



The Power of Early Childhood Developments in Conflict and Post Conflict Societies

New York September 2013



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Una

Una is a global learning initiative
on children and ethnic diversity

early years
the organisation for young children

The International Network on Peace-Building with Young Children – a Programme Working Group of UNA

Our aims:

- to share knowledge and expertise in relation to the development of early childhood programmes which promote respect for ethnic diversity specifically in areas that are either currently experiencing and/or emerging from armed conflict;
- to develop practice materials, training programmes and advocacy tools and strategies to promote reconciliation and peace-building through early childhood service developments.



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Members of the Network/Programme Sub-group

The Network is made up of early childhood specialists, teachers and academics, and advocates in Early Childhood Care and Education from the following countries:

- Azerbaijan (representing ISSA)
- Albania
- Northern Ireland
- Colombia (representing Latin America)
- Serbia (representing the Balkans Network)
- Iraq
- Nepal (representing ARNEC)
- South Africa (representing AECDA)
- Lebanon
- Ethiopia
- El Salvador
- Palestine (representing MENA region)
- Israel
- Turkey
- Cote D'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Kosovo
- Macedonia
- Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development
- Child Fund International

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Overview of the Work of the Network

Network formed in Belfast in 2004 in a partnership between Early Years – the organisation for young children, the World Forum Foundation and Cinde.

2004-2009 funded by European Union – major product from this period was publication of 'From Conflict to Peace-Building: the Power of Early Childhood Initiatives, Lessons from Around the World'



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Overview of the Work of the Network (contd)

Translated into Spanish by CINDE in Colombia and partially available in Arabic, used as advocacy tool.

From 2009 to now it has received further funding from the European Union/Atlantic Philanthropies/Bernard Van Leer Foundation/UNA.

It has a focus on three key areas:

- Development of Master's in Peace-Building and Early Childhood.
- Development of Programmatic Toolkit based on the evidence-based Northern Ireland Respecting Difference Peace-Building Programme.
- Advocacy and networking.



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Launch of the Master's Programme October 2012

- Evolved from the recommendations from 'Conflict to Peace-Building'.
- Recognition of the need to develop a high skills set so as to be able to work sensitively with young children and families in conflict and post conflict societies.
- Recognition of the need to build capacity for institutional change.
- First cohort of local and international students recruited and commenced the programme in 2012/now recruiting for 2013.
- New partnership with INCORE at the University of Ulster.
- Ability to be replicated within the membership countries.

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Programme Toolkit

- Builds upon the evidence-based Northern Ireland Media Initiative Respecting Difference Programme.
- Growing awareness that the impact of conflict on our youngest citizens has traditionally been overlooked.
- Emerging knowledge that the early childhood sector has the potential to contribute to meeting the needs of young children, families and communities in whatever conflict situation they find themselves in.



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Child Rights Ecology Model

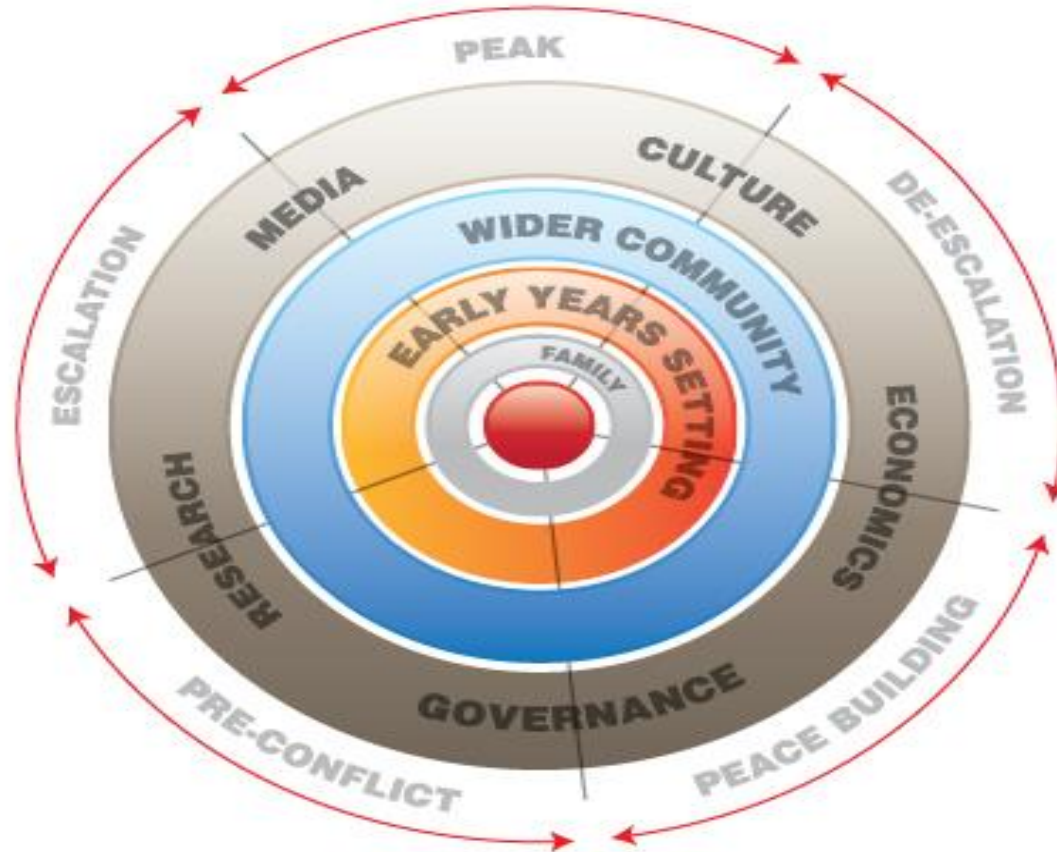


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The Proposed Framework



Using the Programme Toolkit in Practice

- Focuses on parents/teachers and caregivers and how they can support emotional well-being, self-regulation and the resilience of children.
- Uses culturally and contextually appropriate resources and materials.
- Available in a range of languages.
- Embeds a child's rights approach.
- Can be used in the various stages of conflict and peace-building.
- Recognises the important interface between practice, advocacy and participative evaluation.



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Programmatic Toolkit in Practice

- Acknowledges that few early childhood programmes address all the systems.
- Complexity of developing and evaluating early childhood development programmes.
- Programmatic Framework offers a tool that enables those involved in the design, development and evaluation of early childhood development programmes.



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Current and Future Actions

- Toolkit to be used for practice, research and advocacy
- Pilot the toolkit in the 5 ECD Networks represented in the International Network on Peace Building
- Roll out of International Masters Programme on ECD and Peace Building in partnership with INCORE University of Ulster
- Advocacy toolkit currently under development
- New strategic plan for the network



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A moral imperative to act – recent/ongoing violence over flags



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“If we want to build lasting peace, then we begin with young children” (Mahatma Gandhi)



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Our vision in the International Network on Peace-Building/UNA

We dream of giving birth to children who will ask “*Mother, what was war?*”
(Eve Merriman)



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