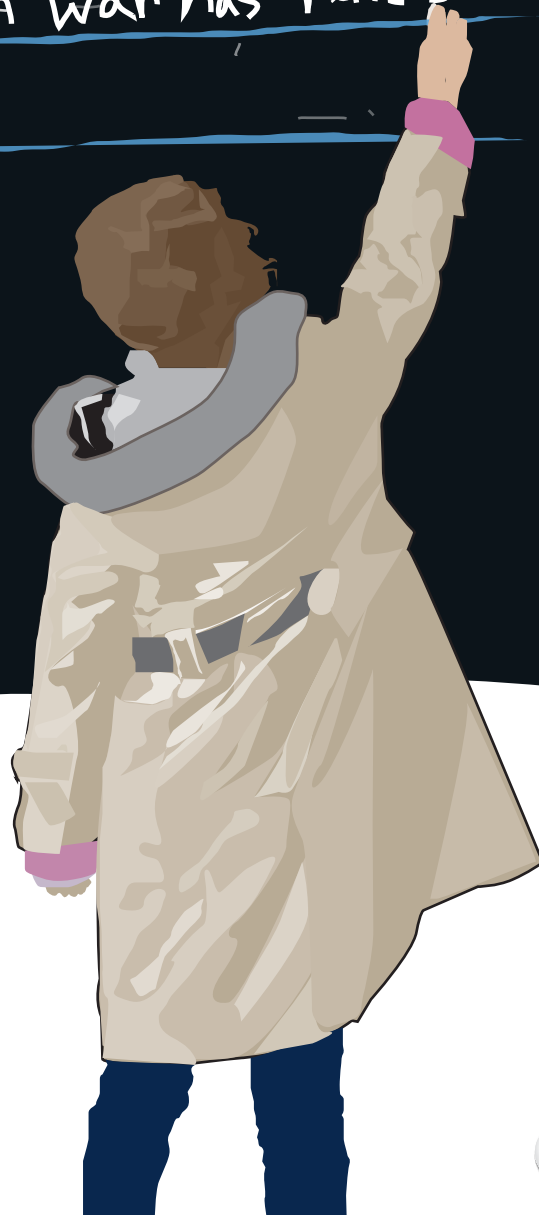


American Red Cross

Essay Competition

Even War has rules



American
Red Cross

International
Humanitarian Law

April, 2021

American Red Cross Essay Competition,
Volume 1: *Education in War*

International Humanitarian Law,
Service to Armed Forces
American Red Cross
National Headquarters

430 18th St NW
Washington, D.C., 20006
U.S.A.



**American
Red Cross**

International
Humanitarian Law

Contents

- 4 **Forward**
- 5 **Introduction**

High School Essays

WINNER

- Riya Addula* 7 Child Soldiers in the War Against Education

FINALISTS

- Ethan Lantzy* 11 Consequences of War on Children
- Mireya Rajendran* 14 Armed Conflict Is Forcing Girls Out of School
- Alex Santiago* 17 Breaking the Cycle: Education in War

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Cade Brandon* 19 A Cycle of Neglect
- Patrick Bednarz* 22 Education: An Investment in Peace
- Ania Chandra* 25 Education: A Collateral Damage
- Asha Goddu* 27 The Impact of War on Youth Education
- Hamza Hague* 30 The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children's Education
- Kyla Howell* 33 Children's Education and Armed Conflict
- Dominique Kay* 35 Education in War
- Rashi Lakhotia* 38 The Effects of Conflicts on Children's Education
- Anna Libbon* 41 U.S. Schools Must Lead the Lessons of Peace Education
- Yagut Mammadhuseynova* 44 Education in War: A Personal Story
- Elsa Martin* 46 The Effects of Informal Education in WWII
- Kayla Schankel* 49 The Lessons of Loss
- Emmalynn Varner* 51 Education in War-Torn Generations
- Jayrold Aldwin Veneracion* 54 The Effects of Armed Conflict on Spartan Education
- Ella Walker* 56 The Struggle for African American Education

College Essays

WINNER

- Stephanie England* 59 The Battle for Girls' Education in War

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Milan Johnson* 62 Teach the Laws of Armed Conflict through Video Games
- Lillian Newton* 65 Schools: Teaching Peace, Preventing War



On behalf of the American Red Cross, it is my honor and privilege to introduce the winners of the 2020-2021 International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Essay Competition. In this competition the Red Cross challenges applicants to craft thoughtful and compelling submissions based upon important issues in the field of IHL. This year, competitors were asked to reflect upon the theme of “Education in War,” a topic that spans a wide range of deeply important issues, from the effects of armed conflict on children’s education, to the role of schools in teaching peace and preventing armed conflicts. Applicants from around the country answered our call to write about this globally impactful topic.

The Competition Committee was thoroughly impressed with the passion, talent, and insightfulness displayed by each and every applicant. Many of this year’s applicants are American Red Cross volunteers, including a number who serve as youth advocates in the Red Cross IHL Youth Action Campaign (YAC). Although the Committee reviewed dozens of wonderful essays, two rose above the rest and were selected as winners in the high school and college categories.

Riya Addula of Flower Mound High School in Texas won the high school category with her essay entitled “Child Soldiers in the War Against Education,” and Stephanie England of the University of South Florida won the undergraduate category with her essay entitled “The Battle for Girls’ Education in War.” Both writers superbly analyzed two highly relevant and complex issues and their passion for this topic shows through in every sentence. I have no doubt that each of these essays will inspire and move each of you in the same way they did for the Competition Committee. I want to personally congratulate both Riya and Stephanie on their success in this year’s competition—they both have incredibly bright futures ahead of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. Bagwell".

—Randy Bagwell
Senior Director
International Services, U.S. Programs
American Red Cross

EDUCATION IN ARMED CONFLICT:

An Introduction



Photo Credit: Jason Straziuso, ICRC. The town of Kodok, South Sudan

During times of armed conflict, children's access to education is drastically impacted as education facilities are attacked and increasing violence creates an unsafe environment for them to attend school. Armed conflict can result in destroyed facilities, causing schools to close, and leading to the loss or displacement of educational materials and personnel. The consequences of war are devastating for everyone involved, but especially for children, as their long-term development is impaired, wreaking havoc on them as individuals, as well as on the social and economic infrastructure of the country.

During prolonged conflicts, entire generations can be left without an education. As the risk of abuse and exclusion rises during wartime, the population may become increasingly socially and economically vulnerable. Typically, exclusions like

these are directed at young girls, leaving them without an education or a system to support them during the most important developmental years of their life. Fortunately, the ICRC, along with other humanitarian organizations, recognize the importance of maintaining access to education during armed conflict, and work to enforce international humanitarian law in order to protect this right.

The Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols include rules and regulations that protect access to education and the maintenance of educational facilities. Though these laws attempt to protect education, they are undermined by other international laws. Such as ones that allow schools to be turned into military objectives, thus, allowing them to lawfully become objects of attack during times of armed conflict. Though

this is allowed within international law, the ICRC recognizes how detrimental it can be to children and has therefore engaged with parties to conflicts on multiple occasions to help them vacate schools or stay as far away from them possible.

Repairing education systems takes more time than the children living in the middle of an armed conflict have, especially given the varying length and severity of war. Therefore, humanitarian actors must continue to make access to education possible during armed conflict to reduce the education gap children unwillingly have to face. Actors such as the ICRC are able to use their neutrality to help promote this goal and continue to fight for equal access to education around the globe.

Written by Kimia Khatibi,
American Red Cross
IHL Intern 2021.



HIGH SCHOOL WINNER

Child Soldiers in the War Against Education



by Riya Addula, North Texas Region Red Cross Volunteer

It is often said that education sheds light on the darkest of places, building a bridge between an individual's present life and future by opening the doors to new possibilities. However, these dark places, many plagued with severe armed conflict, frequently do not possess the ability to provide an education to their inhabitants. The rising number of attacks on education in the areas aforementioned greatly diminishes students' capability to learn and develop, which prevents light from permeating the darkness. Attacks on educational facilities pose another major concern as they often become recruitment centers for child soldiers. Child soldiers may serve as couriers or guards, but oftentimes they are sent to aid in conflict, with some even being forced to fight on the front lines. As made evident by the over 250,000 child soldiers in the world, the rise of youth being forced into armed forces directly correlates with the rise in attacks on education, making the recruitment of child soldiers an increasingly perturbing effect of education in war ("Child Soldiers").

Educational facilities have long been protected in the face of armed conflict, with the earliest example occurring in the Roman Empire when Emperor Constantine declared that in order to better focus on teaching, literature professors were excused from housing soldiers (Sheppard). The most prominent safeguard placed on education in modern times is international humanitarian law, which prevents combatants from occupying schools and declares that armed groups inhabiting other regions

must provide appropriate education and care for children (Tawil). While 147 nations around the world have ratified international humanitarian law, many of the rules described in the set of regulations are, in practice, not followed by armed groups ("Participation In International Humanitarian Law Treaties And Their National Implementation"). The lack of severe ramifications and strategic advantages that attacks on education compel armed forces to violate these largely moral guidelines. Combatants often inhabit schools because of their numerous amenities, such as electricity and water access, and security features, making them suitable to house a large number of people (Sheppard). These assailants then coercively recruit students at school or those on their way to school to join their force. Such is the case in eastern Congo's armed conflicts, where both the Congolese army and non-state affiliated groups occupy educational facilities for military reasons (Gilchrist and Sheppard). By forcibly recruiting students from schools, they obtain children to serve in combat operations or other supporting positions. From time to time, these groups convert the overtaken educational facilities into training spaces, weapons storage, or other spaces used for military purposes, injuring and killing additional students in the process (Gilchrist and Sheppard). This situation not only endangers the lives of thousands of youth by forcing them to fight in strenuous conflicts but also causes these children to lose their right to an education, making the dark places in the

world even darker.

The immense warfare and conflict child soldiers witness is far beyond what many citizens of the world will ever experience. These youth are subject to constant ideological propaganda and violence as they begin to integrate into their armed force. Additionally, children regularly undergo severe physical punishments such as whipping and beating if they fail to follow orders (Sheppard). This threat of abuse makes the process of attempting to leave an armed force incredibly arduous and possibly life-threatening. Combatants may even require their child soldiers to commit acts of abuse to transform their youth's perspective of violence into something positive rather than negative. In many instances, child soldiers receive drugs to diminish their fear and enhance their strength during attacks, generally leading to mental health issues and drug misuse in the future. Specifically, girls recruited by armed forces suffer unique challenges as they are often subjected to sexual violence and rape due to their gender (Sheppard).

Ishmael Beah was 13 when he was forcibly recruited into an armed force during the raging civil war in Sierra Leone. His experience as a child soldier consists of long periods spent traveling in the tropical forest with "blood on his hands" and extensive amounts of violence, for "violence [became] the way of showing loyalty" (Beah). At points, his suffering was so colossal that he lost his desire to survive, slowly growing closer to succumbing to the horrors of war ("A Long Journey: The Story of Ishmael Beah").

The barbarity children, like Beah, encounter regularly results in psychological and physical injuries that must be endured for the rest of their lives. Years of exposure to violence and abuse may cause permanent physical wounds and disabilities. A research team led by Theresa Betancourt found that 62% of child soldiers in the Sierra Leone civil war had been beaten by armed forces, frequently resulting in blunt instrument trauma (qtd. in Drexler). The psychological strain and emotional toll of serving as a child soldier often cause grievous mental health conditions, such as severe anxiety and depression. A study performed by a group of researchers in 2004 found that out of 71 former Ugandan child soldiers, 97% met the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (qtd. in Singh). These extensive impacts prompt a long and formidable healing process for former child soldiers, making the recruitment and utilization of youth in armed forces one of the most alarming impacts of education in war.

Recently, increasing awareness about this issue has led to the creation of numerous initiatives to prevent the overtaking of schools and therefore stem the rise of child soldiers. One such policy is the Safe Schools Declaration, which is an outline of commitments that will reinforce the protections placed on education in areas of armed conflict to ensure schools' preservation ("The Safe Schools Declaration"). With 106 countries endorsing this initiative, nations around the world commit to prioritizing the safety of education. Furthermore, a rise in reintegration organizations, groups whose purpose is to aid child soldiers back into society, has eased the pain and burden of child soldiers' intense healing process. Ishmael Beah, after being rescued from his armed group, spent months in a UNICEF rehabilitation and re-

integration center. There, Beah received the support and education he required to view the world with positivity once more. The education Beah obtained allowed him to seek new opportunities and make lasting relationships, but most importantly, it allowed him to discover and facilitate his passion for writing, leading him to write the New York Times bestselling memoir *A Long Way Gone* about his harrowing experiences ("A Long Journey: The Story of Ishmael Beah"). This program helped Beah repair the bridge between his present and future by providing him with the education and protection necessary to succeed in today's society. However, with hundreds of thousands of youth currently fighting with armed groups, many bridges continue to remain broken.

The number of attacks on education and child soldier recruitments has rapidly increased in the past few years. Between 2015 and 2019, attacks on education occurred in 93 countries, a sharp rise from the 74 countries that experienced attacks from 2013 to 2017 ("Education Under Attack 2020"). Many of these invasions on schools and student enlistment go unpunished, which further encourages the execution of these attacks rather than acting as a deterrent. The suffering of child soldiers greatly relies on educational attacks to create an effective recruitment process. By promoting said attacks, more youth will become involved in combatant forces, shutting the doors to all of the opportunities and possibilities they could have experienced. In order to decrease the frequency of attacks upon education, armed groups violating international humanitarian law must endure harsher repercussions. This strident

prosecution will dissuade combatants from overtaking schools, thus greatly diminishing the existing number of child soldiers and ensuring that children's fundamental right to education remains intact. Additionally, by raising awareness and gaining support for the prevalent issue of education in war, stronger and more wide-reaching reintegration and protection programs can be implemented. These initiatives will bolster the stability of education in armed conflict zones, therefore restraining the rise of assaults on education and the recruitment of child soldiers.

Youth involved in armed forces continuously experience unparalleled horrors. Nearly 77% of child recruits in the Sierra Leone civil war witnessed stabbings and shootings from a close range while 52% forcibly observed large-scale massacres (qtd. in Drexler). With rising numbers of attacks on education, more children will be coerced into joining armed forces, prompting the endangerment of thousands of lives and the boundless loss of potential opportunities. It is only through change that we will attain the ability to shield education from its attackers and finally release light on all of the dark places, illuminating their possibilities to the world. ♦

Works Cited

- “A Long Journey: The Story of Ishmael Beah.” UNICEF, 11 Nov. 2020, www.unicef.org/stories/long-journey-story-of-ishmael-beah.
- “Child Soldiers.” Theirworld, Theirworld, 17 Oct. 2016, theirworld.org/explainers/child-soldiers.
- Drew, Chris. “23 Metaphors about School and Education That Pop! (2021).” Helpful Professor, 26 Dec. 2020, helpfulprofessor.com/metaphors-about-school-education/.
- Drexler, Madeline. “Life after Death: Helping Former Child Soldiers Become Whole Again.” Harvard School of Public Health, Sept. 2011, www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/magazine/child-soldiers-betancourt/.
- “Education Under Attack 2020 - World.” ReliefWeb, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 9 July 2020, reliefweb.int/report/world/education-under-attack-2020.
- Gilchrist, Thomas, and Bede Sheppard. “Our School Became the Battlefield.” Human Rights Watch, 27 Oct. 2015, www.hrw.org/report/2015/10/27/our-school-became-battlefield/using-schools-child-recruitment-and-military.
- Heffes, Ezequiel. “Compliance with IHL by Non-State Armed Groups: Some Practical Reflections at the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.” EJIL Talk, 21 Aug. 2019, www.ejiltalk.org/compliance-with-ihl-by-non-state-armed-groups-some-practical-reflections-at-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-1949-geneva-conventions/.
- “Participation In International Humanitarian Law Treaties And Their National Implementation.” International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC, Jan. 2006, www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/informe_202005_eng.pdf.
- “The Safe Schools Declaration.” Safe Schools Declaration, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, ssd.protectingeducation.org/.
- Sheppard, Bede. “Coercion and Intimidation of Child Soldiers to Participate in Violence.” Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Watch, 16 Apr. 2008, www.hrw.org/news/2008/04/16/coercion-and-intimidation-child-soldiers-participate-violence.
- Sheppard, Bede. “Keeping Schools Safe from the Battlefield: Why Global Legal and Policy Efforts to Deter the Military Use of Schools Matter.” International Review of the Red Cross, ICRC, 1 Aug. 2019, international-review.icrc.org/articles/keeping-schools-safe-battlefield-why-global-legal-and-policy-efforts-deter-military-use.
- Sheppard, Bede. “Protecting Schools from Military Use.” Human Rights Watch, 20 Mar. 2017, www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/20/protecting-schools-military-use/law-policy-and-military-doctrine.
- Singh, Aoife, and Ashok Singh. “The Mental Health Consequences of Being a Child Soldier - an International Perspective.” International Psychiatry: Bulletin of the Board of International Affairs of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 1 July 2010, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6734971/.
- Tawil, Sobhi. “International Humanitarian Law and Basic Education.” ICRC, 30 Sept. 2000, www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/57jq4.htm.



HIGH SCHOOL FINALIST

Consequences of War on Children

by Ethan Lantzy, South Florida Region Red Cross Volunteer

Education in War War is horrific. During conflict, children are plagued by violence, fear and doubt regarding their future. These impacts are worse when education—a usual constant in a child’s life—is threatened. War’s interference with education is widespread and detrimental. It harms innocent children’s long-term health, employment and gender treatment as well as society’s path towards peace. However, there are steps being taken to help.

War drastically interferes with the lives of schoolchildren. In 2013 alone, armed conflict denied almost 50 million children an education (Tran). According to Kadir et al., schools could be occupied by soldiers and used as a youth recruiting center. Also, children may be assaulted when traveling to and from it (Kadir et al.). This threat of violence dissipates a productive learning environment and forces some children to stop attending school. In fact, Kadir et al. stated that conflict interference results in “reduced school enrollment, high dropout rates, lower educational attainment, poor schooling conditions” and more. While some children attend school in fear, others cannot access an education at all. For example, 58% of primary schools were destroyed or closed in Mozambique due to a civil war (“Armed Conflict”). Plus, child refugees have limited access to education. UNICEF reported that there were nearly 30 million child refugees due to armed conflict at the end of 2018 (“Child Displacement”). Since these fleeing children may settle in camps without a school, it is no surprise that

“77% of refugee adolescents are not enrolled in secondary school” (“Education”).

This lost education has severe consequences. Since there are limited job opportunities for uneducated individuals, children will have a harder time affording adequate food, healthcare and lodging for the rest of their life. Overall, people with less education have lower life expectancies (Nicolaci da Costa). Also, education improves gender equity through informing girls about marriage rights and reproduction (“Poverty and Education”). Girls that remain in school “are less likely to marry before age 18 and have children early . . . and they’re more likely to find rewarding work after leaving school” (“Poverty and Education”). War deprives young women of their inalienable right to equality and forces them to accept an inferior social status for the rest of their lives.

In the long run, schools reduce future conflict because education promotes democracy and discourages civilian volunteering. Glaeser et al. strongly correlated education and democracy. Since educated individuals could read and write more effectively than uneducated ones, they could understand political processes, advocate for democratic systems and persuade their fellow citizens better. This is prevalent to long-term security since democratic nations are less likely to engage in conflict. Hegre found that “To a large degree . . . pairs of democratic states have a lower risk of interstate conflict than other pairs.” War is not required for policy or leadership changes since

democracies have a process of settling disagreements through voting (Hegre). Also, most democratic leaders must solicit approval from separate government structures and this enables more parties to weigh the costs of conflict (Hegre). Even if war is declared, educated citizens have less incentive to participate since they have better economic opportunities elsewhere. This is depicted by the 1919-1920 Russian civil war. For the Red and White armies, the “desertion rate was ten times higher in summer than in winter . . . both armies were composed of peasants, and during summer peasants had much higher income-earning opportunities.” (Collier 3). The appeal of a stable income overpowered the people’s desire to fight. Since education increases profitable job opportunities, more schooling will reduce the population that volunteers for armed conflict. Thus, it follows that there is a lower risk of war with more education (Collier 4). The book could end the bullet.

Therefore, it is vital to increase access to education in conflict-plagued areas. According to the IHL Database, “Special care must be taken in military operations to avoid damage to buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, education . . . unless they are military objectives” (“Rule 38”). Unfortunately, countries continue to brashly violate this rule. So, there have been various actions taken on a macro and micro level to resolve this problem.

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack developed the Lucens Guidelines

to increase the monitoring of militant-school conflict and guide domestic policies “on the interaction of military forces with schools . . . aiming at the reduction and eventual elimination of this practice” (“Protect Schools” 20). If individual countries form laws based on these guidelines, there is an enforceable reason for their soldiers to obey the directive. In addition, there are strategies to mitigate educational interference if conflict persists. For instance, one ICRC initiative in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, taught students safety protocols and proper responses to violence around the school (“Rio Project”). Since the school has a plan for dangerous scenarios, students feel more comfortable attending it. Another community-based project showed residents the basics of first aid (“Rio Project”). This lets students walk to school without being in fear for their lives since local residents could respond to medical emergencies and any violence that occurs. Cumulatively, the Rio initiatives resulted in improved student performance, halved dropout rates and decreased understaffing (“Brazil: Partnerships”). While the programs are focused on city violence, they are applicable to wartime situations and signify the benefits of in-school and community projects. Another technique that increases student safety is fortifying schools. In eastern Ukraine, numerous schools were closed, occupied or destroyed due to armed conflict (“ICRC Support”). The ICRC provided anti-blast sheeting, bunker

essentials, teacher first-aid training and other elements (depending on the school) to bolster the school’s ability to handle outside violence (“ICRC Support”). Like the Rio projects, the direct impact of war is lessened when schools are prepared and students feel safe.

Moreover, there are several non-profit organizations that assist schoolchildren in different forms. Justice Rising is a non-profit that works in Syria, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo (“Our work”). This organization rebuilds schools in war-torn areas, allevi-



Photo Credit: Wathiq Khuzaie, UNICEF. A school in Ramadi, Iraq 2016

ates the financial burden of school and conducts similar actions. Currently, they operate 14 schools and have educated over 1,900 students so far (“Our work”). Similarly, the organization War Child establishes temporary schools for children displaced by conflict and educates teachers on instructing emotionally-burdened students (“Education”). This indicates that unique measures should be taken for each country and circumstance to remedy the global education crisis.

In my opinion, there should be two concurrent approaches to assist students during war. First, international organizations such as the UN should persistently encourage countries to develop domestic policies that protect schools in wartime. Non-binding statements like the Safe Schools Declaration are a step in the right direction; however, these proclamations must have enforceable regulations made by individual countries to ensure compliance (“The Safe Schools”). Second, international organizations like the ICRC should assist conflict-plagued

schools by physically fortifying them (e.g. shrapnel-resistant windows) and fostering an atmosphere of preparedness (e.g. disaster plans). This lets students concentrate on school and maximizes their education despite combat. The need will vary depending on the location; for instance, one school may need first-aid certified teachers while another has to be rebuilt. To bolster these efforts, governments could provide grants or encourage charitable donations to established non-profits like the ICRC and War Child that aim to help schoolchildren.

Most children do not sign up for war and its consequences. They do not want to tout rifles, scurry in trenches or avoid mortar fire. They want to play, go to school and have a normal childhood. It is their right to receive this wish. Education impacts the physical and mental well-being of children as well as the future chances of conflict for entire countries. Programs to defend children’s right to education must be expanded and continued to protect the innocent victims of war. ♦

Bibliography

“Armed Conflict.” Educate a Child, Education Above All, www.educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021.

“Brazil: Partnerships Reduce Impact of Violence in Rio de Janeiro.” International Committee of the Red Cross , 14 Dec. 2015, www.icrc.org/en/document/brazil-partnerships-reduce-impact-violence-rio-de-janeiro?language=en . Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

“Child Displacement.” UNICEF , Apr. 2020, www.data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/displacement/#:~:text=This%20number%20includes%20some%2013,country%20by%20violence%20and%20conflict . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021

Collier, Paul. “Doing Well Out of War.” The World Bank, 10 Apr. 1999, pp. 1-15, www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/statsvitenskap/PECOS4010/h12/undervisningsmateriale/war.pdf . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021

“Education.” War Child , 2021, www.warchild.org.uk/what-we-do/education . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021.

Glaeser, Edward L. “Why Does Democracy Need Education?” National Bureau of Economic Research, Apr. 2006, pp. 2-45, www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w12128/w12128.pdf . Working paper. Accessed 10 Jan. 2021.

Hegre, Håvard. “Democracy and Armed Conflict.” Journal of Peace Research, vol. 51, no. 2, 10 Jan. 2014, pp.159-172. SAGE Publications, doi.org/10.1177/0022343313512852 . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021.

“ICRC Support to Schools and Kindergartens.” International Committee of the Red Cross, arcg.is/j8CyP . Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

Kadir, Ayesha, et al. “The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children.” Pediatrics, vol. 142, no. 6, Dec. 2018, doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2586 . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021.

Nicolaci da Costa, Pedro. “A Lack of Education can Literally be Deadly.” World Economic Forum, 13 Feb. 2018, www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/02/this-startling-imf-chart-shows-how-poverty-and-lack-of-access-to-education-are-literally-deadly/ . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021. “Our Work.” Justice Rising , 2018, www.justicerising.org/our-work-overview . Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

“Poverty and Education.” Childfund , 2021, www.childfund.org/poverty-and-education/ . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021

“Protect Schools + Hospitals: Guidance Note on Security Council Resolution 1998.” Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, May 2014, pp. 1-44. United Nations, childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/publications/AttackonSchoolsHospitals.pdf . Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

“Rio Project: Programmes Helped Reduce Humanitarian Impact of Violence in Rio de Janeiro.” International Committee of the Red Cross, 2 Nov. 2016, www.icrc.org/en/document/rio-project-programs-helped-reduce-humanitarian-impact-violence-rio-de-janeiro . Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

“Rule 38. Attacks Against Cultural Property.” IHL Database: Customary IHL. International Committee of the Red Cross, ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule38 . Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

“The Safe Schools Declaration: An Inter-Governmental Political Commitment to Protect Students, Teachers, Schools, and Universities from the Worst Effects of Armed Conflict.” Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack , 2021, ssd.protectingeducation.org/ . Accessed 21 Jan. 2021.

Tran, Mark. “War Denying Millions of Children an Education.” The Guardian , 11 Jul 2013, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/jul/12/war-denying-children-education . Accessed 10 Jan. 2021.

HIGH SCHOOL FINALIST

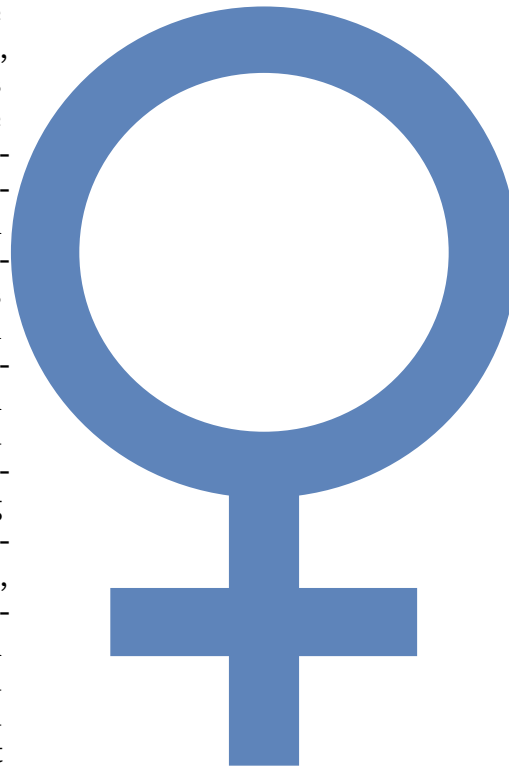
Armed Conflict Is Forcing Girls Out of School

by Mireya Rajendran, Missouri and Arkansas Region Red Cross Volunteer

Young girls are facing increasingly grave consequences of armed conflict, especially in regards to their education. According to Unicef, “In countries affected by conflict, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys” (“27 Million Children out of School in Conflict Zones”). There are many factors, which, combined, cause this disproportionality. Girls are often taken out of school due to family concerns, sexism, violence, oppressive government systems, etc. What people don’t seem to grasp is the severity of the consequences caused by keeping girls from getting a proper education and the amount of benefits associated with simply educating girls. In an article published by the United Nations titled “Youth and Education,” the importance of educating young people of the world is continuously stressed as the UN mentions, “education is important in eradicating poverty and hunger and in promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development.” Without education and schooling, girls automatically become prone to the dangers of child marriage, trafficking, exploitation (child labor practices), abuse, cult/harmful group initiation, and even early military recruitment. The girls, who are being denied educational rights, also have no way of contributing for the betterment of their local second/third-world region. This detrimental problem can be solved by governments enforcing International Humanitarian Law and guaranteeing equal education for all. So, in order to protect girls in war-torn countries, help them

flourish socially and economically in the future, and decrease poverty, governments must prioritize girls’ schooling and ensure every young girl has safe access to a good education.

To begin, we must analyze the question: why is girls’ education



so disproportionately affected by armed conflict and war? A large reason for girls being unable to continue their schooling is family concerns. Many families living in unstable situations fear sending their daughters to school, primarily due to concerns about violence. Their World, a global children’s charity committed to ending the global education crisis, states, “During violent conflicts, girls are deliberately targeted by armed groups and government forces. They often suffer sexual violence, abduc-

tion, intimidation and harassment” (“13 Reasons Why Girls Are Not in School on International Day of the Girl Child”). Not only this, but often military groups, who are against girls’ education, will deliberately attack girls’ schools, further solidifying concerns about safety. In specific countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Niger, South Sudan, and Chad these concerns are heightened because of extremist groups committing femicide - “the most extreme form of gender-based violence” defined as “the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender, usually by a man” (Rodriguez) - and generally striving to keep girls out of school, in an effort to silence women and promote ideals of a male-dominated society. Three of these countries (South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Chad) also “account for highest rate of girls who are out of school, at 76 per cent for South Sudan, Afghanistan (55 per cent) and Chad (53 per cent)” (“Girls Worst Affected as Conflict Keeps More than 25 Million Children out of School”). All countries mentioned are in a state of civil unrest, have corrupt governments, or are in a constant struggle with militant groups. Pakistan falls under the same category. Malala Yousafzai, a modern-day activist, was once a young Pakistani girl yearning for an education in a time when the Taliban, a Muslim extremist group, enforced a ban preventing girls from attending school. Upon riding the bus back home from school on January 9, 2012, Malala took a fatal shot to the face after Taliban officials plotted to kill her for speaking on television and advocating for

the importance of girls' education. After being transported to several international hospitals, Malala miraculously survived and continues to advocate for girls' education and runs the Malala Fund, dedicated to donating for girls' education; however, Malala's father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, remembers the event as "the worst thing that could happen to a family" and claims "remembering it is traumatic" (Yousafzai). Family concerns are always valid and, therefore, governments should be held responsible for alleviating these fears and ensuring girls' safety while simultaneously protecting their right to an education.

"Over 130 million girls are still out of school - that's over 130 million potential engineers, entrepreneurs, teachers and politicians whose leadership the world is missing out on," said Gayle Smith, president of the ONE Campaign (Suliman). Smith highlights the consequence of keeping girls out of school regarding the potential loss of a bright future and no future socio economic improvement. In fact, "[t]oday, 4 of the 5 countries with the largest gender gaps in education are conflict-affected countries (CAR, Chad, Yemen and South Sudan)" (Pariat). These same countries, as mentioned above, also have the highest percentages of their respective female populations out of school. There is a correlation between the successfulness of each country's female population and their education or, in this case, lack thereof. There are other indirect consequences as well, which cause women to suffer from a societal point of view. For example, according to the Cornell University Library, "Men whose mothers had no formal education are inclined to oppose the notion of granting women equal political rights and equal employment opportunities. Quite the opposite is true of men whose mothers attended a university"

(Houissa). In other words, women who have never attended formal schooling are more likely to be stigmatized by society, causing them to be denied jobs, which further enforces the oppressive ideals of a patriarchal society, and prevents women from reaching higher positions or holding influence. Also, uneducated mothers are more likely to refuse education to their daughters without understanding the repercussions which will inevitably come by doing so.

A simple solution to this large problem is International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Per IHL, civilians living in areas plagued by armed conflict are entitled to protection. Governments need to take the current state of girls' education into consideration and take advantage of IHLs policy of "restrict[ing] the means and methods of warfare" ("What Is IHL") to keep educational environments a safe place for students. To give some background information, the Geneva Conventions are the four treaties, which, combined, establish IHL. There is a correlation between the countries who are a part of the Geneva

Convention and the state of said country's educational system. The Council on Foreign Relations states that "194 states in total—including the United States" (Beehner) have signed the Geneva Convention treaties and abide by IHL. These countries also have generally better, safer, higher quality education systems than the countries that refuse to abide by IHL and sign the Geneva Convention treaties. "The Conventions and their Protocols Additional, for which we call for universal ratification, are too often violated, whether in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or South Sudan," (Gueguen) writes the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. The countries which are currently

violating the Geneva Convention are also the countries in which girls' safety is too often breached and they are forced to compromise their education, as a result. By taking the means to implement IHL, I believe governments will have a much easier time progressing their societies in the form of educating the female population.

Overall, education plays a much more critical role in the future of individual families' socioeconomic status, the progression of industrialization, and the future of our planet than many realize. Because of this, it's essential for governments across the world to hold female and male education to the same standard. Economies, societies, and families cannot grow without helping women grow. Due to the extensive armed conflict influencing the withdrawal of girls, across the world, from school, women are losing their basic right to a good education, which negatively influences their futures and lives in several aspects. Educating girls and simultaneously ensuring their protection is a basic duty of governments and must become a priority. If the current education situation continues, not only this generation of women, but the next will be forced to suffer the same consequences stemming from a lack of educational opportunities from a young age. To enunciate my point once more, the girls who are being denied education mainly for safety concerns, as well as other influencing factors, are entitled to protection by their government to ensure they are able to attend school to receive a formal education. ♦

Bibliography:

Beehner, Lionel. "The United States and the Geneva Conventions." Council on Foreign Relations , Council on Foreign Relations, 20 Sept. 2006, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/united-states-and-geneva-conventions.

Detoro, Robyn. "4 Risks of Ignoring the Girls' Education Crisis." ONE , 17 Mar. 2017, www.one.org/international/blog/4-risks-of-ignoring-the-girls-education-crisis/.

"Girls Education." Justice Rising , 2018, www.justicerising.org/girls-education.

"Girls Worst Affected as Conflict Keeps More than 25 Million Children out of School – UNICEF | | UN News." United Nations , United Nations, 24 Apr. 2017, news.un.org/en/story/2017/04/555852.

Gueguen, Anne. "The Geneva Conventions Are Too Often Violated." France ONU , 13 Aug. 2019, onu.delegfrance.org/The-Geneva-Conventions-are-too-often-violated.

Houissa, Ali. "Education of Women in the Arab World." Education of Women in the Arab World | Middle East & Islamic Studies Collection, 2017, middleeast.library.cornell.edu/content/education-women-arab-world.

"Keep Girls in School." World Vision Advocacy, 8 Jan. 2021, worldvisionadvocacy.org/project/keep-girls-in-school/.

McDonald, Laura. "Girls' Education." World Bank , www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation.

"1 In 3 Children And Young People Is Out Of School In Countries Affected By War Or Natural Disasters" – UNICEF . [online] Available at: www.unicef.org/press-releases/1-3-children-and-young-people-out-school-countries-affected-war-or-natural-disasters.

Pariat, Monique. "Educating Girls in Conflict Zones Is Essential." European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - European Commission, 12 Oct. 2016, ec.europa.eu/echo/field-blogs/stories/educating-girls-conflict-zones-essential_en.

Rodriguez, Leah. "Femicide: Everything You Need to Know." Global Citizen , 3 Nov. 2020, www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-femicide-everything-you-need-to-know/.

Suliman, Adela. "130m Girls Are Not in School - and Problem Is Worst in Conflict-Torn Countries, Says Report." Theirworld , Theirworld, 11 Oct. 2017, theirworld.org/news/130m-girls-out-of-school-worst-in-conflict-countries.

"The Situation." Educationcannotwait, www.educationcannotwait.org/the-situation/. www.cfr.org/backgrounders/united-states-and-geneva-conventions.

"13 Reasons Why Girls Are Not in School on International Day of the Girl Child." Theirworld, Theirworld, 11 Oct. 2017, theirworld.org/news/13-reasons-why-girls-are-not-in-school.

"27 Million Children out of School in Conflict Zones." UNICEF , 18 Sept. 2017, www.unicef.org/press-releases/27-million-children-out-school-conflict-zones.

"What Is IHL." ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf.

Yousafzai, Ziauddin. "What Being Malala Yousafzai's Dad Taught Me About Feminism." What Being Malala's Father Taught Me About Feminism , Time, 14 June 2019, time.com/5605625/malala-yousafzai-father/.

"Youth and Education." United Nations Interagency Network on Youth Development, www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-education.pdf.

HIGH SCHOOL FINALIST

Breaking the Cycle: Education in War

by Alex Santiago, Los Angeles Region Red Cross Volunteer



Photo Credit: Amer Almohibany, AFP/Getty. Syrian schoolchildren run past heavily-damaged buildings in the rebel-held area of Jobar, on the eastern outskirts of the Syrian capital of Damascus, on April 30, 2016

During armed conflict, children often regrettably lose their education to the passage of war. Educational institutions frequently take over and are used in particular because of their extended protections under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and children from those schools can be recruited to partake in the war as well as be subjected to extensive abuse; leaving physical and emotional scars. The detriment that can be done to one generation by simply withholding their education can be reverberated and block any potential recuperation of a country.

Education is so crucial, particularly in times of war, because after the war is over what is left standing is the children of that war. In the chaos of a post-war state, these

countries rely on these children to rebuild their infrastructure, their economy, their country and without schooling these children will lack the essential skills to do so. This can continue the revolving cycle of war in poverty stricken countries and education is what helps break that cycle.

IHL prohibits armed forces and armed groups from using educational institutes at the same time as they are being occupied by students and teachers for education purposes. However violations of IHL are nowhere near uncommon and because of educational institution's additional protection under IHL, they are targeted more by armed forces or groups. When these armed forces station themselves in schools, they can easily have an in-

jurious effect on the already weakened system of education in war. Armed groups drastically affect children's learning environment, often sexually abusing or harassing the children, leaving children with PTSD, depression, and anxiety. A study done in 2009 by the Faculty of Health Sciences of Simon Fraser University pointed to PTSD being prevalent in 89.3% of children who were either currently in a war or postwar. Not only that but many children are often recruited to participate in the war by these military personnel, as they are often seen as expendable and impressionable. IHL labels anyone under the age of 15 cannot be recruited into a war, and that recruiting them is a human rights violation, but again this law frequently fails to ensue during

war. According to “Lessons In War: Military Use of Schools and Other Education Institutions during Conflict”, the side effects of military stationed in school’s often include, “high dropout rates, reduced enrollment, lower rates of transition to higher education levels, overcrowding, and loss of instructional hours.” with girls often receiving the brunt of the damage. And in worst case scenarios, the use of an educational institution by military forces can convert it into a military target, endangering students and teachers lives. The protections that are meant to serve children and the facilities they need to thrive are actively exploited in the process of military forces inhibiting an educational facility.

Education is essential for post-

war recovery. A study done by the OECD declared that “ about 40% of civil war countries revert back to war within a decade (Collier et al., 2008),” creating a “conflict trap” in which, “57% of all countries that suffered from one civil war during 1945-2009 experienced at least one conflict thereafter.” Education is the key to stop this cycle from repeating itself.

So what can be done to prevent the future usage of schools as locations of military interest? A proposed solution has been “peace corridors”, places where children (and possibly civilians) can be protected from the reverb of war. Even once suggested for the Israeli-Palestine conflict, peace corridors have been used in history for differing purposes. In November 1985, UNICEF

and Uganda’s government ultimately allowed a peace corridor so that essential drugs and medical supplies could be brought to rural areas. The introduction of a peace corridor for children during times of war where they could safely be educated would save many lives as to help the development of the country post-war. However this alone cannot work without stricter regulations. With strict measures to prevent military members or opposing forces from using them, with strict punishments in place; a hopeful wish for these children in war-torn countries to become educated and place the future at the top of their priorities.♦

Bibliography

Hall BJ;Tol WA;Jordans MJ;Bass J;de Jong JT; “Understanding Resilience in Armed Conflict: Social Resources and Mental Health of Children in Burundi.” *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), U.S. National Library of Medicine, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24922609/.

Manuchehr, Tavassoli_Naini. “Education Right of Children during War and Armed Conflicts.” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier, 10 June 2011, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042811002692.

Hoeffler, A. (2012), “Growth, Aid and Policies in Countries Recovering from War”, OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers, No. 2, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5k49dfgl38wb-en> .

Kadir, Ayesha, et al. “The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children.” *American Academy of Pediatrics*, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1 Dec. 2018, pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/6/e20182586#sec-1. “Lessons In War: Military Use of Schools and Other Education Institutions during Conflict - World.” ReliefWeb, reliefweb.int/report/world/lessons-war-military-use-schools-and-other-education-institutions-during-conflict.

Attanayake V;McKay R;Joffres M;Singh S;Burkle F;Mills E; “Prevalence of Mental Disorders among Children Exposed to War: a Systematic Review of 7,920 Children.” *Medicine, Conflict, and Survival*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19413154/.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

A Cycle of Neglect

by Cade Brandon

An estimate made by The National Center for Education Statistics states roughly around 56.4 million students were enrolled in the year 2020 spanning from elementary to high school in The United States. Each one of those students has the right to free, public education and live without fear that it would ever be denied. Most students in The United States have never been directly affected by war, a luxury, not every student has. No child in America has to worry whether a drone strike or an I.E.D will go off taking the bus ride to and from school. We have the liberty and privilege of not being a target to any armed militia or extremist group but in countries like Iraq, Iran, Syria, and many others across the globe that's not always the case. Countries that have been seen dealing with armed conflicts overlook the glaring issue when opposing groups try to kill each other there are bound to be casualties. One of those casualties that go under the radar for many people is the education system within the regions of conflict. Education doesn't make the front of the newspapers when it comes to war and is usually neglected. A vicious cycle can be created when the education system within these countries aren't addressed.

During times of war education usually takes a backseat to other needs. Children going to school becomes an afterthought to many parents when their country is ravished by conflict.

Safety, food, and shelter become a priority to survive. A study done in Syria by UNICEF presents the consequences of war many peo-

ple overlook. Before civil unrest in March of 2011, Syria saw large improvements and milestones within their education department seeing around 97% enrollment rates in primary schools. But, in a little over two years almost 3 million children had to stop their education because conflict escalated and civil war broke out, forcing families to leave and find refuge in other countries. Some areas that violence was more prevalent saw attendance rates drop as low as 6%. The study also noted that one in every five schools had become unfit for use because they were either damaged, destroyed, or turned into shelters.

Families of children felt it wasn't safe to send them to school in fear of kidnapping or killing. Students felt safer staying home this resulted in education levels within Syria dropping. Syrian government officials even believed it would be for the best to send students trying to seek a higher education to finish their studies in other countries.

As war's wage schools can find themselves easy targets for armed groups either being used for terror attacks or shields. Nonetheless, the education infrastructure gets destroyed, and trying to rebuild that can be one of the most daunting tasks for countries. A school that was victim to an attack that was destroyed within seconds can take years to rebuild. As seen in Afghanistan, a country that has had issues with war and violence for decades, it almost seems impossible to even know where to start rebuilding. A report done by PEIC found that in 2008 there were around 670 attacks on schools in Afghanistan.

Even though many Islamic-extremist groups like the Taliban that imposed heavy restrictions on education have been slowly routed out nothing is certain. A huge problem that faces Afghanistan and its rebuilding process, like many other countries is the issue of finding teachers. The displacement and even death of teachers is a real issue an analysis by UNESCO found that nearly two-thirds of teachers in primary and secondary schools were either killed or displaced as a result of the Rwandan genocide. Some middle eastern countries have been forced to hire teachers that don't meet qualifications and make them teach in overcrowded rooms because they're understaffed and underequipped. Teachers can find themselves teaching to a ratio of 1 to 50 in some areas and without proper training or equipment, it is set up for failure.

When children have no structure and are exposed to the violence of war militias have been known to recruit them. Military forces have been also known to use schools as recruiting grounds and turn them into bases and barracks. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack has documented how armed militias and extremist groups put a large risk of attack on schools from other military forces. Whether the child joins willingly or not it is a failure on the education department for not keeping students off the streets. It is estimated that tens of thousands of kids under the age of 18 are serving in militias in 60 countries. Sadly hundreds of thousands of kids get caught in the crossfire of war. The UNICEF warns

that without the proper education in areas heavily affected by the war that a generation of children won't grow up with the necessary skills they would need to contribute back to their countries and survive. The UNICEF also states that without proper education it leaves children

vulnerable to militia recruitment, child marriage, child labor, and other abuses.

The vicious cycle of neglect has no winner. When fundamental institutions like education are hindered everyone suffers. Education is truly the greatest weapon against pover-

ty, inequality, and social exculsion and when that is taken away the cycle is doomed to repeat. Sadly around 75 million children around the world need educational support according to war child. One of the greatest casualties in war for many people is the education system. ♦



Photo Credit: Thierry Falise, LightRocket/Getty Images. Child soldiers of the resistance Mong Tai Army during training in Myanmar, 2001

Bibliography

“25 Million Children out of School in Conflict Zones.” UNICEF, 20 Jan. 2021, www.unicef.org/press-releases/25-million-children-out-school-conflict-zones.

“Armed Conflict.” Armed Conflict | Educate a Child, educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict#:~:text=Conflict%20affects%20education%20in%20many%20ways%3A&text=Conflict%20prevents%20the%20opening%20of,%20violence%20against%20female%20students.

“Dispatches: Education a Casualty of War.” Human Rights Watch, 28 Oct. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/13/dispatches-education-casualty-war.

“Education under Attack.” UNICEF, www.unicef.org/education-under-attack.

“Education.” War Child, 16 July 2019, www.warchild.org.uk/what-we-do/education.

Epatko, Larisa. “In War Zones, Education Takes a Backseat to Other Needs.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 4 Mar. 2011, www.pbs.org/newshour/world/education-in-war-zones.

“Syrian Education a Casualty of War.” Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2021 Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 6 Jan. 2014, protectingeducation.org/news/syrian-education-a-casualty-of-war/.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “Education Under Attack 2018 - Afghanistan.” Refworld, www.refworld.org/docid/5be94317a.html.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

Education: An Investment in Peace

by Patrick Bednarz, Arizona and New Mexico Region Red Cross Volunteer

“

Urge world leaders to invest in the futures of children living in emergencies—and by doing so invest in the future of our world,” exclaimed Muzoon Almellehan at the 2017 G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany. Although Muzoon, an educational activist and Syrian refugee, stresses the importance of preserving education during war, only 2.6 percent of humanitarian aid was spent on education in 2019. Because of this lack of funding, twenty-five million children in conflict-ridden countries and more than half of all child refugees do not receive any education. Although the twenty-five million children who are missing out on an education live across only twenty-two countries, people worldwide should have a vested interest in preserving education during war because of one of education’s most prominent roles: preventing armed conflict. By increasing funding to education in conflict-ridden countries, world leaders would help ensure stability in these countries because of education’s viability as a long-term means of preventing armed conflict.

Investing in education provides a long-term solution to ensuring stability in conflict-ridden countries because of the direct relationship between a country’s education levels and socioeconomic opportunities. According to research performed on fifty countries in 2020, for every additional year that the average years of schooling in a country increased, the country’s average 40-year growth rate in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures the size of a country’s

overall economy, increased by 0.37 percent. In other words, applied to a conflict-ridden country like South Sudan with average years of schooling of about 4.8 years, increasing the average years of schooling in South Sudan by only two years would increase its GDP over the next forty years by almost thirty percent. This direct relationship between education levels and GDP indicates that safeguarding and investing in education in war-ridden countries could provide a long-term solution to stability in these countries because of the indirect relationship between a country’s socioeconomic opportunities and conflict. For example, according to World Bank data, low GDP per capita is directly related to high state fragility. Furthermore, high socioeconomic opportunity reduces conflict because, according to the Violent Extremism Action Plan developed by the United Nations (UN), socioeconomic opportunity is a primary driver of violent extremism throughout the world. Countries with low socioeconomic opportunities often struggle with violent extremism because, as the World Bank argues, violent extremist groups frequently target poor individuals because they have a small opportunity cost associated with joining an extremist group. In other words, in countries with low socioeconomic opportunities, individuals are more incentivized to join a terrorist group because they can provide the security and economic opportunity, which people in countries with low socioeconomic opportunities lack. Mitigating the growth of terrorism is also increas-

ingly vital in preventing armed conflict because, according to the UN, armed conflict is increasingly waged among domestic groups rather than among countries. For example, deaths due to terrorism made up 8.42 percent of deaths in Iraq in 2016, while deaths due to state-to-state conflict made up only 5.89 percent of all deaths in Iraq. By increasing funding for education and, thus, increasing socioeconomic opportunity in war-ridden countries, world leaders could impair the growth of terrorist groups in the long term. Education, however, not only helps combat the growth of terrorism by decreasing unemployment but also by strengthening emotional intelligence.

Investing in education offers a long-term solution to stability in war-ridden countries because education fosters emotional intelligence, which counteract extremism and terrorism. In a 2016 report, the World Bank detailed that investment in early childhood education is one of the most efficient ways to decrease violence in a country because it increases a child’s emotional intelligence. Instilling emotional intelligence in children through education is critical because, according to the Violent Extremism Action Plan, discrimination and marginalization, whose effects are exacerbated by a lack of emotional intelligence, are key drivers of violent extremism, just like the lack of socioeconomic opportunity. People who lack emotional intelligence are more likely to adopt extremism when they believe that they are being discriminated against or

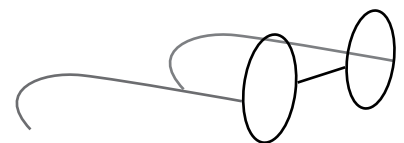
marginalized by society because their lack of emotional intelligence hinders them from judiciously channeling their emotions. Instead, lacking the emotional intelligence to manage their emotions effectively, people in war-ridden countries join terrorist groups when they no longer feel bound by the social fabric. Many terrorists, in fact, have been diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), which illustrates a lack of emotional intelligence among terrorists since a disregard of people characterizes ASPD. With a lack of emotional intelligence being a common characteristic among terrorists or extremists, world leaders could impede the growth of terrorism in war-torn countries by investing in emotional intelligence's most prominent promoter: education.

With critical thinking among a population being essential for preventing and recovering from armed conflict, investing in education would increase stability in war-torn countries because high education levels foster critical thinking. With inventions requiring high levels of critical thinking, the number of patents registered per capita is a reliable indicator of critical thinking levels in a country. When analyzing data on education levels and the number of patents registered per capita in a country, one can clearly see a correlation between high education levels and high critical thinking levels. For example, with the average number of years of schooling in Afghanistan being only 5.1, people living in Afghanistan applied for only nine international patents in 2019. On the other hand, with the average number of years of schooling in Saudi Arabia being 9.2, people living in Saudi Arabia applied for over five thousand patents in 2019, indicating a strong correlation between education levels and critical thinking. Fostering high levels of critical thinking in a country is also essen-

tial to a war-torn country's future prosperity because it helps prevent armed conflict. High critical thinking levels prevent armed conflict because when complex issues arise in a country with high levels of critical thinking, its citizens and leaders are more likely to resolve them without violence. At the same time, safeguarding education during war is extremely important because of the importance of critical thinking after war. After war, skilled leaders are required to unify and heal a country. If education is not protected during war, brain drain, which is the emigration of educated or skilled people from a country, often occurs, hindering a country's ability to deal with internal problems after the armed conflict. In Syria, for instance, over 120,000 university students have fled to other countries because of the occupation and destruction of universities. Although the Syrian Civil War may soon end, brain drain and the damages done to education will plague the country's future success. Therefore, by preserving and investing in education during war, world leaders can secure a more stable future once fighting ceases.

As Muzoon Almellehan exclaimed to leaders at the 2017 G20 summit, an investment in education is an investment in a more peaceful and stable future. By safeguarding and investing in education during armed conflict, world leaders would promote high socioeconomic opportunities, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking, which are vital in preventing armed conflict. As it currently stands, however, the world greatly underestimates the importance of safeguarding education during war, leaving whole generations of students without the ability to lead both themselves and their countries to brighter futures. While the need for education funding is dire, UNICEF reports that as little as thirty million dollars could

provide education to over two million Syrian children, making it an invaluable investment. While armed conflict might resolve a dispute momentarily, the education of children has the ability to stabilize and transform a conflict-ridden country for centuries, and to know this, world leaders do not have to look further than the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "If we are to reach real peace in the world...we shall have to begin with children." ♦



Bibliography

- Zara Sargsyan, "Funding Shortfalls Threaten Education for Children Living in Conflict and Disaster Zones," July 7, 2017, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/funding-shortfalls-threaten-education-children-living-conflict-and-disaster-zones>.
- Asma Zubairi, "Humanitarian Aid Funding Still Failing Education," Global Partnership for Education, November 18, 2020, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/humanitarian-aid-funding-still-failing-education>.
- Filippo Grandi, "Education," UNHCR, n.d., <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/education>;
- Georgina Thompson, "25 Million Children out of School in Conflict Zones," UNICEF, April 24, 2017, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/25-million-children-out-school-conflict-zones>.
- Eric A. Hanushek et al., "Education and Economic Growth," Education Next, July 30, 2020, <https://www.educationnext.org/education-and-economic-growth>
- "Human Development Reports," | Human Development Reports, n.d., <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD>.
- Hannah Ritchie et al., "Terrorism," Our World in Data, July 28, 2013, <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>.
- Kkiernerm, "Counter-Terrorism Module 2 Key Issues: Drivers of Violent Extremism," Counter-Terrorism Module 2 Key Issues: Drivers of Violent Extremism, n.d., <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/drivers-of-violent-extremism.html>.
- "A New Era of Conflict and Violence," United Nations (United Nations, n.d.), <https://www.un.org/en/un75/new-era-conflict-and-violence>.
- Hannah Ritchie et al., "Terrorism," Our World in Data, July 28, 2013, <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>.
- Amina Dendoba, "Stepping Up Early Childhood Development," n.d., <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/868571468321240018/pdf/92988-REVISED-PUBLIC-WB-ECD-Mar2016-ENG-v2-web.pdf>.
- Kkiernerm, "Counter-Terrorism Module 2 Key Issues: Drivers of Violent Extremism," Counter-Terrorism Module 2 Key Issues: Drivers of Violent Extremism, n.d., <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/drivers-of-violent-extremism.html>.
- Willem Martens, "The Terrorist with Antisocial Personality Disorder," Taylor & Francis, accessed March 28, 2003, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J158v04n01_03?journalCode=wfp20.
- UNDP, "Human Development Reports," Mean years of schooling (males aged 25 years and above) (years) | Human Development Reports, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/mean-years-schooling-males-aged-25-years-and-above-years>.; WIPO, Statistical Country Profiles, n.d., https://www.wipo.int/ipstats/en/statistics/country_profile/profile.jsp?code=AF.
- UNDP, "Human Development Reports," Mean years of schooling (males aged 25 years and above) (years) | Human Development Reports, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/mean-years-schooling-males-aged-25-years-and-above-years>.; WIPO, Statistical Country Profiles, n.d., https://www.wipo.int/ipstats/en/statistics/country_profile/profile.jsp?code=SA.
- Julie Young, "The Economic Impact of Brain Drain," Investopedia (Investopedia, October 30, 2020), https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brain_drain.asp.
- Mohammad AlAhmad , "The Crisis of Higher Education for Syrian Refugees," Brookings (Brookings, July 29, 2016), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2016/06/17/the-crisis-of-higher-education-for-syrian-refugees/>.
- Christopher Tidey, "Lack of Funding Leaves Millions of Children in Conflict and Disaster Zones at Risk," UNICEF, October 22, 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/lack-funding-leaves-millions-children-conflict-and-disaster-zones-risk>.
- Mitch Bogen , "Growing Peace: Gandhi, Montessori and What It Means to Begin with the Children," Global Campaign for Peace Education, June 25, 2020, <https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/growing-peace-gandhi-montessori-means-begin-children>.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

Education: A Collateral Damage

by Ania Chandra

Conflict, in its inevitability, exposes faults in a system. However, violent conflict often harms those it intends to help. Education, one of the most valuable things a child can have, is compromised during war. Education is vital to increase literacy rates, help people out of poverty, and educate children about tolerance and peace. The latter is especially important for countries in conflict in order to reduce the chances of war from occurring a second time, which could devastate a country and its education. However, armed conflict greatly affects education by displacing students and educators and hurting the economy so that governments are unable to fund educational services.

Notably, the displacement of students and educators greatly affects the quality of education children in war receive, if any. Children in refugee camps receive minimal or inadequate schooling, which increases the risk of exploitation both as a child and an adult. This is further exacerbated by the enrolling of young boys into the military, an example being the “Lost Boys” of Sudan, a group of runaway boys that were a direct result of rebel groups choosing young boys to fight. Furthermore, displaced children are isolated from their families and culture, which may cause mental distress and can affect how they learn. Children who stay in refugee camps for an extended period of time also face the harsh reality of malnutrition, infectious diseases, and rape.. Additionally, children often miss out on basic education in search for jobs or family, which re-



Photo Credit: D. Willetts, UNESCO. Education for All Global Monitoring Report, School children in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya 1, where many of the Lost Boys and Girls temporarily or permanently resettled, 2011

sulted in a lack of peace education. In post-war countries, places which had inadequate education for children often faced more social unrest and conflict due to the lack of peace education. Children learn about non-violent means of communication through school, and since many countries in conflict cannot offer strong education about peace and international humanitarian laws, these countries continue to struggle with civil unrest.

Moreover, governments use funds meant for educational services for military use, which results in poor education for children. Armed conflict directly impacts schools by physical destruction and targeting teachers and educational administrators; however, war also indirectly affects education financially. In poorer countries especially, officials will use much of the money needed for weaponry and military

force, which leaves less money for rebuilding necessary infrastructure and buildings, such as schools and transportation. Consequently, poor education will lead to another poor and uneducated generation, which keeps the cycle of poverty and civil unrest intact. Lack of government spending in education also leads to more rebel groups; adults will take notice of the government’s inattentiveness to its citizens and try to actively change the system, recruiting school age children, specifically boys, in the process. The physical destruction of schools by rebel groups also serves as an offensive tactic, but harms enrollment and students in the process. During war, children and teachers are more likely to stay home, and in areas with less money, children are less likely to receive education. Armed conflict greatly affects how governments function, which indirectly

determines the quality of education children receive in wartime.

Ultimately, the movement of students and teachers and the government's compromised role in education are results of armed conflict and violence. It is crucial for children to receive education, especially education to prevent future

violence and conflict within a community. International humanitarian law, however, regulates conflict in a community in order to reduce the collateral damage from armed conflict. Under Article 94 of the Geneva Conventions, children are given the right to education during war. Nevertheless, children in con-

flict still are not given proper education, which continues conflict in a community. Giving children education in a war is not only imperative for helping a violence-ridden country, but helps children have a sense of security in an uncertain reality. ♦

Bibliography

Clayton L. Thyne, ABC's, 123's, and the Golden Rule: The Pacifying Effect of Education on Civil War, 1980–1999, *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 50, Issue 4, December 2006, Pages 733–754, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2006.00423.x>

Brian Lai, Clayton Thyne. "The Effect of Civil War on Education, 1980-97 - Brian Lai, Clayton Thyne, 2007." *SAGE Journals*, 1 Jan. 1999, journals.sagepub.com/doi/

Manuchehr, Tavassoli_Naini. "Education Right of Children during War and Armed Conflicts." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier, 10 June 2011, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042811002692.

Santa Barbara, Joanna. "Impact of War on Children and Imperative to End War." *Croatian Medical Journal, Croatian Medical Schools*, Dec. 2006, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2080482/.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Impact of War on Youth Education

by Asha Goddu, Georgia Region Red Cross Volunteer

So many things in life are simply taken for granted; so much so, that their value is sorely undermined. One of these things is our basic right to education. All children deserve the foundational entitlement to learn and grow, at least at a young age. While following through with this often is not an issue, war makes an incredible impact on the upholding of this liberty, and almost always for the worse. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks (GCPEA) and UNESCO have reported that educational facilities were attacked in at least 31 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America in the three years leading up to 2010, and in at least 28 countries between 2013 and 2018 (Armed Conflict).

Education and armed conflict at first thought do not really seem to be connected in any way, but the influence they have on each other is surprisingly undeniable. For example, throughout history many schools have been seized due to armed conflict. Seizing could mean that an armed force is using the school as a military arsenal for weapon storage, thus rendering it a legal target of the opposing army. In this case, the students and teachers may continue their lessons, but not without the fear of attack. This type of threat may be a cause for parents to keep their children from going to school. When a school is seized, it may also mean that the building is completely converted to a war base, with the consequence of the building and resources inside being blocked off from the teachers and children. These resources are vital to the nourishment of the curricu-

lum, and even if a teacher is willing to work without an official job or salary, he or she will be unable to adequately teach without access to the class materials.

Another common way the education system is impacted by war is damage. In many cases of warfare, schools are intentionally or unintentionally damaged by fighting. Despite educational facilities being lawfully protected by International Humanitarian Law as civilian property, there are many instances where that command is ignored or outweighed by the military advantage of destroying the area. Damaged schools lead to long periods of educational shutdown in most countries, as there is no way to continue studies without a building. This type of hindrance is especially harmful to lesser developed countries where using technology as a teaching method is not a feasible option. Damage to school buildings may also cause a physical risk factor for those that continue to use the campus. This physical risk along with the likely close proximity of warfare may again become a reason for parents to fear sending their kids to school.

Education doesn't only revolve around the school buildings. There are many ways that armed conflict affects children's studies without ever nearing a school. Any area that becomes a war zone tends to become economically lacking, thus forcing families to send out more people to work, regardless of age. This overwhelming need often has children working in small, but tiring jobs instead of attending school. Eventually this becomes something

that the youth grows used to, and it will be unlikely for them to return to school even after the conflict ends. But, this seems to be the better version of working instead or learning. In many war-torn villages and cities, children are forced into working as soldiers, despite its illegality. Armed forces may threaten the families of the children, pressuring them to join. Most of these children that are abducted by the military never make it back into the schooling system, and if they do, they are years behind and struggle to fit in. Statistics from Northern Uganda state "the formerly abducted are half as likely to be currently enrolled in school, they are a third less likely to make the transition from primary to secondary school, and are twice as likely as a non-abducted youth to be fully illiterate" (Blattman 2006). In other cases, young girls and women are kidnapped as sex slaves for the militiamen, leading to innumerable physical and psychological scars. In any of these instances though, one thing remains constant: vital education is sacrificed.

Another way of depriving children of schooling comes in the form of lost professors. In order for children to learn, there must be someone to teach them, and these teachers often become scarce during wartime. There have been many cases of innocent school teachers being killed or threatened by incoming military forces, just in the name of wanting information or attempting to take over the school and the students within. For example, over two-thirds of the primary and secondary schools teachers



Photo Credit: Daniel Cima, The American Red Cross/IFRC. Bredjing Refugee Camp, Chad, 4000 out of the 24000 refugees in the Bredjing camp are children, November 2006

in the Rwanda were killed or displaced as a result of the Rwandan genocide (GCPEA 2018). Teachers may also be forced out of work by the condition of the school they are employed by or the lack of a sustainable salary. For governments with conflicts to settle, education becomes a secondary priority, and thus salaries for teachers may be withdrawn, leaving the teachers no choice but to abandon the schools and find another job to provide for their families. Even those teachers who teach in makeshift or informal settings out of passion cannot guide students the way that they should be able to with school resources.

While the formerly stated have been a few examples of how war

negatively affects education, there are numerous others. But collectively, what does all of this mean? If children can't get an education, what impact will that have? In terms of the children themselves, they will likely end up working physical labor jobs that tend to pay less than those which require an education. Cumulatively, society will lose individuals that have potential by failing to nurture the intelligence and creativity they may possess. The community will be unable to fill in skilled job positions, setting the country back by generations. The lack of a skilled workforce will keep the economy in a struggling state. These major setbacks beg the question: what is being done to prevent further issues

caused by lack of education? Many humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, GCPEA, and the Red Cross work dedicatedly to the repair of war-ridden communities, supplying food, water, health support, and more. Despite this, according to a research study conducted by the Financial Tracking Service in 2012, education received the least amount of funding when compared to the other aspects of reconstruction (Children Still Battling to Go to School 2). While there is still much work to be done in terms of aid, humanitarian organizations have been assisting these areas to the best of their ability, giving a second chance to the ruined public. ♦

Bibliography

Annan, Jeannie, and Christopher Blattman. The State of Youth and Youth Protection in Northern Uganda: Findings from the Survey for War-Affected Youth. 1 Sept. 2006, <https://chrisblattman.com/documents/policy/sway/SWAY.Phase1.FinalReport.pdf>.

Armed Conflict | Educate a Child. <https://educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

Betancourt, Theresa S., Stephanie Simmons, et al. "High Hopes, Grim Reality: Reintegration and the Education of Former Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone." *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 52, no. 4, Nov. 2008, pp. 565–87. PubMed Central, doi:10.1086/591298.

Betancourt, Theresa S., Ryan McBain, et al. "Trajectories of Internalizing Problems in War-Affected Sierra Leonean Youth: Examining Conflict and Post-Conflict Factors." *Child Development*, vol. 84, no. 2, 2013, pp. 455–70. PubMed Central, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01861.x. Children Still Battling to Go to School . UNESCO, July 2013, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221668>.

Davies, Lynn. Thinkpiece on Education and Conflict . 2009, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000190778>.

Education Under Attack. GCPEA, 2018, p. 24, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/documents_eua_2018_full.pdf.

"What Can We Do to Protect Education in War Zones?" World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/what-can-we-do-to-protect-education-in-war-zones/>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children's Education

by Hamza A. Haque, North Texas Region Red Cross Volunteer

Armed conflict's effect on education is severe and can have detrimental consequences for a country's people and economy. Findings from an article in *The Journal of Developmental Studies* suggest that an increase in armed conflict in a region is associated with a decrease in educational enrollment. According to educateachild.org, some effects of armed conflict on education include the deaths of teachers and students along with the destruction of schools and other educational infrastructure. Armed conflict can affect a society's infrastructure and ability to teach children, along with a student's quality and quantity of education. Education's vitality makes preventing armed conflict from affecting it a key issue for international organizations and governments.

Education is defined as "the knowledge, skill, and understanding that you get from attending a school, college, or university," according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Education is a human right and should be free, and higher education should be accessible to all based on merit (United Nations, Article 26). Armed conflict, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, is confrontation between two or more states, a state and another body or dissident faction, or two or more organized armed groups in a state. Education contributes to economic growth, increased income, and decreased poverty. It is correlated to a decreased child mortality rate as women are being educated, and it can reduce the risk of armed conflict & violent extremism.

Education is vital to a society, and armed conflict can impact it in many ways. Many factors can contribute to detrimental damage to education and educational infrastructure. Schools could be closed due to ideological differences between two opposing sides, or could be damaged or destroyed (Amir Jones and Naylor). School closures, the death of teachers, and recruitment of students and teachers into conflict can affect the ability of a school to teach its children. If a government is at war with a rebellion or another force, it might not have the ability to spend money on education and educational resources. This might bar people from accessing a quality education. Schools targeted by military groups in armed conflict might be destroyed in order to gain an advantage, or they might be used to recruit child soldiers. Both of these bar teachers from teaching students and students from learning. Schools can be bombed, shelled, or burned (Bede Sheppard and Human Rights Watch), which can be detrimental to students and teachers, and can destroy or damage educational infrastructure and learning material. While attacks on educational facilities & personnel are apparent, there is also much damage done to children that makes it difficult for them to have a quality education. Examples of these are sexual violence at schools where there is armed conflict, along with child recruitment in or around schools (Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) et al.). All of these issues lead to debilitating damage to educational facilities and staff, along with harmful

effects for students.

Students' quality and quantity of education is severely affected by armed conflict. Children who attend school during armed conflict usually have an increased dropout rate and reduced educational survival rates. It was found that disparities arose between poor and not-poor individuals regarding educational attainment. This could be due to the allocation of resources onto armed conflict rather than public education, while not-poor individuals could benefit from private institutions. It was found that armed conflict was associated with a lower likelihood to receive higher education degrees, ultimately leading to a lower income throughout a person's life (Buvinić et al.). This was found to be true during World War II in countries actively at war such as Germany. In places such as Afghanistan and Timor-Leste, there is a high demand for primary school teachers, yet there are not enough. This lowers the quality of education in these areas, and further creates a lower supply and higher demand for teachers. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of teachers and educational facilities and resources, and violence & sexual harassment in or en route to school are all problems that affect areas ridden with armed conflict.

According to Human Rights Watch, Burkina Faso has been ridden with conflict, and this has affected its citizens' education. Schools can be closed due to attacks, and education can be cut short due to a lack of documentation regarding educational attainment. For example, a student whose school was



Photo Credit: A. Balayan, ICRC. Armenia, 2020

attacked said, “It makes me unhappy, to not be able to finish, to have to retake classes, to not even have any documents to show you took the class you can’t even be sure you will continue your studies.” (Seibert et al.).

Withdrawals from schools are not always because of attacks. Fear and trauma regarding attacks on educational institutions is apparent in parents and students, who might fear for their children’s lives or their lives, respectively. This is also true for teachers, who might be traumatized and might not have the ability to go back to school and teach. All of these factors can lower the quality of education for students who go to school.

In short, armed conflict is severely detrimental to a student’s academic career, and can also leave educational facilities and resources in ruin. But how can these be pre-

vented? Some organizations provide structured education and time for play for children in war-ridden areas, and they also train teachers, parents, and guardians so they can provide for their children (War Child). Recommendations by Human Rights Watch include advice for the government to focus on efforts to continue education for students. With the Covid-19 pandemic, it is also especially crucial that governments focus on expanding distance-learning programs and online educational resources. They also advise that alternative educational opportunities be present for those who cannot attend school, and to reach out to those who were withdrawn from school. They also urge security forces to fixate on the protection and security of schools and their students traveling to and from school. The GCPEA (Global Coalition to Protect Education

from Attack) recommends that states should ensure the protection and safety of educators and students, and urge armed forces and armed groups to refrain from using schools and other educational facilities as military objects and bases for recruitment. All of these recommendations will help reduce the effect of armed conflict on education and will help many children.

Armed conflict has cost children their education, and has had detrimental effects for parents, teachers, and students. Educational facilities have been damaged and ravaged by destruction, and children have been left with no education due to the atrocities of war. People and organizations have found ways to combat this, and we can soon end these heinous war crimes and bring education to those who need it. ♦

Annotated Bibliography

American Red Cross. International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign Education in War. 2020. This was used to find the effects of education on society. This resource was used as a curriculum for IHL YAC.

Amir Jones, and Ruth Naylor. The Quantitative Impact of Armed Conflict on Education : Counting the Human and Financial Cost. Reading, Cfbt Education Trust, 2014, www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/d7/d77e9724-b4c7-41a2-b5e1-6a839e871d1f.pdf. Accessed 19 Dec. 2020. Book's executive summary (pg. 7) was used in order to find the quantitative effects of armed conflict on education and the "channels" through which armed conflict can impact education, such as death & injury, along with fear.

Bede Sheppard, and Human Rights Watch (Hrw). Schools and Armed Conflict : A Global Survey of Domestic Laws and State Practice Protecting Schools from Attack and Military Use. New York, Human Rights Watch, 2011, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/crd0711webwcover.pdf. Accessed 20 Dec. 2020. Used to find that schools are bombed, shelled, and burned, which destroys educational infrastructure and material, and can be detrimental to students, teachers, and administrators.

Buvinić, Mayra, et al. "Armed Conflict, Gender, and Schooling." *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 28, no. 2, 14 Oct. 2013, pp. 311–319, openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23542/wber_28_2_311.pdf?sequence=1, 10.1093/wber/lhto32. Accessed 25 May 2019. Was used to find that economic shocks & armed conflict negatively impact a child's educational attainment. It was also found (pg. 3) that war was also associated with a lower likelihood to attain higher education degrees & a lower income.

Diwakar, Vidya. "The Effect of Armed Conflict on Education: Evidence from Iraq." *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 51, no. 12, 24 Aug. 2015, pp. 1702–1718. Taylor & Francis Online, doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2015.1056786, 10.1080/00220388.2015.1056786. Accessed 20 Mar. 2020.

A study on the effect of armed conflict on education in Iraq. "The findings suggest an increase in conflict is associated with a decrease in education for both genders, though more pronounced for boys."
- Abstract.

Educate A Child (EAC). "Armed Conflict | Educate a Child." [Educateachild.org](http://educateachild.org), Educate A Child (EAC), 2019, educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict. Accessed 19 Dec. 2020. Article stating the effects armed conflict has on educational infrastructure, students & teachers, along with other effects. Includes useful citations.

"Education." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/education>. Accessed 21 Dec. 2020. This was used to define education in the paper.

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), et al. EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2020. 2020. Report on education during armed conflict. It was useful when researching, and it provided much information regarding challenges faced by educational facilities in regions of armed conflict.

International Committee of the Red Cross. "Armed Conflict | How Does Law Protect in War? - Online Casebook." [Icrc.org](http://icrc.org), International Committee of the Red Cross, 2015, casebook.icrc.org/glossary/armed-conflict. Accessed 16 Dec. 2019. This was used to formally define what armed conflict is and what it entails.

Kadir, Ayesha, et al. "The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children." *Pediatrics*, vol. 142, no. 6, 5 Nov. 2018, p. e20182586, pediatrics.aapublications.org/content/142/6/e20182586, 10.1542/peds.2018-2586. Accessed 9 Mar. 2019. "Schools, which have been traditionally safe places, are targeted, and children are often attacked while on their way to or from school. In many armed conflicts, schools and educational facilities are used by combatant forces, including government forces, as bases for combat and to recruit children." - Introduction.

Omoeva, Carina, Rachel Hatch, and Wael Moussa. "The effects of armed conflict on educational attainment and inequality." *Education Policy and Data Center Working Paper* (2016). Used to show the disparity between poor and non-poor children and educational attainment between them. (Introduction)

Seibert, Lauren, et al. "Their War Against Education." Human Rights Watch, 26 May 2020, www.hrw.org/report/2020/05/26/their-war-against-education/armed-group-attacks-teachers-students-and-schools. Accessed 22 Dec. 2020. Was used to give examples of conflict's effect on education, specifically in Burkina Faso.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Think Piece Prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011 The Quantitative Impact of Conflict on Education. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, 2010. Was used to determine that children that attend school during armed conflicts have a negative impact on educational attainment.
United Nations. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. New York, New York, United Nations, 1948, www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/. Accessed 21 Dec. 2020. "Everyone has the right to education." - Article 26.

War Child. "Education." War Child, War Child UK, 30 Jan. 2017, www.warchild.org.uk/what-we-do/education. Accessed 22 Dec. 2020. This was used to find that overcrowded classrooms, lack of teachers and resources, and violence in or on-route to school affect children in conflict-ridden areas.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

Children's Education and Armed Conflict

by Kyla Howell, New Jersey Region Red Cross Volunteer

Unfortunately, more than 1 in 10 children worldwide are affected by armed conflict. An armed conflict that seems to be on rise would be school shootings. The United States has recently seen an increase in these types of armed conflict. From 2015 to 2018, there was an average of school shootings every 77 days. War is a factor that impedes a child's education. For example; during the time of the Syrian civil war, a report recorded at least 48.5 million children between the ages of 6 and 15 living in war areas were out of school. Students, teachers, and school buildings become the targets of attacks which placed fear in the heart of children and parents. This incident left many children without an education. There are many effects conflict such as these has on children's education. Some would be poor schooling, exploitation, and sexual violence.

Poor schooling is an obvious factor on the list, so it is important to stress how much an impoverished education affects children. War causes schools and educational facilities to be used as bases for combat and even serve as recruitment areas for children. Hence, the school is forced to stay closed and if they do open, many teachers will refuse to come to work. Children will not be receiving the highest quality of education they can get in these conditions. Schools are now becoming targets in war, defying international law. This could be the cause of the destruction of any school or educational institution leading to lower chances of children receiving education. Research on the connec-

tion between armed conflict and education stated that in conflict-affected countries, only 79% of young people are literate compared to the 93% that live in needy countries. Despite the fact, children will not be receiving proper education, they also are not getting funds that allow them to do so. In twenty-one developing countries, they are currently spending more money on weapons, such as guns, than they do on education. This is why many schools that are destroyed take a long time to be fixed or are never repaired. It's also the reason why the curriculum in these countries is very poverty-stricken.

Living in a battle zone, numerous kids are in high danger of being exploited. Youngsters are effectively controlled because of their naive nature. Numerous military enrollment officials utilize this for their potential benefit to be brought into the toxic environment of war. Children as young as eight years of age are selected. A numerous deal of these children are used in suicide missions and the individuals who do make it out are left with scars and PTSD that follow them for the remainder of their life. This directly influences children's schooling in light of the fact that these kids might be adding to the destruction and shutting of schools for other people. Their schooling is likewise hindered as during their recruitment period, they are more centered around their combat abilities than their academic level. Likewise, when the child figures out how to part from this war environment, they are less inclined to return and get their education because of the

harsh trauma that they experienced at a young age.

Lastly, sexual violence due to war plays a role in children's education. Unfortunately, 1,429 incidents of gender-based violence were reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the span of a year period and 68% of these victims were children. It is not spoken enough how much sexual violence takes a toll on a children's mental state eventually causing the child to abandon their principles. Sexual violence could cause depression, self-harm, and substance abuse issues. These effects cause many children to give up on their hopes in life and education is abandoned and forgotten.

In conclusion, poor schooling due to war affects a child's education because it leads to many children unable to receive good education due to funds being directed towards arms than education, schools being more targeted in war, and being used as military bases. Exploitation is another reason why many children are unable to receive schooling as many are forced into the military and are unable to receive proper education even if they make it out. Lastly, sexual violence from war causes many children to face many psychological and possible physical issues that may make it difficult for them to learn. Armed conflict comes in many different forms but when children are exposed to it, they could be forced to take precautionary methods to avoid it or be swept into forcing them to abandon their daily life. Education is supposed to be first in a child's life but armed conflict forces them to think of survival. ♦

Bibliography

Kadir, Ayesha, et al. "The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children." American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1 Dec. 2018, pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/6/e20182586#:~:text=In%20many%20armed%20conflicts%2C%20schools,combat%20and%20to%20recruit%20children.&text=The%20result%20is%20reduced%20school,and%20the%20exploitation%20of%20children.

"Armed Conflict." Armed Conflict | Educate a Child, educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict#:~:text=Conflict%20affects%20education%20in%20many%20ways%3A&text=Conflict%20prevents%20the%20opening%20of,of%20violence%20against%20female%20students.

Santa Barbara, Joanna. "Impact of War on Children and Imperative to End War." Croatian Medical Journal, Croatian Medical Schools, Dec. 2006, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2080482/#:~:text=Psychological%20suffering,anxiety%20in%20war%2Daffected%20children.

"Effects of Sexual Violence." RAINN, www.rainn.org/effects-sexual-violence.

[Unesdoc.unesco.org, unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000190743](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000190743).

Lund, Georgie. "The Hidden Victims of Sexual Violence in War." War Child, 19 June 2019, www.warchild.org.uk/whats-happening/blogs/hidden-victims-sexual-violence-war.

By, KCUR. "Are School Shootings Becoming More Frequent? We Ran The Numbers." KCUR 89.3 - NPR in Kansas City. Local News, Entertainment and Podcasts., 22 May 2019, www.kcur.org/community/2019-05-21/are-school-shootings-becoming-more-frequent-we-ran-the-numbers.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

Education in War

by Dominique Kay, Southern California Region Red Cross Volunteer



Photo Credit: Tremeau, UNICEF. Ishmael Beah in a school in Sierra Leone, 2020

Education sets societies up for success—it allows for proper brain development, survival, moral understanding, etc. The importance of education is even acknowledged by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child: in Article 28, the right of any child to accessible education is commanded. Except in times of violence, this right is often unrealistic despite its necessity. Education can alleviate armed conflict's effects and even prevent it; however, it's threatened rather than utilized. Specifically, children's education is dangerously compromised due to children being negatively impacted physically and mentally, and communities getting separated and turning hostile.

Children affected by places with armed conflict experience a lower quality of learning partly due to poor mental health from traumatic experiences. These children have an increased prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),

proven by pooled estimates from a systematic review showing 47% of about 8000 children who were exposed to war having it; among children with remote exposures, the rate was lower. The diagnosis of any mental illness requires one to consequently have interference with relationships or work, which leads to struggles to stay or be productive in those types of environments. Therefore, it can be concluded that roughly half of the children directly affected by armed conflict can't utilize education, which is supported by their PTSD making them incapable of learning since they, accordingly, can't function in a school environment. Unfortunately, the mental health impacts from conflict that hinder children's education don't stop here.

Further concern arises when young children in the same circumstance—ranging from the fragile ages of 0 to 6—display sadness, anxiety, crying, temper tantrums,

attention-seeking, fear, and startling. During school, these can all be distractions for not only the child themselves but the surrounding children and staff, too. The distractions may be more than just an interruption, as they can cause distress in other children by making them feel as upset, and cause distress for the staff by them struggling to smoothly continue instruction. In addition, when young children play, they may become more withdrawn or more aggressive. Of course, if a student is hostile, they risk harming their peers and staff, and thus will be removed from school grounds which rids said student's opportunity to learn; regarding withdrawn kids, school is well-known for encouraging social activity, and if an especially young student doesn't interact with their peers, their moral standing could be endangered. Education isn't limited to academia, it also provides basic human decency that is learned by being around oth-

ers. Children who are unsociable because they reside in areas prone to conflict, need this trait as it helps prevent future armed conflict; however, since they typically don't have access to or can't attend school, as well as can't receive a quality education, it's hard to help them develop it.

On a physical level, children commonly suffer from burns, severe head and neck injuries, and penetrating head trauma that is often fatal. In this case, survival is prioritized over education. The severity of these wounds, combined with a lack of access to good and immediate treatment, end up prolonging the return to school anyway. Education isn't considered a necessity, despite the fact that it can increase knowledge about protection against harm, like teaching about proper hygiene and health. Furthermore, armed conflict effects can last long-term, continuing the cycle of injuries and the resulting focus on survival rather than school. For instance, remnants of war may still be present even after conflict is dealt with. Results from a study in Afghanistan showed that children either went about their daily life, played, or tampered with explosive devices when they were harmed by landmines or unexploded ordnance. Ultimately, once again, the outcome is no education because of armed conflict taking advantage of inaccessible treatment which worsens its effects of causing poor physical health in many children and forcing their families or themselves to attempt at barely surviving.

Well-known is the effects of armed conflict on children's health that result in their lack of or poor education, but lesser-known is another effect of it being that children are used as soldiers, which leads to the same problem. They're attractive candidates for war; they're vulnerable, which stems from their immature brain that causes unde-

veloped perceptions about themselves and others. In fact, some child soldiers have claimed that they felt grateful for being given the chance at revenge or protecting their home and being offered protection. Indeed, their standard of wellbeing and morals is unhealthy, demonstrating how easily impressionable children are. Although, regarding school, certain individuals can feel that it isn't safe, and they'll choose to partake in armed conflict to gain security. School is extremely important during conflict because it can provide a safe space and increase knowledge about survival tactics. With a safe space, overall destruction is lessened and education can continue. This information can be used to understand the complexity of young people in conflict's needs and give appropriate treatment or solutions to such circumstances, but it's instead used to increase hostility.

Discrimination and bitterness towards children who come out of armed conflict is a frequent occurrence. Ishmael Beah, the author of *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, recounts his experiences as a former child soldier facing stigma, "I was eager to return. But on the first day of school in Freetown, all the students sat apart from us, as if Mohamed and I were going to snap any minute and kill someone. Somehow they had learned that we had been child soldiers." Conflict will make children witness dangerous events, but schooling throughout it can prevent a skewed perspective on the society by teaching humanitarian law, conflict management, tolerance, and human rights awareness. This allows for less discrimination since awareness and understanding of the circumstances that may have led some children to become soldiers will increase. Not only does discrimination happen among young people, but teachers can take part as well.

One of the key problems identified in a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) participatory assessment—a community-based approach that tries to understand peoples' needs in order to mobilize rights and protection—of a group of child returnees and refugees was that refugee children often experience discrimination by residents, including teachers who resented that refugees received food while Zimbabweans go hungry. War-afflicted communities can feel treated unfairly because one may believe that another is receiving special treatment. Without adequate education on topics similar to peacefully settling disputes, being open-minded is difficult to achieve and further outbreaks of violence erupt as a result—hateful behavior continues.

Armed conflict changes family values, children's role in the family, and separates them. Parents don't let children go to school out of fear for their safety—landmines, abduction, or attack pose as risks. Consequentially, children can't receive education and thus aren't able to continue brain development, which would allow for them to gain the necessary skills to take care of themselves and others. If parents or older members of a family are killed, then the child has to replace them. They work instead of going to school because without money, they can't survive, and that is perceived as a necessity while education isn't, even though vocational education would let them learn trades—crafting, baking, masonry, etc.—that provide more income. When separation from family occurs, migration detention, limited access to health care and social services all delay the return to school. Not only do they cause delay, but they also cause distress because injuries can't be treated properly, persistent loneliness, confusion about the next step in caring for themselves, and

much more. If education is continued again, affected children's mental and physical state will create a barrier to learning smoothly anyway. Families with teachers or other school staff should be taken into consideration, too, as they also have to deal with displacement or death. They're either killed due to the belief that they're important community members, or their poor wellbeing and circumstance prevent them from attending school, so there's no one operating the campus, and then, it can't be opened up. No matter what happens, school has to be mandatory for children, as it can instill a sense of security, continuity, and normalcy when carried out correctly.

Fortunately, there is a necessary and hopeful solution to the problem of children's education getting compromised by armed conflict. Ultimately, most publications point to the neglect of young people's needs during a crisis as the biggest reason for educational disruptions. Resuming school effectively requires including children, so adults can't be completely used to determine curriculum. They're not helpless, they're capable of starting anew. They just need to be listened to for them to be given the right resources and opportunities to accomplish this. ♦

Bibliography

Kadir et al. "The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children." Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1 Dec. 2018, pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/6/e20182586#:~:text=In%20many%20armed%20conflicts%20C%20schools,combat%20and%20to%20recruit%20children.&text=The%20result%20is%20reduced%20school,and%20the%20exploitation%20of%20children.

Parekh, Ranna. What Is Mental Illness?, American Psychiatric Association, Aug. 2018, www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-mental-illness#:~:text=Mental%20illnesses%20are%20health%20conditions,Mental%20illness%20is%20common.

Fanara, Marco. "The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children's Education." SSRN, 27 Jan. 2011, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1749682.

Bilukha et al. "The Lasting Legacy of War: Epidemiology of Injuries from Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance in Afghanistan, 2002-2006." Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2002-2006, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19557963/.

"Armed Conflict." Barriers to Education | Educate a Child, (n.d.), educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict.

"Education under Attack." UNICEF (n.d.), <https://www.unicef.org/education-under-attack>.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "Through the Eyes of a Child: Refugee Children Speak about Violence. A Report on Participatory Assessments Carried out with Refugee and Returnee Children in Southern Africa, 2005-2007." UNHCR, 2005-2007, www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/children/47c804682/eyes-child-refugee-children-speak-violence-report-participatory-assessments.html.

Kantowitz, Dr. Riva B. "Children and Armed Conflict: A Field Scan." Save the Children's Resource Centre, CPC Learning Network, 2017, resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/children-and-armed-conflict-field-scan#:~:text=Its%20objective%20is%20to%20summarize,affected%20by%20violence%20and%20deprivation.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Effects of Conflicts on Children's Education

by Rashi Lakhotia, Central Florida Region Red Cross Volunteer

Malala Yousafzai's story is known around the world. At the age of 15, she was shot by the Taliban in Pakistan for having the courage to speak out for a girl's right to education. She was able to continue her studies in the United Kingdom, and graduated from the University of Oxford in 2020. Her experience fighting for her right of education is inspiring and courageous- and unique. In Pakistan, "only 13 percent of girls are still in school by ninth grade" (Human Rights Watch). This educational crisis is exacerbated by armed conflict in the region, which in turn leads to lower school attendance and a bigger educational crisis. Attacks on education occur to either stop progress or destroy a community. An attack on a school can be because of the school's educational content, perceived allegiances to political ideologies, support of female education, or to destroy a community against a terrorist group. Conflict negatively impacts children education by forcing children out of schools, worsening educational gaps between marginalized groups, and decreasing education rates even after the conflict has ended.

An immediate impact of war arriving in a region is the exodus of students from school. Many schools do not have teachers available to continue staying open. The Rwandan genocide caused the dislocation or death of more than two-thirds of primary and secondary school teachers (Educate A Child). When so many teachers are unable to teach, many schools have no choice but to shut down.

Furthermore, a lack of schools can also cause a gap in education. Many schools are utilized as military shelters during periods of active war and can be targeted by bombs or militants because of their new use. Nigeria's UNICEF representative Mr. Mohammad Fall stated that nearly 1400 schools in Nigeria were



Photo Credit: Shabia Mantoo, UNHCR. Basa-teen district of Aden, Yemen, 2017

destroyed during attacks and most have stayed closed since (Iroegbu). Even if schools are not destroyed through war, potential mines and bombs left at the school by militarized forces may leave them unusable. At least 24 countries have had their schools militarized by armed forces (Martinez). Not only is education stopped by this, but children are more likely to die or be injured from attacks on the school. Without teachers and schools, students will not be able to learn.

Conflict negatively impacts children education by worsening educational gaps between marginalized groups. Girls are less likely to attend school than boys are, and this gap worsens during conflict. Sexual and gender-based violence against

girls makes many reluctant to go to school. Mali reported 211 cases of sexual violence by militant groups just in 2012 (Martinez). This number is underreported, meaning hundreds of girls have been sexually attacked in one year. Parents also keep their daughters home in fear of attacks against girl schools in particular. These targeted attacks are done out of the belief that girl education will destroy the local customs. The Taliban's threats in Pakistan against girl schools caused the closure of around 900 schools, stopping the education of 120,000 girls (Martinez). A lack of female teachers also prohibits some girls from attending school, as many parents only want their daughters to be taught by female teachers. Education can also be stopped because of child marriage. "In East Africa, a 2016 study conducted by the UN Security Council in Rwanda... found that before the 1994 genocide, the average age for marriage for a girl was between 20 and 25 years. In the refugee camps during and after the genocide, the average age of marriage dropped to 15 years" (Kimotho). This demonstrates that war causes such an increase in child marriage rates that the average age for marriage for a girl falls by 10 years. This discrepancy is not present for boys, meaning that girl education is being disproportionately affected by child marriage. As the educational gap between women and men increases, women are not able to have jobs and are forced to stay home and be homemakers. Conflict increases gender-based violence against girls, attacks against girl schools, and child marriage

Figure 4.5: Turkey - Average years of schooling (schooled population), Kurdish-inhabited provinces compared to rest of Turkey

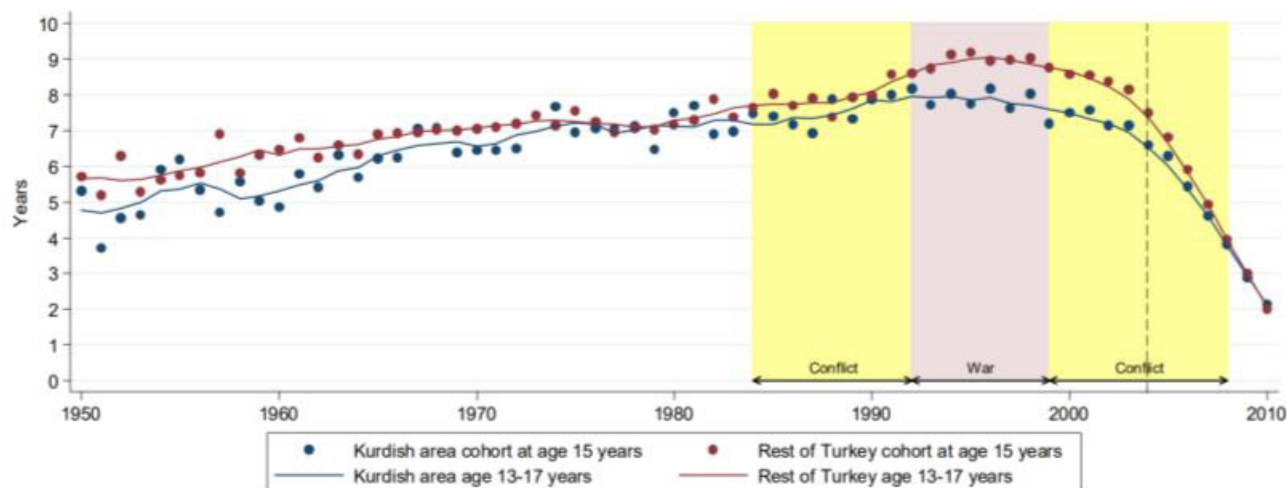


Figure 1: Taken from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics

rates, negatively impacting children education.

The presence of war in a region causes education rates to decrease in a country, hurting children education. Figure 4.5 of the UNESCO “The quantitative impact of conflict on education” report shows a graph depicting the average years of schooling of Kurdish-provinces compared to the rest of Turkey (Sheena Bell and Huebler).

Turkish students age 15 were averaging about eight years of education before conflict over the Turkish civil war broke out in the 1980s. However, during the war, children who were living in areas of active conflict were unable to attend school and the education rates dropped to an average of two years in 2010. While the war had ended before 2000, the presence of active conflict had a long-lasting impact

on schooling rates. Even in areas without conflict after the end of a war, there is a negative impact on the amount of schooling for children. The article “The Effect of Conflict on Education: Evidence from Sierra Leone” by Tillman Hoenig states, “I find that a one standard deviation increase in conflict intensity led to a 0.3-0.5 year reduction in the amount of schooling for school aged children during the war by 2011, that is, ten years after the civil war ended. (Hoenig)” What this means is that when the conflict intensity of the Sierra Leone civil war is plotted on a bell graph, an increase of one standard deviation in intensity, or raising the conflict intensity, causes children to lose 0.3-0.5 years of schooling a decade after the end of the war. While the effects of the Sierra Leone civil war are being felt 10 years after its incidence,

the effects of active conflict in areas after war are felt for far longer. Conflict negatively impacts children education by causing education rates to decrease in a country.

Malala Yousafzai was only fifteen years old when she was shot by the Taliban. Her story of healing and advocacy was instantly taken up by the world as an example of how far children can go when given the right to education. Conflict causes children education to decrease by forcing children out of school, increasing educational gaps between marginalized groups, and causing education rates to decrease in a country. Through raising awareness of the International Humanitarian Law rules and stabilization of conflict-inflicted zones, these children can attend their schools again and learn. ♦



Photo Credit: Annika Hammerschlag, Al Jazeera. “Djan Diagahate, left, watched a group of gunmen storm his village in central Mali and burn it to the ground; Amadou Diagahate, right, is worried for his grandson who has been out of school for a year.”
Mali, 2020

Bibliography

Educate A Child . n.d. 21 January 2021.

Hoenig, Tillman. The Effect of Conflict on Education: Evidence from Sierra Leone. 27 September 2019. 21 January 2021.

Human Rights Watch. 12 November 2018. 21 January 2021.

Iroegbu, Senator. FG Bemoans Use of N’East Schools for Military, IDP Shelters: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. 4 May 2018. 21 January 2021.

Kimotho, Juliet. The Role of Education for Women and Girls in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries. 19 June 2017. 21 January 2021.

Martinez, Elin. “Attacks on Education.” Save the Children (2013): 38. Electronic.

Sheena Bell and Friedrich Huebler. The quantitative impact of conflict on education. Montreal: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2010.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

U.S. Schools Must Lead the Lessons of Peace Education

by Anna Libbon, Southern California Region Red Cross Volunteer

“Of the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of recorded history”(Hedges). These astounding statistics emphasize the intensity of the challenge ahead. How do we learn to value peace and keep those lessons throughout our lives? Teaching peace does not mean avoiding conflict, though. We can not shy away from dealing with difficult issues or avoid weighty conversations. No matter how gruesome or traumatizing it may be to fully grasp the horrors of war, peace education requires honest transparency about the dominance of violence in our collective history. A good place to start would be to focus on teaching young children within the classroom setting about the impact of armed conflicts.

Providing young children with an understanding of the history of war and peace, and showing them on a much more personal level how to solve their problems with a skill set built around peace, would certainly help and likely prevent catastrophic situations from happening. By teaching children how to deal with their issues in a peaceful way, while also educating them on the widespread and permanent consequences of war, children can grow up wanting to choose to live and lead in a world committed to peace.

Peace education should be started at any age - consider Maria Montessori's vision of peace education from the dawn of the 20th century as an excellent blueprint. "Peace education is a major component of the Montessori classroom... {she} saw the education of young

children as the human race's opportunity to recreate itself in a way that would eliminate war" (Jarrell). Her approach to teaching suggests we must move away from lectures and didactic commentary. Instead, schools can borrow from her pedagogy by giving students an opportunity to discover peace for themselves. "Adults model peaceful



and respectful behavior," wrote a Montessori educator named Margaret Jarell, "because Montessori classrooms are composed of mixed age groups, older students serve as role models for younger children." So is the solution to adding more peace in the world just switching US public school pedagogy to a Montessori philosophy? Every single day, in the US and around the world, educators teach peace education through different styles, yet they still run up against students and families who see no hope in changing injustice. Even though we desire to live in a world filled with peace and harmony, different cultures and faiths define violence, and even war, through their own views of justice. If our goal is instill-

ing a lasting sense of tranquility for students in the face of personal and societal conflict, then we must start with teaching directly about peace within the U.S. public school classroom.

Promoting peace in schools by modeling kindness and respect is how young children learn tranquility. If we want to live in a world where war ceases to exist, the United States public education system must encourage peace by teaching students behavioral strategies while modeling good habits in the classroom. An article for Harvard's Graduate School Of Education called "Making Peace: How Schools can Foster a more Peaceful World" shared how peace education models individual skills that reject the use of violence to create a stronger, more cohesive community. The author, Leah Shafer, a peace education advocate and policy writer, wrote, "For U.S. educators, a successful peace education program focuses on helping children develop the skills they'll need to get along with others, solve conflicts in nonviolent ways, contribute positively to their communities, respect intergroup differences, and value diversity."

Young children need to learn and practice these skills in relationship to their peers, teachers, and family members." By teaching young children all these skills, we systematically show them how to love and take care of people, the daily importance of bringing people together, and treating people as they want to be treated. In essence, a life of peace becomes an easier reality to experience and value.

Despite our natural initial con-

cerns about adding stress and tensions into a child's life, teaching children about wars, such as World War II, is a powerful way to examine the dreadful effects of war and why each of us should desire peace. From personal experience, I have seen how learning about the terrorizing effects of war evokes an emotional response and sets the foundation to desire peace. For example, in my sophomore year of high school we were learning about World War II, going really in depth about what people went through in Europe during the 1940's. Being older and more mature than previous years learning about this, we talked about really tough subjects like exactly how the Jewish people were killed and the depth of injustice within those murders. My teacher, Mrs. Long, is very good at promoting peace while teaching about these tough subjects. She told me, "Like with all classes I teach, it is important to give proper context to what is being taught. When teaching about the Holocaust it is important to provide not only the background but also as much as the entire story as possible. There was an immense amount of physical, mental, and emotional violence during the Holocaust but that cannot be the only focus. It is important to address where the hatred originated and then how it developed. When students are able to understand the origin of hate and how it evolves, it becomes more distinguishable and hopefully students are then able to identify that hatred when it takes a different form." Peace education is very important to her while teaching about the Holocaust and I could see that about her teaching almost immediately. She likes when students have an open mind and listens to differing perspectives. Not every student is open to accepting

peace education exactly how it is taught, though. Even in our own class, there was a student so burdened with their own struggles that they simply didn't have the capacity to engage in Mrs. Long's teaching. But Mrs. Long emphasized a basic level of respect through her candid teaching about the horrors of war. In this manner, she is a perfect representative of a teacher dedicated to peace education not just through her approach in the classroom, but also in her collaborations with organizations dedicated to assisting teachers like her.

Mrs. Long and two other 10th grade teachers from my school were supposed to take a trip to Israel that was canceled because of Covid-19. They were going to travel with Classrooms Without Borders, a Pittsburgh based non-profit educational organization providing professional development travel seminars to teachers and students from all around the world. During this trip they were going to learn about Israeli culture and help with the overarching goal of the organization, which is to, "combat bigotry and discrimination by inspiring educators and students to embrace diversity and promote universal human values of tolerance, altruism, forgiveness, courage, and love for humanity"(Classrooms Without Borders). By going to different schools in Israel and talking to the teachers and children who live there, the teachers from my school would be promoting universal peace. They would be there to try to learn and embrace the differences between our two cultures and to create bonds between them.

As administrators and faculty begin to plan for a world post-pandemic, all public schools in the United States grades K-12 should begin the process of teaching peace

education. This is a necessary component of childhood education that should be a part of national curriculum overseen by the Department of Education in conjunction with state and local school boards.

Children aren't born knowing peace, they must be taught, and the public school system is a logical and effective place to do that.

Also, International Day of Peace needs to be promoted and valued the same as Veterans Day or Memorial Day. There should be a mandatory federal holiday built around the day of peace in US schools to encourage and do active community-based peace education. This day, fixed to September 21 after a UN resolution in 2001, would be filled with activities that promote, inspire, and foster peace in children's lives; in doing so, this peace education will be a very beneficial way to help prevent armed conflict and violence, saving lives and giving children the social needs that they desire. "Teaching peace to kids is paramount because of their little, yet infinite absorbent mind. International Day of Peace provides a powerful and inspiring opportunity to engage children and youth in diverse activities related to peace, unity and making a positive difference in their world"(Montessori). The fruits of our efforts in schools nationwide can lead to year 269, 270, and hopefully more, of true peace. ♦

Bibliography

“About.” About | International Day of Peace, internationaldayofpeace.org/about/.

Bookstore, The Rabbit Hole Children’s. “Peace for All - How to Teach Children about Peace.”

KidEngage, 9 Nov. 2019, kidengage.com/blog/2019/09/peace-for-all-how-to-teach-children-about-peace/. “Classrooms Without Borders.” Remake Learning, [remakelearning.org/organization/classrooms-without-borders/#:~:text=Classrooms Without Borders \(CWB\) is, backgrounds to Europe and Israel.](https://remakelearning.org/organization/classrooms-without-borders/#:~:text=Classrooms Without Borders (CWB) is, backgrounds to Europe and Israel.)

“Help Youth At Risk for ACEs |Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 8 Sept. 2020, www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/help-youth-at-risk.html.

“Making Peace: How Schools Can Foster a More Peaceful World.” Global Campaign for Peace Education, 28 Dec. 2015, www.peace-ed-campaign.org/making-peace-how-schools-can-foster-a-more-peaceful-world/. Zervas, Kimberly, and Margaret Jarrell. “Peace Education for All Ages.” Greenspring Montessori School, 27 Feb. 2019, greenspringmontessori.org/peace-education-for-all-ages/. user11522user11522, et al.

“Have Humans Been Entirely at Peace for 268 out of the Last 3400 Years?” Skeptics Stack Exchange, 1 Feb. 1965, skeptics.stackexchange.com/questions/31604/have-humans-been-entirely-at-peace-for-2686-out-of-the-last-3400-years#:~:text=Of the past 3,400 years,claimed more than 1,000 lives.

Long, Molly. Personal interview. 15 January 2021.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

Education in War: A Personal Story

by Yagut Mammadhuseynova

“What do you wish could happen?” the journalist asked Ibrahim. “Two things, my father to return, and to go back to school,” Ibrahim said. Ibrahim is just 12 years old, one of the victims of war. He lost his dad during a war in Syria, and now he is the breadwinner of his family after his dad was killed. Ibrahim didn’t lose his dad only, he also lost his future, his education. Not only him, the United Nations says that 25 million children live without education in war zones. 22 percent of 6-15 year olds in 22 countries are missing out on an education, and 72 percent of children in South Sudan are not receiving an education at all. Many children are born into war, but despite the fact that the only thing they learn is displacement and fear, still they smile, play, and sing. They can stay happy as kids because it is what they need to do.

Children shouldn’t think about war, fear, or sadness. They shouldn’t see dead bodies everywhere. They should learn how to hold a pen, not a gun. Right now, younger kids may not know anything about their future, but each of us can guess what will happen. In the future, they will face different types of difficulties, which will lead them not to have what they need or what they want. Lack of education will prevent them from reaching their full potential—having a chance to get their dream jobs or getting accepted to a college. In short, it will prevent them from achieving their dream life. Because of wars, these children’s wishes are always going to stay as a wish, not reality.

Today, everyone should under-

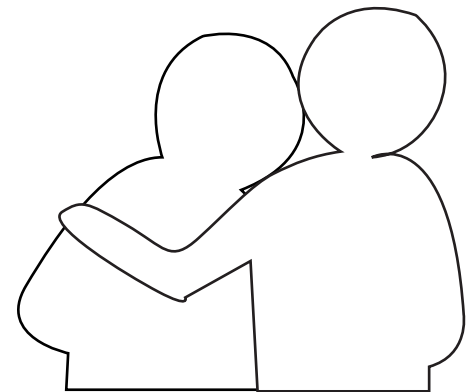
stand how armed conflict can have a damaging impact on schools and education. Describing how the right kind of education will contribute to peace, though, and how the wrong kind will aggravate conflict will only get us so far. We need to find ways to make higher education a possibility in vulnerable countries affected by the wars around the world. This is a task for many people in the international community to provide good education before, after, and during crises. Harassment, recruiting, and brainwashing can harm students, teachers, and others, thus treatment is often damaged or attacked by fighters.

Education can make or break a child’s future. If one person is without education, then the lack of it will never end its damage to a person’s life. That is why there is International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which is a key for the improvement of attitudes and behavior in conflict zones. Armies, security forces, police, and others who use weapons must educate themselves about IHL. The better knowledge these people have for IHL, the better the chance civil lives will be saved. Also, the guidelines warn parties to armed war not to use schools for any purpose in favor of their military operations to safeguard schools from such attacks and protect the health and education of children.

If a school fulfills the concept of a military goal through its military usage, the instructions also advise parties to explore before attacking all possible alternate approaches, including, if conditions do not permit, warning the enemy in advance that an attack will occur until it re-

fuses to use the school.

Thankfully, governments have been taking some steps to provide more protection to students, teachers and education, including running numeracy and literacy classes in private homes or community buildings. They’ve done other things as well. For example, in 2016, the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan released two directives asking the armed forces to avoid using schools for military purposes, and the Chief of Staff of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army released a military order in 2014 in South Sudan asking that all members of the Army refrain from occupying or using schools. Those steps are actually so important for people out there who is facing with war problems.



To conclude, I would love to give an example about one of the victims of war: my family. During 1991, there was a war in my homeland Azerbaijan. My mom, dad, and my uncles and aunts were also there during the war. They’ve lost some of their relatives, they’ve lost their homes, cars, jobs and a lot more. My uncles couldn’t go to school

because of the war, and right now they are without education, which makes it hard for them to find a job. During the war, they saw a lot more than we all expect. What I mean is, they've seen their houses burning, people dying, torture, and more in front of their eyes. During the winter months, they've walked barefoot on the ice and snow. All of these things are not easy to endure. The sound of guns, or the sound of the people screaming is also not something easy to hear. But right now, millions of kids and adults are hearing those sounds anyway and they can't do anything about this. My point is, even though I have never

been in the conflict zone, I can still understand these people out there. Thanks to my family, I have learned a lot from them about the people in war, and I don't want anyone to be in that situation. The background of these kids is influencing them, and therefore, they might become aggressive and offensive in the future. Living without an education is something that is really hard to deal with. If we are studying in a school right now, and wishing to not go there, we should not forget that there are thousands of children who pray to God to go school. ♦

Bibliography

- <https://www.unicef.org/education-under-attack>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bz0cjCPoQBE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iz2tNiRpeY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdjfYSvNkwY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcQYItVBIU0>
- <https://www.justsecurity.org/64344/when-war-comes-to-school/>
- <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/06/30/you-have-no-right-complain/education-social-restrictions-and-justice-taliban-held>
- <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/12/14/we-can-die-too/recruitment-and-use-child-soldiers-south-sudan>



Photo Credit: AA Photo. Khojaly, Azerbaijan, Feb 25, 1992

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Effects of Informal Education in WWII

by Elsa Martin, Greater New York Region Red Cross Volunteer

The disruption of formal education due to war can leave long-term consequences that damage the physical and mental well-being of those affected. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that without access to education, children will grow up without the skills they need to contribute to their countries and economies which increases the destruction of the situation for millions (Education under attack). This lack of opportunity for formal education during times of war or crisis emphasizes education through informal means: the knowledge that one gains through everyday experiences or under the influence of parents, society, or community. With the absence of reliable sources for information, children and others may become more susceptible to misinformation and/or propaganda (Globale, E.). In WWII, most of the information made known to the public was regulated by the state and with the circumstances, much of the information contained bias to promote nationalism within a country. Depending on the point of view, this could have a positive or negative impact on the individuals in society; however, citizens are not allowed to think for themselves or form individual opinions about the situation. The coercion to conformity gives governments the authority to regulate what information their citizens will be receiving. The extent to which education affects society in WWII depends on the amount of social control the government has and how they decide



Photo Credit: Toni Frissell. Famous photograph of boy clutching a stuffed animal in London during the Blitz, 1945

to exploit education. During times of crisis in WWII, a lack of formal education harms society because it makes people more susceptible to conformity, propaganda, and war bias.

One instance of these complications occurs in Germany. The destruction caused by the first world war left German education vulnerable after the deaths of many teachers and students and considerable damage to educational infrastructures. Additionally, German politics was in disarray which allowed the Nazi party to rise to power and take complete control over the government and state. To control public education, the party aimed to control what information the students had access to. This plan would force younger people to conform to the party's norms and remain obedient. A University of Kansas study has found that vulnerable populations, often those most severely affected by such crises, are also at a high risk of consuming and sharing such misinformation (Krings, M). Hitler's plans for educational exploitation included all forms of expression including radio, theatre, cinema, the fine arts, the press, churches, and schools (Nazi Germany). This jurisdiction over information and education forcibly indoctrinated young German people to agree with the ideas of the party by only allowing access to sources they deemed useful to them. Furthermore, the Nazis used propaganda to attack minorities whilst upholding the party's message. Control over media allowed for the spread of extremist ideas about anti-semitism and instilling hatred. They took advantage of Germany's suffering and problems and was able to blame it on the Jewish people. Nazi schooling was extreme in its emphasis on the racial superiority of Aryans, and the 'evil character' of Jews. Children were taught that Jews and other races were inferior to Aryans, and

such beliefs infected the curriculum from math to biology (Everyday Life). The integration of propaganda and misinformation into formal education in Germany instilled hatred against these groups of people; however, it does not mean that Germans are inherently prejudiced. According to Hunter, a writer for the Pacific Legal Foundation, "No matter how intelligent an individual may be, almost every person is susceptible to propaganda. This is because, in many instances, most are unaware that they are falling prey to it. It seeps into our lives through all forms of entertainment but most especially through state-sponsored education" (Hunter, B).

Similar to this situation, these issues reoccur in the United States. Although the country's infrastructure was not directly affected by WWII, the war still had an immense impact on education. Dropouts were common, and High school enrollments were down from 6.7 million in 1941 to 5.5 million in 1944 (21803, M.L.). Additionally, educational organizations were mobilized as training grounds for teachers, defense workers, and soldiers (Conor, C. & Bohan, C.). However, the most prominent effect was the impact of informal education in the form of propaganda to encourage citizens to help in the war effort. After the events at Pearl Harbor, the Office of War information used the chaos to promote racist propaganda that targeted the Japanese. This was an attempt to show the Japanese nation as an enemy that needed to be stopped (Miles, H). A popular caricature used by the press was the "Tokio Kid," a racial stereotype drawn with exaggerated features (World War II Propagand). Widespread propaganda was a direct result of the implicit bias against enemy nations during the war. Many Americans would conform to the hatred or suspicion toward Japanese Amer-

icans. This would cause national paranoia and lead to Executive Order 9066, which established internment camps for Japanese people. They were taken from their homes and forced to take Americanization classes, regardless of how long they had been in America (World War II Propaganda). The lack of formal education and increased exposure to falsified or exaggerated information left Americans susceptible to the war bias and led to detrimental effects on minorities.

Finally, it may be concluded that citizens were more likely to be subject to conformity, propaganda, and war bias during WWII because of the lack of formal education opportunities. These issues are represented in both the United States and Nazi Germany. When war changes the amount of opportunities for formal education and nationalism is promoted through propaganda, citizens conform to the social norms and adopt new prejudices based on information spread about minorities. For future conflicts, society needs to be taught how to be aware of implicit bias, or unconscious attitudes, reactions, stereotypes, and categories that affect behavior and understanding (Awareness Of Implicit Biases) to avoid paranoia and/or prejudice. Studies show that education has a positive impact on citizenship and that the number of years in education of the respondent is positively and significantly correlated with an individuals' engagement in Protest and Social Change activities (Hoskins, B., D'hombres, B., & Campbell, J.). Increasing formal education and awareness of bias can change these outcomes for future generations. ♦

Bibliography

21803, M. L., 10, 65354, & 390. (2016, September 02). Uncovering the Devastating Impact of World War II on American Education. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://www.theedadvocate.org/uncovering-devastating-impact-world-war-ii-american-education/#:~:text=Dropouts%20became%20common%2C%20and%20school,consequence%20on%20education%20in%20America>

Awareness of Implicit Biases: Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/ImplicitBiasAwareness>

Conner, C., & Bohan, C. (n.d.). The Second World War's impact on the progressive educational movement: Assessing its role. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse_facpub/74/

Education under attack. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://www.unicef.org/education-under-attack>

Everyday life. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://www.theholocaustexplained.org/life-in-nazi-occupied-europe/controlling-everyday-life/controlling-education/>

Globale, E. (2020, November 26). TYPES OF EDUCATION: FORMAL, INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://ecoleglobale101.medium.com/types-of-education-formal-informal-and-non-formal-a-ee0495004a9>

Hoskins, B., D'hombres, B., & Campbell, J. (2008). Does Formal Education Have an Impact on Active Citizenship Behaviour? *European Educational Research Journal*, 7(3), 386-402. doi:10.2304/erj.2008.7.3.386

Hunter, B. (2017, November 14). Education Is the State's Greatest Tool for Propaganda:

Brittany Hunter. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://fee.org/articles/education-is-the-states-greatest-tool-for-propaganda/>

Krings, M. (2020, May 21). Study shows vulnerable populations with less education more likely to believe, share misinformation. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://today.ku.edu/2020/04/28/study-shows-vulnerable-populations-less-education-more-likely-believe-share>

Miles, H. (n.d.). WWII Propaganda: The Influence of Racism. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://artifactsjournal.missouri.edu/2012/03/wwii-propaganda-the-influence-of-racism/>

Nazi Germany. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/education/Nazi-Germany>

World War II Propaganda. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://blogs.baylor.edu/ww2propaganda/>

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Lessons of Loss

by Kayla Schankel

There is a saying that “history is told by the victors”. In other words, those who conquer, dominate and win, will be the ones to spread their story. They will be the ones who will be written about in the history books, and the battles they won will be glorified in school education as testaments of power, strength, and their countries might. Instilling a sense of pride in one’s homeland is a common goal of such teachings. Of course, disputes lost are often swept under the rug; an easy way out of facing the disappointment of the younger generation, of admitting weakness, or fault. However, there is value and lessons to be learned from facing one’s failures and striving to be better. Although school curriculums still grapple with studying about losing conflicts, it is important to recognize such events to grow. Teaching students about losing wars is a necessary part of their high school education, as it can ensure avoiding past mistakes, encourages students to accept their country’s flaws, and teaches empathy and compassion for others.

Firstly, by studying the mistakes made by their predecessors, students can learn to prevent the same mistakes from happening and grow. By analyzing and discussing reasons for a loss or reasons for even going to war in the first place, students are more likely to avoid those decisions in the future. In the article, “Making Friends with Failure” by Ainissa Ramirez, Ramirez states that “Schools have this failure-thing, the F-word, all wrong. They focus on getting the answer, but it is the questions and the mistakes that are



more instructive.” By studying failure on such a large scale as countries and nations, students may also become more comfortable with failing themselves. Students are likely to recognize actions that may or may not have cost aside to lose a war and can even apply such lessons to their everyday lives. For example, a student may read about the Battle of Gettysburg and learn about what happened at Culp’s Hill, where the failure of Maj. General Johnson to take the hill contributed to a crushing defeat of the South. (Wikipedia) The student may then come away with a lesson in thinking proactively. There are many things to learn from in War, and many things to be taught from looking into the past.

Secondly, learning about loss may allow students to recognize that countries have, and will make mistakes in the past. Teaching about only the victories a country has won enables nationalism and jingoism. Nationalism is the belief that one’s country is superior to any other, and jingoism is a form of that, yet more aggressive against others not within that country. (Merriam-Webster) Essentially, one who believes in jingoism also believes in attacking other nations to appear stronger and enforce their dominance. Many countries, such as the Nazi regime and communist

China have used such tactics in the past. Essentially, by continuing to narrow-mindedly focus on only the outcomes where the nation of choice wins, it reinforces the idea that said the nation is superior to others in some way. It is important to recognize the faults and mistakes of a country to truly embrace them overall. In Nick Schuster’s article, “Patriotism vs. Jingoism”, he states that, “We love our country because it is ours, and we want it to be the best it can. We celebrate its successes and support it through its challenges.” This is important for students to come to terms with while being a citizen of their country, and can help create a friendlier mindset towards those around them in the future.

Lastly, students can be taught valuable life lessons about compassion and empathy for others. War is not always necessary, or the right options. Countless lives are lost every day due to wars over land, power, resources, etc. It is important to educate students on the effects and damage war has, especially on a losing country. Most of the time, it is the loser who suffers the most, with the strain of casualties during the war, as well as reparations afterward. Teaching students about what happens to the loser can help them place themselves in other people’s shoes, as well as develop a sense of humility themselves. In the article, “Teaching about the First World War today: Historical empathy and participatory citizenship” by Martyn Davison, Davison states that “Regarding a definition of historical empathy, my findings suggested that its affective and cogni-

tive dimensions could be described using a series of equally-weighted elements. This is significant because while it is commonly defined as vicariously walking in someone else's shoes, there are within the literature two competing ways of interpreting historical empathy." Students can have open discussions about the effects of losing on mo-

rale and overall humanity and may be able to place themselves in other people's shoes more easily.

In conclusion, studying losing battle can lead to conversations about avoiding repeated mistakes, allow students to embrace the faults of their country, and provide important life lessons such as compassion. If the school curric-

ulum continues to shy away from the tough parts of war, then should it teach about the war at all? Every war has a winner and a loser. If the cycle of the victor writing the history continues, then there may never be an opportunity for change. Just as balance is critical in all aspects of life, balance in the classroom is as well. ♦

Bibliography

Culp's Hill. (2020, March 04). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culp%27s_Hill

Davison, Martyn. "Teaching about the First World War Today: Historical Empathy and Participatory Citizenship." *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, vol. 16, no. 3, Dec. 2017, pp. 148–156, doi:10.1177/2047173417736906.

Jingoism. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/jingoism>

Mai, L. (n.d.). Use Historical Empathy to Help Students Process the World Today. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/use-historical-empathy-to-help-students-process-the-world-today>

Ramirez, A. (2013, August 26). Making Friends With Failure. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/learning-from-failure-ainissa-ramirez>

Schuster, N. (2018, July 03). Patriotism vs. jingoism. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/columnists/patriotism-vs-jingoism/article_55c534bb-a622-5467-95c9-246be8194beb.html

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

Education in War-Torn Generations

by Emmalynn Varner



Photo Credit: Robin Hammond, ICRC. Al-Raja secondary school for girls, Anbar, Ramadi, Iraq. It was in large destroyed during the last conflict, 2017

My grandma has distinct memories of hiding under her desk at school in Pennsylvania during air raid drills for World War II, even almost eighty years later. She can't remember the majority of what she learned in elementary school, but she can remember the fear that accompanied WWII and the effects that it had on her. War can result in the interruption of education and displacement of schools, but it can also have a major psychological impact on students that lasts for years. The mental health of students affected by war is an important factor in their education and can be addressed through teaching conflict resolution and rebuilding trust.

Armed conflicts often generate fear in children, even in those who are not directly impacted by the fighting. My grandma has memories of the fear accompanied by WWII even though the area where she lived was never threatened or

attacked. Education helps combat this fear by helping children develop problem-solving skills, give back to their community, and feel empowered (Broward). When war interrupts a student's education then it threatens not only their present, but also their future.

The threat that war poses to children is dependent on the direct effects that war has on them, along with the risks that occur indirectly because of this threat. "Extreme poverty, a lack of resources for health provisioning, a breakdown of the school system, as well as increased rates of family and community violence" affect not only the daily lives of children during wartime, but also their future because of the threat to education that each of these problems create (Catani).

The total number of children in the world not attending school decreased from 2008 to 2011 by three million, but children living in countries heavily affected by armed con-

flict have instead been negatively impacted over this timespan. The children in these countries "make up 22% of the world's primary school aged population" but also half of the children globally who aren't receiving an education, a number that has increased eight percent over these three years ("Armed Conflict"). To make this worse, the children whose education is interrupted by armed conflict often don't return to finish their schooling, even after the war has ended, possibly because of the negative psychological effects that war has on them. This can lead to a repetition of the cycle of war because it is all that the children know and they have not been taught alternative methods of problem solving. The very problem that interrupted their education might lead them to interrupt the education of the next generation in their country ("Armed Conflict").

If education is interrupted by armed conflict, the best practice is

to return students to learning as soon as possible, but teachers must be prepared to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder because of what the students have seen and lived through. The trauma created by what children have witnessed can deeply affect their education because “recent neurobiological, epigenetics, and psychological studies have shown that traumatic experiences in childhood can diminish concentration, memory, and the organizational and language abilities children need to succeed in school” (“The Problem: Impact”). It can also cause children to have problems with creative play, an activity that encourages problem-solving and dealing with everyday life (“The Problem: Impact”). These are in addition to any struggles with learning that children had prior to war and any physical repercussions created by the conflict that both directly and indirectly affects them.

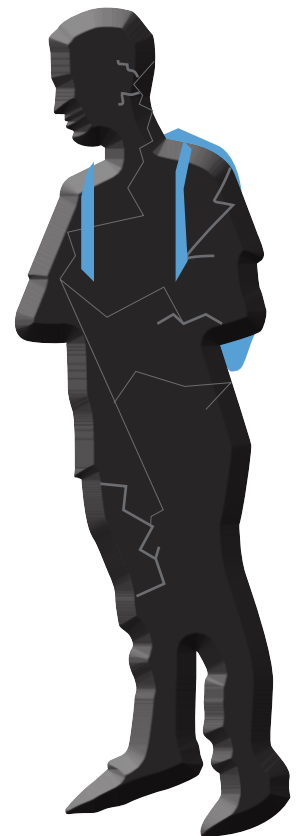
The best way to combat the ef-

fects that war has on children and their education is to teach them that there are other options. By getting students back in the classroom as soon as possible it allows them to healthily cope with the trauma they’ve experienced and learn that violence is not the only solution to problems. When children are educated on academic subjects they are equipped to further succeed in life and when they are educated on problem solving they are equipped to help future generations avoid the trauma that they faced because of war. By understanding the cause and effect aspect of conflict, children can be taught to defuse situations before they reach violence (“Alternatives to Violence”).

Education is especially important during times of war and upheaval because “conflict usually begins with a lack of information” about other people and opposing beliefs and ideas (“Alternatives to Violence”). A recent study shows

that 75% of teenagers believe that violence is learned, a statistic that points to the idea that violence can be unlearned if children are taught to handle conflict while in school. Generally, the most efficient way to deal with conflict before it escalates is to “control emotions that arise out of conflict and lead to violent action” (“Alternatives to Violence”). Activities in school that focus on creative play and roleplaying allow children to understand others better and problem solve in a safe environment.

Children often have to be taught to trust again after experiencing something as traumatic as war and the best place to relearn this is in a safe place like school. If teachers can help students relearn to trust people, then those students will be more likely to form healthy relationships with other children and adults and less likely to participate in violent conflict themselves. ♦



Bibliography

“Alternatives to Violence.” Constitutional Rights Foundation, www.crf-usa.org/school-violence/alternatives-to-violence.html.

“Armed Conflict.” Armed Conflict | Educate a Child, educateachild.org/explore/barriers-to-education/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations/armed-conflict#:~:text=Conflict affects education in many,result of the Rwandan genocide.&text=Conflict threatens children's security while travelling to school and attending class.

Broward, Habitat. “10 Benefits Showing Why Education Is Important to Our Society.” Habitat for Humanity, Habitat Broward https://www.habitatbroward.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2017/10/HHB_menu_logo_lg.Png, 21 Jan. 2020, www.habitatbroward.org/benefits-of-education/.

Catani, Claudia. “Mental Health of Children Living in War Zones: a Risk and Protection Perspective.” *World Psychiatry* : Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), John Wiley and Sons Inc., Feb. 2018, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5775132/.

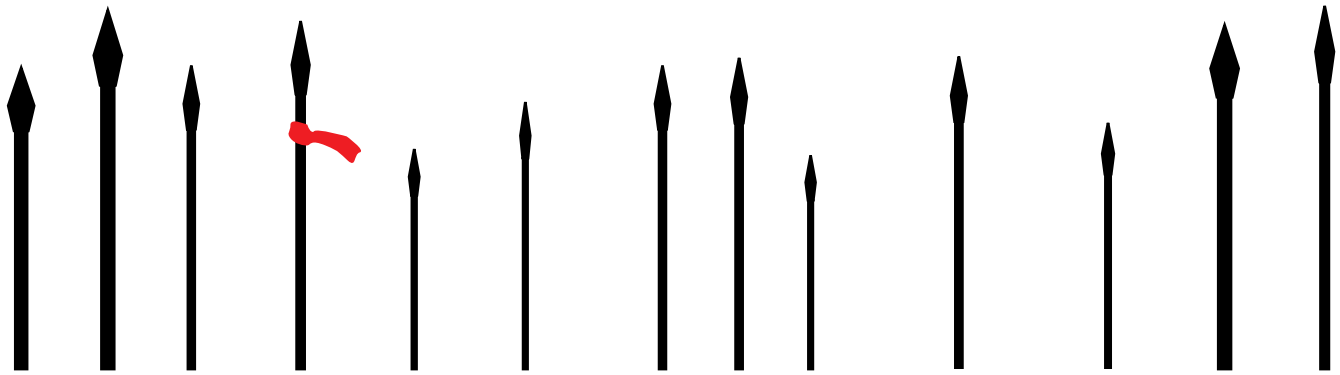
Melinda. “Helping Children Cope with Traumatic Events.” HelpGuide.org, www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/helping-children-cope-with-traumatic-stress.htm.

“The Problem: Impact.” Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 14 Aug. 2018, traumasensitiveschools.org/trauma-and-learning/the-problem-impact/#:~:text=Traumatic%20experiences%20can%20impact%20learning,need%20to%20succeed%20in%20school.

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Effects of Armed Conflict on Spartan Education

by Jayrold Aldwin Veneracion



Renowned as one of the most disciplined and strong warriors in history, the Spartans were heavily skilled in combat. This goes without saying, that the result of prestigious levels of skill in combat, come from the early ages of a Spartan's life (Andrews, 2018). The education system within Sparta during 1000 BC to 100 BC, was mainly pertained around training young individuals to be suited for combat, and join the ranks of the Spartans (Spartan Warriors Equipment and Training Explained, 2021). The claims that back the reason why armed conflict affected Spartan Education was due to the fact that kids were recruited at the age of seven to be educated on combat, the style of learning was fit towards enlisting into becoming a Spartan, and the countless victories that came with skilled combat through training. These claims are also backed with the fact that the main influence was to overpower Athenian forces in the Peloponnesian war with skillful and thoughtful combat, thus doing so took devotion, thus the reason as to why all these claims were stated.

Firstly, the way armed conflict affected Spartan education, was due to the fact that kids were recruited at the young age of seven

(Andrews, 2018). The structure of their education was what most people would expect it to be, writing, basic math, yet the key component was also throwing kids into the agoge, a state-sponsored training program that was set into most childrens' lives to eventually become a Spartan (Spartan Warriors Equipment and Training Explained, 2021). Armed conflict had a major key factor into recruiting kids at such a young age, due to the fact that they were expected to be prestigious, especially when their title calls for such a skillful warrior, thus what it means to be a Spartan. With the Peloponnesian War and conflict with the Persians, it affected the education system with having to enforce training regiments to young Spartans, at a really young age (300, 2007). During this time, these were the contributors towards how armed conflict affected children's education, excluding the women who actually used the knowledge given to them in sustaining Sparta.

Secondly, another reason as to how armed conflict affected Spartan education, was the way they taught and educated their students. The purpose of Spartan education was to create and maintain a powerful army for generations to come,

with the source of discipline and knowledge. As stated before, the Spartans did teach students how to read and write, but those skills were often proven to be useless for a Spartan.

That being said, the education system focused on physical education to enhance the strength and discipline of an upcoming Spartan (Spartan Warriors Equipment and Training Explained, 2021). Like what was previously stated, these intentions were best suited with the knowledge of engaging into armed conflict, with the Athenians and the Persians alike (300, 2007). That being said, this claim supports the idea that armed conflict influenced the education system, due to the fact that the Spartans were hardening their students in order to combat bigger armies.

Lastly, the last example of how armed conflicts affected the education system, would be the results of the Battle of Thermopylae, and why it was so important to the Spartans to train their children to fight. The Battle of Thermopylae was a representation of Spartan strength and discipline, to where 300 Spartan soldiers fended off King Xerxes' hoard of soldiers. Outnumbered however, the Spartans were out-

flanked and soon to be slaughtered, but sent one man home to tell the tale of the 300 Spartans (Lohnes, 2018). This is a huge influence of armed conflict on the Spartan education system, due to the fact that honor and glory came from the experience and training of soldiers, at a very young age and throughout their life. That being said, the tale of the 300 came about as one of the glorious defenses in history, being outnumbered but still being able to manage two days without being slaughtered (300, 2007). To further the claim, the events of the Battle of Thermopylae justify the

means of educating young Spartans to become warriors, due to the fact that with just 300 men, the Spartans were able to withhold Xerxes forces for 48 hours.

Overall, the main influence that armed conflict has on Spartan education, would be the fact that they did train their warriors with extreme discipline, and at a very young age to start with (Andrews, 2018). That being said, the Spartan warriors came with a reputation of consistent victorious battles that came from hard work and training. This reputation only grew, which inspired the whole state to become

militaristic and specialize in educating children on how to become Spartan warriors. This big impact on pride and glory, came along with just the plain thought of defending their own homes.

The biggest takeaway with Spartan education was that with the means of man conflicts with the Persians, the Athenians, and many more, the Spartans were the ones who came on top through sheer experience, and lasting knowledge that originated from such a very young age. ♦

Bibliography

Andrews, Evan. "8 Reasons It Wasn't Easy Being Spartan." History.com. 1 September 2018. A&E Television Networks, LLC. 20 January 2021. <https://www.history.com/news/8-reasons-it-wasnt-easy-being-spartan#:~:text=Spartan%20children%20were%20placed%20in,skilled%20warriors%20and%20moral%20citizens>.

"Spartan Warriors Equipment and Training Explained." YouTube, Uploaded by The Infographics Show. 3 January 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gJKW74XcKQ

300. Directed by Zach Snyder, Warner Bros. Pictures. 9 March 2007.

Lohnes, Kate. "Battle of Thermopylae." Britannica. 5 June 2018. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 20 January 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Thermopylae-Greek-history-480-BC/additional-info#history>

HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION

The Struggle for African American Education

by Ella Walker

The Civil War was fought from 1861 to 1865 between the northern Union forces and the southern Confederate forces. There were many factors that led to the outbreak of the war, though the sole purpose is still heavily argued today. Some argue it was a fight over state's rights and others over slavery, either way, it is clear that the South was fighting to preserve its way of life, which was based on the institution of slavery. In 1963, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which would free slaves in states that were not already under control of the Union. The Civil War helped to progress African American education. Education of African Americans was discouraged, even outlawed, in some states prior to the period. The Civil War gave many African Americans their first taste of schooling and would allow them the freedom of their own education in post-war America.

Throughout their time in the United States, African Americans were seen as less than human. They were simply used for labor. As America's economy grew, it became more reliant on slaves. To avoid any chance of a slave uprising, slaveholders discouraged their education. Some states even went so far as to outlaw teaching slaves to read or write. A statute from North Carolina in 1830 states, "any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within this State to read or write, the use of figures accepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this

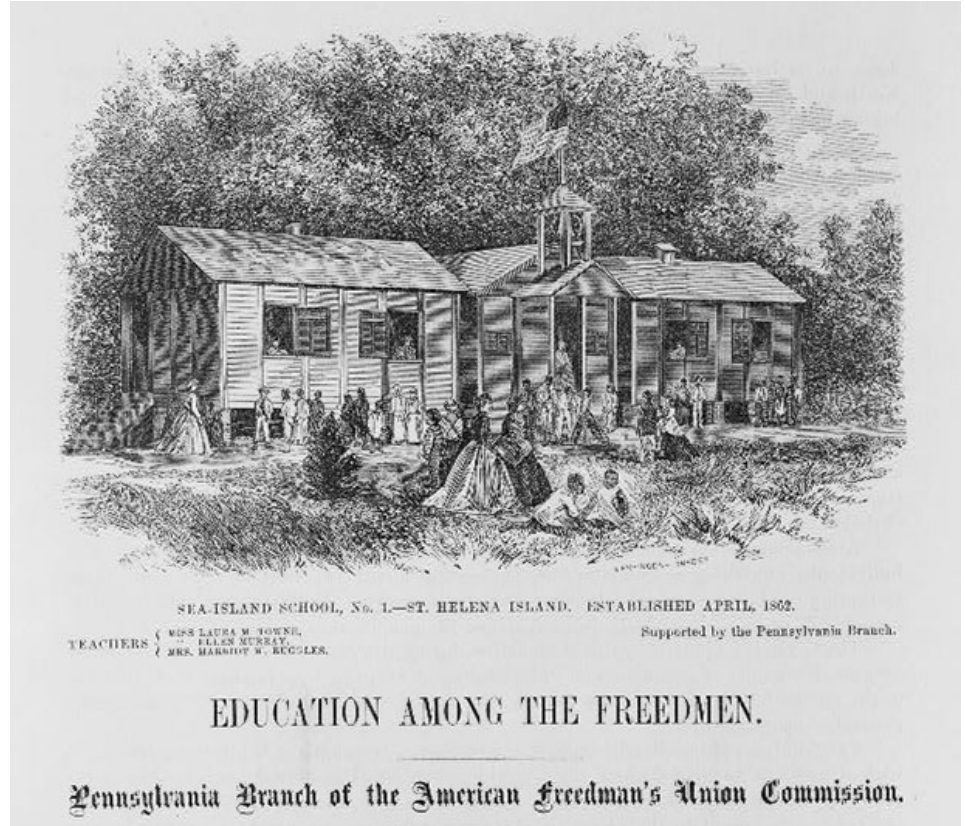


Illustration Credit: Education Among the Freedme. Sea Island School, no. 1 – St. Helena Island. Established April, 1862. Published between 1866 and 1870

State." In spite of the laws, some African Americans still dared to learn. One example is "pit schools" which were constructed in the ground or woods for slaves to gather away from their masters. Still, there were no formal schools for them to get a proper education yet.

With the Emancipation Proclamation, came the ability for African Americans to join the army. War camps were often the first place African American soldiers and escaped slaves ever got access to schooling. The historian Eric Foner said this about education after the end of slavery, "Black soldiers get education through the army. The contrabands -- that is, runaway slaves who are now living in camps

or other areas protected by the army -- schools are created there for them. So the first real impulse for black education comes out of the army... and then it expands outward." The Civil War created some of the first opportunities for newly freed slaves to get a proper education.

After the Civil War, the education of African Americans began to increase. During the reconstruction period, they had the freedom to construct their own schools and teach without having to hide. Aid societies, the Freedmen's Bureau, and African American communities poured their money and time into building schools. Although they couldn't get as many teachers, buildings, and resources at the

start, they were passionate and excited to learn. Eric Foner also said this about the new schools, “It’s not just schoolchildren. Adults, elderly people are seeking education. This is one of the critical definitions of freedom for black people, is the ability to get an education.” By the 1870s a great deal of African American children were attending segregated public schools. Segregation wouldn’t be widely addressed until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1850s-60s and they were content with that for the moment. With the ability to read and write came the

ability to understand their rights and communicate better. This was the start of something so much greater than just ex-slaves going to school. This was the beginning of

African Americans becoming part of society and making a huge advancement in American history.

The Civil War triggered significant progress in the education of African Americans. Before the war, African Americans were not allowed an education at all. Slaveholders were fearful of slaves acting against them, so they denied them the chance for schooling. When

the Civil War rolled around, things started to look up. The Emancipation Proclamation freed a majority of slaves and allowed them to enlist. War camps gave them their first taste of education. In post-war America, African Americans had obtained more freedoms. They began to build and attend schools. The Civil War pushed America a step in the right direction as African Americans were accepted into society. They still had a long way to go, but we’re still continuing to make progress 156 years later. ♦

Bibliography

“About.” Harvard Graduate School of Education, www.hepg.org/her-home/issues/harvard-educational-review-volume-77-issue-3/herbooknote/self-taught_325.

“African Americans and Education During Reconstruction: The Tolson’s Chapel Schools (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, www.nps.gov/articles/african-americans-and-education-during-reconstruction-the-tolson-s-chapel-schools.htm.

“NCpedia: NCpedia.” Link to NCpedia Main Page, www.ncpedia.org/anchor/bill-prevent-all-persons#:~:text=Business and Politics-,A Bill to Prevent All Persons from Teaching Slaves to,in the bill reprinted here).

“Schools and Education During Reconstruction.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/reconstruction-schools-and-education-during-reconstruction/.



COLLEGE WINNER

The Battle for Girls' Education in War



by Stephanie England, Central Florida Region Red Cross Volunteer

In 2012, the world learned through Malala Yousafzai's eyes what it is like to be a girl in a war-torn country who wants an education. Unfortunately, Malala's experience represents that of many girls who face the same barriers to education during war. The Safe Schools Declaration, passed in 2015, states that "every boy and girl has the right to an education without fear of violence or attack." Since 2015, over 100 countries have adopted the Declaration, although girls in many countries still face education barriers during war. During war, girls' education suffers directly because girls-only schools are targeted, girls are abducted and sexually assaulted, and girls are recruited as soldiers.

Schools are often targeted during armed conflict for a variety of reasons, with girls-only schools being attacked more frequently to prevent them from attending. For example, of the estimated 3.7 million Afghan children out of school, girls were about 60 percent, an overwhelming majority. Amir Shir Ali Khan High School in Farah city was set ablaze and detonated on April 15, 2019, preventing 1,000 girls from attending school. The unnecessary attack hurt girls' education because it was one of many committed by non-state armed groups, the Taliban, and the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (IKSP), encouraging girls to stay home and instill fear. In 2017, 16-year-old Malalai said that the Taliban left a letter in the schoolyard saying, "...they put the bombs because you have to stop sending your girls to school." This letter is one of the nu-

merous examples of unethical war tactics and weaponizing the fear of innocent girls. Another attack occurred in Syria, on May 7, 2019, when the Syrian regime fixed-wing warplanes fired missiles near the all-girls high school in Kafr Sajna, causing furniture and structural damage. Although the school was not a primary target in the airstrikes, it forces parents to make the painful decision to risk their children's lives for education or to protect them from the warfare. When interviewed, a relative of an injured student said that despite knowing that schools, neighborhoods, and hospitals were targets in the cross-fire in Syria, the family wanted her to continue her education. Girls are physically, mentally, and emotionally afflicted from warfare, fearing that they cannot transform their trauma to fulfilling careers because their education is destroyed. These attacks on schools also have years-long impacts on the country's economy and its constituents because families move to other school districts or seek asylum in other countries, causing a brain drain.

During war, education for girls is threatened because they are abducted and sexually assaulted, often during school raids. Insurgent groups like Boko Haram are notorious for abducting hundreds of girls at once from schools in Nigeria because in their eyes, 'studying Biology, Physics, Geography is cursing God,' according to 17-year-old victim Rafiya I. The most recent mass abduction of girls occurred on February 19, 2018, when 111 schoolgirls and two children were abducted from the Government Girls Science

and Technical College in Dapchi, in Yobe State, for a month. A local citizen originally took the fighters to the primary school, but the Boko Haram insurgents specifically wanted to target the Science and Technical College. Fadimatu L., a 15-year-old student, said that the group told the girls not to panic because "they were there to help us," although she realized they were not real soldiers once a truck arrived. These innocent girls are often manipulated or convinced that the soldiers are meant to help, and they tragically realize it once it is too late. These incidents are not contained to primary or secondary students in Africa, or only abductions. In Myanmar, where fighting has occurred in the Rakhine and other northern states, Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) soldiers raped a girl in an unnamed village and several other women and girls faced the same painful fate. Insurgents and government soldiers alike use rape and sexual assault of girls as intimidation, although they fail to consider how it will affect the girls for the rest of their lives. Burmese girls are also subject to human trafficking in China, where there is a bride shortage, and the girls are predominantly trafficked by people they trust. Nang Nu Tsawm was trafficked at 14, originally working at a clothing store to pay for studies with her cousin until they were drugged and sold to China for seven years. She was 'married' to a 15-year-old boy, originally just co-habiting but the family forced them to start having children. In both Nigeria and Myanmar, innocent girls are manipulated into thinking people are



Photo Credit: Afolable Sotundi, Reuters. Hundreds of abducted schoolgirls in Nigeria freed, March 2021

there to help when these people are exploiting them in war-torn regions. These experiences have unimaginable effects on these girls for the rest of their lives, pressuring some to never receive formal education again.

When girls are not raped when abducted, they are often recruited as child soldiers. As a result, their education is impacted since they are now fighting instead of going to school. Sadly, this occurs in almost every corner of the world. Between 2017 and 2019, Colombia registered 14 cases of child recruitment in the Arauca province, some occurring during and after school. Arauca is only one of 32 provinces in the country, meaning that there could be countless other cases in other provinces. In April 2019, 15-year-olds Lina and Natalia (pseudonyms) were coming home from school when they were recruited by ELN (National Liberation Army) members to become fighters. There are innumerable amounts of child recruitment that happen worldwide. Child recruitment is also popular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where girls were convinced or abducted to protect

the armed units by rustling their skirts to send bullets back to enemy soldiers who shot at them, with up to 89 percent of abducted girls involved in armed clashes. Prudence K., who was 15 during her abduction by the Kmuina Nsapu militia at school, said that she was told to join or be killed, was given a red headband, red skirt, and magic broom, and ‘disappeared during battle’ when using her magic skills. Oftentimes, girls are used as child recruits because they are more vulnerable, get lighter sentences when caught, and are often raped and abused during their involuntary service. In Colombia, the DRC, and countless other countries, parents and children are afraid of attending school because they may be abducted and never seen again until fighting on the battlefield or until death.

For girls, education during war is an uphill battle with almost no peak in sight. Targeting girls’ schools, sexual assaults and abductions, and child recruitments are many fears families worry about when deciding whether their child should attend school during war. Although many countries have adopted the Safe Schools Declaration,

schools are often the sources of danger and exploitation for young girls and women. The coronavirus pandemic has worsened the situation, with as many as 20 million girls lacking education even after the pandemic subsides.¹⁸ Consequently, incidences of child marriages, pregnancies, and maternal mortality rates might increase from a lack of education during war in these regions. As Malala said, “girls and young women are the first removed from school and the last to return,” and we should do more to protect our girls with the ideas of International Humanitarian Law and the Safe Schools Declaration to preserve their sacred education, especially during war. ♦

Bibliography

“All That I Have Lost.” Impact of Attacks on Education for Women and Girls in Kasai Central Province Democratic Republic of Congo. New York: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. May 20, 2019. https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/documents_drc_kasai_attacks_on_women_and_girls.pdf.

Barr, Heather. “War is Driving Girls Out of School: Governments Need to Better Protect Girl Students from Attack.” Human Rights Watch. November 27, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/27/war-driving-girls-out-school>.

Education Under Attack 2018. New York: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. Accessed December 30, 2020. http://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/documents_eua_2018_full.pdf

Education Under Attack 2020: A Global Study of Attacks on Schools, Universities, their Students and Staff, 2017-2019. New York: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. Accessed December 28, 2020. https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_full.pdf.

“Give Us a Baby and We’ll Let You Go.”: Trafficking of Kachin “Brides” from Myanmar to China. New York: Human Rights Watch. March 21, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/03/21/give-us-baby-and-well-let-you-go/trafficking-kachin-brides-myanmar-china>.

“The Guerillas Are the Police.” Social Control and Abuses by Armed Groups in Colombia’s Arauca Province and Venezuela’s Apure State. New York: Human Rights Watch, January 22, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/colombia0120_web.pdf.

“I Will Never Go Back to School”: The Impact of Attacks on Education for Nigerian Women and Girls. New York: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. October 11, 2018. https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/documents_attacks_on_nigerian_women_and_girls.pdf.

“Malala Fund Releases Report on Girls’ Education and COVID-19.” Malala Fund. April 6, 2020. <https://malala.org/newsroom/archive/malala-fund-releases-report-girls-education-covid-19>.

“The Safe Schools Declaration.” Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. Accessed December 28, 2020. <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/>.

Syria: ‘Nowhere is Safe for Us’: Unlawful Attacks and Mass Displacement in North-West Syria. London: Amnesty International. May 11, 2020. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE2420892020ENGLISH.PDF>.

“Syrian Regime Forces Bombed a School in Kafr Sajna Village in Idlib Suburbs, on May 7.” Syrian Network for Human Rights, May 7, 2019. <https://news.sn4hr.org/2019/05/07/syrian-regime-forces-bombed-school-kafr-sajna-village-idlib-suburbs-may-7/>.

United Nations. “Malala Yousafzai: Pakistan – 2017.” United Nations Messengers of Peace. Accessed December 28, 2020. <https://www.un.org/en/messengers-peace/malala-yousafzai>.

COLLEGE HONORABLE MENTION

Teach the Laws of Armed Conflict through Video Games

by Milan J. Johnson, Michigan Region Red Cross Volunteer

Call of Duty, Grand Theft Auto and Mortal Combat are the household names for video games with groundbreaking imagery and shocking violent visuals. Imagine it is your 9th birthday party. You already blew out your candles, your family and friends sang happy birthday, and now you rush to rip open the paper on the box while your heart is racing. It is a video game! There's countless hours you spend playing this game, learning every combo and memorizing every combo and character backstory until you can recite it from memory. You go to school and get more and more agitated with the class bully. Eventually, you decide to try out some of the fighting moves you've seen and at least they'll leave your friend alone now. This is just one example of the many students and young people who received a violent video game who became more violent through playing often and impressionability.

Given this information, violent video games leave lasting impressions on young people. In 7-17 year olds since they have undeveloped brains and this can create an increase in aggression and aggressive behavior in young people and even in adults as the emotion develops in time. Violent video games visuals, music and sometimes even character interactions can create a sense of nostalgia or enjoyment and this has an affect on cognitive psychology as the imagery creates a connection with the child, teen or adult brain. Impacting the development negatively of the human brain during and after playing a violent video game is both alarming and thought

provoking. Playing a video game is such a fun activity that many households enjoy, usually as a reward for completing chores or homework, or even getting good grades. However, it is also a common activity that has unexpected results. There is a recorded and emotional response increasing the aggression response in children from many sources including APA Exposure to media violence and aggression can create an emotional response and lasting impression on an underdeveloped mind and or someone who is highly impressionable to their unknown detriment because violent video games are so easily accessed once one or multiple are available at home with parental knowledge. In my research psychologist Jay Hull produced various aggression findings.

In response to "Media violence is a risk factor to aggression", there is a quote from Jay Hull, a social psychologist, that states "It's not the biggest, it's also not the smallest, but it's worth paying attention to". This is relevant, as it is in conjunction with the negative effect videogames have on children. The control group of this scenario have a skewed negative or unhealthy viewpoint of armed conflict. They view it as a lawless or limited ruled venture to contribute to armed conflict discussions. Video games in general have an objective to introduce characters, create a background and world within it, and allow the player to interact under those circumstances. Emotions experienced like this can be positive, nostalgic or negative it all depends on the players state of mind before, during and after play-

ing. Feelings during play can linger well after a console is turned off. Feelings such as frustration cases can occur when one doesn't understand the instructions of a game, or one begins losing against the game computer opponent. Losing to a friend or family member can hurt one's ego and make them more frustrated and aggressive in behavior towards others. There are many ways in which the aggression can be shown but the most common isn't specifically through criminal acts which is the more extreme example. Small ways that aggression can be shown such as thinking about hitting another kid or saying a curse word. What happens is, if shown in a video game to a child the child may find the interaction exciting and try to repeat it at school or home. This causes a disruption to daily activities, lack of peer positive interactions and disciplinary action.

This makes a child more likely to continue acting out or attempting to seek "revenge" based on being singled out in a classroom or home setting. There are many short term effects of violent video games such as "aggressive behavior, thoughts, pro social behavior, increased heart rate and increased blood pressure." There are also many long term effects of violent video games such as "a decrease in pro social behaviors such as helping another person or the ability to understand others."

These effects could potentially cause a short term effect into a long term effect that develops and creates a strong desensitization effect on a person. Playing long hours of a game or playing daily, weekly or monthly will become a source

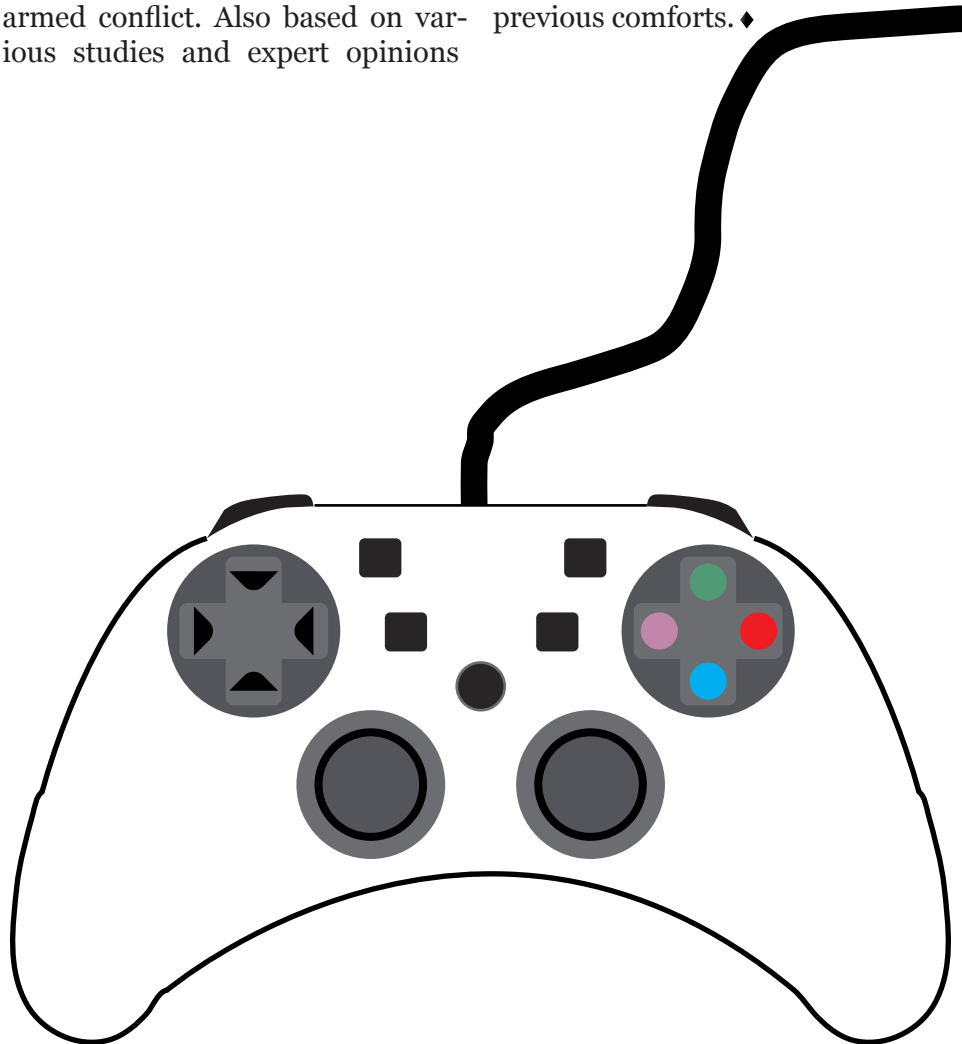
of overexposure to such images, sounds, language and overall visuals. This impairs one in many ways as desensitizing can cause one to not help or care for others eliminating a moral right or wrong compass within them and along with their peers, family and friends. I have found that overall children are especially negatively affected as their brain is still in development. However teens and adults viewpoint is important also as they make professional and social steps into society and with a skewed mindset of the use of video games to teach the laws of armed conflict. If their only knowledge of armed conflict is through the false reality of a violent video game and background of it's content it is unlikely that person will be able to discern between things that are morally fair or unfair in a game or real life likely combining them. Therefore making uneducated and desensitized views in conversation, or having to take an-

ger management classes, or therapy in order to understand the source of the aggression especially in cases where one is addicted to playing video games.

Over dependency with violent video games is never good. Overall the use of video games to teach the laws of armed conflict can be a good thing if done correctly. However, this takes a community or familial effort in order to achieve and a lack of violent video games reaching children and teens and adults is tough. Tablets, laptops, shows, movies, and even radio commercials promote violent video games. Not to mention social media and forums such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Reddit can be harmful with constant usage. Considering all these things there is a plethora of information out that supports how negative things do occur on the use of video games to teach the laws of armed conflict. Also based on various studies and expert opinions

there are generally substandard ideals and results from internal studies that prove that violent video games do not have a positive effect on children, teens and adults. Specifically on children playing violent video games since their brains are still in development and are more easily impressionable through violent video game visuals.

Overall though video games can create good memories and a sense of competitive practice. There is a way violent video games can be misused, amplified, and misconstrued in the minds of people unknowingly and without regard to their own wellbeing. Until a caring family member or friend steps in to assist and help lessen the game play or stop playing altogether. It's always nice to get lost in something new. Spending time together can be enjoyable even without violent video games to play regardless of the previous comforts. ♦



Bibliography

Yes, Violent Video Games Do Cause Aggression | Psychology Today

What's The Psychological Effect of Violent Video Games on Children? – Association for Psychological Science – APS

APA review confirms link between playing violent video games and aggression

Do Violent Video Games Trigger Aggression? - Scientific American

Analysis Links Violent Video Games to Increased Aggression | Dartmouth News

Frustration with Video Games Leads to Aggressive Behavior (psychcentral.com)

Violent Video Games Change Kids to Think More Aggressively | Time

Violence in the Media: What Effects on Behavior? | Psychiatric Times

Violent Video Games and Aggression | National Center for Health Research (center4research.org)

Short-term and Long-term Effects of Violent Media on Aggression in Children and Adults | Pediatrics | JAMA Pediatrics | JAMA Network

Playing violent video games and desensitization to violence - PubMed (nih.gov)

Violent Video Games Can Trigger Emotional Desensitization | Psychology Today

What Are The Psychological Symptoms Of Video Game Addiction? (addictions.com)

Violence in the Media: What Effects on Behavior? | Psychiatric Times

Violence in the Media and Entertainment (Position Paper) (aafp.org)

The Impact of Violent Video Games on the Player's Social Network — ISRA (israsociety.com)

Postive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Children (firstcry.com)

The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families | American Academy of Pediatrics (aappublications.org)

How Social Media Is Changing the Gaming World (adweek.com)

COLLEGE HONORABLE MENTION

Schools: Teaching Peace, Preventing War

by Lillian Newton



Photo Credit: Wathiq Khuzaie, UNICEF. Al Takiya Al Kasnazaniya camp for internally displaced persons in Karkh District, Baghdad Governorate, Iraq, 2017

Throughout history, schools have been a major contributor to the education of younger generations. Although modern education systems teach subjects such as math, history, and science, they also play key roles in solidifying the moral values of the world's children. School is one of the four main agents of socialization and therefore plays a key role in what values children learn and internalize (Ferris, Chapter 4). Through both the education of specific subjects and the teaching of common morals, kids attending schools are taught analytical problem-solving and moral values that help to prevent armed conflicts and promote global peace.

Classes such as math, history, and science are taught regularly throughout the world. Every day, almost one billion students head to school to learn about an array of subjects ("Education- UNICEF", 1). Although these children are attending school to learn about a number of primary subjects, the time they spend interacting with their

peers and teachers allows them to learn about social interactions and what counts as acceptable behavior. From an early age, children are disciplined for violence in the classroom and are given alternative outlets to diminish their anger. These punishments allow children to develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong; punishments help further deter immoral actions and will continue to act as deterrents late in life. Through this learning cycle, "Children who receive fair consequences every time they break a rule will learn to connect their choices with consequences" ("The Effects" 4). Both peers and teachers demonstrate right and wrong and will eventually be able to translate these moral judgments into bigger problems, such as deciding between peace or acting in war. As children move up through school grades, their capacity to morally decide which path they want to progress through grows. In the future, educated children will have more resources available to them to overcome the possibility of armed con-

flict. For instance, having children talk out their problems and work through solutions with one another can translate to diplomacy in their adult life. School teaches children to work with their words instead of violence, a direct reflection of peace over armed conflict.

Education is the key to happier, healthier communities and societies. Particularly in locations where there are gender-based restrictions, allowing girls to receive schooling has been connected to many benefits that help combat the ramifications of war. According to Global

Citizen, an organization committed to ending poverty, "An educated girl is more likely to marry later, to have her first child when she is not a child herself and to help break the cycle of poverty" (3). The resulting factors of educating women help lead to peacebuilding; as greater populations develop the necessary skill sets to support themselves, nations rise above the problems that cause armed conflicts. In modern-day studies, "scholars trace war to human nature, biological in-

instincts, frustration, fear and greed, the existence of weapons, and similar factors” (Levy, 141). Many of these factors can be both better understood and overcome with the help of education. For instance, frustration, fear, and greed may arise as a result of living in impoverished areas. With access to education, populations of frustrated, fearful, and greedy individuals are able to fix the source of their emotions. Through schooling, these individuals will have better access to the resources needed to fill the gaps that are causing the problems they face. As students grow up, school “can help [an] individual to avoid... poverty, build up harmony and democracy... Education [is] also capable [of giving] power for them to voice out their views...” (Idrisa, 444-443). Education is a positive tool with positive repercussions; it allows people to rise above their circumstances and to find ways to make the world a better place. It is the tool that gives students opportunities and positions to choose peace. Access to education for all is a road that can give options to those who had none before, thus creating an atmosphere of peace and curtailing the rise of war.

School is a powerful resource; not only does it give children an education, but it also creates a space where children can just be children. The walls of a school act as barriers between the concerns of a child and the problems adults face. In fact, “children in school, even while conflict goes on around them, or near them, are relatively safe. Keeping them in school reduces the chances of more conflict; children out of school roam the streets and countryside and can be potential recruits for armed groups” (McDowell, 2). By staying in school children are kept away from the problems of war, minimizing the chance that they become statistics in history.

Education reduces the possibili-

ty that the children in areas of war progress down the same path as older generations, meaning that there is less of a flow of recruits to keep up the battles being fought. Schools can be counted on as being pockets of tranquility hidden away from war. In many ways, schools help make sure students stay stable during times of war. It is noted that schools help “keep some sense of normality in otherwise stressful circumstances and improves the prospects for recovery and longer-term wellbeing”(“Education-War Child,”¹). This sense of normality can be the difference between a person choosing to participate in war or choosing to stay away from the conflict. If all one knows is war, they are bound to fall back on what they understand. Schools make sure war is not the focal point of everyday life for children, thus giving them alternative routes to progress through life; this is key in children choosing peace over war.

One key subject that schools do teach is history. History, as a subject, not only allows students to learn about the past but also provides a lens through which to view the world’s actions. History gives the gift of being able to contemplate the faults of other’s decisions throughout the years and the consequences of such actions. The teachings of the past are timeless, and in many ways “studying the stories of individuals and situations in the past allows a student of history to test his or her own moral sense, to hone it against some of the real complexities individuals have faced in difficult settings” (Stearns, 4). Through looking back at the negative consequences of armed conflicts and towards the positive aspects that times of peace bring, students learn that war is not always the best option. History teaches people that armed conflict should never be the first choice of strong leaders and that when it is the chosen route,

many people suffer because of it. Statistics of history give insight into the casualties of eras of conflicts and firsthand account tales give personalized stories about the day-to-day consequences of war. From these facts of the past, the students of today learn how to live and interact with the world around them. Trends of peace and the benefits of such times in history translate into peace in the modern world. Regarding this learning process, Stearns writes “history is in fact very useful, actually indispensable, but the products of historical study are less tangible, sometimes less immediate, than those that stem from some —other disciplines” (2). School’s role in preventing armed conflict and promoting peace may not be seen at first glance; instead, its importance can arise years later when the students of yesterday are the leaders of today.

Education lasts long past the time children graduate, continuing to keep the violence out of the world in little measures.

Education is a key and an opportunity. It is the main factor that keeps kids out of war and allows them to prevent armed conflicts as adults. Because of this, it is school that keeps people out of war’s grasp. People, instead, turn towards the arms of peace. Students are taught the importance of peace through multiple lenses and of how to maintain this atmosphere in the modern-day era. Thus, students are able to continue peace as a constant variable for future generations. School, both purposefully and unintentionally, teaches children to pick peace over war. Through social interactions and intellectual learning, students grow to be diplomatic beings that argue with their words instead of their fists. Education is a tool that must be cherished, for it has taken on a central role in the history of peace and will continue to do so far into the future. ♦

Bibliography

“Education Reduces Violence.” Global Citizen, www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/education-reduces-violence/. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

“Education- UNICEF.” UNICEF, www.unicef.org/education. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021. “Education- War Child.” War Child, 16 July 2019, www.warchild.org.uk/what-we-do/education. Accessed 21 Jan. 2021.

The Effects of Rewarding Positive Behavior in Children, Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2 Nov. 2015, www.education.gov.gy/web/index.php/parenting-tips/item/1785-the-effects-of-rewarding-positive-behavior-in-children. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

Ferris, Kerry, and Jill Stein. *The Real World: an Introduction to Sociology*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2020. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

Idrisa, Fazilah, et al. “The Role of Education in Shaping Youth’s National Identity.” *Www.sciencedirect.com*, UKM Teaching and Learning Congress 2011, core.ac.uk/download/pdf/81145809.pdf. Accessed 21 Jan. 2021.

Levy, Jack S. “139-165.” *THE CAUSES OF WAR AND THE CONDITIONS OF PEACE*, Annual Review of Political Science, 1998. Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

McDowell, Michael. “A Shelter from War: Education’s Role in Reducing Conflict.” Global Partnership for Education, 12 Apr. 2011, www.globalpartnership.org/blog/shelter-war-education%E2%80%99s-role-reducing-conflict. Accessed 21 Jan. 2021.

Oswalt, Angela. “Early Childhood Moral Development Continued.” Grace Point, www.gracepointwellness.org/462-child-development-parenting-early-3-7/article/12770-early-childhood-moral-development-continued. Accessed 21 Jan. 2021.

Stearns, Peter N. “Why Study History? (1998).” American Historical Association, [www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1998\)](http://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998)). Accessed 21 Jan. 2021.



**American
Red Cross**

International
Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law (IHL) is the set of rules that govern armed conflict. It was originally contained in customs and traditions. During the U.S. Civil War, Frances Lieber—at the direction of President Lincoln—was one of the first to write down the rules of war. Around the same time, other parts of IHL were written into the first Geneva Convention in 1864. IHL has since been modified several times, resulting in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their three Additional Protocols that we have today.

American Red Cross IHL Dissemination Program

The American Red Cross offers several IHL classes designed to inform the public on rules of war. These classes vary in length and detail so that everyone who wants to learn about IHL has an option that fits their level of interest. In addition to these classes, some local Red Cross offices may offer presentations on specific topics in IHL.



Even War Has Rules: An Introduction to IHL

In this one-hour overview of the basics of IHL, participants will learn the four fundamental principles of IHL—Military Necessity, Proportionality, Distinction, and Limiting Unnecessary Suffering. At the conclusion of the class, they will be able to apply these principles to understand the rules governing conflicts around the world.

Born on the Battlefield: An Intermediate Level Class on IHL

IHL and the Red Cross Movement were both born on the battlefield. This three-hour course discusses the beginnings of the of the Red Cross Movement and the birth of modern IHL. At the conclusion, participants will not only be able to analyze the legality of actions in armed conflicts, they will also understand the role the Red Cross Movement has played in the development of IHL.



Humanity in War: An IHL Primer for Professionals

Humanity in War is the most detailed IHL course offered by the American Red Cross. This daylong course covers the basics of IHL and expands upon themes such as enforcement of IHL and the interplay of IHL and International Human Rights Law. No prerequisites are required for this course.



INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW Youth Action Campaign



Every day we hear about the consequences of war and the suffering of the victims of armed conflict. Join in the effort to raise awareness about the rules of war.

Through the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Youth Action Campaign you can start the conversation in your community about how International Humanitarian Law preserves humanity amidst inhumanity.

IHL is the set of rules that govern armed conflict. When fighters follow these rules carefully, they help support the following objectives:

- Less suffering for victims
- Fewer civilian deaths
- Fewer refugees and internally displaced persons
- Less destruction of societal infrastructure, like hospitals and schools
- Stronger potential to restore peace after the conflict

Youth and young adults, ages 13-24, can receive an overview of IHL and build the skills necessary to manage an effective awareness campaign through this American Red Cross program. Participants will:



Plan and execute an IHL Campaign in their community.



Use social media and in-person tactics to spread their message.



Develop leadership, communication, and project management skills.



Potentially be nominated for the IHL Youth Action Campaign Summit in Washington, DC.



Historical poster from 1954

“You must never so much think as whether you like it or not, whether it is bearable or not; you must never think of anything except the need, and how to meet it.”

— Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross



Resources

Learn more about the [Youth Action Campaign](#)

Familiarize yourself with [International Humanitarian Law](#)

To get involved, please reach out to us at:

IHLyouth@redcross.org

Education in War

This volume was designed and created by Paul Jang,
American Red Cross
International Humanitarian Law, Youth Action Campaign
Intern 2021



American Red Cross