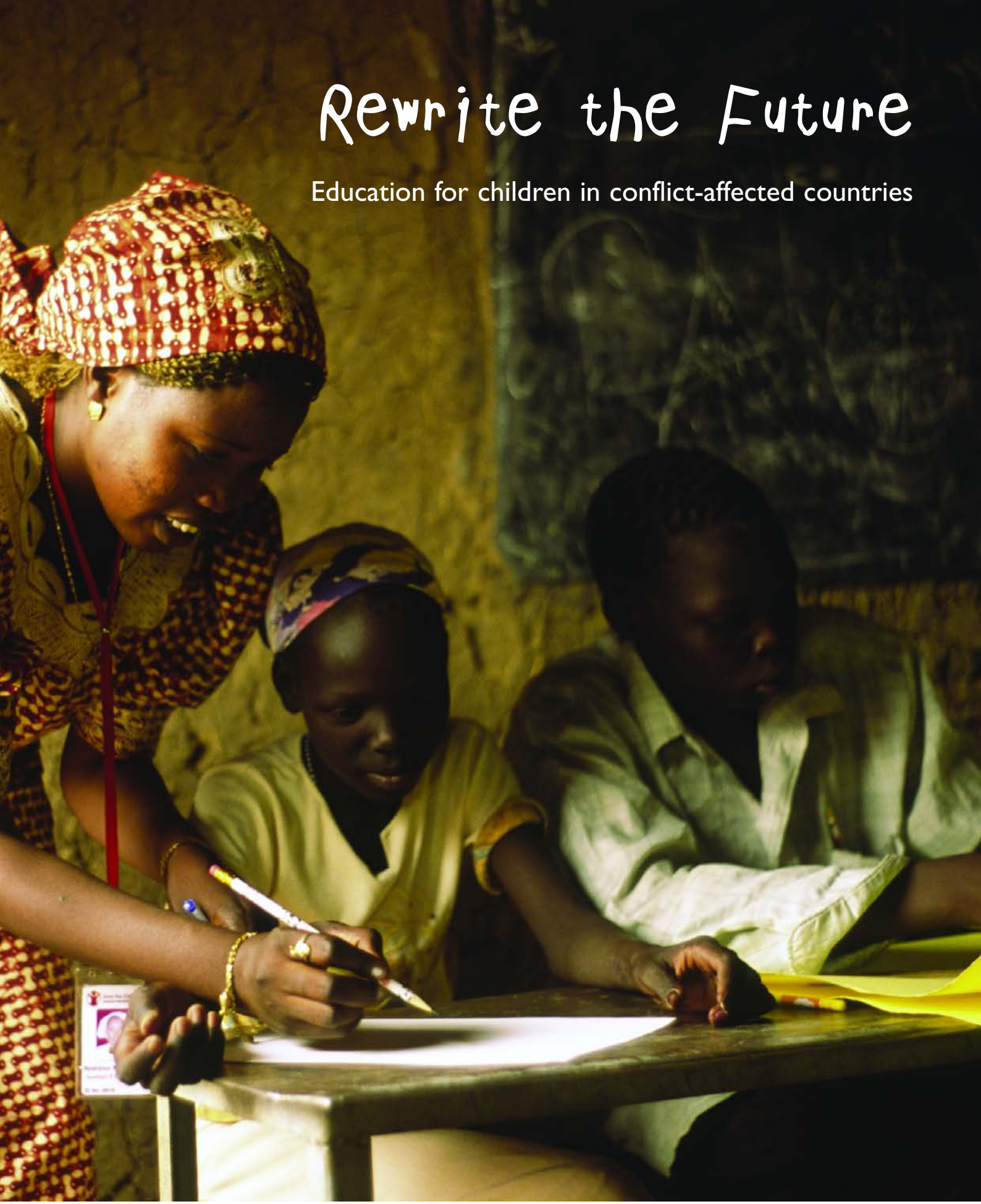
Rewrite the Future

Education for children in conflict-affected countries



Save the Children

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Save the Children

The International Save the Children Alliance is the world's leading independent children's rights organisation, with members in 28 countries and operational programmes in more than 100. We fight for children's rights and deliver lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Vision

Save the Children works for a world:
- **that respects and values each child**
- **that listens to children and learns**
- **where all children have hope and opportunity.**

Mission

Save the Children fights for children's rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Published by
International Save the Children Alliance
Cambridge House
Cambridge Grove
London W6 0LE
UK

First published 2006

Registered Charity No. 10768220

Typeset by Grasshopper Design Company

Cover photograph: *Angelina, 13, with Save the Children Education Officer Nyanjur Bilal, at a Save the Children supported school in Mayo IDP camp, northern Sudan.* (Felicia Webb)

Printed by Park Communications Limited

Contents

Abbreviations

CAFS	Conflict-affected fragile state
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Education for all
EDPF	Education Program Development Fund
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
IDP	Internally displaced person/people
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
SWAP	Sector-wide approach
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Foreword

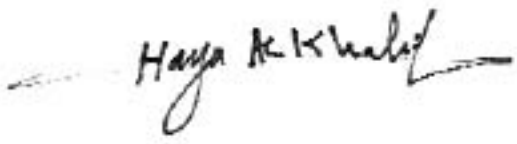
No child should have to pay the price for adults' wars, but increasingly they do. Millions of children are killed, millions more are injured, and millions spend their entire childhood in camps and other temporary shelters. Children cannot wait for conflict to end before we begin to address their educational needs.

It is shameful that, in 2006, there are still 115 million children around the world who are denied their right to primary education. It is even more disturbing that one-third of these children are being kept out of school because of the effects of conflict. Without education and without protection, they are being denied both their childhood and hope for the future.

Education plays a vital role in nurturing future generations. While enabling personal growth, it also contributes to economic and social development. It is our common responsibility to ensure that all children have access to education. Special attention needs to be paid to promoting education for girls. We must also encourage the development of educational curricula that promote openness, critical thinking and creativity.

The life chances of future generations depend on the ways in which we address contemporary problems. We applaud Save the Children for leading the challenge to rewrite the future for the millions of children missing out on an education because they live in conflict-affected countries.

Jan Eliasson
President of the 60th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly



Haya Rashed Al Khalifa
President of the 61st Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

Karin Beate Nøsterud/Save the Children

"I dream of a country that is not at war."

Mirwais, 14, Afghanistan

Introduction

Today, 115 million children who should be in primary school are not. That is an astonishing 18 per cent of the world's primary school-aged children. These children are denied their right to education, a fair chance in life, access to skills and knowledge, and the route to a better life for themselves and their country. Every day, these children wake up to a life characterised by hardship and work, and a bleak outlook for their future.

There are various factors keeping these children out of school, but one of the biggest barriers, and the most difficult to tackle, is conflict. As well as killing and injuring millions of children, conflict disrupts normal life, forces millions of families to flee their homes, separates children from their families, and reduces schools to rubble. Save the Children has calculated that, of the 115 million primary-aged children not in school, at least 43 million – one in three – live in fragile states affected by armed conflict.[1]

Within conflict situations, systems tend to shut down. The traditional response from the international community is to initiate an emergency response, focusing on emergency aid such as shelter, food, water, sanitation and healthcare. Education is frequently left out of emergency responses, whether they are to natural disasters or conflict. When signs of normality return, and the international response starts to focus on longer-term development, education is given greater priority and is seen as a key component in helping a country return to stability.

One in three out-of-school primary-aged children live in conflict-affected fragile states.

The problem with this approach is that the world and its conflicts do not follow a neat, linear path. Countries slip in and out of conflict, and in and out of emergency and development phases, as we have seen recently in Timor Leste and Sri Lanka. Children often spend their whole childhood living in an emergency situation, receiving, at best, only emergency aid – such as in Somalia and parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). By the time a country is considered to have entered the development phase, there may be no foundations left on which to build. For example, in Southern Sudan, there are few schools, an incomplete curriculum, a dire shortage of teachers with any training, and no education systems in place.

Save the Children was established at the end of the First World War to address the needs of children suffering as a result of that war, on both sides of the conflict. It was called the war to end all wars – yet almost a century later the world is riddled with conflict. The most terrifying difference is that today the majority of victims are civilians, not soldiers, and those left destitute are mostly children. The world has failed these children, leaving them without education and without hope or opportunity, in some cases for generations.

Education is recognised as a basic human right for every child, whatever their circumstances. At the current rate of progress, however, even if promises are kept, the goal of universal primary education by 2015 will not be met. This is because conflict issues, or proposed solutions for educating children affected by conflict, are largely absent from educational planning documents, international conferences on education, and debates about education for all. Urgent and effective action must be taken if the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education and the 'education for all' targets adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 are to be met.

Unless children affected by conflict are protected and educated, their futures, and the future of their nations, are seriously imperilled. Yet the world would be a better place for all of us if every child had an education and every child had a fair chance in life. That is why 28 International Save the Children Alliance organisations across the world have joined forces to rewrite the future for the millions of children who are being denied an education because their countries are in conflict, and because the international community is failing them.

We will be working with children and their communities to meet our commitment to get three million out-of-school children into school by 2010, and to improve the quality of education for a total of eight million. We are also calling on the international community and national governments to ensure that the 43 million children in conflict-affected countries get the quality education to which they are entitled.

Anna Kari

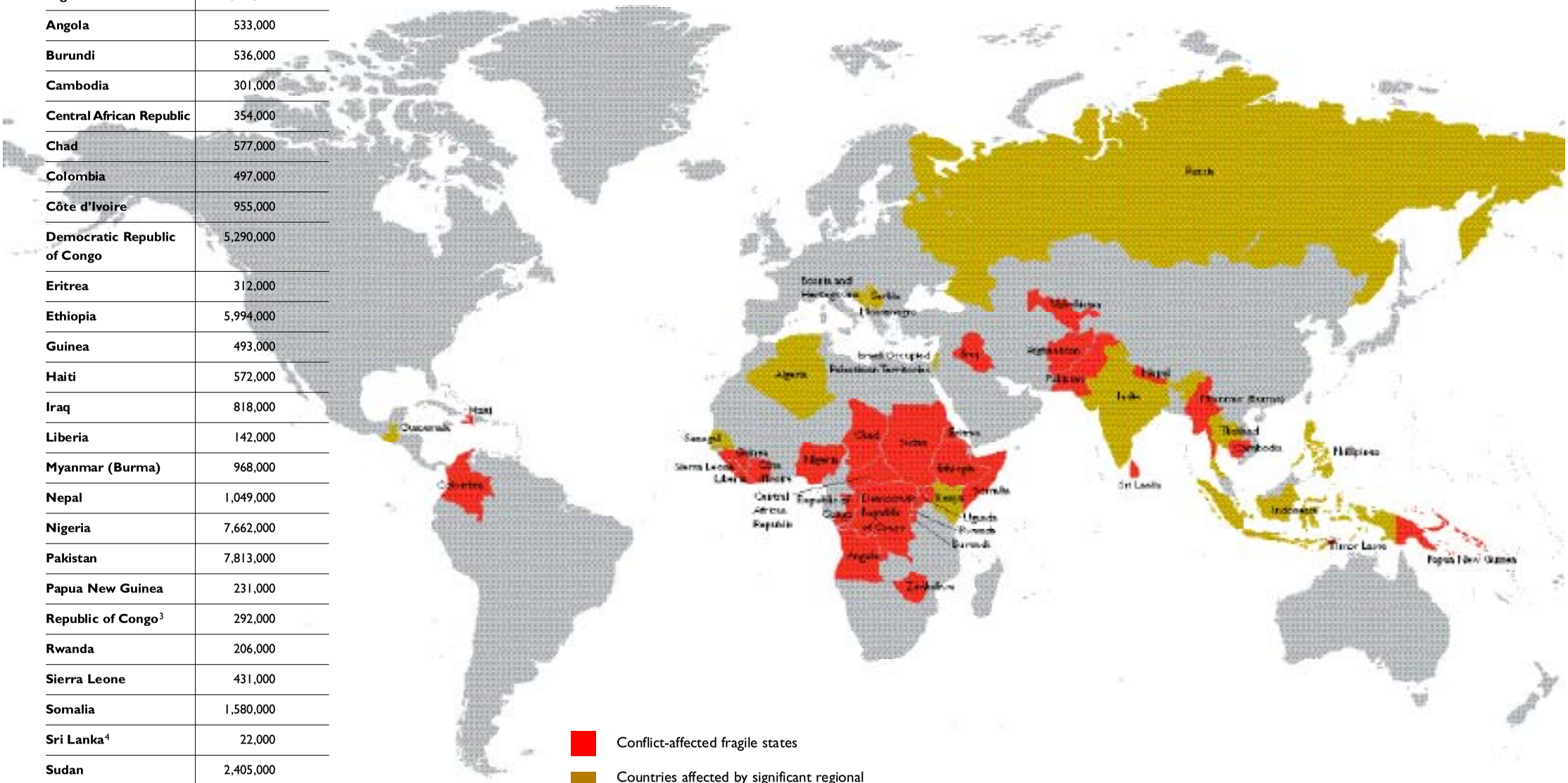
"We were tired of their attacks and the war. Children were dead. Parents were dead. There was no school. Everything was bad and in chaos."

Sifa,* 15, Democratic Republic of Congo

*not her real name

Countries affected by conflict[1]

Conflict-affected fragile state	Primary-aged children out of school
Afghanistan[2]	1,139,000
Angola	533,000
Burundi	536,000
Cambodia	301,000
Central African Republic	354,000
Chad	577,000
Colombia	497,000
Côte d'Ivoire	955,000
Democratic Republic of Congo	5,290,000
Eritrea	312,000
Ethiopia	5,994,000
Guinea	493,000
Haiti	572,000
Iraq	818,000
Liberia	142,000
Myanmar (Burma)	968,000
Nepal	1,049,000
Nigeria	7,662,000
Pakistan	7,813,000
Papua New Guinea	231,000
Republic of Congo[3]	292,000
Rwanda	206,000
Sierra Leone	431,000
Somalia	1,580,000
Sri Lanka[4]	22,000
Sudan	2,405,000
Timor Leste[5]	75,000
Uganda	1,068,000
Uzbekistan	491,000
Zimbabwe	498,000
TOTAL	**43,304,000**



1. Source: UNESCO/UNICEF (2005) *Children out of School: Measuring exclusion from primary education*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=6427_201+IDZ=DO_TOPIC, except where indicated.

2. UNESCO/UNICEF (2005) and United Nations Development Project (2004) Afghanistan Human Development Report 2004, UNDP www.undp.org.af/nhdr_04/pdfs/B_chapter2.pdf

3. UNESCO (2006) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006* http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=43283&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

4. The World Bank Group (2004) GenderStats Database of Gender Statistics http://devdata.worldbank.org/genderRpt.asp?rpt=education&cty=LKA,Sri%20Lanka&hm=home2

5. World Bank (2004) *Timor-Leste: Education since independence, from reconstruction to sustainable improvement.* http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/01/04/000160016_20050104120709/Rendered/PDF/297840PAPER0TP1INEPENDENCE01public1.pdf

The impact of conflict on children and their education

Since 1990, 90 per cent of deaths related to armed conflict have been civilians and, of those, 80 per cent are children and women.[2] In the past decade, two million children have been killed in armed conflict. Three times as many have been seriously injured or permanently disabled.[3] Millions of others have been forced to witness or take part in horrifying acts of violence.[4] In conflict situations, children become separated from their families, displaced or abandoned, and are at risk of being recruited into armed forces. The vast majority of armed conflicts involve the use of child combatants under the age of 18.[5] In 2003, more than half of armed conflicts used combatants under the age of 15.[6] Because of the breakdown of family and community structures, children are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation and being trafficked, and even more than usual are forced to work to support their families.

All of the 19 conflicts recorded as major armed conflicts in 2004 were classified as intra-state conflicts.[7] However, in a globalised world, intra-state conflicts are increasingly becoming international in nature and in effect. Almost all are lengthy conflicts. Only three – those in Iraq, in Darfur (Sudan), and against al-Qaeda – are less than ten years old.

Although, globally, the number of refugees has gone down to 8.4 million,[8] the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has increased. In 2005, there were 24 million people living in IDP camps or temporary situations within their own countries.[9] Since many IDPs are displaced for years, displacement can hardly be termed 'temporary' for the millions of children who are growing up in conflict.

Save the Children has identified a group of countries that are both fragile and affected by conflict (see map opposite). Of these 30 countries, fighting is currently going on in 18. Together they represent 13 per cent of the world's population, and include the countries least likely to achieve universal primary education.

Missing out on school

Today, there are 43 million children out of school in conflict-affected fragile states. At a time when children could most benefit from the structure, opportunity, hope, protection, skills and choices offered by education, they are most likely to be denied it. When education is needed to help break the cycle of poverty, destruction and conflict, it is least likely to be available. For example, more than five million primary-aged children (6–11 years) are out of school in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and more than six million 12–17-year-olds have never been to school.[10] In Darfur, in northern Sudan, only 39 per cent of primary-aged children are enrolled in school.[11]

"In the First World War, civilians accounted for 5 per cent of casualties. In the Second World War, that figure rose to 48 per cent. Today, up to 90 per cent of casualties are civilians – an increasing number of these are women and children."

Olara Otunnu, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict[1]

Not surprisingly, families may be unwilling to send their children to school if there are risks of armed attack, abduction or recruitment by militias. In Nepal, between January and August 2005, more than 11,800 students were abducted from rural schools for indoctrination or forced recruitment into the militia.[12] Teachers also are often targets as they are seen as important community members and government employees. Many are killed or flee to escape the violence. As a result, there is often a lack of qualified teachers. New, unqualified teachers brought in to fill gaps are often unpaid and untrained. In Afghanistan, most qualified teachers, headteachers and trainers fled the conflict. Now, fewer than 15 per cent of teachers hold professional qualifications.[13] In Uganda, up to 46 per cent of teachers are untrained, yet have to manage classes of up to 200 pupils.[14]

Schools are destroyed or commandeered by armed forces, and used as shelter for people who have fled or lost their homes. In Liberia, approximately 80 per cent of schools were destroyed in the 1989–1997 civil war, and the 2003 war caused further damage.[15] In Nepal, both the Maoist rebels and government forces have used schools as battlegrounds and have also requisitioned schools for use as barracks and other purposes.[16]

Because children in conflict-affected countries are prevented from starting school until they are older, there is often an above-average age school population. In Liberia, after 14 years of conflict, an estimated 60 per cent of primary school students are over-age.[17] This can lead to increased drop-out rates, especially if there is no prospect of post-primary education and/or training, as there are additional demands on older children's time. It also discourages families from sending their younger children to school, especially their girls, if there are over-aged boys in school.

As in non-conflict situations, access to education for girls is a more acute problem. Traditional cultural attitudes may disapprove of or not value girls' education, so they are more likely to be kept at home to care for younger siblings and to do household chores. There are also risks of sexual harassment – in transit to school or from teachers or male students when they get there. Girls are at risk of being abducted by armed groups and forced to become combatants' 'wives', leading to unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection.

As in non-conflict situations, access to education for girls is a more acute problem.

The longer conflict continues, the more difficult it becomes to sustain funding and administrative support for education. The complete or partial failure of educational management and administration means that materials and teachers' salaries do not reach schools in certain regions or in most of the country. It becomes increasingly difficult to hold national level school-leaving examinations, resulting in incomplete or unaccredited years of education. War and counter-insurgency absorb an increasing amount of government budgets, leaving less funds for education and affecting the entire system. Livelihoods are affected, incomes less secure and children's support to the family is more urgent, making it harder for children to maintain attendance in a formal school system, even where one exists.

Conflict, particularly protracted conflict, inevitably affects the quality of education, and poor quality is still one of the main reasons why children do not go to school or why they drop out. Keeping children in school is perhaps the biggest challenge. In Southern

Sudan, the education enrolment rate is just 20 per cent, and out of those, only 2 per cent complete primary education.[18] In northern Uganda, 70 per cent of children who enrol in grade one do not complete primary school,[19] and in Angola, poor-quality teaching – and learning – is behind the 27 per cent of children who have to repeat years.[20] Children themselves often cite corporal punishment and harsh discipline as a reason for dropping out, and the emotional and psychological support children need – especially those who have experienced the trauma of war – is often ignored.

As situations deteriorate and there are fewer qualified teachers, teaching methods are likely to become less effective. Essential content might be missing and materials unavailable. It becomes increasingly difficult for children to complete primary education, leaving them without even the minimum mastery of basic skills needed to continue learning or to earn a living.

Education plays a key role in forming national identity, and can be used as a promoter of peace or as a weapon.

In many cases of acute and chronic conflict, the community becomes the main provider of education. Communities build schools, identify teachers, negotiate with whatever authorities exist – or with national and international non-governmental organisastions (NGOs) – for salaries for teachers, and often supplement these salaries with shelter and food. In some cases they even pay the teacher salaries themselves. But there are limits to what communities in these constrained circumstances can provide.

Preventing or fuelling conflict

A good-quality education system can have cumulative benefits that mitigate the impact of conflict on children and help prevent conflict. But the opposite is also true. Education can be used to divide and lead to further conflict. Education, and the denial of it, were used to oppress under the apartheid regime in South Africa. Unequal access to education was a source of friction and a root cause of the conflict in both the Rwandan genocide and the conflict in Kosovo. If, during conflict, young people are denied schooling opportunities, they may be at higher risk of military recruitment, sexual violence, prostitution and contracting sexually transmitted diseases. They may be driven to become a destabilising and destructive force, continuing cycles of violence and vulnerability.[21]

Education plays a key role in forming national identity, and can be used as a promoter of peace or as a weapon. Teaching content can be co-opted to serve a political function, with teachers imposing biased views on language, religion or history. Stereotyping and scapegoating of different groups in textbooks can contribute to social tension by justifying inequalities, and the curriculum can be used to perpetuate intolerant ideologies. Poor, inappropriate teaching and inadequate school environments lead to low academic achievements, absenteeism, and drop out – which can in turn lead to antisocial and violent behaviour.

Education can be a positive force for peace and contribute to the prevention of further conflict – but only if it is inclusive and of good quality. Yet education – its provision and its quality – is neglected in humanitarian responses to conflict. And, in post-conflict situations, although there is increased interest in education and more resources put into it, it is in many cases neither appropriate nor of good quality.

Education rehabilitates

A series of wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – from 1996 to 2003 – has impoverished the nation and traumatised the children. More than 3.5 million people have been killed and millions more have been displaced. Despite a ceasefire and government elections in 2006, conflict is still ongoing in some provinces.

More than five million primary-age children are still not getting an education, and more than six million 12–17-year-olds have never been to school. Children have been forced to join militia, raped and abducted from school. Schools have been burned or turned into military bases or shelter for people who were forced to leave their homes. Teachers have not been paid for more than ten years.

In the early 1970s, school enrolment rates were high for the region, but since then the education system has been seriously damaged. Parents fund not only schools, but the whole administrative system. As a result, in the conflict-affected eastern regions, half the population can't afford to send their children to school. Many out-of-school children were or are associated with armed groups and many, particularly girls, have despaired of ever getting an education.

Eastern provinces are cut off by road from the rest of the country and are subject to ongoing conflict, including invasion from neighbouring countries. Villagers are still forced to flee their homes, and interruptions to the planting and harvesting cycle mean that many suffer extreme hunger. Many children are still being recruited into armed groups – sometimes forcibly, but also voluntarily in the absence of any other opportunities. Beyond school level, the education authority is very weak. Although there is a school inspector in one district, he has no office and no transport.

Save the Children's experience

Save the Children is aiming to increase the number of children going to school in the remote North and South Kivu provinces in eastern DRC. Working with six schools in three districts, which we helped rehabilitate, we provide an accelerated learning programme for older children who missed out on primary education and offer vocational training.

Working with local communities, we set up committees to identify those children who are most vulnerable. One of the initial tasks was to convince the local community of the importance of education and the fact that every child has the right to it. We brought together school directors, teachers, parents and children to encourage schools to take non-fee paying children. Teachers were initially reluctant as they rely on fees for their salaries, but the rehabilitation of schools and the provision of school materials and teacher training helped to persuade them. All the schools were willing to accept the non-fee paying children who had been identified as particularly vulnerable.

A real strength of our work has been the provision of different types of education programmes to meet the different needs identified in community workshops. We are currently expanding the programme so that girls who have babies as a result of being involved with armed groups can attend courses. Education is an important means of providing protection, especially for children who may otherwise be ostracised by their communities because they have been associated with armed groups. Once children are accepted into school, they are accepted into the community.

What is needed

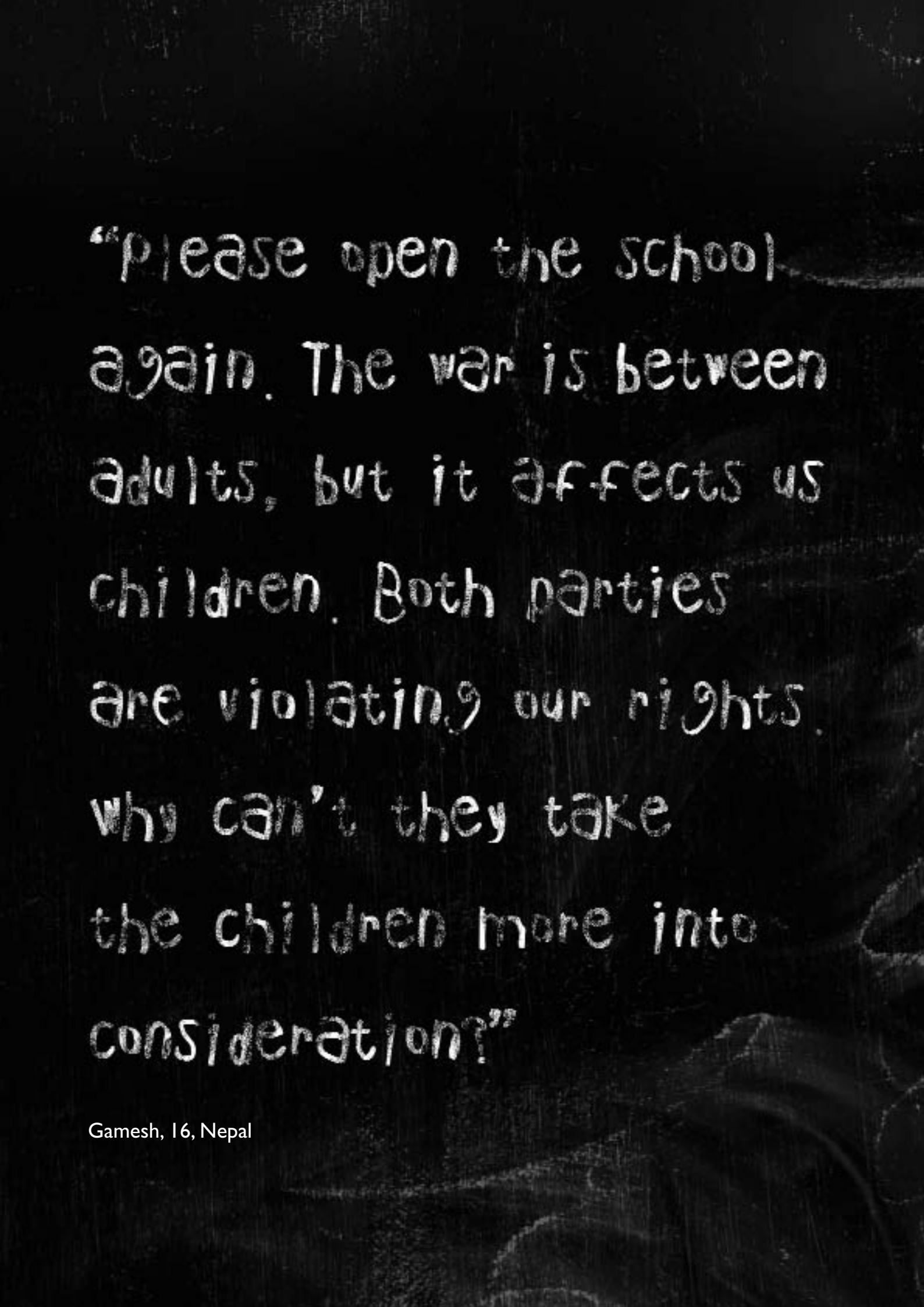
Save the Children will continue to support communities to improve access to good-quality education and to increased protection for the most vulnerable children, including those who have been associated with armed groups. Our target is to get 79,000 out-of-school children into school by 2010, and offer these plus 184,000 others a better and more relevant education.

We will also support the government to increase its funding for education from the current 6 per cent to 25 per cent of the national budget, to bring children formerly associated with armed groups back into their schools and communities, and to close the gender gap in education.

Felicia Webb

"If everybody's educated it will help people stop fighting."

Deborah, 10, Southern Sudan



Gamesh, 16, Nepal

Why we must meet the challenge 2

We cannot ignore the plight of children whose rights have been severely reduced or completely diminished because they live in countries affected by conflict. Just because it is more difficult to deliver education in these countries, that is no reason not to do so. Indeed, there are several urgent reasons why the world should focus its attention on education for children affected by conflict.

In 1990, delegates from 155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organisations, agreed at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand to universalise primary education and massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade.[2] In 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as an international strategy to eliminate world poverty. Two of the goals relate specifically to education, but the provision of education is central to the overall framework. Also in 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action[3] stated that in order to achieve education for all, the international community must meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability. It urges international and bilateral partners to work with governmental and non-governmental partners to restore and provide education in any crisis or post-conflict situation as a human right for children, young people and adults. Nevertheless, worldwide, 43 million children are missing out on education because they live in conflict-affected fragile states. In Haiti, almost every second child of primary school age is not in school, amounting to about 570,000 children.[4]

The right to education

Education for all means education for all. Every child in the world has the right to education – as laid out in international standards such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and as stipulated in legally binding treaties such as the 1962 Convention against Discrimination in Education and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Additional legislation exists for the world's most vulnerable children. The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states that refugee children should have the same opportunities of elementary education as nationals from the host country, and the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War declares that in times of hostility, states are responsible for ensuring the provision

"There are a large number of human rights problems, which cannot be solved unless the right to education is addressed as the key to unlock other human rights. Education operates as a multiplier."

Katerina Tomasevski, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education[1]

of education for orphaned or unaccompanied children and schools are guaranteed protection from military attacks.

Education remains a basic human right for every child, whatever the circumstances, even during conflict. Yet each day, millions of children are denied this right because they live in countries in the midst of or emerging from conflict.

A priority for children, parents and communities

Education is a consistent and persistent request from children and parents in conflict situations. Children and parents alike believe that continuing schooling is important for the future development of children and society. Parents show an impressive willingness to support education activities. They get involved in education committees and parent teacher associations, and are often willing to donate their time, labour and limited resources. If it is the priority of children and parents in conflict-affected countries, struggling as they are in exceptionally difficult circumstances, so too should it be a priority for all those who work with them.

Protection and prevention

Across the crisis-to-stability continuum, well-designed education programmes can protect children cognitively, psychologically, socially and physically. They can also promote conflict resolution, tolerance, human rights and citizenship. Preliminary results from a study in Nepal found that children who had received quality education in schools supported by Save the Children had lower levels of stress and higher levels of learning than children in other schools.[5] Moreover, children who are kept in school as the situation moves from crisis to stability are more likely to play a constructive role in rebuilding communities and keeping their countries from dropping back into conflict

The provision of quality education can help protect children from physical harm, exploitation and violence.

In conflict and post-conflict situations, schools can be a refuge and offer a degree of normality in an otherwise chaotic world. The provision of quality education can help protect children from physical harm, exploitation and violence, and from abuses related to forced displacement. Schools and other places of learning can provide psychological support and healing.

Reinstating an educational service during and after a conflict signals a return to normality and stability. It is important in helping children to deal with the traumas they have experienced, and in developing their social skills and self-esteem. Children who attend school are less vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups, to abusive work and to being trafficked. Specially designated ‘safe places’, temporary schools or government schools can protect children by introducing life skills, landmine awareness, HIV and AIDS information, peace education and skills for conflict resolution. Communities can be engaged to protect children en route to and from school, and to ensure children are protected from abduction and military recruitment.

Education also gives children and their families hope for the future. It reduces both poverty and inequality, and lays the foundation for sound governance and effective institutions.[6] Secondary education can be especially valuable in promoting 'turnaround' in fragile states.[7] It helps provide the necessary capacity in both the formal and informal sectors to set up robust national institutions and kick-start the economy. Countries with higher levels of education have greater political stability and stronger democratic rights.[8] Education affects not only a child's chances of a better future, it also affects the chances of countries to break the cycle of poverty, violence and insecurity.

Early investment in education protects children from the most damaging aspects of conflict and plays a significant role in building peace, restoring countries to a positive development path, and reversing the damage wrought by conflict. Yet child protection and education are still viewed as of secondary concern in most interventions in countries affected by acute or chronic conflict.

Quality education can promote humanitarian values such as equity, tolerance and peace.

Investing in children

Education can be an essential part of the recovery process for children who have lived through armed conflict. Quality education can promote humanitarian values such as equity, tolerance and peace. It can teach children to be respectful of their own and others' values and identities. Developing critical thinking skills in schools can encourage students to question social myths and norms that foster intolerance and conflict, as is happening in post-genocide Rwanda. Community-focused peace-building that is extended to schools can contribute to creating the environment for peace and help in the process of reconciliation.

For conflict-displaced populations such as refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), education can restore a sense of structure and organisation, transmit survival messages and life skills, and contribute to the social and economic development of the refugee community.[9] This is especially important if displaced populations return home, since they take the knowledge, skills and values back with them. Education can increase the human capital of the returned displaced community (and of any conflict-affected population), enabling them to be productive during and after conflict and contribute more fully to national reconciliation and reconstruction.

Providing education during the emergency or acute phase of conflict can help to establish a long-term framework that can be implemented in post-conflict educational systems. It can act both as a conflict prevention and reconciliation measure, and as a bridge from emergency to development. Reconstructing the education system in a post-conflict situation can restore confidence and hope for war-affected populations. Reconstructed educational systems that are based upon open and inclusive access and that use relevant curricula can help to eradicate grievances based on social exclusion. For conflict-affected populations, education can build social capital by establishing connections between schools and communities, for example, by involving the community in school management.

Education offers an entry point for triggering longer-term social, economic and political change, especially for the poorest families. It is one of the key ingredients of democracy building, as universal literacy is essential for creating politically active citizens and strong societies. Through education, children become more effective citizens, and more engaged and willing to advocate for theirs and others' rights. Education provision can play a crucial role in preventing fragile states from falling back into conflict and in helping them to move towards greater stability.

Investment in girls' education yields some of the highest returns of all development investments.

No country has reached sustained economic growth without achieving near universal primary education.[10] Education is a long-term investment with intergenerational benefits. It helps individuals improve their opportunities for earning a living and increases their productivity. Every year of schooling increases individual wages for both men and women by a worldwide average of about 10 per cent.[11]

Education makes for healthier households and smaller families, both of which have positive implications for national growth, development and poverty reduction. Whereas in developed countries home characteristics and levels of family wealth and social status are stronger determining factors of achievement than schooling, in developing countries schooling is often the determining factor of employment and success.

Investment in girls' education yields some of the highest returns of all development investments, resulting in both private and social benefits for individuals, families and society at large. Education can increase women's labour force participation rates and earnings. It also creates intergenerational benefits. A mother's education is a significant variable affecting her children's survival, as well as their educational attainment and opportunities.[12]

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The provision of education is central to the overall framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While two of the goals specifically address education – one calling for universal primary education by 2015, the other for parity between girls and boys – education can also make a vital contribution to the attainment of all the goals.[13] Schooling clearly has an impact on the reduction of poverty, the promotion of gender equality and lower child mortality and fertility rates. No country has achieved economic stability before achieving universal primary education. Poverty and conflict are also highly correlated. Of the world's 20 poorest countries, 16 have suffered a major civil war in the last 20 years. Therefore conflict prevention and resolution, education and poverty reduction must be seen as mutually reinforcing (and their absence as mutually destructive). Education also provides increased protection against HIV and AIDS, and increased awareness of environmental issues.

As long as conflict-affected countries remain the poorest states, with the lowest enrolment rates (67.8 per cent compared to 83.2 per cent in other developing countries[14]), the MDGs will not be met.

Education protects

Colombia has suffered from internal armed conflict for half a century and has one of the five highest populations of internally displaced people. Over the past 15 years, more than three million people have been forced to flee their homes, 83 per cent of them children. Colombia also ranks fourth in the number of antipersonnel mines planted in a national territory. The people most affected by the conflict, both as perpetrators and as victims, are young people aged 12–24. Almost 11,000 are serving as combatants in armed groups. Other children and young people are working to plant, process and sell drugs.

The struggle for territorial control of urban neighbourhoods between insurgent fighters and paramilitary groups has increased economic hardship and destroyed the social fabric of communities. It is estimated that 43 per cent of the population needs care for mental illness.

Although every child in Colombia has a statutory right to free education, and enrolment rates are 82 per cent, drop-out rates are high. Many parents cannot afford to pay for school materials, uniforms and tuition fees, and young people find it difficult to combine school with work. Others drop out because they are pregnant or because they are involved in gangs.

Save the Children's experience

Fifteen years ago, Soacha was a peaceful, rural community. Over the past four years, its population has increased by 62 per cent and it is now an urban sprawl on the outskirts of Bogotá. Every day, an average of five new families arrive to escape violence in the surrounding countryside.

Save the Children is working with children and young people in Soacha to provide them with an education and to reduce the risk of them being recruited into armed groups. Semillas de Mostaza (mustard seeds) is a community school in the Loma Linda neighbourhood of Soacha. Parents who cannot afford public schools send their children to Semillas de Mostaza because there is no uniform and there are no fees for textbooks and other materials. Because many children are malnourished, the school also provides meals.

Community teachers, most of them from the local area and who have experienced the same problems as their students, are being trained in child protection, children's rights, and the detection and prevention of sexual abuse. The project teaches sport, music, acting, writing and circus skills, and provides a safe environment in which children and young people can gain the self-confidence to protect themselves from mistreatment. Activities with children and young people are complemented by sessions with parents and other adults to encourage them to become community guardians.

What is needed

The Colombian government's *Plan Sectorial de Educación* 2002–06 states that there is a need for more autonomous and flexible educational institutions that are able to adapt to the interests and expectations of students, and stimulate a passion for knowledge, critical thinking, and positive and constructive relationships with others.

Save the Children will continue to work with the government, the National Ombudsman's Office and partner organisations to support and strengthen non-formal educational initiatives. We will also continue to develop teaching materials to promote conflict resolution, democratic school governance and alternatives to violence within schools.

Olav Urdahl/Save the Children

"I joined them because I wanted to fight, wear a uniform and carry arms. Now my family wants me to concentrate on my school work, and I will."

Geetha,* 17, Sri Lanka

*not her real name

Meeting the challenge – it can be done 3

Each country affected by conflict is different and levels of conflict vary. In some places, such as in Darfur, Sudan, the level of conflict is such that at best only emergency aid can be provided. In other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia, chronic conflict lasting for years has destroyed education systems and infrastructure. Other countries, such as Liberia, Serbia and Cambodia, are post conflict, recovering from years of civil war. These different circumstances tend to be addressed through a series of separate approaches – from humanitarian relief work, to post-conflict development and then long-term development programming. However, the approaches should be co-ordinated and coherent, based on the ultimate objective of long-term, equitable development. Efficient and effective service delivery is what ultimately matters in all these contexts – ensuring a quality, relevant education, based on an analysis of the local context and involving national authorities and local communities.

Most education systems are founded on a similar model, established for children living in comparable contexts with common government systems, and with social and financial regularity. This model assumes the existence of basic conditions – including a functioning education ministry, a reasonably efficient delivery service, regularly paid teachers and support services – which are not present in conflict-affected countries. While problems may exist in developing countries – for example, drop-out and repetition rates may be high, achievement low, the sector undermined by persistent under-funding – over time this model is likely to reach many of the world's out-of-school children. But it will never reach the most marginalised children, including those living in countries affected by conflict. To reach them, systems need to change and be flexible.

Achieving education for all children everywhere – including those in countries in the midst of or recovering from conflict – is indeed a challenge. Yet it is a challenge that can be met if everyone plays their part.

With Save the Children's campaign to help all children get school, education and protection in situations of armed conflict, we can make a big step forward. We should redouble our effort.

Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator

Government responsibilities

In countries affected by conflict, government structures and ministries are often operating under increased pressures and, in some cases, limited capacity. However, governments are the primary duty-bearers in the fulfillment of their citizens' rights. To ensure that all children enjoy the rights set out in international standards, governments need to put in place policies and plans to achieve education for all.

International donors have a vital role to play in supporting governments – even those in countries affected by conflict – by providing direct aid to enable basic services such as education to function and by providing the technical support to guide them. In turn, national governments must have mechanisms in place for the disbursement of funds to education, based on need and without discrimination for political ends.

Other international agencies – UN agencies and non-governmental organisations – also have a vital role to play. Through their programmes, these agencies can reach the children in the hardest-to-reach areas, whether in humanitarian crises or in post-conflict reconstruction. Agencies can work directly with the children, their communities and their de facto or nascent authorities, identify local needs and wishes, support local initiatives, explore innovative solutions, build up local capacity and scale up services.

Making education part of the humanitarian response

Until recently, education was either completely neglected or given a very low priority in humanitarian responses to emergencies. In recognition of this, the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was established in 2000. INEE has successfully raised the profile of education in emergencies and led the development of minimum standards for the provision of education in emergencies, chronic crises and reconstruction. Education is becoming a more familiar component of emergency responses to natural disasters – such as the 2004 tsunami and the earthquakes in Iran, India, Pakistan and Indonesia – but it is still lacking in emergencies caused by conflict.

Education can and should be part of all humanitarian responses.

Education can and should be part of all humanitarian responses – including those to conflict situations. For example, in 2001/02, Save the Children was successfully able to implement an emergency education and protection project for displaced Afghan children living on the Pianj Islands, between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. For six months, the project focused on providing education activities and identifying and supporting vulnerable children, such as those who had been separated from their families and those with disabilities. Based on the structure we established, the local communities then continued to run education activities, and other agencies have used the model in other parts of Afghanistan.

Whether an activity is considered humanitarian is usually determined by the context rather than the activity itself. For example, building and operating a primary healthcare facility is a developmental activity in the absence of a crisis, but is considered a life-saving humanitarian intervention in the midst of a crisis. The same should be true of education. Early visibility of education provision signals investment in a future.

Linking education with protection

In countries affected by conflict, the risks to children increase, and education can play a vital role in protecting them. Safe play spaces and temporary learning centres can provide an effective way to identify and reunite separated children with their families. When distance, security issues or work prevent children from going to regular schools, alternative basic education programmes that include school outreach centres, out-of-school programmes and flexibly-timed schooling can provide security and protection, as well as enabling children to continue their education. In West Darfur, Sudan, for example, Save the Children has established more than 20 children's centres, reaching 55,000 children in 11 camps. The centres provide somewhere safe for them to play with other children, and they are taught basic literacy and numeracy.

Education can help stabilise countries that are going through protracted crises or recovering from conflict by increasing social cohesion.

Well-managed school spaces can help to protect children from physical harm, psychological and emotional stress, recruitment into armed groups, family separation, and other abuses. Classes provide a sense of normality, routine and hope for the future, all of which are critical to children's emotional well-being. Educational programmes can also provide survival skills, teaching children how to avoid landmines, protect themselves against sexual abuse, and deal with fear and anger.

Education can help stabilise countries that are going through protracted crises or recovering from conflict by increasing social cohesion. Children's clubs can raise children's self-esteem and impart an early understanding of human rights, social justice, teamwork and the process of peace and reconciliation. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, children have identified violence in and around school as one of the greatest threats to their protection. As part of Save the Children's Education that Protects project, children and staff in six public schools have set up school protection committees. Through these, children and staff have developed creative ways to resolve conflict, and to establish better relationships between children and between children and teachers. There are plans, with the Ministry of Education, to roll out these committees to all schools.

Ensuring both access and quality

In conflict situations, when education resources and sources are scarce, the typically marginalised become even more so. Yet crises create a window of opportunity to address pre-existing deficiencies and establish new education systems. Non-state providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are frequently the only groups engaged in providing basic services, often demonstrating innovative mechanisms for service delivery. In Darfur, Save the Children is building 16 temporary schools with 115 classrooms, as well as rehabilitating 13 existing schools. This is expected to dramatically increase enrolment rates.

In Somaliland and Somalia, Save the Children is improving access to education for more than 20,000 children, particularly girls and children from minority ethnic groups.

As well as school-aged children, the programme benefits over-aged groups, such as young married women who were previously denied the chance of elementary schooling. By living in an environment more accepting of girls' education and having female role models within the teaching staff, young women are encouraged to seek better employment opportunities and to participate more fully in society.

Genuinely listening to children and their needs must be a core part of creating policies, strategies, plans and programmes.

For older children who missed out on going to primary school and who are reluctant to learn in a classroom with younger children, alternative programmes can provide an accelerated, non-formal education that enables them to catch up and eventually enter mainstream government schools. Flexible approaches to schooling and timetabling can also enable working children to continue earning a living and supporting their families at the same time as getting an education.

Without trained teachers, however, it is impossible to deliver good-quality education. In countries experiencing prolonged conflict and in post-conflict situations where qualified teachers have been killed or fled, new teachers need to be trained. In Southern Sudan, for example, Save the Children has trained 100 primary school teachers, some of whom had only completed three years of primary school themselves. Also, because many teachers returning after years of displacement in the north of the country have little English – the language in which the southern curriculum is taught – we have supported intensive English language courses for teachers.

It is also important that the curriculum is relevant to children's lives and experiences, and that it meets their particular needs. In Indonesia, Save the Children developed a 'Framework for Learning for Children Affected by Emergencies' that outlines three areas of learning important for children whose lives and education have been disrupted. The first addresses survival skills to help children live safely in camps and other temporary places. The second is focused on individual and social development to help children overcome the negative experiences they have had as a result of conflict. The third helps them develop learning skills and provides teachers with activities to help children re-engage with learning when their education has been disrupted.

Putting children and local communities at the centre

Genuinely listening to children and their needs must be a core part of creating policies, strategies, plans and programmes that will reach children affected by conflict. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, children were asked why they stayed away from school. The main reason was traffic. Children felt they were risking their lives in the daily walk to school. Without consulting children, this issue would probably have been overlooked.

Children's clubs have proven to be a remarkable catalyst for change and development within communities. The clubs help build children's self-esteem and confidence, increase their access to information, develop their solidarity and leadership qualities, and provide opportunities for recreation and learning. Save the Children has supported

clubs in Nepal and Angola, both recovering from years of civil war. We have provided training so that children can manage the clubs themselves, as well as training them in journalism, creative writing and public speaking.

Where they have survived, local schools are often the main point of reference for collective action at the community level. The Fe y Esperanza (Faith and Hope) school in Altos de Cazucá, Colombia, serves 200 children who have been internally displaced by the ongoing conflict in the country. The children themselves organise the day-to-day running of the school, and parents and other members of the community are encouraged to get involved. In the midst of violence and insecurity, the school gives children and adults some sense of security and control over their own lives.[1]

Co-ordinating education and planning for the future

Successful educational initiatives – whether undertaken by communities, faith-based groups or NGOs – usually have the essential ingredients of local context, innovation and good quality (based on the concept of children at the centre). Good examples of service delivery need to be scaled up in order to meet the extent of the problem. It is critical that national authorities, however weak, are brought on board to support and assist in the eventual scaling up of innovations. In the post-conflict phase, the challenge is for all parties – state authorities, donors and NGOs – to capitalise on and scale up these innovations in the most effective way and to mainstream them into a rebuilt education system.

Conflict-affected countries have usually had their physical and human infrastructures destroyed and need to develop a comprehensive plan. Short-term approaches should be aligned with long-term perspectives. The ultimate aim must be a functioning nation (no matter how distant that aim may seem at the present time), with the needs of the education sector set within the context of overall national development. Education cannot be seen in isolation from other public services – health, water, sanitation and security.

The ultimate aim must be a functioning nation, with the needs of the education sector set within the context of overall national development.

Many successful small-scale initiatives (using volunteer teachers, for example) cannot be sustained over time. It is therefore necessary to engage with national authorities and address system-wide issues. Efforts may be wasted training teachers if their salaries are so low that they do not enter (or stay in) the teaching service. Teachers need regular salaries, they need a professional career path built on professional qualifications, and they need a support system to strengthen their ability to ensure effective and creative teaching and learning. This means looking at recurrent and development costs. It also means looking at secondary provision, because the less post-primary provision there is, the higher the drop-out from primary school (thus lowering rates of completion). Secondary education can only be provided by the state, not necessarily as the sole provider, but it must at least play a leading role. Since, in the end, sustained poverty reduction has to be the responsibility of national governments, the most effective intervention is likely to be building the capacity of the government to lead.

Education builds peace

The civil war that has torn Nepal apart over the past ten years has claimed the lives of 12,000 people. The Maoist insurgency, dedicated to overthrowing what it sees as an outdated, repressive monarchy, controls much of the countryside. Schooling in rural areas has been badly affected, with schools being targeted along with other government facilities. Schools are commandeered by both the Maoist rebels and the army, and both students and teachers are abducted to join rebel forces. Between January and August 2005, 11,800 children were abducted. Schools are often closed due to bandhs (strikes) called by the rebels.

Attendance rates, not high to begin with, have dropped. A fifth of all primary-aged children do not attend school. More than half of all girls and 80 per cent of 'lower caste' Dalit children are not getting a basic primary education, many because they do not have the necessary birth registration forms because local registrars will not risk travelling to remote villages.

Nevertheless, classrooms are overcrowded, many with virtually no materials or equipment. Only a third of primary school teachers have been trained. There are tensions between the staff of all government-supported facilities – including teachers – and the Maoist rebels. Schools are technically the responsibility of district education offices but, in many areas, the rebels have become the de facto local government.

Save the Children's experience

Save the Children has been working in Nepal for 22 years. Over the last ten years, our work has been increasingly affected by the conflict, and has involved working with both the government and the Maoist rebels, and building up the trust of local communities. By working at a local level, we have been able to demonstrate that children can become the focus for constructive collaboration, even in a conflict zone.

In one district heavily affected by the civil war, we encouraged families to set up education committees made up of representatives of ten to 30 households within a hamlet. First they did local research, identifying which children were not in school and why. This information was then incorporated into a school improvement plan, and each committee took responsibility for sending all children over the age of six to school on a regular basis.

We were able to get the district education office to support the school improvement plan. This made the rebels suspicious but, through the committees, community members told the rebels that if they would not support them, they would have no right to come to the villages asking for shelter and food. The Maoists eventually agreed and became involved in the schools instead of destroying them. Enrolment now exceeds 90 per cent in these communities. All the schools have renovated or new classrooms, and teachers are using more active and interactive learning approaches. Over two years, the pass rate increased from 39 per cent to 68 per cent, and the drop-out rate has fallen from 23 to 2 per cent. Parents are even moving their children back from private schools in larger towns to enrol in the local schools.

With so many children graduating from primary school, there was growing demand to extend the local school to include high school grades. After much discussion, the community decided to invite the District Education Officer to visit their village, through Save the Children. Initially he refused because of the possibility of being kidnapped, but the rebels promised not to harm him. When he came it was the first such visit in the 32 years since the school had been set up, and he agreed that the school could be extended.

Save the Children committed $10,000 for the construction, the District Education Officer agreed to provide the necessary teachers and furniture, and the community provided labour. Having initially refused to supoprt a government-sponsored scheme, the rebels ended up collecting funds, getting materials donated, such as concrete, and contributing labour.

What is needed

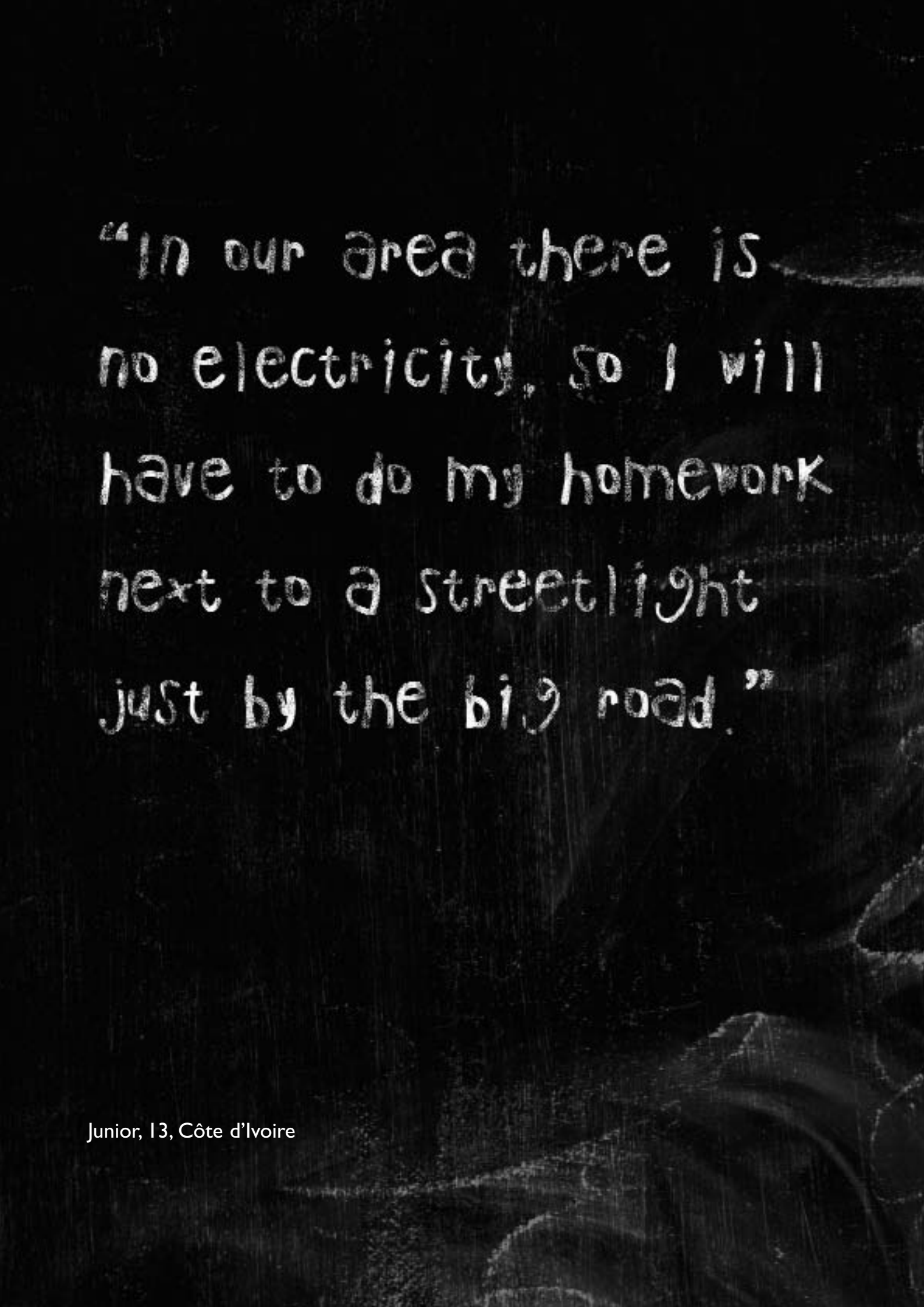
Save the Children will continue to work with the Nepalese government, the Maoist rebels, other partners and local communities to replicate our experience in other districts. We will support the government to increase school enrolment to 90 per cent throughout the country and increase the primary education completion rate. By 2010, we aim to have increased literacy from 57 per cent to 70 per cent and for 40 per cent of children to have early childhood development opportunities.

Although Nepal has a clear plan and targets for education, the government does not allocate enough resources and has weak monitoring and evaluation systems. The international community must therefore create a climate in which Nepal accepts that it must – and can – reach its education targets.

Save the Children

"If I had a magic wand I would do two things: I would make the school bigger with bricks and with more space, and I would make a patio where we can play safely."

Freddy, 6, Colombia



Junior, 13, Côte d'Ivoire

Bridging the funding gaps 4

To achieve education for all, national governments need adequate and predictable funding for education, as well as having the mechanisms in place to disburse it on the basis of need and without discrimination for political end. The Dakar Framework for Action emphasised the roles of both national governments and the international community in achieving education for all by stating that "no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources."[1]

National financing for education

It has been argued that governments should invest at least 6 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) in education.[2] None of the conflict-affected fragile states for which there are available data are reaching this level of investment. In terms of budget allocation, it has also been suggested that for a country to be successful, it needs to spend approximately 20 per cent of its total budget on education.[3] Only two conflict-affected fragile states have reached this level of expenditure (Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea).[4] How much is spent on education is influenced by the situation in each country and competing priorities. Governments of conflict-affected fragile states may not see education as their main priority, and resources may be diverted into funding military activities. In northern Sudan, just 1.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) goes on education.[5] In Ethiopia, during the war with Eritrea in 1999/2000, there was a significant decline in education spending. However, when the peace agreement was signed, the government turned its attention away from military spending and has substantially increased the budget for education.[6]

When governments are not able or willing to resource education adequately, the burden of financing schools will fall to communities and parents. In order to fill the shortfall in their budgets, schools often charge fees to cover teachers' salaries, maintenance and textbooks. Fees can be the only way that schools can continue to operate, but they also mean that the poorest children, especially girls, are excluded from school. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) spends US$4 per pupil per year on education, while parents have to pay between US$14 and US$32 per child, which many cannot afford.[7]

International financing for education

Suffering as they do from very low or weak capacity, conflict-affected fragile states need aid flows to be greater and longer term in order to build stronger and more sustainable institutions.

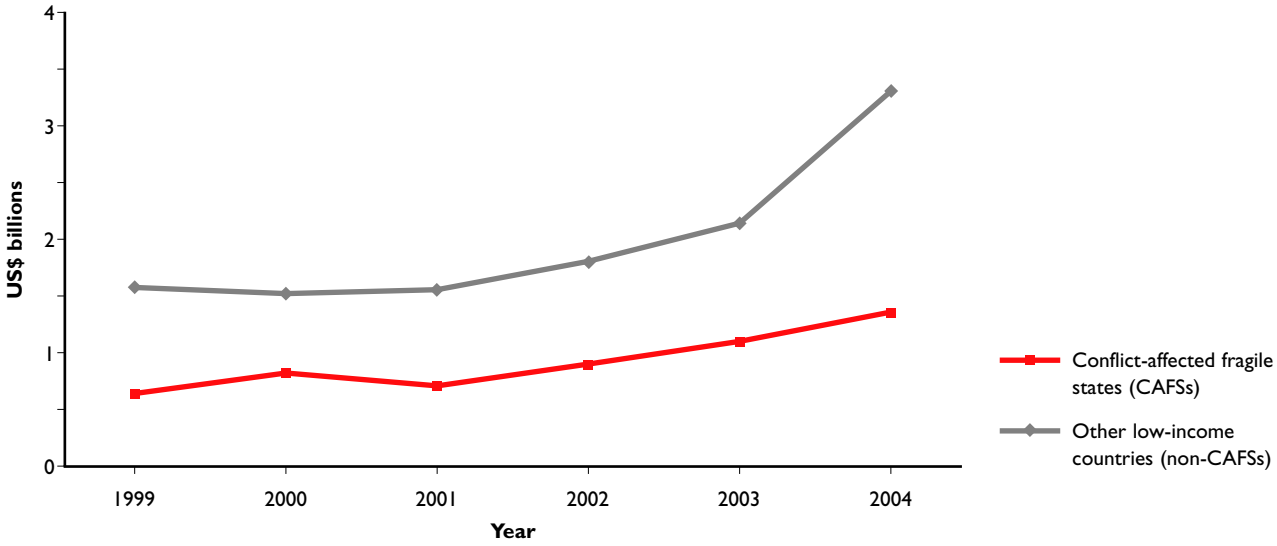
Two high-profile international meetings in 2005 – the G8 Summit and UN Summit – reinforced the world's commitment to tackling poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed in 2000. At the G8, world leaders committed to find an extra US$50 billion per year by 2010 required to make the MDGs a reality. Shortly after, the UN Summit pledged "that children in armed conflicts [would] receive timely and effective humanitarian assistance, including education, for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society."[8] However, this funding is not reaching children living in conflict-affected fragile states. Despite an increasing international commitment to poverty reduction, to achieving the MDGs, to supporting education and to increasing aid flows, the countries most in need, and those furthest away from achieving the MDGs, are still not getting the financial assistance their education systems need.[9] People living in conflict-affected fragile states are particularly disadvantaged in the amount of aid they receive, how much of that aid is committed to education, how it is disbursed, and in their access to international financing mechanisms.

Development aid and education

It is generally acknowledged by donors and aid agencies that conflict-affected fragile states are more difficult to assist than other developing countries. In countries that are both fragile and affected by conflict, the political will is often weak or totally absent, national institutions are often in various stages of disarray, and national capacity decimated. Many donors in the past have been reluctant to take the associated risks involved in financing conflict-affected fragile states, often because legitimate governments are not in place for donors to do business with or because, where they are, there can be limited accountability and funds may be diverted to military expenditure.

Suffering as they do from very low or weak capacity, conflict-affected fragile states need aid flows to be greater and longer term in order to build stronger and more sustainable institutions. However, because donors use selectivity criteria to target their aid towards countries with good policies or that are considered good performers,[10] the conflict-affected fragile states receive less aid. Although official development assistance (ODA) for education in developing countries has risen from US$5 billion in 1999 to US$8.5 billion in 2004, conflict-affected fragile states receive a much smaller proportion compared with other low-income countries.[11] In 2004, the 30 countries classed as conflict-affected fragile states[12] received less than one third of the education aid going to low-income countries, while two-thirds of the education aid went to the remaining 33 low-income countries. When calculated as education aid per capita, conflict-affected countries also do worse than other low-income countries, receiving an average of just US$1.6 per capita per year between 1999 and 2003, compared with US$3.3 per year for other low-income countries.[13]

Total education overseas development assistance commitments from 1999–2004*



*Figures calculated on the basis of 2003 constant US$ billions

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) was launched in 2002 as the main international mechanism for mobilising funds for education and as a 'compact between countries and donors'.[14] For countries to receive FTI endorsement, they must have a poverty reduction strategy or equivalent in place, and have a credible education sector plan that has been endorsed by in-country donors. Following endorsement, funding can then be obtained via either in-country donors or the Catalytic Fund.[15] In addition, the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) was established at the end of 2003 to provide technical support and capacity-building to help countries prepare and implement a sound education plan.

Although the FTI has galvanised support for education internationally, it has not been able to meet the financing needs of the 20 countries that have been endorsed. In addition, many conflict-affected fragile states have been excluded from full FTI endorsement because they have not produced a poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) or equivalent, and do not have an education plan.[16] However, the November 2005 FTI Partnership meeting in Beijing supported the notion that FTI should increase its support for fragile states, and there is a general consensus that the EPDF may provide a mechanism to support fragile states to develop education programmes. Currently, an FTI task team on fragile states is exploring how this might be achieved. However, the FTI can only function well if donors meet their commitments for funding. Without this happening, countries may be disinclined to commit to the analytic work required in order to receive support.

Humanitarian aid and education

For countries affected by conflict and protracted crises, humanitarian aid is often the dominant form of support over a period of time. From 1993/94 to 2003/04, for example, 73 per cent of UK aid to both Liberia and Somalia was comprised of emergency aid.[17] Humanitarian aid is based on the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality, and is seen as distinct in purpose from much development aid. It is sometimes seen as a way to work around, rather than through, the state. Humanitarian efforts have traditionally relied on non-state actors, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, the private sector and faith-based groups to deliver aid.

However, only a small proportion of humanitarian aid is directed at education. Most humanitarian aid is co-ordinated through the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), which allocates just 2 per cent of contributions to education in emergencies.[18] Over the past few years the number of humanitarian contributions for education have begun to rise. But funding still falls far short of education needs identified in appeals, and significantly short in comparison to funding for other sectors. For example, in a review of the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Financial Tracking Service (FTS) archives and summary reports from 2001 to 2005, it was found that only 42 per cent of education needs were met compared to 66 per cent of those for all sectors.

Matching promises with payment

Many donors promise aid and make commitments but then fail to disburse the money or the full amount, or disburse it late. Once again, conflict-affected fragile states are worse off than other countries. From 2002 to 2004, only 56 per cent of the bilateral education aid committed to conflict-affected fragile states actually got disbursed, compared to 65 per cent for developing countries overall. In fact, aid flows to fragile states are at least twice as volatile as aid flows to other low-income countries.[19] The potential positive impact of aid committed to conflict-affected fragile states is significantly reduced by its unpredictability, as countries cannot use it to commit to long-term plans, pay salaries regularly or make regular inputs.[20] The impact of this volatility is more acute in countries that are conflict affected or fragile than it would be in more stable countries due to their higher initial needs.[21]

From 2002 to 2004, only 56 per cent of the bilateral education aid committed to conflict-affected fragile states actually got disbursed.

Channels for disbursing aid

Most of the channels for disbursing aid still favour stable countries with at least minimum levels of good governance and/or administrative capacity, which again puts conflict-affected fragile states at a disadvantage. Sources of funds vary – directly from donors, or pooled funds such as the multi-donor trust fund. There are also several possible channels for disbursing aid – including direct budget support, sector budget support, project support and community funds – which can be used in combination to enable funds to be channelled to governments and to education.

Direct budget support, for example, provides non-earmarked money directly into a national budget. It is rarely used in emergencies or fragile states, but Rwanda and Sierra Leone are examples of the use of direct budget support in early post-conflict situations.

Donors should recognise the role of civil society as watchdogs and advocates, not just as service providers.

Sector budget support earmarks money for a specific sector such as education. Donors agree a sector development plan, and align funds and technical support behind it. Donors may use a Sector-wide Approach (SWAP) to harmonise their resources (financial and technical) to a particular sector. However, sector budget support does not necessarily ensure that the funds are additional to a sector's budget, and are most often not used in countries with fragile governments due to transparency and reporting difficulties.

Individual projects are the most typical disbursement mechanism. Funds are given either to state or non-state actors to implement a specific, time-bound project. One larger-scale example has been in Southern Sudan, where in 2003 an NGO consortium was funded to support education system development, particularly teacher training and infrastructure. However, there is criticism that projects are over-used to deliver services, may duplicate existing processes, add bureaucratic burden and rarely finance recurrent costs.

Community funds (or social protection funds) are established within, or parallel to, government structures with the intent of disbursing money directly to communities. Communities may be required to provide matching support, particularly in kind (eg, labour). In both post-conflict Rwanda and Timor Leste, communities used some of these funds to finance education and build schools. Funds are usually used more generally to alleviate poverty, thereby increasing access to schooling.

When using any of these channels for disbursing aid, donors should also recognise the role of civil society as watchdogs and advocates, not just as service providers, and should provide appropriate financial and political support.

Building technical capacity

In the long term, a stable government should be the focal point for managing the scaling-up of aid flows to conflict-affected fragile states. Therefore, it is important that parallel systems are not created if funds are temporarily channelled through NGOs and other non-state actors, and that state capacity is strengthened at the same time as non-state actors provide a temporary channel for funds. This includes providing simple and effective technical support to ensure that education aid can be disbursed to district and local level.

"It's very important that other countries help us. It's not just about money, as we have many resources. It's also about knowledge – we don't have enough of that."

Moises Samuel, director of a national children's rights organisation in Angola

Providing technical assistance and building the capacity of education authorities at all levels is critical to system renewal, and to developing good-quality education that does not replicate weaknesses that may have contributed to conflict and fragility. This requires financial commitments to support curriculum renewal, modernisation of teacher training and supervision, as well as a significant investment in building technical capacity. Bombed schools can be rebuilt and new exercise books can be purchased, but if there is a lack of technical expertise, if an 'Education for All' plan needs drafting, if a curriculum needs reviewing, if teachers, planners or administrators have fled – then resources alone will not fill the gap. Technical assistance is also required, offered through training and materials, and supported through placements and appointments.

Opportunities for change

Conflict-affected fragile states are clearly disadvantaged at every turn when it comes to accessing external assistance for education, yet they are not all the same and face very different challenges. Some, such as the DRC, have significant natural wealth, but very weak governance. Others have good systems in place, but these are rendered ineffective because of chronic conflict, such as in north-east Sri Lanka. One thing, however, is clear. The finances made available for education are not reaching children in the countries with the greatest needs and those severely affected by conflict.

There is an opportunity for funding patterns to change. Largely due to concerns about security post-9/11, there has been an upsurge in interest in conflict-affected fragile states – mostly in identifying mechanisms for funding and implementing programmes that can deliver basic services, promote good governance and increase stability. Donors, therefore, need to lead the way and be innovative in designing and using combinations of disbursement mechanisms that enable resources to be channelled to reach the poorest children in conflict-affected fragile states.

Education brings opportunity

Haiti has been plagued with political turmoil and a lack of governance for two decades. It has few trained teachers, poor infrastructure and a lack of materials. More than 500,000 children have no access to basic education, and only two-thirds of the country's six to 12-year-olds go to school. Less than a third of all children complete their primary education. Nearly half the population is below the age of 18 and the population is likely to double by the year 2030, creating an unprecedented need for education services.

Ninety per cent of all primary schools in Haiti are run by the private sector. Since 80 per cent of the population lives below the poverty level, many parents cannot afford to send their children to school. Parents in rural areas encourage their children to become domestic workers, believing that this will enable them to get an education. There are about 300,000 child domestic workers, some of whom end up as street children, having run away from their employers to escape abuse.

The new government, elected in February 2006, has made universal education and school canteens a priority. The latter is important because of high rates of hunger and malnutrition. It has also promised to continue implementing the National Plan for Education and Training, developed in 1996, which has four priorities: access, quality, governance and efficiency.

Save the Children's experience

Save the Children works with 94 community, government, mission and private schools in two rural districts, reaching more than 20,000 children. As well as providing books and equipment, we have built eight schools and offer training for teachers, school directors, school management committees and for parents' associations.

Save the Children works with some of the 2,000 street children in the capital, many of whom have never been to school. We have set up welcome centres and non-formal schools where they can learn to read and write, so that they can go on to enter the mainstream education system. When they are ready to enter the formal school system, we provide them with uniforms and pay their school fees.

What is needed

Save the Children will continue to work with the public and private sectors, and partner organisations, to replicate our work and increase access to education for 40,000 children. We will also work with the government to support community schools in remote areas and lobby for transparency through institutional accreditation. The existing legislation on the right to free education should be enforced to the greatest extent possible. Increased government funding for education should still be focused on basic education, while recognising the need for improvements across the sector.

Felicia Webb

"I have a message for other children. 'Please do not leave school because in the future you have to rely on yourself and not on other people.'"

Hijazi, 12, northern Sudan

Rewriting the future – recommendations

5

Save the Children is challenging the world to ensure that the 43 million out-of-school children living in conflict-affected fragile states have access to the quality education every child deserves and has a right to. We will play our part in meeting the challenge. Using our presence on the ground and drawing on our experience in the field of children's rights and education, we will ensure that three million out-of-school children in conflict-affected countries enter school by 2010 and, at the same time, improve the quality of education for a total of eight million children. Through the promotion of this campaign and active partnerships, we will encourage other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations to empower children, their families and their communities to demand and to obtain their right to quality education.

Save the Children recognises that, while governments are the principle duty-bearers in ensuring that the rights of their citizens are fulfilled, in countries affected by conflict governments may be weakened and unable to fulfil their basic obligations without support. We believe, therefore, that the international community – donor governments, international financial institutions and UN agencies – has an obligation to ensure that all children, including children living in countries affected by conflict, enjoy their right to education. If the world is to meet the objectives on education as agreed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All targets set in Dakar, then urgent and effective action needs to be taken.

Save the Children calls on world leaders, organisations, governments and individuals to publicly pledge their support for the right of all children to education and to take immediate and sustained action to implement the following changes and ensure that these 43 million children have access to quality education.

Save the Children calls on world leaders, organisations, governments and individuals to publicly pledge their support for the right of all children to education.

Those who hold the power – governments, donors and international organisations – are demonstrating neither the political will nor the commitment to reach these 43 million children. The international community has to act faster to prevent conflict, respond more rapidly to outbreaks of conflict and provide the financial and capacity-building assistance needed to preserve peace as post-conflict countries embark on the processes of national reconstruction.

Education rewrites the future

Education in Southern Sudan is almost non-existent, due to over two decades of war. More than 1.5 million people have been killed and about four million forced to flee to the north or to other countries. Many of them have still not been able to return. The education system and infrastructure have been totally destroyed.

Over the last ten years, ad hoc education programmes have been set up by local communities, NGOs and faith-based organisations, but the Ministry of Education is run by volunteers and teachers are untrained, unpaid and often have had very little schooling themselves. Going to school, for those children who do, means sitting under a tree or in a grass hut, with no water or toilets, without even the most basic teaching and learning materials.

The children of Southern Sudan have the least access to primary education in the world. Around 20 per cent of children enrol in school, with only 2 per cent completing primary education. The situation is even worse for girls. In a population of between six and seven million, 500 girls finish primary school each year.

Now that a separate government has been set up and a fragile peace negotiated, people are beginning to return to the south, placing an even greater strain on a non-functioning education system.

Save the Children's experience

Save the Children has been working in Southern Sudan for 12 years and running our current education programme since 2001. We are now working in five regions that have been chronically affected by the war, helping to rehabilitate the country's dilapidated education system.

One of our biggest challenges is to encourage more girls to come to school. Many girls are kept at home to look after children and the house. Girls are seen as a valuable source of income, as families receive a dowry of cows when their daughters marry. As a result parents often don't send their daughters to school for fear that they will be 'spoiled' – ie, that they will lose their virginity to fellow students – and therefore will no longer be worth a big dowry.

To help encourage the enrolment of girls and prevent them dropping out, Save the Children is supporting social advocacy teams in schools. Made up of six girls and six boys, the teams go out into their local communities to talk to parents who are not sending their girls to school and try to change their attitudes.

Volunteering to join the teams, the children use dance, drama and song to illustrate the importance of girls' education and to draw the attention of the community. They use public speaking and debates to provoke discussion around education ideas, and visit parents individually in their houses as well as performing at community meetings. At school, the teams use sports such as volleyball to encourage girls' participation, setting up tournaments between the classes.

Save the Children has already trained 31 social advocacy teams, and another 15 are being set up. To prepare the members for speaking out in their communities, we train them in public-speaking, as well as in subjects such as children's rights. The teams also take part in workshops to discuss educational issues and decision-making regarding their own education.

What is needed

There is no comprehensive education policy in Southern Sudan and the Ministry of Education is severely under-resourced. Save the Children is helping to increase the knowledge and abilities of local education authorities and is advocating for the government of Southern Sudan to increase its budget for education to 15 per cent of its overall expenditure.

The reluctance to send girls to school is still strong. As well as increasing overall primary school enrolment from 60,000 to 250,000, our aim is that 40 per cent of new students are girls. We will continue to work with parent/teacher associations and child-led advocacy teams to change thinking in communities, and are working to increase the proportion of female teachers to 10 per cent.

Very few schools have permanent buildings, and we are currently involved in constructing 50 buildings. We will carry on providing school materials and helping to develop the new curriculum. We have already trained 1,040 teachers (including for our advanced learning programme and early childhood development projects) and are working so that 60 per cent of teachers will be using child- and gender-friendly methods by 2009. We are also providing support from 2006 for the newly developed teacher training system in Southern Sudan.

Recommendations

National governments must take steps to:

- make a time-bound plan to fulfill commitments to abolish primary school fees while taking appropriate steps to protect and improve the quality of education
- ensure adequate numbers and quality of teaching staff by reforming teacher development systems and upgrading teacher pay and conditions of service
- design school curricula that impart an early understanding of human rights, social justice, teamwork and the process of peace and reconciliation, and which assist children in protecting themselves from dangers associated with conflict, such as increased risk of landmines and HIV and AIDS.
- resource schools and/or alternative education centres
- protect children and teachers from violence by government forces and/or armed militia by ensuring that perpetrators are subject to prosecution under national law
- promote understanding of the right to and the value of education among parents, children and the wider community.

Donors and international agencies must

ensure education is part of immediate humanitarian relief work by:

- providing quality education as a frontline service in all humanitarian responses within the first 30 days, using the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies as the benchmark for quality[1]
- ensuring that education as a humanitarian response is resourced and co-ordinated, and that a percentage of funds raised through UN flash appeals for emergencies are earmarked for the education sector.

ensure child protection through and within quality education by:

- supporting the establishment of well-managed school spaces to protect children from physical harm, psychological and social distress, recruitment into armed groups, family separation and abuses related to their displacement
- promoting the creation of alternative basic education programmes that include school outreach centres, out-of-school programmes and flexible-hour schooling, particularly when security prevents children from going to regular schools

ensure adequate financing of education in conflict and post-conflict countries by:

- increasing their engagement with conflict-affected fragile states and leading the way in exploring financing mechanisms that enable funds to be channelled effectively to meet basic needs, particularly in the absence of an effective government
- increasing allocation of long-term predictable aid for education in conflict-affected fragile states, with a significant proportion of this aid being used to provide basic education
- expanding the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) to enable conflict-affected fragile states to benefit from increased aid and technical support through the FTI, with a corresponding increase in overall FTI resources.

Louise Dyring Nielsen/Save the Children

"Studying is the most important thing in my life."

Selestina, 14, Angola

Endnotes

Introduction

[1] There is no one authoritative list of conflict-affected countries. Save the Children has identified a group of countries that are both conflict-affected and fragile by cross referencing several lists. Countries identified as conflict-affected fragile states (CAFSs) are those that appear on at least two of the following lists: (1) Project Ploughshares' list of states having experienced at least one armed conflict during the period 1995–2005 www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/ACRText/Summary2004/pdf (2) the Failed States Index 2006 www.fundforpeace.org/programs/fsi/fsindex2006.php (3) the World Bank LICUS (low-income countries under stress) group 2004 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/2004CPIAweb1.pdf

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[9] The 2006 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* states that it is evident that countries with the lowest Education Development Index (EDI) are not necessarily accorded priority in aid to education and that these confirm other analyses that find that aid is not necessarily provided to the poorest and most needy countries. Rather, disproportionate volumes go to middle-income countries with relatively better social indicators including primary school enrolment. (Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2006: 114).

[10] 'Good performers' as according to the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment. (CPIA) scores. For each of its 136 borrowers, the World Bank performs an annual CPIA rating that produces an overall performance ranking for each borrowing government. The ratings are based on assessments of each country's governance as well as its economic, structural, social and public reform policies.

[11] Based on data from the OECD DAC On-line Database on Aid Activities, which includes both DAC members' official statistical reporting to the OECD as well as that of international organisations.

[12] CAFSs do also include four lower middle-income countries (Angola, Colombia, Iraq and Sri Lanka). Removing these would demonstrate that even less aid goes to low-income CAFSs.

[13] Data from the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (2006)

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COVER PHOTO: FELICIA WEBB

Rewrite the Future

Education for children in conflict-affected countries

Save the Children has calculated that 43 million – one third – of the 115 million primary-aged children not in school live in conflict-affected fragile states. As well as killing and injuring millions of children, conflict disrupts normal life. Families are forced to flee their homes and schools are destroyed. National budgets are diverted away from education, and the usual international response is to provide emergency aid, which rarely includes education.

World leaders have promised to get all children into school by 2015. But current promises, even if they are kept, will not reach children in conflict-affected fragile states, where special measures are required.

Based on its 80-years experience of working with children in conflict situations, Save the Children has pledged to get three million out-of-school children in conflict-affected fragile states into school by 2010, and to improve the quality of education for a total of eight million.

Rewrite the Future also calls on national governments, donors and international agencies to take immediate and sustained action to ensure that the 43 million children in conflict-affected fragile states have access to good-quality education.

www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture