

Editorial

Develop Your Thinking

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Development starts 2004 with a radically different cover. It is designed by Fonu Bain-Vete, an 18-year-old Fijian artist. It is her vision of the journal's potential to help transform transnational, racial and gender differences through a balancing of culture and nature, North and South, men and women, young and old. The cover, in its beauty and seriousness, is both a celebration of this potential as well as a depiction of the complexity of the issues we face together. That a young woman artist from the one of the most geographically marginalized and exploited areas of the world, the Pacific, was able to capture these themes so well gives, in itself, hope for the future.

We hope readers will agree that the fresh look, which is to be taken up in the promotion of the journal by the new publisher Palgrave Macmillan, reflects not so much a shift in the journal's approach to development, but a recognition and consolidation of the editorial line of the last years. With its long history, indeed as the journal that takes the name of development, it continues to be a challenge to maintain an open and meaningful dialogue given the huge variety of ways development has been understood. This has never been more true than in the last years with the growing disillusionment about the global development project from all sides. The ascendancy of an unabashedly self-interested United States as the world's only superpower has occurred with a parallel demise of the influence and some would say effectiveness of the United Nations. The backdrop to this continues to be increasing disparities of wealth between the elite and the poor, heightened by violence, environmental degradation and pandemics such as HIV/AIDS. The continual reinventions of development strategies among agencies, governments, the private sector and the growing numbers of NGOs seem to have done little to halt the slide of development as the way to reach common goals for social justice, equality and rights. And, tellingly, the no longer muted cynicism among the development community contrasts starkly with the solidarity and hope in the far more idealistic and growing members of the anti-globalization movement, particularly since the war on terrorism has dominated geopolitics.

Today's critical view of development as an institution or as a way to fight injustice makes the journal's task at once harder and more important. The journal has never been afraid to open up its pages to hard-hitting dialogue around economic, social, political and social criticism of the different faces of transnational relations. In March 1997, the editorial traced the agenda-setting articles that had been published in *Development* in its 40-year history that often heralded major switches in development policy and thinking.

In the last seven years, we have continued to publish articles that have challenged the development community and those around it with rigorous analysis of current think-

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ing, with innovative and at times almost clashing viewpoints. The journal has examined globalization from economic to cultural and place-based critiques. It has considered children's rights, masculinity, gender violence, public health, reproductive health and human rights from a wide range of entry points. The thorny issues of migration, consumerism, food security, environment and sustainable livelihoods have been taken up charting different trends of North and South. And in the most recent volume religion, communication and the new information age, as well as civil society's role in peace, terrorism and conflict have featured.

In volume 47, we will continue to promote this challenging 'thinking' approach to development taking up the themes of: violence of development, the politics of health, corporate social responsibility and future searches. As the often disturbing stories in the articles of this first issue shows, the violence embedded in development needs to be emphasized again and again as we grow increasingly immune to the violence we live in today – from unthinking consumerism that destroys cultures and natural resources to the level of violent conflict in the home and among peoples in what have been labelled 'failed states'. The sad truth is that violence experienced as ill-health, economic oppression, social fractures, displacement and insecurity continues to be the experience of the majority of people living in the world today.

The second issue on the politics of the health continues the in-depth exploration of health begun in earlier *Development* issues. This time the authors look at how health experts often play uniquely important political roles in social and political transformation of communities, and how health itself is an entry point into broader political questions.

The third issue picks up the role of the corporate sector, a role that is often feared or derided and certainly excluded from state led or civil society discussions of development, yet it is one of the most commented upon and influential trends in the private sector. We have all heard of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and their millions that are making HIV/AIDS one of the best funded

development issues of today, but there are many more ways in which consumer/shareholder/public pressure for corporate responsibility is changing development-related concerns through ethical banking, different modes of investment using environmentally sound and rights-based logic. It is important that the development community understand the vision and the reasoning behind decision-making in this arena and what partnership means with these often dynamic and powerful groups of people.

Future searches, the theme of the fourth issue, introduces readers to another fast-growing new understanding of development with an examination of one methodology that has been led by the private sector and is now entering into the state and civil society arena as an innovative way to plan and decide the future among development policymakers.

In each of the issues making up this volume, we will ask a diverse group of men and women from around the world to bring their thinking to these topics – from academics, independent researchers, journalists, civil society groups, UN policymakers, government bureaucrats, social movement activists, students and opinion makers. Such ethical, analytical and practical concerns need to continue to inform our thinking as development seems to be transforming into new institutional arrangements and ways to tackle the complexity of our times. The number of commissions that have been formed in the last year by the development community to look at a host of issues from the UN, private and public partnership, human rights, migration, globalization indicates that the leadership is grasping, like all of us, to understand where the next years are to take us.

We are confident that *Development* will continue to be a space where dialogue will allow innovation and courage to flourish in the face of these changing, somewhat paradoxical times. We hope that readers will find hope in the pages of this issue and find inspiration in Fonu Bain-Vete's image of complex but calm beauty that points to need to unravel, understand and then follow the different paths for our continued survival and social transformation.