LEARNING FOR PEACE
Advancing Learning. Building Peace.

Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme

The challenge: Each year, 500 million to 1.5 billion children around the world are subjected to some form of violence.[1] More than 1 billion children were living in areas affected by conflict and violence in 2006.[2]

Conflict affects multiple aspects of development, including child survival, gender equity, poverty reduction and access to education.

The facts

- Children living in fragile or conflicted-affected countries are more than twice as likely to be malnourished, three times as likely to miss primary school and almost twice as likely to die before age 5 compared to children in other developing countries.[3]

- Women and children are disproportionately affected by conflict, making up nearly 80 per cent of refugees and internally displaced people.[4]

- The percentage of out-of-school children in conflict-affected countries rose from 42 per cent in 2008 to 50 per cent in 2011.[5]

- More than half of the 28.5 million children in conflict-affected countries who are out of school are girls.[6]

- Women are often marginalized in peacebuilding processes, including official negotiations and the formulation of peacebuilding agreements.[7]

- Poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile countries that are more vulnerable to external shocks. As of April 2013, one third of the world's poor lived in fragile states, and this proportion could rise to one half in 2018 and to nearly two thirds in 2030.[8]

- As of 2011, no country affected by conflict or fragility had achieved a single Millennium Development Goal.[9] For every three years a country is affected by violence, poverty reduction lags by 2.7 percentage points.[10]

- Aid programmes in conflict-affected areas will either reinforce or mitigate the factors that cause conflict.[11] For education programmes, conflict-sensitive design is essential to address the root causes of violence and to ensure that education contributes to peace and more equitable access.

- Despite an increasingly urgent need, the share of humanitarian aid dedicated to education has dropped significantly, from 2.4 per cent of total humanitarian aid in 2011 to just 1.4 per cent in 2012 – a $221 million cut in a single year.[12]

unicef

UNICEF's role in peacebuilding

Helping children live in peace, free of violence and fear, is central to UNICEF's work.

UNICEF is present in conflict and post-crisis situations. It is a vital actor in addressing the impact of conflict on children and supporting countries to build more stable societies.

UNICEF recently launched an intensive effort to integrate peacebuilding into its programmes by addressing the underlying factors of conflict and their negative impact on children's rights. Peacebuilding improves the quality of UNICEF's programmes in conflict-affected areas and builds capacities for more cohesive, peaceful societies.

UNICEF is a partner of choice for governments, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations engaged in national peacebuilding planning and policies. As part of its strategic plan for 2014–2017, UNICEF will work to strengthen its best practices in social service delivery and peacebuilding to support countries in assessing and managing risks.

If nations do not invest in services that address the root causes of conflict and promote peace, there is a higher risk of current and future generations relapsing into war. Yet, while equitable access to social services is a priority area,[13] education is often not prioritized in national peacebuilding plans.[14]

UNICEF's work to enhance access to safe, quality education, protection and development opportunities for youth offers crucial contributions to peace. While UNICEF is strategically involved in identified peacebuilding areas, its niche in social services can produce tangible results for communities recovering from crises.

Why education for peacebuilding?

Education is crucial to peacebuilding and to fostering more cohesive societies.

Education is arguably the single most transformative institution that can touch every citizen, female and male, when it is equitably available, good quality, relevant and conflict-sensitive. It forms the bedrock of a country's economy, good governance, gender equality, identity and culture.

The contributions of education to peacebuilding are wide ranging:

Access to a quality education is a right that should be maintained even in the most difficult circumstances. Education protects children from violent conflict and creates safe and secure learning environments. In the midst of conflict, education has an important role in providing protection and establishing a sense of normalcy. For example:

- 'Schools as Zones of Peace' in Nepal has been a successful model for keeping schools open despite civil unrest.[15]

- Life skills training is often used to promote health, hygiene, landmine awareness and HIV control programmes. It is particularly successful when based on subjects that students can apply to their everyday lives.[16]

Education is central to identity formation, promotes inclusion and contributes to state building.

- Formal primary education helps restore hope to communities, showing that their lives can return to normal.[17]

- Secondary schooling can provide young people with enhanced status and an identity that legitimizes their role as citizens, while confirming the role of government in their lives.[18]

- Across 18 sub-Saharan African countries, those of voting age with primary education were found to be 1.5 times more likely to express support for democracy than those with no education – and the level doubles among those who have completed secondary education. Findings also show that a secondary education increases tolerance towards people of a different religion or those speaking a different language.[19]

Education can help address the inequalities that generate conflict. Inequalities can fuel conflict, just as conflict can worsen inequalities.[20]

Conflict-sensitive curricula and teaching methods promote inclusion and the elimination of stereotypes. At the local level, a relevant curriculum that includes local learning and teaching resources is essential to increasing access and enrolment.[21] Careful attention is needed to ensure that children's education links to future possibilities including further education and employment opportunities.

Research also highlights the importance of secondary education in preventing a return to violence. For example:

- Inclusive secondary education can lower the incidence of violence by increasing the opportunity cost to individuals of participating in violence.[22]

- Secondary schooling is a central state institution in local areas; it reinforces the sense of belonging and obligations of youth towards their societies.[23]

Too often, schools are used to reinforce social divisions, intolerance and prejudices that lead to discord and violence, or are increasingly targeted by armed groups in violation of international law. Education systems in many conflict-affected countries are not reaching children or fail to provide them with skills needed to lead purposeful lives and overcome poverty and unemployment. With more than 60 per cent of the population in conflict-affected countries under age 25,[24] quality education is critical to overcoming the despair that often contributes to violent conflict.

The funding landscape

As financial crises place additional pressures on governments and communities, the international community is seeking to invest in long-term, sustainable development and social cohesion in fragile states. For example:

- The United Kingdom has committed funding to conflict prevention through education. This includes dedicating 30 per cent of its official development assistance to conflict-affected and fragile states by 2014/2015. By 2015, the Department for International Development (DfID) will spend half of its direct education aid in unstable or war-torn countries – which are home to more than two fifths of all out-of-school children.[25]

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) aims to mainstream conflict-sensitive programming into its development assistance portfolio across sectors, including education. As of mid-2013, USAID had supported more than 135 projects in 35 countries and awarded more than $115 million in grants for 'people-to-people' reconciliation programmes and activities.[26]

- The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) supports quality, relevant education during and after crises to save and sustain lives, since education helps provide psychosocial support, protection and a foundation for social and economic development and peacebuilding.[27]

- The Government of the Netherlands is partnering with UNICEF to address the root causes of conflict and strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security through innovative education programmes that are conflict-sensitive and promote learning.

The 'Learning for Peace' programme

'Learning for Peace' – the four-year Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme – is a partnership between UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands, the national governments of 14 participating countries and other key supporters.

The Learning for Peace programme focuses on five outcomes:

1. Increase inclusion of education into peacebuilding and conflict reduction policies, analyses and implementation.

2. Increase institutional capacities to supply conflict-sensitive education.

3. Increase the capacities of children, parents, teachers and other duty bearers to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace.

4. Increase access to quality and relevant conflict-sensitive education that contributes to peace.

5. Contribute to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education, conflict and peacebuilding.

Learning for Peace is a unique initiative to bridge education and peacebuilding. It works to link multiple communities and programmes to build durable peace. Learning for Peace is also amplifying the voices of women and girls by ensuring that they are included in consultative processes and that there is equal representation in the restoration and delivery of education. The implications of gender for peacebuilding are explored as a cross-cutting issue through all research areas and initiatives in the programme.

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For more information, visit **www.unicef.org/education** or **http://learningforpeace.unicef.org**.

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