

Fra: Jette Kristensen [mailto:jkr@diis.dk] På vegne af DIIS Konferencesektion  
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Emne: DIIS seminar 20 March "Past, Present and Future of International Aid - Reflections on Aid Agencies and the Development System"

The Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) has the pleasure of inviting you to a seminar on:

Past, Present and Future of International Aid –  
Reflections on Aid Agencies and the Development System  
Tuesday, 20 March 2012, 13.00-15.30  
Danish Institute for International Studies  
Main Auditorium  
Strandgade 71, ground floor, 1401 Copenhagen K

### Background

While 'development' is often discussed in technical terms, based on an underlying understanding of the concept as neutral and universally applicable, it can be argued that it is in many ways highly normative, shaped by a particular historical context and based on specific moral and ideological assumptions. In his presentation, *Beyond Development: In Search of New Forms of Engagement in International Relations*, Philip Quarles van Ufford will speak about the idea of development, tracing its trajectory from its birth after the 2nd World War until today. He will discuss three discourses of development – hope, politics and management – identifying contradictions, strengths and weaknesses inherent in each. Quarles van Ufford will present ideas for a new vision of international relations, centring on three insights: the need to confront contradictions in between the 'here and the there'; the 'uses of pessimism' in the shaping of new political views in international relations; and finally, the re-writing of religious and political histories of compassion.

Focusing more specifically on the role of aid agencies in the contemporary development system, David Lewis will give a lecture titled *Reconnecting Development Policy, People and History*. Using experiences in the history of flood control in Bangladesh as an example, his lecture seeks to examine some of what anthropologist Paul Connerton (2009) terms the 'types of structural forgetting which are specific to the culture of modernity'. Development agencies are trapped in the ahistorical "perpetual present" of policy worlds, and face a consequent inability to learn lessons from past experiences. Previous policy experience is only poorly remembered by agency staff, if at all. Why is this? Lewis argues that an ideology of managerialism pushes a relentless emphasis on novelty and change in the development system. Organizational pressures result in what may be called 'a continuity of discontinuity' as expatriate staff come and go, and agencies 'escape into the future', losing their capacity to retain their own past.

### Speakers

Philip Quarles van Ufford, Professor Emeritus, Free University, Amsterdam  
[David Lewis](#), Professor, LSE, London  
[Marie Juul Petersen](#), Project Researcher, DIIS  
[Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde](#), PhD Candidate, DIIS

### Programme

More details about the seminar are available on our [website](#).

#### Practical Information

The seminar will be held in English.

Participation is free of charge, but registration is required. Please use our [online registration form](#) no later than Monday, 19 March 2012 at 12.00 noon.

Please await confirmation by e-mail from DIIS for participation.

Sincerely,

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