

Seminar held on ‘The Norwegian Police Engagement in Afghanistan: Perspectives on security and development for local women and men’

On Monday, December 10th, Noragric (UMB) and the Norwegian Police University College (PHS) jointly held a half-day seminar at Litteraturhuset in Oslo discussing Norway’s ten year police engagement in Afghanistan. Since 2003, Norwegian police have served in Afghanistan as advisors and trainers to the Afghan police at national, provincial and district levels, including a special program on advising and training the women police. Although the Norwegian Police Project (NORAF) was terminated this year, police, policymakers from the Norwegian ministries of foreign affairs and justice, and development experts gathered in two panels to discuss what has been learned from this exercise. The seminar opened with an introductory presentation by Ingrid Nyborg (Noragric) and Jai Ganapathy (PHS) informing of some of the early findings of their joint research on human security and development aspects of the police engagement, highlighting possible areas of discussion during the seminar. This was followed by a panel of police men and women, who shared some of their experiences from working with the Afghan police, and highlighted issues which they felt were important when considering Norway’s future support to the civil police in Afghanistan. After a lively open discussion, the second panel opened with Mr. Karim Merchant, Senior Development Advisor, offering insight into Afghan community perspectives of the police, and the importance of finding appropriate ways for the Afghan police to engage with local communities. Representatives on the panel from the Norwegian ministries of justice and foreign affairs went on to discuss policy perspectives, which led to another active discussion on how Norway might better learn from and use the rich experience gained by the over 170 Norwegian police who have served in Afghanistan in their future support of the civil police reform process (see detailed program here).

The seminar was sponsored by Refleks (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and the Conflict, Human Security and Development research cluster at the Department of International Environment and Development, Noragric.