

STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS



Youth and Violent Conflict

United States Institute of Peace



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Introduction

Objectives of the Study Guide

- ❑ To increase student understanding of the prevalence of youth participation in violent conflict and the challenges to addressing this global issue.
- ❑ To familiarize students with strategies for conflict prevention, management, and resolution.
- ❑ To develop students' analytical reading, writing, and research skills.
- ❑ To reinforce students' abilities to collaborate and produce a work product with peers using traditional and electronic means of research, discussion, and document preparation.
- ❑ To enable classroom teachers, students, and contest coordinators to:
 - understand the overall theme of the National Peace Essay Contest (NPEC) topic;
 - define and understand the concepts contained in the essay question;
 - formulate a thesis for their essay;
 - review bibliographic resources and select qualified sources for their research;
 - write, edit, and submit essays to the United States Institute of Peace.
- ❑ To provide teachers with lesson plans, worksheets, bibliographic sources, and factual material to assist them in preparing students to write essays for submission to the National Peace Essay Contest.

Advance Preparation

1. Review this Study Guide and the NPEC guidebook.
2. Decide whether you will use these lessons as preparation for the NPEC or as a supplement to your curriculum.
3. If you will use the guide as preparation for the NPEC, decide:
 - Will this be a required, extra-credit, or extracurricular project for your students?
 - At what point in your course will you include the NPEC?
 - How many class hours can you devote to this project?
 - How will the class hours be scheduled among other assignments and activities?
 - Will you use optional activities?
 - Will you use any of the extension activities?
4. For each student, make copies of the essay question, your schedule of assignments, and grading criteria. If you are submitting essays to the NPEC, you may also want to make copies of the Contest guidelines and judging criteria located in the NPEC guidebook. Please note that you can request a copy of the guidebook for each student in your class by contacting the Institute at (202) 429-3854. Students can also access the guidebook on the NPEC web site: www.usip.org/npec.
5. Make copies of the worksheets, overhead transparencies, and reference materials for the lessons you have decided to use.

Teaching Materials

- Library Access
- Internet Access (if available)
- Overhead Projector

NOTES:

- ❑ This Study Guide has been prepared to coincide with the 2006-2007 NPEC; however, the materials can be used at any time, independent of the contest.
- ❑ These lessons assume a 45-minute class period. If your school uses block scheduling, these lessons may be combined or may be used as a portion of one day's block. Several lessons are "expandable" depending on the amount of time you wish to give students for research, whether they work individually or in groups, and the method of presentation of their results (written or oral reports). The sequence of lessons is recommended but is subject to teacher discretion.
- ❑ You may wish to confer with colleagues in other departments for substantive information or ideas to improve your students' essay-writing skills.
- ❑ Throughout the Guide topics or activities that appear in *italics* are optional.

About the United States Institute of Peace (USIP)

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan, national institution established and funded by Congress to prevent and resolve violent international conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and increase peacebuilding capacity by empowering others with knowledge, skills and resources, as well as by its direct involvement in peacebuilding efforts around the globe.

In order to achieve the above goals, the Institute "thinks, acts, teaches and trains," providing a unique combination of nonpartisan research, innovative program development, and hands-on support:

- providing on-the-ground operational support in zones of conflict around the world;
- performing cutting edge research;
- identifying best practices and developing innovative programs;
- providing professional/practitioner training;
- educating emerging generations;
- supporting policy-makers;
- informing academia, the media, and the public about the nature of current international and intrastate conflicts and on approaches to their prevention, management, and resolution.

The Education Program

The Education Program of the United States Institute of Peace seeks to address the needs of educators, students, scholars, international affairs practitioners, and the public to understand the complexities of international conflicts and approaches to peace. Activities of the Education Program include:

- developing teaching resources on international conflict prevention, management, and resolution for secondary and higher education;
- organizing professional development workshops for faculty teaching in US educational institutions;
- sponsoring the National Peace Essay Contest for high school students;
- supporting conflict prevention, management, and resolution through education in a number of conflicts around the world.

2006-2007 National Peace Essay Contest Topic Youth and Violent Conflict

Over the past 20 years, children—both boys and girls—as young as six years old have become involved in many violent conflicts around the world. The reasons why they become involved are complex. Sometimes, despair and a lack of hope for the future—because of limited opportunities for jobs, education, housing, or health care—cause some young people to join groups that use violence, such as gangs, criminal groups, or militant organizations. At times, youths are persuaded that violence—sometimes going as far as suicide bombing—is their only chance for political, social, and economic change. Many young people are involuntarily recruited into or forced to join armed groups. There are more than 300,000 child soldiers (soldiers under the age of 18 according to the UN Protocol on Child Soldiers) participating in current conflicts.

Many governments, international organizations and private groups work to provide young people with alternatives to joining militias or other groups prone to violence. The focus of some of these programs is to prevent young people from engaging in violence. For instance, the organization *Search for Common Ground* holds soccer camps and peace camps for children from different ethnic groups in Burundi. These camps help build solidarity across ethnic divides and offer alternatives to violence by providing leadership training and education. Other programs integrate those who have fought in violent conflicts back into civil society. As an example, the organization *Save the Children* is working in Sri Lanka to reintegrate child soldiers into their communities by giving them job skills and hope for the future. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is doing the same with child soldiers in Uganda.

In this exercise, you are the leader of a United Nations task force on youth and conflict. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has asked you to develop programs that (1) prevent young people from turning to violence, or (2) help them to rejoin their community after a conflict. Base your program on an analysis of two foreign conflicts—at least one case should be post-Cold War— in which young people were involved in the fighting. At least one case should include efforts to prevent young people from fighting or help them rejoin society after conflict comes to an end. In 1500 words, your essay should:

- Briefly describe and analyze the conflicts by examining causes and the parties involved. How did the nature of the conflict affect the role youth played in the conflict? What kind of impact did the conflict have on those young people? Describe programs to prevent youth from participating in violence or reintegrate them when the conflict had come to an end. If there were no such programs, what were the consequences?
- Drawing on lessons learned from your analysis, design one or more options for preventing youth from becoming involved in violent groups or for reintegrating them into their communities after a conflict. Explain the key components of your program, including target audience, and how you would determine its success.
- In conclusion, explain how your proposal will help to prevent, reduce or resolve violent conflict.

Lesson I: Part A. Introducing the National Peace Essay Contest to Students (1 period)

Lesson Overview: This lesson introduces students to the topic of the 2006-2007 NPEC and sets the stage for the lessons that follow. The lesson emphasizes understanding of the vocabulary, ideas, and directives of the essay topic. The lesson also stresses the importance of locating and using high-quality, reliable sources in the proper manner.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson students will have demonstrated an understanding of:

- ❑ possible definitions for conflict;
- ❑ the meaning of essential vocabulary in the essay topic;
- ❑ the content and tasks of the question;
- ❑ the difference between primary and secondary sources.

Materials:

- ❑ 2006-2007 NPEC Guidebook
- ❑ Essay contest topic, NPEC rules and guidelines, and information on USIP
- ❑ Your schedule of due dates, grading policy or rubric, and guidelines for the project
- ❑ Student Worksheet IA(1): When You Say Conflict, I Think Of...; Student Worksheet IA(2): Essay Topic Key Terms; Teacher Resource IA; Box 1: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, Student Worksheet IB: Understanding Primary and Secondary Resources; Student Handout IB: Evaluating Internet Resources

Procedures:

Step 1 Introductory Quote

“Conflict is the beginning of consciousness.”
– M. Esther Harding

Write the introductory quote on the board and have students discuss the meaning of the quote in pairs for 3-5 minutes. Have pairs volunteer what they believe the quote means.

Underline the word “conflict” in the quote and ask students what they think of when they hear this word. Ask them what emotions or feelings they have when they hear the word “conflict.” Generate a word web from the ideas presented.

Step 2

Distribute **Student Worksheet IA(1): When You Say Conflict, I Think Of...** and give students 5 minutes to complete it.

Step 3

Have students share their responses with a partner and instruct them to discuss those words for which they have different responses.

Step 4

Discuss some of the aspects of conflict noted in the words on the worksheet.

Step 5

Have students work with a partner to create a definition of conflict. As a class, try to come up with one definition of conflict that incorporates ideas from each group’s definition.

One definition might be: Conflict is a strong disagreement based on a *perceived* difference in needs or interests among individuals, groups, communities, or nations.

Step 6

Lead a class discussion using some or all of the following questions:

1. Is a fight different than an argument? Why do conflicts become violent?
2. Are conflicts always bad? Can they be positive or have good endings?
3. How do you feel when you have successfully resolved a conflict?
4. Can you think of a conflict that helped you learn something about yourself or others?

Step 7

Introduce the topic of the National Peace Essay Contest as dealing with youth and violent conflict. Have students read the topic on “Youth and Violent Conflict.”

Step 8

Divide students into groups of three or four and distribute copies of **Student Worksheet IA(2):**

Essay Topic Key Terms. Divide the vocabulary among the groups and have each group develop definitions for their words based on the context of the essay topic. Provide students with dictionaries or Internet access (if you have either available in your classroom) to complete the assignment. You may want to distribute **Box 1** as an additional resource. Alternatively, you may have students develop definitions for homework if you do not have resources in your classroom.

Step 9

Have each group present their definitions. Use **Teacher Resource 1A** to guide their responses.

Step 10

Divide the class into three groups and assign each group a paragraph of the essay topic. These paragraphs set the stage and framework for the subject of youth and violent conflict. Have students prepare one or two questions or prompts to lead a discussion about their assigned paragraph. For example,

Paragraph 1: Why might it be difficult for youth to avoid violent conflict?

Paragraph 2: What challenges could the government or a local organization face in trying to prevent youth from participating in violent conflict?

One group should re-read and carefully consider the third paragraph and each of the three bulleted items that give the direction for writing the essay. These students should prepare to review the bullets with their classmates.

Step 11

Have students ask the class the questions they developed about their paragraph and the bulleted items to assure that students fully understand the topic and essay format.

Note to teachers: Successful essays will analyze a case of youth and violent conflict and will present an original program that conforms to the description in the sentences before the bullets. In good essays the writer uses words or phrases from the topic to give the reader an indication which phrase or question is being addressed.

Step 12: Assignment

Distribute copies of **Student Worksheet 1B**. If you are pre-selecting the web page for **Student Handout 1B**, distribute that as well.

For students working independently

Follow steps 2, 5, and 8.

Student Worksheet 1A(1):

When you say conflict I think of...

Directions: When you hear the word “conflict,” what words do you think of? Using the following scale, place a number by each word in the list.

- 1= think of this word very often
- 2= think of this word sometimes
- 3= don't think of this word much at all

___ difference

___ innocent

___ hurt

___ anger

___ win/lose

___ decision

___ normal

___ disagree

___ guilty

___ unfair

___ struggle

___ right

___ clash

___ violence

___ fight

___ people

___ learning

___ wrong

___ war

___ ideas

___ agreement

___ against

___ separate

___ change

___ avoid

___ intervene

___ help

What other words do you think of? List them in the space below.

Student Worksheet 1A(2):

Essay Topic Key Terms

Directions: Listed below are words that appear in the Essay Question which are important for you to understand in order to consider this topic. Using the context in which these words appear, write a definition for each word. Refer to a dictionary or other resource if you need assistance.

Youth:

Conflict:

Militant Organizations:

Suicide Bombing:

Child Soldiers:

Militias:

Ethnic Groups:

Civil Society:

Reintegrate (Reintegration):

Alternatives to Violence:

Box 1: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

DDR are key processes in ensuring security in a country once a conflict has ended.

Disarmament - Disarmament is the process of destroying and removing small arms and light and heavy weapons from the possession and reach of warring parties. It may also involve transferring ownership of these weapons from rebels to the army. Disarmament does not by itself ensure security and stability; it is only an element of a series of complex activities that take place during the transition from war to peace. In most cases, disarmament happens concurrently or is followed by demobilization.

Demobilization - Demobilization refers to disbanding military structures and control and commands of warring parties. While disarmament addresses the means of violence, demobilization focuses on the structures an organization put in place to carry out the violence. For individuals, demobilization starts to break their ties with military life and prepare them for their new civilian life.

Reintegration - While disarmament and demobilization cut ex-combatants' (former fighters) ties with their military life, reintegration focuses on enabling the ex-combatant to strengthen his/her ties with civilian life and his/her community. Reintegration to civilian life is fundamental to break the ties between individual ex-combatants and their military life and support them in becoming productive members of society and accepted members of their local communities. After being disarmed and demobilized, ex-combatants have to find a way to make a living, build new and different relationships, reconcile with former enemies and sometimes victims, and fit into the social web of relations and trust that hold communities together. At times it is difficult for an ex-combatant's family or community to accept a former fighter back home.

K. Kingma identifies three dimensions of reintegration: economic, social and psychological. Economic reintegration involves ex-combatants re-establishing a livelihood and contributing to the creation of wealth and growth in their community. The psychological dimension consists of a series of psychological adjustments the ex-combatant goes through to fit into the value system of civilian life. For some ex-combatants there may be conflict between military values and civilian values. Most important is social reintegration, which addresses the wounds, scars, and broken relationships within communities and between the communities and the ex-combatants. The goal is to reconcile the ex-combatant with his/her community and to restore trust so that the ex-combatant can contribute to the community and benefit from being a member of the community.

Sources:

- Barth, F. E. (2002). Peace as disappointment: The reintegration of female soldiers in post-conflict societies: A comparative study from Africa. PeaceWomen.
- Gomes J. & Imogen, P. (2003). Final DDR programmes and what's to come. In Institute of Security Studies: ISS (Eds.) *Sustaining the peace in Angola an overview of current demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration*.
- Kingma, K. (2001). Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants in post-war and transition countries. In K. Torge (Ed). *Bonn: Deutsche gesellschaft fur technische zusammenarbeit. (GTZ) GmbH*.
- Sany, J. (2005). Dilemmas of community involvement in the reintegration of ex-combatants, the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Master thesis, Institute for Conflict Analysis and resolution, George Mason University, 120 pages.

Teacher Resource 1A(2): Essay Topic Key Terms

Directions: Listed below are words that appear in the essay question which are important for you to understand in order to consider this topic. Using the context in which these words appear, write a definition for each word. Refer to a dictionary or other resource if you need assistance.

Youth:

The concept of youth varies from country to country, depending on the specific socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors. Youth is generally conceived of as the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, between approximately the ages of 15 and 24. In terms of child soldiers, there are also different definitions. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets 18 as the minimum age for recruitment into the armed services from. The International Criminal Court makes it a war crime to recruit children into armed forces if they are under 15. For the purposes of this essay, youth involved in violent conflict can be as young as 6.

Conflict:

Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goal. It is a natural process or kind of human interaction that can occur within and among individuals, groups, organizations or societies. It can be either productive or destructive depending on how it is managed. Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goal.

Militant Organizations:

A group, not part of an established military, that is engaged in aggressive physical or verbal combat as part of a struggle to achieve a political goal.

Suicide Bombing:

A violent, politically motivated attack, carried out deliberately by a person who blows herself/himself up together with her/his chosen target.

Child Soldiers:

A child soldier is "any person under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members" (UN Children's Fund). Child soldiers perform a range of tasks including participation in combat, laying mines and explosives; scouting, spying, acting as decoys, couriers or guards; training, drill or other preparations; logistics and support functions, domestic labor; and sexual slavery.

Militias:

Groups of citizens that are not part of a regular state military but are organized to provide paramilitary service to supplement the regular military, oppose the military, oppose domestic political opponents of the state government or serve as a national police force.

Ethnic Groups:

A population whose members identify with each other usually based on a common genealogy, and who are also united by common cultural, behavioral, linguistic, or religious practices.

Civil Society:

A civil society is a society in which ordinary citizens respond actively to problems that concern them in an organized and voluntary way. In a civil society there is public-spiritedness and community involvement that extends far beyond voting. There is also among citizens a spirit of cooperation, respect and trust toward one another even when they differ on important issues. Citizens expect government to respond to their needs and have the means to exercise influence and leverage over government decisions. In societies emerging from authoritarian rule, a critical component of building a democracy is the development of a civil society, which is often very difficult because there is so little upon which to base trust, respect and public participation. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

Alternatives to Violence:

Ways of resolving conflict and promoting social or political change that reduce incentives for violence or the need to resort to violence as a solution. These include learning and using skills such as problem-solving, active listening, oral expression, critical thinking, assertiveness, and teamwork. Alternatives to violence can include conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, dialogue, community building and peace building as well as civil disobedience, peaceful protest, boycotts and strikes.

Part B. Finding and Using Bibliographic Resources (1/2 period)

Lesson Overview: This lesson emphasizes the importance of locating and using high-quality, reliable sources in the proper manner.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson students will have demonstrated an understanding of:

- ❑ the difference between primary and secondary sources;
- ❑ how to evaluate Internet resources;
- ❑ *the dangers of plagiarism (optional).*

Materials:

- ❑ NPEC guidelines, and suggestions for sources and bibliography in the contest guidebook
- ❑ Completed copies of Student Worksheet 1B(1): Understanding Primary and Secondary Resources and Student Handout 1B(2): Evaluating Internet Resources

Procedures:

Step 1

Review NPEC rules, guidelines for sources, and bibliography suggestions with students and answer any questions they have. Be sure to emphasize that essays submitted to the NPEC must have a properly constructed bibliography which:

- contains a variety of Internet and non-Internet sources;
- adheres to the NPEC guidelines regarding encyclopedias, web-sites, and dictionaries (located in the NPEC guidebook);
- includes material that is as up-to-date as possible;
- lists Internet sources separately.

Step 2

Review student answers for **Student Worksheet 1B(1): Understanding Primary and Secondary Sources.**

Step 3

Review student answers for **Student Handout 1B(2): Evaluating Internet Resources.**

Step 4 (Optional)

Refer to the USIP website

(<http://www.usip.org/ed/npec/index.html>) if you would like to explore **Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism** with your students.

For students working independently

Follow steps 1-4.

Student Worksheet 1B(1): Understanding Primary and Secondary Sources

Part 1

Directions: For each item below, place a “P” in front of those which are Primary sources and a ”S” in front of those which are Secondary sources.

_____ Human Rights Watch Report. (2003). *“You’ll learn not to cry”*: *Child combatants in Colombia*.

_____ Wessells, M. (1998). The changing nature of armed conflict and its implications for children: The Graca Machel/UN study on the impact of armed conflict on children, *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 4.

_____ Deng, B., Deng, A., & Ajak, B. (2005). *They poured fire on us from the sky: The true story of three lost boys from Sudan*. New York: PublicAffairs.

_____ Singer, P.W. (2005). *Children at war*. New York: Pantheon.

Part 2

Directions: In the space provided, list four potential primary sources for your essay and four potential secondary sources.

Primary Sources

Secondary Sources

Part 3

Directions: In a short paragraph, explain why a good essay is based on both primary and secondary sources.

Student Handout I B(2): Evaluating Internet Resources

Directions: Conduct an Internet search for a web site and/or page that your teacher has selected or one that might be a source for your essay. Print the page(s). Using a highlighter and referring to the numbered and lettered items that follow, mark the page(s) to indicate that the site meets the standards listed below. For example, for II. A. "Author/producer is identifiable" you would highlight the name of the author/producer and write "II A" alongside that information.

I. Overall Purpose

- A. Information at this site is relevant to my topic.
- B. My purpose in using the site meshes with the purpose of its author/producer.

II. Source

- A. Author/producer is identifiable.
- B. Credentials of author/producer are available.
- C. Credentials suggest that author/producer has expertise on the subject.
- D. Sponsor/location of the site is shown in the URL
 - 1. i.e., .edu; .gov; .com.
 - 2. Beware of personal home pages with no official sanction.
- E. Mail-to link is offered for submission of questions or comments.

III. Content

- A. Information is attributed properly or clearly expressed as the author/producer's original work-product.
- B. Accuracy of factual material can be verified with links to other sources.
- C. Subjective opinion or bias is clearly presented as such.
- D. There is a clear indication of whether the material only covers a specific time period.
- E. Site has been updated recently as reflected by the date on the page.
- F. Information is up-to-date.
- G. Links are relevant and appropriate.

IV. Style and Functionality

- A. Site is laid out clearly and logically with well-organized subsections.
- B. Writing style is appropriate for an academic audience.
- C. Site is easy to navigate including:
 - 1. Clearly labeled *Back*, *Home*, *Go To Top* icons/links.
 - 2. Internal indexing links on lengthy pages.
- D. Links to remote sites all work.
- E. Search capability is offered if the site is extensive.

Handout based on Jacobson, Trudi and Laura Cohen, "Evaluating Internet Resources" University at Albany Libraries at <http://library.albany.edu/internet/evaluate.html>.

Lesson II: Analyzing a Conflict (1 period)

Lesson Overview: In this lesson students will explore the process of analyzing conflicts, both local and global, as a necessary step in resolving conflicts.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson students will have demonstrated an understanding of:

- ❑ the various elements of a conflict and what they mean;
- ❑ the process of analyzing a conflict.

Materials:

- ❑ Student Handout 2: Elements of Conflict; Student Worksheet 2(a): Describing a Conflict; Student Worksheet 2(b): Understanding Individuals
- ❑ Youth profiles for Abu, Fatmata, Mark, and Colin

Procedures:

Step 1 Introductory Quote

“Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict.”
-William Ellery Channing

Write the introductory quote on the board and have students discuss the meaning of the quote in pairs for 3-5 minutes. Have pairs volunteer what they believe the quote means.

Step 2

Ask students what kinds of conflict exist in their lives, internally, at home, with friends, at school. What are these conflicts about? Who is involved in these conflicts?

Step 3

Have students share with a partner a conflict they have been involved in either in their school or community. What was the conflict about? Who was involved? How was the conflict resolved? What did they learn from the conflict? Ask for volunteers to share their experiences. Ask the class to identify similar elements in the conflicts shared with the class.

Step 4

Explain to students that there are several elements to a conflict. Distribute **Student**

Handout 2: Elements of Conflict and review the 5 elements. Have students return to their partner and share any information on the handout sheet that they did not already share about the conflict in which they were involved.

Step 5

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group an article from a magazine or newspaper that illustrates a conflict either between individuals or between groups. Have students read the article silently in their groups and complete the worksheet **Student Worksheet 2(I): Describing a Conflict** together.

Step 6

Have each group present a summary of their conflict based on the responses on their worksheet.

Step 7

Lead a class discussion using the questions below.

1. What are some of the common elements that you heard in the group presentations?
2. Think of a personal conflict. Were these elements part of the conflict? Which ones?
3. Why is it useful to analyze a conflict before deciding how you will respond to it?

Step 8

Assign each student a profile to examine for homework. Try to assign the same number of students to each profile. Have students complete **Student Worksheet 2(a): Understanding Individuals** and **Student Worksheet 2(b): Describing a Conflict** based on the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland. Students will need to research the conflict presented in the profile. The profile is merely a starting point and a way to personalize the conflict.

For students working independently

Follow steps 1, 2, 4, and 8.

Student Handout 2: Elements of Conflict

Understanding a conflict is difficult because of the many issues involved. Understanding a conflict that is taking place in another part of the world adds to the complexity, as you have to learn about the history, geography, political, economic, and social conditions that surround the conflict. But understanding the nature of conflict is the first step in deciding how to respond to it. Once you know what the conflict is about, how it began, what is fueling it, and who the players are, you may be able to identify ways to resolve the conflict. The elements listed below can help you analyze and understand conflicts.

WHAT IS THE CONFLICT ABOUT?

- Is it about values and beliefs?
- Is it about power?
- Is it about needs (physical needs, emotional needs—respect, love, friendship)?
- Is it about resources or the distribution of resources?
- Is it about identity?
- What does each party want? Are the issues that the parties say they are fighting about the only issues that divide them? Are there areas of common interest that might provide common ground to the parties? Does each side have other needs that must be dealt with in order to resolve the conflict? What resources do the parties have to continue the conflict? Have these changed over time?

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT?

- Is it an internal conflict—a conflict with oneself?
- Is it an interpersonal conflict—a conflict between two or more people?
- Is it an intergroup conflict—a conflict between two or more groups?
- Is it an intragroup conflict—a conflict within a group?
- Is it an international conflict—a conflict among two or more countries?
- Is it a regional or global conflict—a conflict that involves many countries and peoples?
- Who are the key people (antagonists, decision-makers, peacemakers, neighbors, influential outsiders) involved in this conflict? What are the important institutions?

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE IN THE CONFLICT?

- Do the parties have equal power?
- How well do they know each other?
- How much do they rely on each other? Do the actions of one seriously affect the actions of the other?
- Do they communicate? If so, how? What relationships do they have with other actors?

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT?

- What is the context—history, political system, economic, social and environmental conditions—in which this conflict is occurring?
- When did this conflict begin and what triggered it? How long has it gone on? Is there active fighting, and if so, is it violent? Has it changed in intensity or gone through phases? Is it confined to a specific space or distributed over a large area? Could this conflict spread to neighboring regions? What would the consequences be?
- How intense is the conflict? Is the conflict life-threatening? How does the intensity affect possible solutions to the conflict?
- What conditions make a society more vulnerable to violent conflict? Can those conditions be changed or overcome?

HOW HAVE THE PEOPLE IN THE CONFLICT CHOSEN TO DEAL WITH THE CONFLICT?

- Did they use one or more of the following conflict styles: confront or compete; accommodate; compromise; problem-solve; avoid?
- What peacemaking efforts have there been? What was the result? Have the parties tried to solve their problems without outside help? If outsiders have helped, what has been the result of their efforts?

Student Worksheet 2(a): Describing a Conflict

1. Describe the conflict in one sentence.
2. What type of conflict is it? (internal, interpersonal...)
3. Who are the parties (different individuals or groups) involved in the conflict?
4. Describe their relationship.
5. What are the sources of the conflict? (e.g., resources, power, values, needs)
6. What is the history of the conflict? How long has the conflict been going on? Is it recurring? How serious is the conflict?
7. How are the parties currently dealing with the conflict?
8. What problem/issue seems the most difficult to resolve?
9. What is the major obstacle to resolving the conflict?
10. What can the parties do to move toward resolution?

Youth Profile 1: Abu

The profile below is from the United Nations website <http://www.un.org/works/goingon/goinghome.html>. The profile is a transcript from a UN video series entitled What's Going On? which highlights a number of international issues affecting youth. Abu's profile is the story of a child soldier in Sierra Leone.

Abu

"I don't know how old I am," said Abu Bakar Bangura, a slight and serious young boy from the West African country of Sierra Leone. "I was very young when I was taken from my family," he explained. Abu, as he is known, is one of the 10,000 children who were abducted from their homes and forced to become soldiers by both the pro-government and the rebel forces during the 10-year civil war that tore his country apart.

An estimated 300,000 children like Abu have been kidnapped or conscripted to fight as a child soldiers in wars around the world.

Abu's Story

After being kidnapped by the rebel group, Abu was drugged, beaten, and forced to commit terrible atrocities. Instead of a childhood of innocence and affection, he lived a life of violence and fear. He was a fast learner and survived by following orders. "In the war, I was trying not to make wicked things. That's why God saved me," he said.

Although a UN-sponsored peace agreement called for the disarmament and release of all child soldiers in 1999, the fighting in Sierra Leone did not stop until 2001. Only then could these children put down their weapons and return to their homes and their childhoods. But many had forgotten how to be children and part of a family. Fighting and fending for themselves was all that they remembered. Those who could remember where they were from were often afraid to return for fear of rejection by their families.

The United Nations and partners such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have been working to reunite former child soldiers with their families.

Actor Michael Douglas, a United Nations

Messenger of Peace, met Abu while at the Child Protection Care Center in Kono in the eastern district of Sierra Leone. At its highest capacity, the Center housed as many as 166 former child soldiers, but when Michael met Abu, the Center had only a few occupants. Since the war ended, Abu had been in a French-speaking refugee camp, had lived on his own, and had now been at the Center for two months. But Abu's time was running out, if his family wasn't found soon, he would be placed in foster care, an option that he was not looking forward to.

"Abu has lost a lot; he doesn't know what it is to have someone take care of him," explained Samuel T. Kamanda, known as T-Boy, the IRC's assistant program manager for the Child Protection Care Center.

Although T-Boy had already visited several villages trying to track down Abu's family without success, he decided to follow one of Abu's last leads - a village in another region of Sierra Leone. Michael Douglas accompanied T-Boy and Abu on the quest. After flying in on a UN helicopter, they walked for miles in a tiring search for Abu's village and family.

Finally, after walking under the hot sun, they came to a village, and suddenly, while waiting for the village chief, Abu heard a cry of joy and surprise. It was his mother. Abu recognized her immediately and rushed to her crying with relief and excitement.

"It's incredible to see Abu in his mother's arms. I'm overwhelmed," said Douglas. "I never expected to see Abu reunited with his family."

What's Next for Abu?

Today Abu is living with his family, but he carries deep emotional scars. It may take time for Abu to feel at home and to deal with the memories of a haunting past.

Youth Profile 2: Fatmata

The profile below is from the United Nations website <http://www.un.org/works/goingon/goinghome.html>. The profile is a transcript from a UN video series entitled What's Going On? which highlights a number of international issues affecting youth. Fatmata's profile is the story of a young female involved in Sierra Leone's violent conflict.

Fatmata

For the last 11 years, Fatmata Kamara has rarely let people see her radiant smile. Haunted by all that she has lost during the savage decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone, Fatmata has had little to smile about. During the war, she was taken from her family to work as a slave and the "wife" of a warlord.

Fatmata's Story

In the abandoned house she shares with other homeless girls in the district of Kono, Fatmata recalled the terrifying time when rebels rampaged through the village where she was staying with relatives, looting and killing everyone, including her aunt and uncle.

"I was hiding under a bed with two other children," she remembered. "There was chaos everywhere. One of the rebels came and took me and hid me in the mosque, where the Imam prays. I thought I was going to die. I'll always remember that day, I'll never forget it."

Fatmata, one of only two survivors from the village on that fateful day, was barely six years old. She was taken to a rebel stronghold and forced to work under harsh conditions as a servant. "We had to work all day while they would curse my mother and abuse me," she recalled. When she got older, Fatmata was forced to become the second wife of one of her rebel captors.

When the civil war finally ended in 2001, Fatmata found her way to Kono, which was nearly destroyed. Too old for a foster home, she has had to fend for herself, along with other recently released or displaced girls, some of whom have children of their own to support. All of them missed out on years of formal education, so now they do what they can to survive.

Fatmata clings to memories of her lost childhood. "I remember when I was living with my family how everything was easy," she sighed. "I miss my family desperately, especially my mother and my uncle." Now that Fatmata is no longer living with the rebels, her deepest desire is to return home and be reunited with her family — not an easy task since she's not sure where her native village is located. And even if she finds it, there is no guarantee that her family will still be there or that they're even alive, because during the ten years of conflict, two-thirds of Sierra Leone's population of nearly five million people was internally displaced.

Then, there is the problem of acceptance. Although Fatmata has learned to survive without her family, she has never given up hope that she will eventually find them. But, as with many girls, family acceptance after so many years away is a big concern.

She took a big step forward by sharing her story with Mariama, a social worker for the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Using a technique called "video tracing", Mariama made a tape of Fatmata describing her family and village.

Then T-Boy, an IRC assistant program manager in Kono, took the hand held video camera to the village where Fatmata thought might be home, hoping that somebody will recognize her or know where to find her parents. Several weeks later, T-Boy returns. With him, he brought a video message from the village. As he played the videotape, all the other girls in Fatmata's house gathered around to watch. Fatmata saw instantly that her family had been found. Through her tears, she recognized her mother's face for the first time in 11 years and her eyes lit up with happiness. All of the other girls hug her and erupt in songs of joy. T-Boy hoped that Fatmata's successful family tracing would encourage the other girls to share their stories as well.

Since many girls are concerned about their family's acceptance, this video messaging program is a safe and easy way to tell their families that they are alive and want to come home as well as to find out if their families want them back.

In Fatmata's case, her parents can't believe she's alive. "When she was abducted, I cried for an entire year," reflected her mother. "I used to dream of Fatmata. It's been so long that I can't even remember a time when we were together."

What's Next for Fatmata?

Fatmata's wishes came true. Her mother wants to see her daughter, as does her whole family and community. She still loves her and wants to see her to come home. "This is the best day for me," Fatmata said, flashing a luminous smile.

Now that Fatmata is living with her family, she is thinking about opening her own business. Fatmata has hope that she can rebuild her life.

Youth Profile 3: Mark

The profile below is from the United Nations website <http://www.un.org/works/goingon/goinghome.html>. The profile is a transcript from a UN video series entitled What's Going On? which highlights a number of international issues affecting youth. Mark's profile is the story of the impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland on a young Catholic.

Mark

In Northern Ireland, decades of violent conflict between two opposing traditions—Nationalist Catholics and Loyalist Protestants—have left thousands dead. The cycle of violence is perpetuated as hatred and is passed from one generation to the next.

Since a peace agreement in 1998, the violence in Northern Ireland has decreased; people are struggling to overcome deep mistrust and put ancient hatreds behind them. However, attacks by extremist paramilitary groups on both sides of the conflict continue to claim innocent lives.

Teenagers like Mark Rodgers feel the struggle most profoundly, as they have experienced a personal loss that makes them want to strike back. Now there is hope as young people make a conscious effort to break the cycle of violence that has plagued generations before them.

Mark's Story

Mark is a Catholic. When he was just six years old, his father was shot and killed by Protestant gunmen. To this day, Mark remains deeply affected and finds it hard to deal with the loss. He struggles with the anger and the desire for revenge that often haunts the families of victims.

Mark rarely talks about the tragedy and keeps his memories to himself. "I wouldn't ever tell anyone about it. I would never share it. I just tell them about myself," he says. He finds some release in boxing—a sport he is good at and practices regularly at a local gym.

The death of Mark's father was well publicized by the media, but Mark does not need the television or the newspaper to recall what is burned in his memory. His feelings make the incident seem like yesterday—not ten years ago. He had locked his feelings inside for so long that his anger began pulling him into despair.

Finally, Mark decided to seek help at Belfast's Wave Trauma Centre, which helps Catholic and Protestant children deal with tragedy—together. Like Mark, almost everyone at the Centre has

lost someone to the conflict.

At the Wave, kids who would normally be enemies work together to help each other recover. Ironically, their losses often stem from the very same tragedy. The bombing that killed the relatives of Leah and Tamar, two other teenagers seeking help, prompted the retaliatory murder of Mark's father.

Allan McBride, a youth worker at the Wave, is also a victim. His wife was killed in a bombing in 1993. Since then, he has dedicated his life to helping kids cope. At the Centre, Allan leads activities that suggest creative ways for the kids to express themselves and begin the process of recovery. Often, even a simple art project will spark a positive memory.

For one art project, Mark focused on a good memory of his father and took a snapshot to express it. Taking a simple photograph is one small step but it is how the Wave helps kids re-focus their emotions. Allan publishes their artwork in a book, which represents their experiences.

What's Next for Mark?

As Mark continues at the Wave, he is able to share his feelings more openly. And although he still battles with anger, he recognizes that he is changing. He reflects on the change, saying, "If I didn't go to the Wave, I would definitely, definitely be a different person. I probably would do something really stupid...probably would join a paramilitary group or something. But since I've gone [to] the Wave and done boxing, it's kept all that away."

When Ronan Tynan, a famous Irish singer, visits the Wave, his energy and enthusiasm draw Mark out. When Ronan asks the teenager what he wants to do in life, Mark shyly admits that he wants to be "a rapper." "Do it! Do it!" Ronan urges Mark who responds with a rare smile. Since he began attending activities at the Wave, Mark has begun opening up to others and can now imagine a life free of depression and fear.

Youth Profile 4: Colin

The profile below is from the United Nations website <http://www.un.org/works/goingon/goinghome.html>. The profile is a transcript from a UN video series entitled *What's Going On?* which highlights a number of international issues affecting youth. Colin's profile is the story of the impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland on a young Protestant.

Colin

Until very recently, Northern Ireland was plagued by the "Troubles", a conflict that raged between two opposing traditions—Protestant Loyalists and Nationalist Catholics. Intolerance passed from one generation to the next, perpetuating the cycle of violence. Since 1998, there has been an uneasy peace, and now some young people and their families are working to break with the past.

Colin's Story

Colin McCrory lives with his family in one of the most contentious areas of Belfast: the top of Shankill Road on the Protestant side of a "Peace Wall," which divides his neighborhood from the Catholic area. At a point along the wall, the Catholic homes are on one side of the street, while Protestants reside on the other. To an outsider, the people and houses look the same. Yet the locals only see the differences. Even today, when walking home from school, Colin is careful to keep to the Protestant side of the street. One time when he strayed from the Protestant side, a group of Catholic kids beat him severely.

Colin was barely five years old at the time of the infamous Shankill bombing. History has recorded it as the largest loss of life in a single incident since 1987. Ten people were killed, including the bomber and 57 were injured. The unionist Irish Republican Army claimed responsibility for the bombing but said the bomb was not intended to kill civilians; rather it was meant to detonate during the meeting of a rival unionist group. The loyalists retaliated immediately, killing 14 Catholics.

Colin and his family were especially affected by the Shankill bombing. Alfie, Colin's father, was in the area of the fish shop when the bomb exploded. Amid the carnage and mass confusion, Alfie was frantically rescuing the wounded. As he lifted one injured person out of the wreckage, Alfie wondered why the man was wearing surgical gloves. The victim was taken to hospital where he fully recovered. Later, the family

learned that the man with the gloves was not only a Catholic. He was the bomber.

The McCrory family paid a heavy price for Alfie's role in "helping a Fenian." Ostracized by their own people, they became a target for retaliatory violence. The family lived in fear. Every morning, they checked the car for bombs. At night, they locked every window and door, inside and out, including the bedrooms. The Troubles had made the McCrory family prisoners in their own home. Years of tension and violence took their toll. The hatred was destroying their lives of the McCrory family. Alfie realized that if his son was to have any future, they had to break with the past and change their attitudes.

What's Next for Colin?

In Northern Ireland, most Protestant and Catholic children go to separate schools, a system, which perpetuates entrenched beliefs. Integrated schools encourage children on each side of the conflict to learn to get along. Though a 2003 poll showed that 82 percent of the Northern Ireland population supports integrated education, only 16,500 students or 5 percent of school age children attend 50 integrated schools. Colin is one of them. He made a bold decision to attend Hazelwood Integrated College.

At Hazelwood, discussions about religion and politics are encouraged, where normally such conversations would end in violence. Students are given the chance to explore what they have in common and examine their differences in a supportive, non-violent environment. In short, they find ways to get along.

Colin and his father are committed to change and the teenager has clearly benefited from his time at Hazelwood. He is confident and talks positively about his future. If other parents like Alfie McCrory let their children form their own opinions and break from past attitudes—even if they don't agree with them—there can be change in Northern Ireland.

Lesson III: Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Conflict (1 period)

Lesson Overview: In this lesson students will explore local and global strategies for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson students will have demonstrated an understanding of:

- ❑ different strategies for preventing, managing, and resolving conflict;
- ❑ the purposes and functions of community organizations that address conflict.

Materials:

- ❑ Student Worksheets 2(a) and 2(b); Student Worksheet 3: Interview Questionnaire
- ❑ Student Handout 3: Responding to Conflict

Procedures:

Step 1 Introductory Quote

“The direct use of force is such a poor solution to any problem, it is generally employed only by small children and large nations.”

- **David Friedman**

Write the introductory quote on the board and have students discuss the meaning of the quote in pairs for 3-5 minutes. Have pairs volunteer what they believe the quote means.

Step 2

Put students in pairs based on the country represented in the profile they read. Students who read Abu’s story should be paired with students who read Fatmata’s. Students who read Mark’s story should be paired with students who read Colin’s. Have students share the story of the youth in their profile and discuss similarities and differences in the young people’s experiences.

Step 3

Divide students into groups of four with each group including a student who read a different profile. Have students summarize the information on **Student Worksheets 2(a) and 2(b)**.

Step 4

Lead a whole class discussion using some or all of the following questions. In your discussion pay special attention to the notion of reintegration.

1. What surprised you from the profiles?

2. What elements of these conflicts do you see where you live? Do you know someone who has had an experience similar to one of the young people in the profiles?
3. Why should people who live so far away from a conflict be concerned about the people involved?

Step 5

Remind students that analyzing a conflict can prepare you to think about ways to manage and resolve it. Ask students what their school or community does to try to reduce the number of violent conflicts around them. What could the school or community do differently? What organizations exist that focus on conflict prevention, management, or resolution in their school or community?

Step 6

Have students brainstorm organizations or groups working to prevent or resolve conflicts in their school or community, e.g. peer mediation, community mediation centers, or peaceable classrooms programs. Refer to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center at www.safeyouth.org for examples of community-based organizations that address conflict prevention and management.

Step 7

Ask students to select one of the organizations listed that they would like to learn more about. Tell students they will interview someone who participates in the organization they select in order to learn more about conflict prevention and management strategies. Brainstorm with students questions they might want to ask. Have students develop a list of questions in pairs. Distribute **Student Worksheet 3: Worksheet Questionnaire** or have students create their own interview worksheet.

Step 8: Optional

Distribute Student Handout 3 and review the conflict prevention and management strategies with students. Have students give examples of each strategy based on conflicts with which they are familiar.

For Students Working Independently
Follow steps 3-7.

Student Worksheet 3:

Interview Questionnaire

Name of Interviewer (person asking questions): _____

Name of Interviewee (person being interviewed): _____

Name of Interviewee's organization: _____

About the organization:

1. What is the purpose of your organization?

2. What kind of services does your organization provide? For whom?

3. What strategies does your organization use to promote non-violence, alternatives to violence, or conflict prevention?

4. What conflict management strategies does your organization use?

About the interviewee:

1. Why did you become involved in this organization?

2. What conflict prevention or management strategies do you think are most useful?

Other questions:

Student Handout 3:

Preventing and Managing Conflict

Once you understand the nature of a conflict, you can think about how to prevent the conflict from escalating to violence or how to respond to violence if it does occur. If the problem centers is about lack of contact and communication, you might think of ways to increase interaction between the parties in conflict: starting dialogue groups, student exchanges, common projects that will bring adversaries together. If you are analyzing a civil conflict or a conflict between two countries, you might think of activities that would work at the official level, i.e. with the government, and at the non-official level, i.e., with religious institutions, schools, community groups, and other non-governmental associations. The following is a list of strategies for dealing with conflicts at the individual level or in small groups. Some of the tools can be used either to prevent conflict or to manage it once it has developed; other tools are most useful when used in one specific type of situation. Which ones would work for the conflicts you have been a part of or the international conflicts you have analyzed?

Preventing Individual and Small Group Conflicts:

The prevention of youth conflict revolves around the creation of a safe environment for youth by eliminating the possibility of violence. Prevention strives to build skills and resiliency so that problems will not develop. Below are a few possible strategies.

1. Programs that teach respect and appreciation for people of all backgrounds through education and developing personal relationships
2. Conflict resolution programs in schools to learn effective communication skills and anger management
3. Public information campaigns
4. Job training programs
5. Community development and improvement initiatives
6. After-school recreational programs for youth, e.g. Boys and Girls Clubs programs
7. Youth exchanges

USIP in Conflict Zones

Internationally, USIP has worked with Israeli and Palestinian educators to provide them with conflict resolution materials for their classrooms and schools. These materials encourage the development of respect and understanding between groups that have differences; effective communication skills; and conflict resolution strategies that teach students to solve problems instead of resorting to violence. USIP will soon work with teachers of different religious and ethnic backgrounds in Mindanao, and island of the Philippines that has struggled with conflict for many years.

Lesson IV: Case Study (1 period)

Lesson Overview: In this lesson students will use a case study to consider what can be done to prevent youth from participating in violent conflict.

Lesson Outcomes: By the end of the lesson students will have demonstrated an understanding of:

- ❑ The complexity of violent conflicts involving youth;
- ❑ The challenges of preventing youth from participating in violence.

Materials:

- ❑ Student Worksheets 2(a) and 2(b).
- ❑ Resources for Classroom Research
- ❑ Student Worksheet 4: Preventing and Managing Conflict
- ❑ Student Handout 4(a): Case Study: Colombia and Box 2; Student Handout 4(b): Case Study Discussion Guide

Procedures:

Step 1 Introductory Quote

“You can't shake hands with a clenched fist.”
-Indira Gandhi

Write the introductory quote on the board and have students discuss the meaning of the quote in pairs for 3-5 minutes. Have pairs volunteer what they believe the quote means.

Step 2

Divide students in groups of four to share the information from their interviews. Ask each group to summarize the highlights of their conversations.

Step 3

Return to the youth profiles and ask students what the young people's relationship was with their community and other youth? Provide resources in class for students to research their cases further and find out what the local community or government did to help prevent youth from being involved in violent conflict or

to help them reintegrate in their community once the violence ended. Have students consider what the local community or government might have done differently. *Optional: Distribute Student Worksheet 4: Managing Conflict*
Discussion Questions:

1. In your cases, what challenges existed that made it difficult to prevent youth from participating in violence?
2. What challenges did the government, organizations, and youth face when trying to help the youth reintegrate in their community?
3. What can be done to overcome these challenges?

Step 4

Divide students into groups and have them read the **Student Handout 4(a): Case Study: Colombia** and **Box 2: Fictional Case Study on Conflict Prevention**.

Step 5

Have students use **Student Handout 4(b): Case Study Discussion Guide** to guide their small group discussions. *Optional: If you have the time, you may want to have students analyze the conflict in Colombia using Student Worksheet 2(b): Describing a Conflict for homework before they discuss the conflict in groups.*

Step 6

Lead a whole class discussion reviewing the discussion questions on **Student Handout 4(b)**.

For students working independently

Follow steps 3, 4.

Student Worksheet 4:

Preventing and Managing Conflict

Directions: Research the case you have been assigned and answer the following questions.

1. What did the local community or government do to help prevent young people from being involved in violent conflict or to help them reintegrate in their community once the violence ended?

2. What could the community or government have done differently?

Student Handout 4(a):

Case Study: Colombia

The following case study on Colombia gives a closer view into a specific conflict in which youth as played a part.

Background on the Conflict

The conflict in Colombia dates back to the 1940s when a civil war was triggered by the assassination of the liberal presidential candidate. At the time, the conservatives in power excluded the liberals from the cabinet, which sparked discontent within the liberal political faction. The liberals took a stand by supporting the liberal candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, but his assassination led to a national uproar. During the 1949 elections, the liberals withdrew their presidential candidate accusing the government of electoral law violation, resulting in the victory of the conservative candidate, Laureano Gómez. Between Gómez's election and his inauguration, a number of left-wing rebels surfaced in response to the government's instability.

Guerrilla groups appeared in remote mountain areas and in agriculturally populated regions. In response, the government installed a militaristic dictatorship to suppress the zones with most conflict. Beginning in the 1960's the influence of communism gave a different edge to the conflict. Thousands of families abandoned their homes and went to the mountains where most of them became part of the guerrilla warfare.

Parties in the Conflict:

In 1964 the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was established as the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party. Their goal was to fight for a change in the government. They maintained that Colombia was in such bad shape because the elite class of the state, which was influenced by the United States, controlled it. They argued that the government was in breach of its people's human rights and that the government as a whole was not credible. FARC currently calls together "all the citizens who dream of a Colombia for Colombians, with equality of opportunities and equitable distribution of wealth and where among us all we can build peace with social equality and sovereignty."

The guerrilla group, National Liberation Army (ELN), appeared in 1966. The People's Liberation Army (ELP) was created in 1967 and M-19 in the

1970s. Paramilitary groups formed to assist the government in their attempts to crush guerrilla fighters, which fueled the violence even further. Desire to control the drug industry led to fighting between guerrillas and paramilitaries. Today there is a triangular war in Colombia between guerrillas, paramilitaries, and government security forces.

The current conflict pits the government against two major guerrilla forces, FARC and the ELN. This war, known as the "dirty war," is waged by an alliance of the military, security services, drug lords, great landowners, and paramilitary groups; and on the other side Colombia's left-wing movements, trade unions, peasant leagues, and ethnic minorities. FARC presently has great control over many municipalities.

Thousands have died in combat, but the brunt of the killings is suffered by the civilian population as the warring forces avoid each other, targeting instead each other's perceived civilian supporters. Since 1987, tens of thousands of civilians have been murdered or made to disappear mostly by security and paramilitary forces.

Since 1987, tens of thousands of civilians have been murdered or made to disappear mostly by security and paramilitary forces.

Guerrillas target those suspected of collaborating with the armed forces or the paramilitaries. . Guerrillas also kill noncombatants, contribute to displacement, and hold hundreds of hostages. Colombian military strategy is to deprive the guerrillas of support in the countryside. In practice, this means indiscriminate and illegal killings of civilians by the armed forces and by well-equipped and well-trained paramilitaries that operate in heavily militarized areas and coordinate their operations with the army. In urban areas, guerrilla-linked militias and police-linked death squads target political activists and those labeled socially undesirable: vagrants, street children, thieves, homosexuals, and prostitutes. With their new wealth, drug traffickers have become large

landowners and thereby come into direct conflict with guerrillas and peasants. These drug traffickers sometimes collaborate with the armed forces in creating and financing paramilitary death squads. This violence is not the result of competition over scarce resources. Colombia has a moderate population density and abundant resources. Wealth, however, is not distributed equitably. The bottom third of the population has an income share of less than ten percent, while the top third has an income share of close to 70 percent. For those in misery, drug trafficking and political struggle are attractive options.

The Role of Children:

All of the irregular armed forces (guerrilla and paramilitary groups) recruit young children, despite each group's own statutes which set recruitment age limits ranging from 15 to 18. At least one in four combatants in the irregular armed forces is under the age of 18. These children often have only the slightest idea of why they are fighting. They are ordered by adults to kill, mutilate, and torture. Children who desert their forces are subject to execution.

At least one in four combatants in the irregular armed forces is under the age of 18.

Many youth choose to join an armed group because they feel safe under its protection. In most cases, these children have no idea what life as a combatant is like until it is too late. In exchange for food and protection, they are exposed to disease, sudden death, and torture by the enemy. Most lose all family contact.

The youngest of children, as young as eight, have special duties, but by age 13 they have been trained in armed combat and are forced to watch tortures, shoot captives and deserters, and participate in "social killings" of drug users and thieves.

Unlike guerrilla groups, paramilitaries pay recruits a salary, which comes from drug trafficking, extortion, and contributions. Irregular forces do not wait for youth to find them. They mount recruitment drives that glamorize soldier life and tempt children with promises of money and a brighter future.

Many children join to escape family violence, while some are drawn by the promise of money. Others are drawn by the status of a gun or find camp life adventurous. The majority of child recruits to irregular forces are voluntary, but forcible

recruitment does occur. Voluntary does not mean acting on free will, however. Joining the irregular forces is often the result of poor living conditions and lack of opportunity in their home environment. By 2001, two out of three children lived below the poverty line and one out of ten was destitute, according to the Colombian Office of the Public Advocate.

Between one-quarter and one-half of guerrilla units are female. Many girls have the same duties and possibilities of promotion as boys. Yet, girls face different dangers than boys. While rape is not tolerated in these armed groups, many young girls are pressured into sexual relationships with male commanders. In contrast to the guerrilla units, paramilitary groups have few females.

Many child combatants try to escape, but those that do so successfully are often unable to return to their families. They risk being re-captured by irregular armed forces and killed or they put their families at risk if they return home. Some who are captured are given to the army or the police. In most cases, they are treated well, though there are cases where children have been beaten and tortured once in the custody of the army or police. Often they are put in juvenile detention centers and then transferred to a center run by the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF). When placed in a detention center, a juvenile judge decides where a child will go after capture. In areas where there is no local ICBF office, children are sent to prison, where they are subjected to security risks and do not have access to the counseling and other services the ICBF can provide.

ICBF takes children through three stages. Initially they are given medical attention, counseling, and psychological help. In the second stage, they are moved to a "specialized care center" which is run by a local non-governmental organization (NGO). The atmosphere here is like that of a summer camp. Children are able to let their guard down. While at the center, staff tries to contact families. Sometimes reunions are possible. In some cases either the child or the parents express no interest in reunion. In the third stage, a few children are reunited with their families. In most cases, the children leave to live with several other former combatants in a "youth house" where they are supervised by a mentor. They can leave this setting when they are eighteen.

In addition to ICBF the government runs a Reinsertion Program, which is specifically for

deserters from guerrilla groups. While ICBF provides support services and protection, the Reinsertion Program gives children more independence and more money.

The ICBF and Reinsertion Programs have been able to help several hundred former child combatants, but Human Rights Watch estimates that there are 11,000 child soldiers in Colombia. There is clearly still a need for the government and NGOs to develop programs that will prevent youth from choosing the path of violence when there is a choice to be made.

Sources:

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Box 2: Fictional Case Study in Conflict Prevention

The El Salvadoran organization Youth First was formed 1995, just three years after the end of the country’s civil war. Youth First is a grassroots organization that works closely with youth who are at risk of gang and street violence. While gangs in El Salvador have existed since the 1970’s, it wasn’t until the end of the civil war that large numbers of youth become involved in gangs. There are an estimated 30,000 members of gangs in El Salvador today. Many young people turn to gangs to find the respect and solidarity that is lacking at home or in school.

Run by a former gang member, Youth First’s mission is to prevent violence among youth by providing them with life enhancing activities. The purpose is to give youth hope for a better life and provide them with the tools necessary to make positive changes in their lives. Youth First draws on former gang members and/or family members of gang members who are trained to intervene when youth are in danger of becoming involved with this destructive lifestyle, based upon the belief that community workers who have experienced and overcome the challenges facing young people today are best able to assist them.

Target Population

The target population for services at Youth First is youth, ages 9-21, who are in gangs or on the fringe of becoming involved. The primary target areas for Youth First are neighborhoods located around the capital, San Salvador.

Programs: Youth First has organized itself into three program components for these youth; Leadership Development, Educational Outreach and Community Outreach. Each component is equipped with a program designed to meet the needs of young people who display the warning signs leading to gang involvement. Youth First provides alternatives for youth by designing programs created with their input. Programs involve youth as well as parents and community members.

El Centro is one of Youth First’s primary programs. El Centro is a drop-in center that offers recreational as well as educational programs for 9-18 year old youth. El Centro provides after school activities and a place where youth can take part in weekly Youth Meetings, Art Classes, Outings, Computer Instruction, job training or just hang out and talk to friends and staff.

Student Handout 4(b):

Case Study Discussion Guide

Directions: Read the case study on Colombia and the case study in Box 2. In your groups, discuss the questions that follow.

Colombia:

1. What are some of the reasons youth become involved in the conflict in Colombia?
2. Which of these reasons could be addressed by the government or by non-governmental organizations? Which reasons would be more difficult to address? What makes them so difficult?
3. How might the government or non-governmental organizations work to prevent youth from joining guerrilla and paramilitary groups?
4. What challenges would the government or a non-governmental organization face in trying to prevent youth from participating in violence in Colombia?

Youth First:

2. What problem does Youth First address?
3. What is the organization's purpose?
4. What is their target audience?
5. How do they achieve their mission?
6. What might the example of Youth First mean for the conflict in Colombia and young people there? How are the two cases different?
7. Acknowledging those differences, how might the Youth First case be instructive for the situation in Colombia?

Lesson V: Designing a Program (1 period)

Lesson Overview: Based on the case study presented in lesson 4, students will consider what is necessary in designing a program that will prevent youth from participating in violence.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the lesson students will have demonstrated an understanding of:

- the elements of program design;
- the challenges of program design.

Materials:

- Student Handout 4: Case Study: Colombia
- Student Worksheet 5: Designing a Program

Procedures:

Step 1 Introductory Quote

“Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional.”
– Max Lucade

Write the introductory quote on the board and have students discuss the meaning of the quote in pairs for 3-5 minutes. Have pairs volunteer what they believe the quote means.

Step 2

Tell students that they are going to design a program intended to prevent youth from engaging in conflict based on the case study in

Lesson 4. Discuss with students what factors they might want to consider when creating their design. Divide students in groups of three and have them design a program either based on the list of factors you have generated as a group, or give them **Student Worksheet 5: Designing a Program** to guide their design.

Step 3

Have students present their programs to the class. Prior to the presentations, give each group a card with one or two areas of focus to listen for during the presentations. After each presentation, groups must ask questions about the area(s) of focus on their card. Possible areas of focus should be taken from the questions listed on **Student Worksheet 5**, e.g. Purpose, Audience, Impact, etc....

Step 4

For homework, have groups revise their programs based on the questions and feedback from their peers. They should turn the revised program in for a grade.

For students working independently

Follow steps 2, 4.

Student Worksheet 5:

Designing a Program

Directions: Use the questions below to guide you in designing a program that will prevent conflict based on the case study in Lesson 4.

1. What type of organization will develop the program (government, local NGO, international NGO)?
2. What is the problem you are trying to address?
3. What is the purpose of the program?
4. Who is your target audience?
5. What will the program look like? Describe the program.
6. What do you hope the impact of the program will be?
7. How will the program be funded?
8. Who will implement the program?
9. How will you know if the program is successful?
10. How might your program differ if it were designed by a different organization? A government agency? An international NGO? A youth advocacy group?
11. What other groups (private, charitable, government) might be able to help with this project?

Extension Activities

The following extension activities will give your students opportunities to expand their knowledge about youth and violent conflict. In addition, if your state or school requires students to complete a large project or service learning requirement prior to graduation from high school, the National Peace Essay Contest and these activities may be used to satisfy this requirement.

- ❑ Conduct a public opinion poll on questions related to the peace essay topic. Analyze the results in a written and/or oral presentation that includes graphic depictions (bar, pie, and line graphs).
- ❑ Interview your member of Congress, staff person from your Senator's office, a local college professor of International Relations or U.S. Government, or a person with expertise or experience related to the topic. Write a report of this interview.
- ❑ Write letters to elected officials, newspapers, or magazines expressing your opinion on the topic.
- ❑ Participate in or establish a web-site related to the topic, including a chat-room for interested persons to share their opinions.
- ❑ Create a video documentary about youth and violent conflict.
- ❑ Create a work of visual or performance art expressing your ideas about youth and violent conflict, for example: drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, dance.
- ❑ Volunteer for a school or community-based conflict prevention/management organization to add to your service learning hours.

Tips for Helping Students Write a Successful Peace Essay

Below are some ideas for improving the quality of your students' essays and making them potential contest winners:

- ❑ Be sure students carefully read all the rules and guidelines for successful essays.
- ❑ Encourage students to read winning essays from past years which appear in the guidebook and on the U.S. Institute of Peace website (www.usip.org).
- ❑ If students select cases that are still underway at the time their essay is written, be sure they acknowledge this situation in their essay and have the most up-to-date sources possible at the time of writing.
- ❑ English and Social Studies teachers can complement each other's knowledge and abilities if they work together to help students with the peace essay. Consider collaborating or team teaching for this project. You may choose to permit students who have research paper requirements in courses in both departments to use the NPEC to satisfy both assignments.
- ❑ After all essays are written, consider asking one or more colleagues to read and rate the strongest ones. Students whose papers receive high ratings can then prepare them for submission to the NPEC by correcting all typographical or grammatical errors, updating information as needed, and making last-minute improvements.
- ❑ Emphasize that ALL parts of the essay question must be covered in the essay.
- ❑ Direct students who are not writing the essay as a class assignment to use the "For Students Working Independently" at the end of each lesson.

Note: *Students are permitted to submit essays to the National Peace Essay Contest as individuals or as part of a classroom submission by a teacher.*

Additional Resources

Websites

Additional introductory quotes for the lessons in this guide • <http://www.usip.org/class/quotes.html>

Organizations and Programs Addressing Youth and Conflict

Balkan Youth Project • <http://www.balkanyouthproject.net>

Colombia Children's Peace Movement: Soldiers of Peace • <http://turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers/index.html>

Seeds of Peace • <http://www.seedsofpeace.org>

Youth Work in Contested Spaces: Preparing Youth for life in a divided and contested society • http://www.contestedspaces.org/home_page.php

International Organizations

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child • <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

International Committee of the Red Cross • <http://www.icrc.org>

International Rescue Committee • <http://www.theirc.org>

Human Rights Watch • <http://www.hrw.org>

Save the Children • <http://www.savethechildren.org>

The International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers • <http://www.child-soldier.org>

Amnesty International • <http://www.amnestyusa.org/children/soldiers>

Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict
• <http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/English/ChildSoldiers.html>

Books

Van Tongeren, P., Brenk, M., Hellema, M., & Verhoeven, J. (Eds.) (2005). *People building peace II: successful stories of civil society*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Video Resources

RCN Entertainment (Producer). (2003). *What's going on? Child soldiers in Sierra Leone*. [Documentary]. http://www.un.org/works/goingon/soldiers/goingon_soldiers.html

RCN Entertainment (Producer). (2003). *What's going on? Intolerance in Northern Ireland*. [Documentary]. <http://www.un.org/works/goingon/ireland/ireland.html>

Quinn, C. & Walker, T. (Directors). (2004). *God grew tired of us: The story of lost boys of Sudan*. [Documentary].

Mylan, M & Shenk, J. (Directors). (2004). *Lost boys of Sudan* [Documentary]. United States. <http://www.lostboysfilm.com/about.html>

Autobiographies

Deng, B., Deng, A., & Ajak, B. (2005). *They poured fire on us from the sky: The true story of three lost boys from Sudan*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Keitetsi, C. (2004). *Child soldier*. Souvenir Pr Ltd.

Ung, L. (2000). *First they killed my father, a daughter of Cambodia remembers*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Fiction

Iweala, U. (2005). *Beasts of no nation: A novel*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

National Content Standards

The lessons in this guide apply to the following National Content Standards of the Mid-continent Regional Educational Library.

Civics Standards

- Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy.
- Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations.
- Understands issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights.
- Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals.
- Understands the importance of political leadership, public service, and knowledgeable citizenry in American constitutional democracy.

Language Arts Standards

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of writing.
- Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.
- Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes.
- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of reading.
- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts.
- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning.

Life Skills Standards

- Performs self-appraisal.
- Understands and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument.
- Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences (compares, contrasts, classifies).
- Applies decision-making techniques.
- Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

World History Standards

- Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.
- Understands major global trends since World War II.