

Youth and African conflict

– agency, empowerment and victims



Photo: Erlend Brandal

Seminar 2 December, 10.00 – 16.00, Fafo, Borggt. 2B, Oslo

Organised by: Africa Network Norway and Fafo

Recently the issue of youth in African insurgency movements and conflicts has been a topic of much heated debate. Paul Richards' seminal contribution about youth and war in Sierra Leone was followed by several critical contributions. The most lasting part of this critique is Ibrahim Abdullah's 'lumpen' thesis. Later the issue of youth was raised in Thandika Mkandawire's thesis about the 'urban bias' of African insurgency movements, and it has also become an integral part of what can be called a 'critical ethnography of war'. In addition, a number of reports from various human rights groups have also been concerned about this issue. This seminar will therefore take stock of current achievements within this rapidly increasing field of research and present novel findings. The seminar targets academia as well as practitioners concerned with the role of youth in conflict in Africa.

Panelists:

Morten Bøås (Fafo): Violence and empowerment: youth agency in the West African conflicts

Maya Christensen (University of Copenhagen) and Mats Utas (Nordic Africa Institute): Mercenaries of democracy: the 'politricks' of remobilised combatants in the 2007 general elections, Sierra Leone

Chris Coulter (Uppsala University): Being a bush wife – gendered tales from the war in Sierra Leone

Peter Kagwanja (University of Nairobi) tbc

Henrik Vigh (University of Copenhagen): Navigating terrains of war: youth and soldiering in Guinea-Bissau

Comments: Ruben de Koning (UNDP)

The seminar is open and free of charge. Registration before 25 November by e-mail to sigridd@svt.ntnu.no