

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

“Crisis and Conflict in the Arab World: Localisation of Responses.”

16-18th December 2017

Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies Conference 2017

The Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies invites you to submit abstracts for its upcoming conference “*Localisation of Responses to Conflict in the Arab World*”, which will take place in Doha, Qatar, 16-18 December 2017.

Conference Summary

The aim of the conference is to examine in detail the concept of *localisation* of responses to crisis and conflict within the context of the Arab region. Community participation has long been recognised as a cornerstone of successful development¹ and for effectively working with communities affected by disaster and conflict.² Yet over the years this guiding principle has often only been paid lip service to, with fewer resources going into genuine participatory work at the local level at a time when more communities have developed the capacities to engage with regional and international actors. This is further compounded by a lack of understanding of the significance of *localisation* and a lack of leadership in developing it as a practice. *Localisation* seeks to address the issues of a top-down approach by utilising culturally appropriate local knowledge and giving ownership of recovery and responses to conflict to local actors with support from the wider structures of the international community. The World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 brought the already hotly debated concept of *localisation* into the mainstream in its ‘Grand Bargain’ agreement signed by 52 national and international humanitarian and development organizations. The agreement commits the humanitarian community to principles of local ownership and to pledges including providing 25% of humanitarian aid directly to local actors by 2020.

¹ Chambers, R. (1994) Paradigm Shifts and the Practice of Participatory Research and Development. IDS Working Paper 2, Brighton: IDS.

² Cuny, F. (1983) Disasters and Development. Oxford University Press.

The emergence of *localisation* as a central issue on the humanitarian agenda has opened up a need for discussions of how local ownership can be utilised in terms of providing sustainable and effective humanitarian relief, building lasting peace, and contributing to reconstruction and recovery. As a region with many of the world's most urgent crisis and conflict contexts, there is a particularly pressing need for critical reflection on the concept of *localisation* and its potentialities and limitations in the context of responses to conflict in the Arab world. Rather than offering a counsel of despair in the face of escalating conflict, the conference will systematically address the local, national and global responses to conflict in the region in order to identify paths for transformation. It seeks to identify effective responses that can bring an end to conflict and enable recovery to facilitate locally-centered recovery in order to provide ways forward that can contribute to the region breaking out of the vicious cycles of violence and conflict. It will examine the interplay of local, regional and global responses to conflict and explore the prospect for more locally-grown forms of crisis management and peacebuilding in the region, thus acknowledging the fact that despite all the losses, the region has gained indispensable capacities at the grassroots, community-level for responding to conflict and dealing with its aftermath.

The three-day conference is a first of its kind to explore the agenda of *localisation* from a multi- and inter-disciplinary perspective in relation to the peacebuilding, humanitarian, and developmental issues that the Arab world faces. The conference will offer a valuable opportunity for scholars, policy makers and practitioners to engage in intensive discussions within the open and academic environment of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Following the conference, selected papers will form the basis of an edited volume. A full conference programme and draft papers will be provided in advance of the conference.

Conference Themes

The conference encourages inter-disciplinary and collaborative scholarly work. It will be organized around the following themes:

- 1. *Localisation of conflict resolution and transformation.***

This theme will explore the relevance of global best practice approaches to conflict resolution in a culturally appropriate context for the Arab region and the potential for greater local ownership to underpin more effective responses to conflict. It will examine local practices and conceptualizations of conflict resolution approaches at the local level in the region. Submissions are

welcome on a wide range of topics including local and tribal mechanisms of conflict mediation, national dialogues, and the role of local cultural and social practices in addressing transitional justice and reconciliation.

2. *Localisation of Relief and Reconstruction Approaches.*

This theme will address the role of local actors and processes of localization in humanitarian and reconstruction responses to conflict in the Arab world. Papers will focus on the major challenges and opportunities facing relief and reconstruction in the region and beyond. We are particularly interested in documenting innovative and successful forms of response that have helped increase community resilience while reducing levels of conflict. Papers are welcome on any case studies that explore the role of local and national actors in a changing humanitarian landscape. Submissions are particularly encouraged that identify promising community-driven micro-level initiatives or interventions with potential to be scaled up or replicated in other fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

3. *Localisation and regionalization of the conflict and humanitarian knowledge architecture.*

Despite decades of conflict and crisis in the Arab world, many of the solutions proposed and implemented derive from outside of the region. There is now a growing realisation that sustainable solutions require more culturally appropriate and locally-owned knowledge. This theme will examine methodological and epistemological issues in researching local approaches to conflict resolution in the region. It is important that this relatively new discipline finds a platform and a voice in academia and think tanks within the Arab region. Therefore, papers should look to explore knowledge management, research methods, and how to effectively capture relevant examples and best practices of *localisation* in the Arab region.

Guide for Authors

To submit your abstract (approximately 250 words), please send it to chs@dohainstitute.edu.qa by 15th September 2017.

- ❖ Submissions are accepted in Arabic or English, and simultaneous translation will be provided at the conference

- ❖ A decision on the acceptance of abstracts will be sent two weeks after the submission deadline.
- ❖ Full papers of 3,000-4,000 words are due by November 15th 2017.
- ❖ Presenters requiring financial support will be able to apply for grants from the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies to assist with travel and accommodation costs.

Conference Committee Members

The Conference is a collaboration between the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies (CHS), Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, and a number of internationally renowned centers of excellence, including the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies, Friedrich-Schiller University Jena, the International Humanitarian Leadership Academy and others, with committee representatives from the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH), the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS), and the School of Public Administration and Development Economics (SPADE).