CONCLUSIONS

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
March 11-12, 2009
Introduction

Most people recognize instinctively the role of education in preventing conflict and in building peace. Now it is time to begin to work toward the establishment of peace in countries affected by conflict by integrating quality education into peace agreements. This report from the March 2009 Sarajevo conference Where Peace Begins: The Pivotal Role of Education for Lasting Peace summarizes the reasons for our focus on the critical period of peace negotiations, and the next steps that will ensure that quality education becomes a reality for all children living in conflict-affected fragile situations.

The need is urgent. Too few peace agreements mention education, and many do not set in place the necessary infrastructure and financing to ensure long-term steady progress toward the Millennium Development Goal of Education for All. Too many ignore the pressing need for teacher replacements and skills training, funds for school supplies and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, and the introduction of essential peace education curriculum that reinforces reconciliation, tolerance and respect.

As a result, millions of children are denied the chance to go to school for months and sometimes years. Children fall behind in their education, or drop out. Schools fall into disrepair or receive inadequate funding to be built safely. Teachers who are available in the post-conflict setting are required to work in overcrowded facilities with limited supplies and inadequate salaries. Curricula is neglected, and may even reinforce the attitudes, divisions or behaviours that created the conflict to begin with. Ignorance and illiteracy are allowed to prevail, thereby preventing individuals and communities from seeking alternative ways to coexist.

On March 11-12, 2009 Save the Children, in conjunction with the Government of Norway held an international conference in Sarajevo Where Peace Begins: The Pivotal Role of Education for Lasting Peace.

The conference examined why education should be prioritized in peace processes, and how to ensure education is prioritized and becomes a reality for all children living in countries where peace has been negotiated.

The conference marked the culmination of a year-long debate launched by Save the Children in March 2008, based on the report Where Peace Begins, to engage children, education experts, and interested actors in the fields of governance and peace, to consider the role of education in the development of peace.

Through expert presentations and moderated discussions, conference participants were asked to:

- Review and discuss what role education has had in past peace mediations, and how education might be better integrated into peace processes to help build sustainable peace.
**Why education for children affected by conflict?**

Over half the world’s 75 million out-of-school children – 40 million children – live in conflict-affected fragile situations. Particularly for these children, education is critically important. It can provide protection – offering a safe place to play, and making children less vulnerable to recruitment into armed forces. It can offer children a sense of normalcy and psychological support in the aftermath of a conflict. Going to school offers children a way to transform their lives and lift themselves out of the endless cycle of poverty and conflict. One year of education can raise the living wage of men and women by an average of 10%\(^1\). Education is every child’s right and it should not be denied.

In populations emerging from conflict, quality education can build social capital by strengthening connections between schools and communities, bridging ethnic divisions and accelerating development. Every additional year of formal schooling for young males can reduce the risk of their becoming involved in conflict by 20%\(^2\).

History has taught us a great deal about the importance of equal access to quality education as an integral part of a society’s successful recovery from violent conflict. Although there are many definitions of what is meant by the term “quality education”\(^3\), we agree that education systems should aim to provide children with the time, space and guidance they need to realise their personal potential. They should offer the reassuring safety of daily routine, build the confidence that comes with acquiring knowledge, and, like the best of societies, invite children to enjoy freedom, within rules, to choose their own interests and friends while accepting that they belong to a larger community, and to learn possibly the most important rule of all: equality for all. Quality education should be a cornerstone for any country emerging from war that wishes to preserve a fragile peace and build a strong society.

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\(3\) Quality education is a broad concept which includes standards for teacher training, class sizes, and curricula which is age-appropriate and teaches respect and the confidence to question intolerance and violence.

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**Save the Children and interested conference participants look forward to a dialogue with you as to how together we can ensure that, in all future peace negotiations, education receives the attention that it deserves.**

**This report is intended to reflect the views and analysis of attendees to the Where Peace Begins conference.**

**We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the conference by the Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Government of Norway.**
Why integrate education into peace processes?

Education should be considered an important element both of peace agreements and of the peace-building processes that peace agreements are a part of, for four reasons:

• Peace agreements can determine the agenda for the post-conflict period, to include funding and program priorities of governments, donors, and humanitarian organizations alike. Including education in a peace agreement thus makes it more likely that education will receive attention after a conflict period, including funding and that the impact of the conflict on the education system will be addressed as well as the role that education may have played in the outbreak of conflict.4

• Addressing education in peace agreements by, for instance, committing the state to providing wider access to education, can signal that the state cares about the population and is committed to keeping and building peace by transforming the roots of conflict, thus restoring faith in the government and defusing dissent.5 Explicitly addressing education in peace agreements can thus constitute an important incentive for individuals to lay down arms, particularly where educational exclusion is at the root of young people’s motivations to fight. Therefore, incorporating education into peace agreements can be critical in bringing the direct physical violence of a conflict to an end.

• Education systems play a vital role in building long-term, positive peace that transforms the roots of conflict and helps a country move from a fractured society to a new cohesive entity.

• Perhaps the most important rationale is that education is a fundamental right, enshrined within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, equally applicable in times of war and peace.

It is not enough, of course, simply to include the mention of education in a peace agreement. The goals and targets for the education system must be mutually agreed upon, and developed using the input of many concerned parties. The peace agreement should reference education in the context of reinforcing security, child protection, economic development, and supporting socio-political transformations within a society. Adequate funding and technical support for these educational objectives must also be specified.

This agreement is in fact a blueprint that must address the root causes of any tensions and inequities within the education system, and even consider the role that divisive or discriminatory education may have played in the outbreak or perpetuation of the conflict. Education systems must work to mitigate future conflict. Schools must be back up and running quickly, in order to restore a sense of normalcy to children and families’ lives. The blueprint must ensure that schools will provide a place for reconciliation, paving the way for the reintegration of children who have been associated with armed groups and armed forces or separated from families and communities, the incorporation of peace and conflict-resolution curriculum, and for wider conflict transformation through constructive interaction.

There are many key actors during peace negotiations who have a role to play in creating this blueprint. The conference suggests that there is a clear need for these key actors to better understand where this has been done successfully, and to have tools and training which make this easier to accomplish.

There are challenges to making education a priority at all during negotiations. But we can change the scope of peace processes so that broader questions of ‘inclusive security’ are taken as seriously as the ‘harder’ questions of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform, transitional justice, and political power-sharing.

The statements and recommendations included in this report reflect significant expertise and the will to address many of these challenges. On behalf of all conference participants, we urge you to consider what part you may now play in making these recommendations a reality, in order that millions of children living in conflict-affected fragile situations may soon go to school, and real progress is made towards lasting peace in post-conflict societies in the next decade.

“Children cannot wait; they cannot wait for the care they need; they cannot wait for the education they need; they cannot wait for peace. They need peace now….If we do not make more progress in peace building, generations of children and adolescents in many countries will be at risk of not developing their capacities for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (Article 29, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)”

(Lothar Krappmann, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child)
Common Ground: Statements for Education in Peace Agreements

Throughout the conference, there was common agreement on the following statements regarding quality education, why it matters, and how it can be achieved:

1. **Inclusive quality education in post-conflict societies is about more than social justice or political theory.** It makes a real and measureable difference in determining whether peace agreements succeed or fail. The data shows that where education is inclusive and all participate, the peace is more likely to succeed. In the peace negotiations, therefore, quality education merits serious consideration.

   All those who believe in equal access to quality education in emergencies and in post-conflict fragile situations must advocate for this priority. Efforts should be focused on all of those who are in a position to affect the agenda and the outcomes of peace processes.

2. **While quality education is an essential ingredient in recovery from conflict, a system of education cannot, by itself, achieve or preserve peace.** Parties who desire a stable and enduring peace must understand and find ways to manage the underlying sources of the conflict. Equal access to quality education, and teaching that promotes tolerance and diverse points of view goes hand-in-hand with other ongoing efforts toward reconciliation.

3. **Teachers play a critical role in promoting peace or continuing conflict.** Part of the price often paid in violent conflicts is the loss of teachers and education experts. They are sometimes targeted in the violence. They often emigrate and do not return. For that reason, recruiting, training and paying educators and teachers will frequently be an early post-conflict priority. Their training, protection and their mandate should reflect the crucial role teachers can play as peacebuilders, acting as they do so directly on the first generation of the citizens of a new peace.

4. **Quality education requires a quality curriculum.** It needs to be prepared with the advice of education experts, drawn from both within and outside the current context, and is intended to prepare the next generation to govern with understanding and a respect for human rights. The curriculum also needs to deal frankly with the shared history of the parties to the peace agreement, so that young people will know what happened, while accommodating different points of view and promoting tolerance.
i. An integrated framework and policy that includes both peace education and conflict resolution skills will support the goal of quality education.

ii. It is important to note that reconciliation and durable peace may be supported by both informal as well as formal quality education. Every effort should be made to encourage exchanges, promote social interaction and allow children to come together face to face. (Such initiatives often take place in children and young people’s clubs and networks, which have evolved in schools or local community organizations.)

iii. The curriculum should recognize international law, respect human rights, and aim to create a culture of peace.

iv. The process for generating a new or revised curriculum should be sensitive to the cultural, psychological, and historical context as well as seek to involve and empower local stakeholders as much as possible.

5. **Peace agreements create high expectations; education can help meet those expectations.** Where they provide for access to quality education, the population will expect to see early results. Financial and physical resources, both domestic and international, must therefore be deployed as quickly as possible, consistent with thorough consultation and careful, transparent planning.

6. **Schools must be safe from attack.** For quality education to be delivered throughout conflicts, and in post-conflict periods, schools and children’s routes to schools must be considered “zones of peace” free from intimidation and violence.

7. **Girls must have access to education.** Education for girls and young women is frequently neglected in post-conflict societies. Yet the evidence establishes that educating girls is among the most productive social investment which supports a more stable society, economic recovery, and an enduring peace. In peace mediation, girls’ education should be a high priority.

8. **Designing a system of quality education after violent conflict requires trust built among the parties.** Trust is fostered best by true collaboration. Thus, decisions about education should involve all stakeholders, including those in authority, working in mutual collaboration with educators and teachers, parents and families, and above all children and young people. Children and youth should have a voice in the process and their views should be reflected in the outcome.

“**OSCE is engaged in education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina because this sector is essential to the Mission’s goal of helping BiH become a fully democratic, stable, and secure state. For governments, the importance of education reform along with political and legislative changes in the sector-means also greater stability in the region.**”

(Valery Perry, Deputy Director, Education Department, OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina)

“**Peace agreements are political solutions to armed conflict, and education is fundamentally a political matter because education is a central component of the production and reproduction of power structures in society. In this way, education is strongly connected to the root causes of conflict, which include distribution of resources, access to political power in societies, recognition of identity and cultural development, and poverty**”

(Kendra Dupuy, Researcher, International Peace Institute, Oslo (PRIO))

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9. **The international community is crucial.** Mediators, facilitators, members of peace support operations, experts in education, UN departments and agencies, donors, and civil society have an important role to play in the process leading to equal access to quality education in post-conflict settings.

10. **Donors and international financial institutions must provide the necessary support.** They should clear away obstacles and find solutions so that financial and physical resources are provided as needed to make education (at primary and at higher levels) available as an early peace dividend.

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“The Oslo Declaration stresses that national governments and development partners must increase financing of policies and programmes that promote inclusion of all children and improve learning outcomes for all.”

*(Olav Seim, Director, Education for All Coordination Team, UNESCO)*

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“While many of these — such as poverty, population or regime type — are difficult if not impossible to change in the short term, education is a factor that can be designed and delivered in a manner that will help to ensure positive contributions to post-conflict peace.”

*(Kerstin Tebbe, Coordinator, INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility (Ref. C.L. Thyne, ABC’s, 123’s, and the Golden Rule: The Pacifying Effect of Education on Civil War, 1980–1999))*

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**On Friday, March 13 Save the Children led a complementary session for Southeastern Europe education experts, government officials, and civil society representatives, entitled Education for Social Cohesion and the Bosnia-Herzegovina Path toward EU Integration.** The focus was to build consensus on ways forward to strengthen and reform the current B-H educational system. The listing of recommendations from this event is available at www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/rewritethefuture/peace/bosnia.html

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“I do hope that today’s Conference will send important recommendations and expert advice which could be of use to all countries for the promotion of peace and development through education. That is the only way the results of education can be lasting wealth which will be transferred to future generations.”

**Chairman of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency, H.E. Mr. Neboša Radmanović**
Recommendations

There was broad agreement from Conference participants that the following recommendations, if met, will support more instances of education included in peace agreements and thereby bring about lasting change for children affected by armed conflict:

To the United Nations Security Council, United Nations General Assembly, Regional Organizations and Member States of these Organizations:

- **Reaffirm high-level political support** for primary and post-primary education in conflict- and post-conflict societies through strong resolutions, backed by financial support, time-bound goals and accountability mechanisms. (Current international legal mechanisms that exist to ensure and protect the right to education in conflict and post-conflict settings should be adhered to and further expanded as needed)

- **Reaffirm that addressing issues of quality education that promote tolerance is a requirement under international law**, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and UN Security Council Resolution 53/1999 for the creation of a Culture of Peace Program and its Plan of Action

- **Reinforce the efforts** of the UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, UNICEF and other international agencies and non-governmental actors in identifying, highlighting and stopping attacks on schools and other violations of international humanitarian law affecting education specifically and children and their rights in general, as well as other provisions under UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1612

- **Ensure the mandate of peacekeeping operations includes the physical safety of schools, children, teachers and staff.** Include it in all peacekeeping operations and give it a high priority in the context of civilian protection efforts

- **Call on all member states to develop integrated action plans** to support the inclusion of children’s rights and education issues in both emergencies and post-conflict reconstruction efforts

- **Establish a “Friends” group at the United Nations and beyond** to actively promote implementation of this agenda and to monitor and hold parties accountable for action

To International Mediators, including those from the UN, Regional Organizations, and Track Two Actors:

- **Promote the development of “education charters” in advance of formal negotiating processes** in order to spell out for negotiators the views of children, youth, communities and civil society actors for incorporation into peace talks and agreements

- **Ensure those for whom education is important can participate in the peace process** by identifying relevant representatives of the educational community, parents’ associations, teacher trade unions, non-governmental associations, women’s groups, church groups, and particularly children and young people themselves. They can assist in the adequate preparation of all parties in the peace process. They should do so as holders of formal seats at the table in peace negotiations, and/or on technical committees or established and credible consultation mechanisms. (And where possible, children, youth, parents and community representatives should be involved in pre-negotiations to peace processes.)

- **Expand the participation of women in peace negotiations**, recognizing the tendency for them to more fully address issues related to education and rights; ensure that a more representative number of senior mediators and other actors are women

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1 J. Montville (1992) defined the term “Track Two actors” as those non-governmental and non-official groups that assist informally in the process of finding solutions and strategies during peace negotiations
• Engage as a group or as individual mediators with the participants of this Conference and with the broader peace building community to explore ways that together we can increase the priority of education during peace mediation. This might include a survey of tools that they need to effectively raise the priority of education, training modules, or joint advocacy efforts (ie. joint letters or ‘Friends’ advocacy group)

To Peace Implementers, including Host Country officials and Civil Society actors, and International Peacekeepers and Monitors from such Agencies as UNDPKO, OSCE, and the African Union:

• Education’s inclusion in peace processes needs to be monitored to ensure progress. Establish clear mechanisms to monitor implementation of provisions on education in peace accords, including specific time-bound goals and objectives; mechanism should address both quantitative elements (e.g., funding for projects, construction of schools, return of students to schools), as well as qualitative elements to measure whether education programs are supporting national reconciliation

  • To support this, establish formal mechanisms or platforms for children and youth involvement in the sectors relating to children during implementation of peace agreements, based on the principle of “nothing about us without us” (incorporating children and young people’s knowledge, experiences and proposals) and ensure that such mechanisms enhance public “ownership” over the peace process

  • Encourage the identification and use of non-formal settings and informal resources that exist in the local/regional/national context (including vocational education and skills-building programs linked to employment opportunities in the economy), for educational purposes

To Governments in Post-Conflict Countries and International Donors:

• Ensure adequate funding for quality education⁸ - to ensure sustainable educational systems - supplemented by financial support from international donors and private sector social responsibility programs especially for the construction of schools and other educational infrastructure. This should include provision for appropriate education programs for children and youth who have missed out on school, such as second-chance, accelerated learning programs, vocational skills and job training programs

• Prioritize education at post-conflict donors conferences and other coordination mechanisms, including those under the guidance of the World Bank, UNDP, and other actors

• Ensure the more rapid disbursement⁹ of funds pledged for education, recognizing the importance of addressing popular expectations for improvement in education as a dividend of peace

To negotiation support groups, conflict resolution agencies and academics:

• Prepare and disseminate a handbook for mediators for incorporation of education issues into negotiations, through such bodies as the Mediation Support Unit of the United Nations, in conjunction with key civil society actors, drawing on the experiences of Track one, two and three mediations; develop targeted checklists addressed to all actors, including mediators, participants, civil society actors, supporting UN and bilateral aid agencies; provide training to international and local mediators for these practices

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⁸ Save the Children (2009) Last in Line, Last in School, p. vii
⁹ Save the Children (2009) Last in Line, Last in School, p. 9
• Conduct a systematic, cross-cutting analysis of successful interventions in various countries of efforts to prevent, contain and ultimately transform violent conflict and promote post-conflict reconciliations, using education as a tool for tolerance

• Identify decision-makers and influential actors in peace processes to target with knowledge and tools. Increase collaboration and advocacy in raising awareness on the importance of including quality education in the agenda of peace processes and in providing the necessary tools.

• More fully define the concept of “quality education for peace,” to help promote a common vision. Elements of a quality education that promotes peace should include:

  i. The principles of accessible and inclusive education. Fundamental to this, ensure adequate funding and coordinated structures to address in particular the educational situation of children and youth from displaced communities, children affected by armed groups and forces, refugees, orphans, and other marginalized or vulnerable groups. Ensure that policies are in place that require equity in educational opportunities for girls and young women in primary and secondary school, and insist on equal allocation of resources and steps to overcome cultural, economic, and legal biases that keep girls out of schools and social activities

  ii. The recognition that while each context is different, there can still be standardized curriculum and textbooks that promote reconciliation, stress tolerance, and accurately present the often competing visions of national history (including the root causes of conflict) and peace and peacebuilding

  iii. Prioritized teacher (and education administrator) training programs within budget allocations to reinforce national reconciliation and the concept of teachers as “peacebuilders” through their work in and out of school

  iv. The identification and promotion of children and youth peace initiatives, including mechanisms outside of the context of formal education that encourage inter-community contact, reconciliation, networking, intercultural linking, activities leading to social integration, and peacebuilding

  v. Processes which identify, document and share good practices from around the world (including those from children and young people) that address education within conflict and in post-conflict situations (include a full range of initiatives) in order to facilitate additional support from governments, donors and international organizations

• Continue to engage, communicate and advocate with the broader peacebuilding community, including mediators, to see that these recommendations become a reality

For the conference programme, biographies of presenters, photographs, and copies of presentations, please visit www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture
The International Save the Children Alliance is the world’s leading independent children’s rights organisation, with members in 27 countries and operational programmes in more than 100. We fight for children’s rights and deliver lasting improvements to children’s lives worldwide.

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