to improved understanding of the processes and mechanisms that lead to poverty, with particular focus on research that may contribute with relevant knowledge for poverty *reduction* strategies, especially for those trapped in the worst forms of poverty in poor countries.⁷ This is the fundamental focus of the programme. Within the thematic areas suggested below, poverty may be studied at different levels, in local, national and international settings. International trends, trade and investment flows, etc. have a marked impact on poverty levels in individual countries. At the same time, poverty reduction strategies are country specific. Greater focus has also been given lately to the micro-level foundation for development. We will be particularly, but not exclusively, interested in the following topics of research:

A marked and undisputed rise in *income inequality* observed in many industrialized or transition countries, combined with growing debate on the distribution across countries and the effects of the “Washington consensus”, has brought issues of income inequality and their impact on poverty alleviation centre stage for scholars and policy makers. The relationship between growth, poverty and inequality has remained controversial, with shifting theoretical arguments and focus concerning the effects of inequality on growth and poverty alleviation. At the same time, this very focus has also been an important area for development theory which focuses on development paths and poverty reduction in Scandinavia, and hence provides an important area in which Norwegian scholars may contribute with constructive insight.

There is growing recognition of *the role of institutions* in regulating markets, constraining governments and determining the interaction of households in the marketplace.⁸ However, more information is needed on how, and the extent to which, the effects of institutions depend on different political and economic frameworks. We also need more knowledge about the particular kinds of institutions necessary for poverty reduction, and the kinds of institutions needed to promote poverty reduction in transitions and globalization processes. International institutions also have a major impact on poverty levels and poverty eradication in poor countries. At the same time, attention should be given to studies of the role of civil society, social capital and social networks in poverty reduction and redistribution.

Poverty is often a question of unemployment, underemployment and informalization of work and ownership. At the same time, it is first and foremost through labour markets and global value chains, i.e. access to work and various types of employment, that international trade and investment flows are affecting poverty and living standards. Hence, *labour markets and job creation* has become the subject of considerable attention for development efforts in the past decade.⁹ At the same time, we have inadequate information about the actual levels, degree and character of underemployment and marginality in the labour markets in the South. More knowledge is also needed on how to formalize informal sectors, establish minimum standards, and transform the agricultural and commodity sectors, which so many countries depend on, into sustainable economies. We have insufficient information about the kinds of labour market institutions emerging in developing countries, and how to establish sustainable institutions.

Poverty reduction obviously depends on the various kinds and forms of *welfare and social policies* being developed. More research attention should be turned toward the effects of various welfare programmes

⁷ At the same time, the living standards, or deprivation, amongst the poorest of the poor is generally closely linked to the living standards of the slightly better off. Distributional issues, the size and role of the middle class, and the wealth gap between the poor and the rich has considerable influence on poverty and will also hold a prominent position in the research programme.

⁸ The World Bank, through the *World development Report 2002*, has for example given considerable attention to this topic.

⁹ See for example: *A Fair Globalization. Creating Opportunities for All*. World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, Geneva: ILO 2004.

and universal versus targeted benefits. Furthermore, more focus should be given to the distributional effects of social security systems, costs and benefits of cash transfers versus benefits in kind, and the relationship between labour markets and welfare. Comparative research, which establishes the differences and similarities in development of welfare policies and models between South and North, is also welcome.

Poverty is also linked to *environmental security*. The first victims of environmental destruction resulting from global or local environmental changes are usually people living in absolute poverty. The success of poverty eradication programmes may depend on the local conditions of the environment and the possibility of the poor to access and gain control over natural resources and their usage to improve well-being. Environmental policies have a history of transforming local cultural practices into environmental management plans and practices controlled by national and regional government officials. Even development projects applying principles of people's participation have resulted in deprivation of the poorest of the poor who are dependent on scarce natural resources for survival. On the other hand, local neighbourhood groups working on local environmental issues such as improved sanitation, tree planting, garbage disposal, etc. have turned out to be efficient income-generators for the poor as well as efficient entry points for political mobilization and democratization. Most information on the relationship between poverty and environment links is anecdotal, as little systematic and independent research has been done on these issues. More research attention to the influence of the environment and natural resources on poverty is therefore relevant for this programme.

War, peace and development¹⁰

The relationship between violence, peace and development has long been central to the social sciences. The questions have been framed on different levels: individuals and groups; state and economy; global and world systems. A large and varied literature has emerged. The research programme builds on this, as well as on the literature review in three background papers commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad.¹¹ Three areas are of special interest: 1) the role of poverty, resource management, and developmental and modernizing change in generating violent conflict; 2) the developmental consequences of violent conflict; and 3) strategies for transitions out of violent conflict.

Issues of human rights and institution-building constitute central cross-cutting issues. Violent conflict often entails human rights violations relating to physical security. Both conventional and new types of warfare have increasingly come to affect civilian populations. Other types of violence (state repression and violence perpetrated by non-state actors) also typically target civilians in ways that negate or undermine human rights. Institutional developments are equally central in that the difference between potential and actual violent conflict is usually related to the establishment of certain kinds of institutions, such as democratic decision-making processes, predictable and legitimate agencies that adjudicate disputes and affirm norms of social rights, wrongs and fairness (rule of law), constitutional guarantees of decentralization or power-sharing, or procedures for negotiation among contending groups. Institutional developments of this kind may appear as intervening variables that co-determine whether a given transition/development process takes a violent form, or not.

The priority areas of research for the programme are those in which current events demand new policy-relevant knowledge; new areas that have been identified by the relevant research communities; areas where knowledge can be advanced by building cumulatively on earlier findings; areas in which existing

¹⁰ Following the usage of the CMI-PRO report, we use both "conflict" and "development" in a broad sense. "Development" is taken to include economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions. It includes, but is much broader than, a focus on poverty reduction. As for "conflict", this programme will build on the extensive work already done on the causes and consequences of civil wars, but further encourages research on other forms of violence. This includes systematic state repression, mass murders, low-level conflicts (LIC) and a whole range of violence associated with non-state actors (e.g. gangs, organized crime, militias, militant movements and transnational militant organizations). Interventionist wars are also relevant to the development perspective insofar as they typically take place in a context of uneven power and development and are accompanied by, or justified with, a development agenda.

¹¹ The background documents commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad are: *Conflict and development. Framework for a proposed research area*, CMI and PRIO, March 2003; *Decentralization in conflict and post-conflict situations*, NIBR, January 2005, and *In Search of strategy. A proposed Agenda for Applied Research on transitions from conflict*, FAFO, February 2005.

knowledge has produced puzzles to be explained or resolved; and areas where different methodologies have produced contrasting findings.

Interrelationship between development and conflict

Recent social science research has found that, statistically speaking, civil wars are more likely to occur in poor countries than in rich ones. While this suggests some relationship between certain kinds of violence and poverty, not all poor states are equally prone to violence, and some rich states are prone to violence other than civil wars. Qualitative research, moreover, has found that the causes of civil wars, as well as other kinds of violence, are quite complex, with economic dimensions playing different roles in different contexts. For instance, poverty and systematic inequality can, in some cases, create “cohesion of oppression” rather than rebellion; elsewhere these conditions lead to mobilization of discontent. Further research could elaborate on these relationships and related variables such as institutional development, social organization, resources/resource management, international/regional contexts and the role of age and gender.

A considerable body of literature views development as an inherently conflictual process and finds that *change* is a critical variable. Marked or sudden changes in aspirations or conditions of material life can generate conflict. New riches, for instance, can cause conflict over how to divide the goods; new scarcities can have the same effect. Change brought on by the modernization process can generate conflict over belief-systems and specific ideologies. These in turn may be rooted in altered material conditions that affect group identity, welfare, and opportunity structures. More generally, developmental change and modernization affect issues of distributional justice, access to political power and control of the state apparatus that historically have been important causes of violent conflict. These areas have been well investigated by researchers in the past. A central task at present is to build on the rich literature in this area in order to explore current manifestations of the conflict-generating potential of developmental change and to examine forces that contain or actualize the potential for violence. Of particular interest in this connection are the effects of globalization, economic neo-liberalism and the “third wave” of democratization. Further unpacking of the concept and elements of an alleged “clash of civilizations” is also relevant.

Violent conflict has major consequences for development. While the socio-economic costs are frequently noted and studied, there is increasing interest in socio-economic structures generated by war and other forms of violence, and which have clear winners as well as losers. Such structures are of particular interest in relation to the transition from war to peace, or in the transformation of a war economy to a peace economy.

Development and peacebuilding¹²

The combination of large aid flows and high policy relevance has made peacebuilding studies a growth industry. Much of this work has been highly applied (project or programme oriented). The academic literature, by contrast, has sought to develop empirically-based theories of “causes of peace” in the aftermath of major wars, and of appropriate types and sequencing of aid policies to sustain the post-war peace. Despite the growth in the literature, peacebuilding is still a new area in which much research remains to be done. In part, existing literature on development and conflict can be applied; in part, new theoretical and analytical perspectives seem necessary to account for the legacy of past violence. There is still limited or contested theory about the conditions that are necessary and/or sufficient for implementing a peace agreement; which peacebuilding strategies tend to produce what kinds of results, what the effects are of different sequencing and pacing of reforms, and how contextual, historical variables interact with policy variables.

¹² The term “peacebuilding” is a post-Cold War term, developed in the 1990s when the scope widened for UN-sanctioned intervention to end conflicts and construct a post-war peace. Already by the mid-1990s, “peacebuilding” had come to mean an increasingly standardized package of post-war aid designed to promote demilitarization, return of refugees and reconstruction within a market economy, the rule of law, Western-style democratic elections, civil society and human rights.

Further research should take into account the analytical and theoretical perspectives in the field. Moreover, there is a distinction between building peace “from above” and “from below”. The former includes aid strategies (for peacekeeping, economic assistance, reconstruction, democratisation, etc) that operate in the public policy arena, seek to provide mostly tangible public goods, and are typically mediated through state actors. Building peace “from below” operates on a different level and with different aims; the objective here is to develop trust and build confidence among communities on the local level. More broadly in the area of peacebuilding, particular, but not exclusive, attention should be given to the following thematic areas:

The causes of peace in a post-war situation. Given contesting theories about the causes of peace in a post-conflict situation, more work is needed to identify the relevant determinants of sustainable peace. This includes contextual-historical variables, policy variables relating to the causes of the war (typically distributive issues over political and/or economic resources, and control over legitimate symbols and means of coercion), institutional/constitutional issues relating to state-building and decentralization, and policy variables relating to strategies included in typical post-conflict aid packages.

Strategies of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding typically entails intrusive foreign aid strategies that raise problematic issues of legitimacy, dependency and accountability – more broadly, the concept of sovereignty. Are such problems inherent in the peacebuilding project? What are the effects of different approaches and sequencing of reforms?

The nature of the peace. Given increasing interest in what *kind* of peace is being created - and growing, although fragmented, evidence that a transformation of violence may be taking place - this area constitutes an important area for further research. More knowledge is needed to document and explain the tendency of many so-called post-conflict countries to experience widespread violence, corruption, illegal economic activities, and disempowerment of large social segments. Increasing use in the literature of terms such as “a violent peace” and “violence in the post-conflict phase” further suggests the need to re-examine commonly used definitional concepts of war and peace.

The nature of peacebuilding after interventionist wars. Civil wars, internationalized civil wars, and wars of international intervention constitute very different starting points for reconstruction. It is unclear to what extent determinants of peace in post-civil wars also figure in post-interventionist wars. Although relatively few in number, cases of interventionist wars are politically significant, and they raise classic questions in political theory about the role of violence as a ‘midwife’ of social progress.

3. Demarcation, Integration and Strategic Initiatives

With the above outlined priority areas and themes, we invite the research community to initiate research on relevant issues for poverty eradication and peacebuilding. Projects that have relevance for more than one thematic area and focus will be well received. The aim is to mobilize sections of the research sector that have the relevant expertise and the ability to build cumulatively on earlier findings; that have the institutional capacity to carry such a research initiative forward, including senior academic staff; that have ambitious plans for capacity-building, including doctoral and postdoctoral development; and that show interest in exploring links, networks and cooperation with international expertise as well as with new and innovative interdisciplinary and institutional networks.

Strategic aims

An important strategic goal of the committee is to help *strengthen Norwegian research* on poverty and peace issues in order to bring it up to the highest international standards. The best proposals should be favoured in this research initiative in order to develop strong expertise in key areas for poverty reduction and peace development. The programme plan committee recommends giving attention to basic research. The research initiatives must strive to generate high quality research published in the best international journals, as well as secure funding for PhD and postdoctoral candidates in fields of relevant research for these programmes. In many disciplines, we are beginning to acquire a fairly large group of researchers with doctorates, while a remaining challenge may be linked to the difficulties researchers have in continuing their research careers. Because of this, we believe that funds should be allocated to both

doctoral and postdoctoral scholarships. Strengthening poverty and peace related research in areas of methodology and theory paradigms will form crucial parts of capacity-building. At the same time, the committee recognizes that capacity-building requires resources and broader engagement from the university sector as well, and it hereby appeals to the Research Council to lobby the universities for strategic investments such as these. Few universities and higher educational institutions today have the resources, teaching competency, doctoral programmes, research possibilities and positions corresponding to the high degree of interest and importance that these research fields have achieved.

Dissemination of research is seen as particularly important. This may be in international academic journals, within national and international policy communities or to the general public through conferences and the mass media. Targeted goals for dissemination should be set with regular evaluations of progress.

At the same time, *internationalization* of the Norwegian research sector is a key goal for both the Research Council and Norwegian research policies in general. In this case, internationalization will require assistance to the Norwegian research sector in order for researchers to better position themselves vis-à-vis international funding resources and policy-making institutions. Norwegian experts are under-utilized in the formulation of the development policies of the World Bank, IMF, ILO and other UN bodies. The programmes outlined in this programme plan should help to better position Norwegian researchers academically and strategically in relation to international institutions. Internationalization further entails targeted cooperation with key international research institutions, in both the North and the South. Applicants should be able to identify the key international research expertise and develop plans for interacting and cooperating with these groups. At the same time, important international networks have been developed that the Norwegian research sector could, and possibly should, feed into.

While measurable goals for dissemination, PhD and postdoctoral scholarships, etc. are relatively easy to develop, other goals are not so easily measured, such as those that reflect the quality improvements of the research sector, strategizing vis-à-vis international institutions or assessing innovative networks and approaches. The committee does, however, appeal to the future programme board to maintain a diligent eye on such goals and conduct regular evaluations in order to strengthen the sector along these dimensions.

Integration or separate programmes?

There are clear benefits and disadvantages of integrating the two thematic areas into one programme. When it comes to the disadvantages, the two fields will, to some extent, have different academic foci and interested “user groups”. The “war, peace and development” research focus does not emphasize the role of poverty in a narrow sense, but rather the interrelationship between violent conflict and development, trends and processes, etc. Support and funding for the two areas of research are located in different institutions and budgets. At the same time, the funding for and focus on “war, peace and development” may have different (and more limited) budget allocations than the research focus on poverty eradication. On the other hand, integration of the two research areas will reduce administrative and infrastructure costs, thereby freeing up more resources for research. Furthermore, and more importantly, the two thematic areas have clear and overlapping linkages. After careful review of the issues, the committee prefers to organize the two areas of research into separate programmes, one on poverty research and one on research on war, peace and development. The two research programmes should be administered by separate programme boards with sufficient overlap in terms of members to ensure that a core group of three to four people take part in the decision-making of both research programmes.

Demarcation and relationship to other programme areas

The research areas and themes outlined above demarcate the interest and focus of this programme. However, the committee appeals to the Research Council to continue to examine ways of improving the coordination and collaboration between the development research field and other relevant research programmes and fields of expertise at the Research Council.

As stated in previous reports, it is important that the Research Council assists Norwegian development research in achieving a more deliberate emphasis on collaboration and comparative research

programmes, which includes European, non-European and global themes and problems. Several opportunities should exist within the Research Council for achieving this, and opportunities should be sought for maximum co-ordination between this new programme and existing programmes already directed by the Research Council (such as the Welfare Research Programme, Labour Market Research Programme, Culture & Society Programme, and research on sustainable development and the environment). In this context, it is important that such initiatives are co-ordinated with international initiatives in which Norway is involved through multilateral agreements, and that Norwegian research groups are given responsibility for the Norwegian aspect of this work.

4 Organisation and Funding of the Research Programmes

The programme plan committee emphasizes that the quality of the projects is more important than their size. We think there must be space for different projects. However, the programme plan committee finds it particularly important to assist in the development of large-scale projects rather than funding several small projects. With overall goals of capacity-building, strategic international positioning and quality improvements, large-scale projects may offer benefits of “economies of scale”, senior research staff and efficient institutional and infrastructure support. Such large-scale projects do not necessarily have to be located in one institution. The development of networks, cooperation mechanisms and clusters of projects in which several researchers and institutions collaborate is welcome.

Such large-scale projects should contain doctoral and/or postdoctoral components, as well as established networks and international collaborative partners. Networks and cooperation that cut across “traditional” academic fields, expertise and programme areas will be looked upon favourably. Cooperation between institutes and across the institute sector and university “divide” will also be particularly welcome within such large-scale projects. The aim of the large-scale projects as an organizing principle for the two research programmes will be to give particular focus to capacity building at senior levels (doctoral and postdoctoral), strengthening of quality and standards, and inducing synergy effects in other research areas. Such an organizational model does, however, require substantial funding (suggested 3-5 million NOK each) and will not be feasible unless funding of at least NOK 10 million is assured for each programme annually. At the same time, it is important to assure baseline funding for smaller-scale projects (2 million NOK or less) as well in order to ensure diversity and distribution of expertise in the research approach and sector.

While individual research projects will constitute the main instrument in achieving the goals of the programmes, additional strategic initiatives should, or could, be added in order to promote the goals of research and collaboration across thematic and academic fields and programmes. The programme boards may decide, for instance, to give targeted additional support to arenas, conferences, journals, databases¹³ and networks for academic discourse and dissemination (both academic and popular) of research findings within the research themes, and initiate postgraduate research courses to support recruitment and linkages of young researchers in poverty and peace studies.

5 Concluding Words

The committee emphasizes that the research focus of these programmes is of worldwide interest. This research can help to ensure sustainable development, basic human rights and the long-term development of the global human society. For researchers to face such challenges asks for both humility and courage.

¹³ Improving the accessibility to databases and published material/reports is a field where a great deal of infrastructure and expertise is lacking and which also has been given particular priority in the recent White Paper on Research (St. meld. nr. 20 (2004-2005)). Such work must be co-ordinated with work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the Norwegian Council of Universities, UNINETT, the research institutes and voluntary aid organizations.

To ensure that our Norwegian research community can perform at the highest level possible, there is a need for funding that can actually support a critical mass of research. It will not be possible to reach the goals of the programmes unless the annual funding is substantial enough to provide grants to a large number of the best applications. If not, the researchers will concentrate their work on other issues, bypassing some of the most urgent research questions identified above.