BACKGROUND PAPER | MAY 2016

TEACHING PEACE, BUILDING RESILIENCE

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PEACE EDUCATION FOR YOUNG SYRIANS

SUMMARY

Peace education plays a significant role in building resilience in children and young adults against the effects of trauma and violence, and in developing their resilience and skills to resisting recruitment into armed groups and engaging in violence in general. In October 2015, International Alert launched a project aimed at building an evidence base to demonstrate the role that peace education can play in addressing young Syrians' needs and increasing their resilience in the face of violence, displacement and war; in particular their resilience to recruitment by armed groups. Evidence gathered through Alert's work with Syrian civil society organisations (CSOs) in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey shows that the provision of psychosocial support, safe spaces, supportive and positive adult role models, and value-based lessons in non-violence, human rights and self-care helps young people to navigate and cope with the impact of war.

INTRODUCTION

Now in its sixth year, the conflict in Syria has killed an estimated 300,000 people including 12,000 children.[1] It has left 6.5 million people internally displaced,[2] with millions living in besieged areas with limited or no access to humanitarian aid, and caused one of the largest movements of refugees in recent history. By early 2016, over 4.8 million Syrian refugees were registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),[3] including two million children, who fled to neighbouring Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq.[4] The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 8.4 million children (more than 80% of all Syrian children) are affected by the conflict and in urgent need of assistance, either in the country or as refugees in neighbouring countries.[5] Tens of thousands of Syrian children are estimated to be living with life-altering injuries due to the conflict.[6] In addition to death and injury, children are exposed to further dangers of malnutrition, illness and the psychological impact of their traumatic experiences.

Rates of early marriage (predominantly among girls) and child labour are high.[7] Evidence suggests that children as young as eight are being recruited into armed groups,[8] where they are increasingly vulnerable to brutalisation and potential radicalisation. Young Syrians are increasingly captured by armed groups and subjected to torture, rape and sexual abuse;[9] rates of sexual violence and exploitation, including in the home, in host communities such as Lebanon and Turkey are also reported to be high.[10] Many more have lost the family and community structures that

1 Save the Children, Education under attack in Syria, Save the Children, September 2015, p.5, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/educationunderattack_sept2015.pdf
2 About the crisis, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), http://www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic/syria-country-profile/about-crisis, accessed 17 February 2016
3 Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, UNCHR, http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php, accessed 17 February 2016
4 Syrian children under siege, UNICEF US, https://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/child-refugees/syria-crisis, accessed 17 February 2016
5 1 in 3 Syrian children have grown up knowing only crisis as conflict reaches 5 year point, UNICEF, Press release, 14 March 2016, http://childrenofsyria.info/2016/03/14/1-in-3-syrian-children-have-grown-up-knowing-only-crisis-as-conflict-reaches-5-year-point-unicef/
6 UNICEF, Under siege: The devastating impact on children of three years of conflict in Syria under siege, Amman: UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 2014, http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Under_Siege_March_2014.pdf
7 Ibid.
8 Save the Children and UNICEF, Small hands heavy burden: How the Syria conflict is driving more children into the workforce, Amman: Save the Children Regional Office for the Middle East and Eurasia and UNICEF Regional Office for the MENA, 2015, http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55966c574.pdf, p.7
9 UNICEF, 2014, Op. cit.
10 Peace Education for Young Syrians internal project reports and monitoring data, October 2015–March 2016

should keep them safe[11] and in this fragile context, exposure to armed violence, limited access to education, loss of friends and family, and the increased stress of prolonged displacement is having a profound impact on their wellbeing and development.[12]

In this context of violence and displacement, a breakdown of societal structures and declining access to basic services, young people are increasingly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and poor physical, emotional and psychological health.

What is peace education?

For the purposes of this project, the term 'peace education' is defined as the integration of peacebuilding approaches and skills into formal and non-formal education curricula that aim to bring about an individual's desire for positive peace and an understanding of the consequences of violence; that impart skills and values to manage conflict without recourse to violence; and that encourage students to critically analyse the conflicts around and within them, including understanding the structural and cultural factors that underpin conflict and injustice.

Peace education for young Syrians

In late 2015, Alert alongside four local implementing partners[13] engaged 7,111 children aged 6–18 and youth aged 18+ in a range of peace education interventions in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey over a six-month period.

The project tested the potential for peace education to address the damage that the conflict in Syria has had on young people and to increase their resilience to recruitment into armed groups. Project activities aimed to increase young people's skills and capacity for non-violence, develop social and life skills, develop individual and group resources, develop resilience and build support networks.

This highlighted the degradation of education infrastructure and opportunities to learn as a key vulnerability, and underlined the central role of quality, holistic education in reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.[14]

Methodology

This paper draws on data from a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process of the project, presenting solid evidence about the emerging impact of peace education in this context from project activities across 13 locations in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey,[15] based on six months of implementation from September 2015. This includes interview data from 311 young Syrians and wider community members outside of the project activities, documenting attitudes among young Syrians towards armed conflict, the impact of war and displacement on their lives, and their motivations for involvement in or rejection of violence. The research also interrogated vulnerability and resilience factors that affect young people's engagement in armed violence. This was supplemented by secondary literature research. The primary research was carried out in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey over a three-month period from December 2015 to February 2016.

Local contexts and conflict dynamics affect the focus and efficacy of peace education, so partners tailored their approaches to local needs and cultural dynamics.

As local contexts and conflict dynamics significantly impact on peace education work, in terms of its focus and efficacy, partners tailored approaches to local needs and cultural dynamics. Alert's partners implemented five different peace education approaches in total. It is important to highlight that the significance of different vulnerability and resilience factors – and peace education's relative ability to address these – varies significantly depending on the context. This paper therefore documents and critiques a number of successful peace education approaches that address the complex needs of young people.

While the evidence gathered from the pilot is sufficient to demonstrate the project's value and effectiveness,[16] six months is a short timeframe to assess longer-term change outcomes. Only through continued implementation and monitoring can more substantive findings be drawn about the sustainability of the impact.

11 UNICEF reported that in 2014 at least 8,000 children arrived at Syria's borders without their parents. UNICEF, 2014, Op. cit.

12 Save the Children, Childhood in the shadow of war: Voices of young Syrians, Amman: Save the Children Regional Office for the Middle East and Eurasia, 2015, https://www.savethechildren.org.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/124119/Childhood-in-the-shadow-of-war-WEB.PDF

13 The names of our partners have not been disclosed in order to protect their safety and that of our beneficiaries.

14 See International Alert, Why young Syrians choose to fight: Vulnerability and resilience to recruitment by violent extremist groups in Syria, London: International Alert, 2016

15 The locations have not been disclosed in order to protect the safety of our partners and beneficiaries.

16 RMTeam, Draft independent project evaluation report, Reducing young Syrians' vulnerability to recruitment by violent extremist groups through peace education (April 2016), forthcoming

THE STATE OF EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN CHILDREN IN SYRIA, LEBANON AND TURKEY

Millions of Syrian children are being born, and growing up, in conflict.[17] Across Syria and in neighbouring countries, children's education is severely affected. A total of 700,000 Syrian refugee children are out of school in neighbouring countries[18] and over 40% of children are unable to continue their education in Syria.[19]

In Syria, education infrastructure has been severely eroded. It is estimated that one in four schools are no longer operational because they have been damaged, destroyed or used either to shelter the internally displaced or appropriated by armed groups.[20] Areas contested by the Assad regime and opposition armed forces have been most severely impacted.[21] As the conflict drives households further towards destitution, children are increasingly forced to work in extremely poor conditions and for minimal wages.[22] As a result, two million children in Syria are out of school, and across the region it is estimated that more than 13 million are not attending school.[23]

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In Lebanon, fewer than 30% of school-age registered Syrian refugees have been able to access formal public schooling.[24] This has been attributed to lack of familiarity with and challenges to adjusting to the Lebanese curriculum, and high costs associated with attendance.[25] These challenges, as well as child labour (involving children as young as six),[26] transport costs, bullying in schools, discrimination and language barriers have also contributed to high drop-out rates among Syrian refugees.[27]

In addition, research has highlighted the barriers to young Syrians acquiring professional qualifications, including the different curricula and access to a reduced Lebanese curriculum preventing them from accessing higher education.[28] The two-shift system for Lebanese and Syrian children, established to meet the needs of refugees in the country's public schools, has also separated children and negatively impacted young Syrians' ability to form inclusive social networks.[29] While significant efforts have been made by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education and international partners to respond to the educational needs of refugee and Lebanese children through the public school system, agencies are struggling to meet the demand. Non-formal education provided by NGOs is attempting to fill the gap; however, coordination between and among education providers, formal and non-formal, and integration of inclusive education approaches, remains limited.[30]

In Turkey, the government has implemented policy changes to support increased levels of attendance at school and higher education institutions, but, as of 2015, 400,000 children of school age in Turkey were not in school.[31] The majority of these children are out of camps in urban settings where school attendance among those aged

17 UNICEF, No place for children: The impact of five years of war on Syria's children and their childhoods, Amman: UNICEF Regional Office for the MENA, 2016, http://childrenofsyria.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SYRIA5Y-REPORT-12-MARCH.pdf, accessed 12 April 2016

18 #NoLostGeneration, http://nolostgeneration.org/, accessed 12 April 2016

19 UNICEF, March 2014, Op. cit., p.18

20 UNICEF, Education under fire: How conflict in the Middle East is depriving children of their schooling, Amman: UNICEF Regional Office for the MENA, September 2015, p.4, http://www.unicef.org/mena/Education_Under_Fire.pdf

21 UNICEF, Curriculum, accreditation and certification for Syrian children in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, Regional study, Amman: UNICEF Regional Office for the MENA, March 2015, p.6, http://www.oosci-mena.org/uploads/1/wysiwyg/150527_CAC_for_Syrian_children_report_final.pdf

22 UNICEF, September 2015, Op. cit., p.4

23 Ibid., p.3

24 C. Alsharabati and C. Lahoud, Analysis of child education survey: A study done at the Political Science Institute at USJ, 2016, http://www.isp.usj.edu.lb/pdf/Refugees%20Report%20USJ%20-Avril%202016.pdf, p.6

25 O. Dahi, Breaking point: The crisis of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Middle East Research and Information Project, 25 September 2013, http://carnegie-mec.org/2013/09/25/breaking-point-crisis-of-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon

26 An International Labour Organization (ILO) rapid assessment of child labour in Lebanon found that almost a third of working children were under 14. The report also found that children aged 6–8 had already been working for at least six months as of 2012 in the north of Lebanon. R.A. Habib-Khoury, Rapid assessment on child labour in North Lebanon (Tripoli and Akkar) and Bekaa Governorates, Beirut: ILO Regional Office for Arab States, 2012, p.37, http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20112

27 H.A. El-Ghali, N. Ghalayini and G. Ismail, Responding to crisis: Syrian refugee education in Lebanon, Policy Brief No. 7, Beirut: AUB Policy Institute, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut, 2016, p.2

28 Z. Abla and M. Al-Masri, Better together: The impact of the schooling system on Lebanese and Syrian displaced pupils on social stability, London: International Alert, 2015, http://international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_LebaneseSyrianSchoolingSystem_EN_2015.pdf; A. Nehmeh, Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon: A participative research into the major vulnerability and resilience factors driving radicalisation, London: International Alert, forthcoming

29 Z. Abla and M. Al-Masri, 2015, Op. cit.

30 H.A. El-Ghali, N. Ghalayini and G. Ismail, 2016, Op. cit., p.3

31 Turkey: 400,00 Syrian children not in school, Human Rights Watch, 8 November 2015, https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/11/08/turkey-400000-syrian-children-not-school

6–17 is significantly lower than in camps.[32] Lack of school facilities, the need to work, distance from schools, language and limited teacher capacity have been highlighted as barriers to education for Syrian refugees.[33]

The role of non-formal education

Within the context of the breakdown of the state school system in Syria, and the barriers to education faced by Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Turkey, informal and non-formal education – all education and learning outside of a formally accredited education system – is filling the gap. The strain on existing education infrastructure means that humanitarian, informal education initiatives led by NGOs and CSOs are playing a pivotal role in providing self-help responses to the education crisis.[34]

Beyond filling the gap, non-formal education programmes can support, and in many cases are supporting, children's psychological wellbeing and mental health. Alongside educational needs, psychological support has been consistently highlighted as a priority for young Syrians,[35] and support for these needs is limited.[36] Outside of standardised, formal education curricula, non-formal educational programmes, such as peace education, can offer holistic packages of support and address the psychosocial needs of children, including addressing conflict-related trauma.

Non-formal education should not replace formal education; rather it should complement and enrich it. However, the stark reality is that, for many Syrian children (particularly within Syria), informal and non-formal education programmes, including peace education, is the only source of education they receive.[37]

PEACE EDUCATION APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES

Alert's peace education project implemented and assessed five peace education approaches, in terms of their ability to support resilience in young people and their potential to reduce the risk of recruitment into armed groups. These approaches were developed by Alert's partners in response to specific needs of the communities in which the partner organisations are working. The curricula were developed to address issues including: young people's desire for justice and revenge, normalisation of violence, belonging and identity, lack of knowledge about alternative options or ways of thinking, and addressing the impacts of trauma.

Each partner in the project has different approaches to peace education, working with different age groups of children and young people with different needs. Some approaches followed well-established modules, while others were initiatives piloted through this project. While the approaches are different in focus and methodology, all aim to build positive relationships and support for diversity, and provide knowledge and skills so that children and young people can protect themselves, support one another, deal with psychosocial impacts of conflict, and manage conflicts and tensions in non-violent ways. The five different approaches are summarised below.

MAINSTREAMING PEACE INTO FORMAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

This approach involved integrating peace education curriculum into formal education in 15 schools in the Aleppo and Idlib governorates by training 15 social workers to deliver peace education and psychosocial support. Fifteen child-friendly spaces were established to deliver awareness sessions on child protection issues to parents and the wider community. The approach involved training and accompaniment with teachers and facilitators in peace education (projection and diversity-focused modules), and support for the physical rehabilitation of centres to create safe learning and recreation spaces for children. The approach:

- built children's capacity to make sense of the conflict, manage powerful emotions and adapt to the shifting conflict environment;
- developed critical thinking, constructive non-violent responses and fostered reconciliation among students;
- cultivated self-reflection, understanding and respect for others; and
- set personal goals to build positive identities away from the conflict.

32 S. Dorman, Educational needs assessment for urban Syrian refugees in Turkey, YUVA Association, September 2014, p.11, https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7898

33 Ibid., p.4

34 T. Zaman, Networks of self-reliance: A holistic response to the Syrian conflict, Report prepared on behalf of Alert, 8 July 2014

35 International Alert, 2016, Op. cit., project data and project M&E

36 Ibid.

37 This was underlined by the project evaluation, where a significant number of focus group discussion (FGD) participants and interviewees highlighted the lack of education opportunities and the central role these non-formal peace education programmes were playing in filling the gap. RMTeam, Draft independent project evaluation report: Reducing young Syrians' vulnerability to recruitment by violent extremist groups through peace education, 2016

CREATIVE AND INTERACTIVE ARTS-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

This approach centred around using arts-based therapy to establish child-friendly spaces and aiding children in dealing with trauma. The approach targeted those aged 6–17 and aimed to help them understand their personal and collective identity, and improve their relationships with themselves, those around them and the environment. It also sought to empower them to reject discrimination and better understand their role in promoting peace through creative initiatives. The approach:

- provided psychological first aid and support, equipping the target age group with constructive, self-help techniques to examine trauma and encouraging non-violent self-expression;
- supported children to develop positive coping strategies to reconstruct and strengthen their perceptions of self, others and meaning of events through interactive sessions addressing problems and stresses in their lives and with facilitators providing them with the skills to manage problems in a healthy way (identifying and dealing with emotions and talking about fears and issues affecting them, such as abuse and self-harm);
- provided access to meaningful activities and peaceful activism where young people can seek positive outlets and gain optimism; and
- supported children to develop empathy and break down stereotypes, challenging assumptions and forming a sense of common humanity through mixed activities and interactive sessions on diversity and tolerance.

FAITH-BASED RESILIENCE AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

This approach involved running an extensive training-of-trainers programme on interfaith peacebuilding processes, including facilitation, resilience, peace education and interfaith relations. So far, over 40 community leaders have been trained and implemented programmes in eight centres in Syria and Lebanon. The approach:

- built individual resilience and emotional wellbeing, mutual respect and understanding, intercommunity relations and social cohesion through a tailored course of 24 weekly sessions;
- developed individual capacity and resources to analytically interpret, critically assess and question conflict dynamics and violent narratives;
- provided alternative role models that offer a pro-peace perspective to the conflict to directly counter radical narratives and justifications of violence; and
- equipped community leaders with skills to respond to conflict situations through non-violent approaches (conflict management and dialogue) and to build strong community networks.

'LIFE STREET' WITH VULNERABLE STREET CHILDREN

This approach involved helping children on the streets of Beirut and Damascus to become agents for positive change rather than being vulnerable to violence, addiction, abuse and recruitment by armed groups. It developed a network of facilitators who worked with street children through outreach programmes. Through weekly, open-access sessions, children participated in activities focused on developing literacy, self-awareness, self-protection and building self-resilience to help them recognise dangers so that they can protect themselves from exploitation. The approach:

- reframed the way young people see their lives, building a sense of optimism and helping them to develop coping strategies to build resilience and protect themselves (by building trust and positive interaction with the children);
- taught them how to protect themselves from exploitation (by providing information on child rights, abuse and protection, including available services and support); and
- fulfilled individual needs for belonging by providing supportive and safe networks where young people have a shared sense of collective identity.

'BUILDING BRIDGES' BETWEEN NETWORKS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

This approach was centred around developing a network of youth social leaders from locations across Syria and southern Turkey, and developing their skills in conflict resolution, communication, resilience and team building through an intensive five-day residential learning experience. The approach aimed to build bridges between young people across political divides and support workshop participants to pursue their own initiatives in their communities and on a national level. The approach:

- challenged the attraction to the camaraderie of armed groups by providing a sense of collective identity and individual belonging within supportive and safe networks;
- developed personal resilience, challenging cycles of violence and feelings of helplessness by instilling a sense of hope that peace is possible through planning and access to meaningful activities;
- provided perspectives and realities from other communities, challenging negative attitudes, fostering empathy and building a sense of common humanity; and
- provided income opportunities through participation in community initiatives.

WHAT MAKES YOUNG SYRIANS VULNERABLE TO JOINING ARMED GROUPS?

Alert's research and experience from the peace education interventions found that vulnerability among young Syrians is being generated by an absence of means to serve basic human needs. In many instances, violent extremist groups are effectively meeting these needs.

The most vulnerable groups are adolescent boys and young men aged 12–24, children and young adults who are not in education, internally displaced persons and refugees without supportive family structures and networks.

The main factors that drive vulnerability are:

1. **Lack of economic opportunity:** Economic imperatives are a key driver for many Syrians deciding to join armed groups. The economic imperative to join armed groups is most pronounced in Syria, while it plays less of a direct role among refugees in neighbouring countries.
2. **Disruptive social context and experiences of violence, displacement, trauma and loss:** Exposure to violence, traumatic events and deep-seated grievances towards the Assad regime are stimulating desires to exact revenge, achieve or regain a sense of honour, fulfil perceived moral duties to protect and defend the 'home' and the 'family', and to be part of some sort of cohesive and purposeful social group.
3. **Deprivation of personal psychological needs for efficacy, autonomy and purpose:** Deprivation of personal psychological needs drives vulnerability because it gives rise to a quest to regain a sense of personal purpose, control and significance. This is especially true for young men, for whom vulnerability is compounded by norms of masculinity.
4. **Degradation of education infrastructure and opportunities to learn:** For young people in Syria, the collapse of the education system has contributed to vulnerability by creating a gap that violent extremist groups have been able to fill by establishing their own education systems.

What supports their resilience?

Resilience exists to the extent that the vulnerability factors are addressed in combination (that is, one factor alone will not provide resilience). Our research suggests that the main factors that underpin resilience are:

1. **Alternative and respected sources of livelihood** outside of armed groups, which give individuals a sense of purpose and dignity.
2. **Access to comprehensive, holistic and quality education** both in Syria and in neighbouring countries.
3. **Access to supportive, positive and inclusive social networks and institutions,** which can provide psychosocial support, mentors, role models and options for the development of non-violent social identities.
4. **Alternative avenues for exercising agency and non-violent activism** that provide individuals with a sense of autonomy and control over lives and a way to make sense of their experiences.

PEACE EDUCATION'S ROLE IN REDUCING VULNERABILITY AND INCREASING RESILIENCE TO RECRUITMENT BY ARMED GROUPS

This project aimed to assess and generate evidence about the role of peace education in reducing young Syrians' vulnerability and increasing their resilience to recruitment by armed groups, including violent extremist groups. It also aimed to test the relevance of peace education in a time of war in terms of addressing the impact of conflict.

Project M&E and primary research has demonstrated peace education's capacity to support psychosocial resilience and reduce the risk of children and young people engaging in violence in the following ways:

1. Peace education provides supportive social networks through the creation of physical and emotional safe spaces for children and young people with trusted mentors

By attending peace education activities, participants gain a much-needed space in which they can share their fears and concerns with people they can trust. Providing young people with regular contact with trained mentors to talk about issues affecting them directly counters violent narratives and the pull of violence.

Feeling unsafe, some children resort to carrying weapons. This was the case of a nine-year-old Syrian boy in Gaziantep in southeast Turkey, who used to carry a knife everywhere he went. After attending sessions, he felt safe enough to hand in his knife:

> *"When I come from work at night, Turkish people attack me so I always have a knife on me. I like you and I like coming here so I am giving you the knife. A knife does not suit these activities."*[38]

Peace education projects have provided access to positive role models. These are trusted mentors who are challenging violent narratives in response to issues of normalisation of violence, feelings of hopelessness and violence as a last resort. After building a strong relationship with trusted facilitators, children demonstrated an increased likelihood to open up about situations that are troubling them, including cases of abuse and exploitation, or attempted recruitment.

Participants also confided in facilitators in cases where they were approached by recruiters from armed groups. A 17-year-old (Syrian-Palestinian) male attending peace education sessions in Saida approached the facilitator and told him, "I want to go back to Syria to join ISIS." He wanted advice on whether or not to go back to Syria, as he found it difficult to cope with life in Lebanon. The facilitator was able to discuss the issue with the young man and convince him not to return to Syria and join ISIS. The young man told the facilitator: "Without your guidance and what you tell us, I would have joined ISIS just like the other kid"[39] (referring to another boy who went back to Syria to join ISIS a year before and was contacting his colleagues to join him).

2. Peace education promotes psychosocial resilience and wellbeing

Provision of psychosocial support as part of the peace education initiatives is helping young Syrians deal with grief and trauma, make sense of the conflict and manage powerful emotions, such as revenge and the sense of injustice. Supporting positive mental health and wellbeing has enabled the young people in the sessions to adapt to worsening circumstances and develop coping strategies.

By participating in a range of peace education activities, children and young adults are showing signs of enhanced psychosocial wellbeing. For example, parents of children engaged in activities in Shatila, Lebanon have observed less violent, disruptive behaviour and increased confidence and outgoing behaviour in their children.[40] Facilitators have observed that children are able to overcome problems with more confidence, cooperate and interact with other children better and have more positive outlooks.[41] There are a number of cases of children who no longer self-harm due to the support provided by the programmes.[42]

38 Facilitated partner reflection session report (internal project monitoring data), January 2016
39 Ibid.
40 Final external project evaluation report, forthcoming.
41 Ibid. and facilitated partner reflection session reports (internal project monitoring data), January and March 2016
42 Project M&E data and interviews with facilitators and facilitated partner reflection session reports (internal project monitoring data), January and March 2016

"In Syria, children who aren't engaged in [psychosocial] activities like this are so vulnerable to recruitment, they could be directly recruited by Da'esh or Al-Nusra. Without this, children would look elsewhere for this need to be fulfilled, which would make them vulnerable to armed groups, particularly ideological groups which specifically address this need in their recruitment practices. We give them tools to express themselves in the community, rather than using weapons to express anger at their losses."[43]

Dealing with trauma and building psychosocial stability in youth is a basis for preventing the perpetuation of violence, depression, anger, and family and community instability. It is also a prerequisite for developing confidence and empowering young people, helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives and their futures.

3. Peace education builds bridges across divides and fosters intercultural understanding and respect for diversity

Peace education activities that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds are significantly impacting on the development of respect, empathy and understanding. Relationships have been built between individuals who were – before attending the programme – on opposing sides of the conflict in Syria, and now have committed to working together despite their political differences.

By bringing together different segments of the community, projects provided a space for reconciliation, laying the groundwork for young people to respond to intergroup divisions. The 'Building Bridges' approach was successful in providing a space for bringing Syrian participants from Syria, Lebanon and Turkey to meet, enabling a very interesting and fruitful exchange. Participants from a strictly pro-regime area in Damascus and from opposition areas in Aleppo worked very closely together despite being on the opposite side of the political spectrum. Pro-regime participants were keen to hear from others about how they saw the revolution and how it started, which is a very rare exchange. Some of the participants at the workshops became friends and even planned a joint initiative together for their communities to be implemented in parallel to the workshops. Following the workshops, participants asked for networking workshops so that they could be put in touch with each other in Syria, to continue to work together and create a network of individuals with peacebuilding skills.

Increased levels of empathy have been a key outcome, allowing young people to recognise commonalities and value difference, enabling them to respond to issues of conflict they face and achieve better, positive outcomes. There is also evidence of increased acceptance of and respect for those who have a different opinion, background and affiliation through bringing people together from across divides. Peace education activities are encouraging young people to see those who are different to them as individuals with similar needs to their own. In particular, it has been noted that tensions between boys and girls have significantly reduced as a result of the workshops.

While each approach deals with diversity differently (depending on the contexts they work in and communities they work with), all approaches focus on respect for differences – whether those are based on gender, age, class, ethnicity, religion or political beliefs – as a key component. Parents interviewed as part of the project evaluation said that "these activities create an understanding between all different segments and create peace amongst individuals in society".[44] Facilitators also observed a decrease in bullying between different identity groups and increased positive interaction, for example, playing among younger children and cooperation in tasks among older children.

In a demonstration of a positive change in attitude towards other religious communities, a 10-year-old child at a peace education session in Urfa in southeast Turkey created a cross out of clay during an activity about collective identity. At first this caused some consternation within the group, which questioned why the boy would make a cross. The boy stated that he made the cross because "we lack Christians in the community and the cross was a reminder of diversity".[45]

While the peace education activities aimed to encourage mixed sessions, bringing together different groups or genders, this was not always possible or desirable within specific cultural or conflict contexts. For example, in some locations classes for boys and girls were conducted separately, particularly for children aged 10 or over. This includes one partner sessions in Idlib, where in order to continue activities in an area under Al-Nusra control, classes had to be separate for girls and boys. In areas where co-ed approaches were possible across the three countries, improved relationships between boys and girls were widely reported.[46]

43 Interview with a facilitator in Beirut, Lebanon, February 2016
44 Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming
45 Facilitated partner reflection session report (internal project monitoring data), January 2016
46 Examples from partner reporting from North Lebanon

4. Peace education provides alternatives to violence and delegitimises violence

Peace education approaches have demonstrated the ability to provide knowledge and skills, which help young people to manage conflicts they experience in daily life in a non-violent way. The vast majority of project evaluation participants stated that their knowledge of peaceful approaches to solving problems had increased considerably as a result of participating in peace education programmes.[47]

Faced with the daily reality of conflict, and with the risk of violence and exploitation, combating the normalisation of violence and use of weapons among children was a key component of the peace education approaches. One example of this is from Al Kobbe, North Lebanon, where there has been longstanding violence between the Alawites of Jabal Mohsen and the Sunnis of Bab al-Tabbaneh. Children in these classes widely see weapons as an instrument of power, specifically for boys, and they would proudly show pictures of themselves with weapons. Through the sessions, children began to discuss the negative impact of weapons and increasingly questioned whether using weapons was legitimate.[48]

Peace education initiatives work to delegitimise violence and encourage children and young people to believe that peaceful solutions to their problems are possible. This is being achieved in several ways:

- **Critical thinking and development of skills for non-violence and reconciliation:** Access to a balanced curriculum and information on peace and conflict, as well as encouraging critical thinking, has proved effective in countering violent and extremist messages and attempts at recruitment by a range of armed groups, including through social media or family connections. The case of Ali in southern Turkey summarised below demonstrates this.
- **Developing new ways of understanding conflict situations:** During workshop sessions in Lebanon, one partner invited Lebanese people who fought in the Lebanese civil war to come and speak about their experiences with the young Syrians at the workshop and warn them about the dangers of getting involved in fighting and violence. Many young Syrian participants asked about the process of quitting the active fighting and were so affected by this exchange that they wanted to get their friends and family to attend such workshops.
- **Managing conflict in daily lives:** Most of the participating children stated that they had developed new knowledge and skills, which enable them to solve problems without verbal or physical violence. In Akkar, one child said: "The new games learned are important because we can share them with the other students in the camps. The techniques used to resolve conflicts are very important because it allows us to find a common solution without fighting." Another said: "Conflicts can often affect the relationship with our families. Ultimately, it is important to respect each other's differences."[49]
- **Managing grievances and desire for revenge:** Partner organisations reported a widespread desire for justice and revenge, often expressed through violence, by children at the beginning of the project, particularly among children aged 10 and above. A statement by one child in Al Kobbe illustrates the desire for revenge: "I want to go to Syria and kill all of [those] who made me lose my home."[50] Verified by an external evaluation and feedback from facilitators, parents and communities, the desire for revenge, as well as violent and aggressive behaviour, has significantly decreased.[51]

Most of the participating children stated that they had developed new knowledge and skills, which enable them to solve problems without verbal or physical violence.

While peace education is demonstrating an ability to change perspectives on violence and weapons, attitudes to weapons and fighting remain mixed. In one evaluation interview in Turkey, one child said: "If I can use a weapon, I will fight in my country, better than living in Turkey. I don't like the ideas of Islamic State, I just think about power and sovereignty." Another child, at the same meeting, stated: "All fighting factions are bad, they are sabotaging our country."[52]

47 Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming
48 Facilitated partner reflection session report (internal project monitoring data), January 2016
49 Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming
50 Facilitated partner reflection session report (internal project monitoring data), March 2016
51 Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming
52 Ibid.

EQUIPPING CHILDREN WITH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO RESIST RECRUITMENT AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF FAMILY: ALI'S STORY

Ali is 13 years old and is the youngest of his brothers. Through his brothers, he learned how to use mobile phones and access social media. Ali was very active on social media; he had over 700 friends on Facebook. One day, he was talking to a person who was a member of an extremist faction, who asked Ali to come and train with this group. He told Ali that education is not good for him and that "it's the man who has to defend his country and fight for it". He told him that parents do not have the authority over their children if they want to go to Jihad. Ali was convinced and ready to believe this man.

Ali was a sixth-grade student who always came to one of the project partner's centre to attend peace education activities. He learned quickly what a 'peace culture' means. But when he compared how the fighters talk with what he learned at the centre, he became confused. He consulted his oldest brother who was surprised to hear that Ali had been approached by a recruiter and that he was considering joining. The brother told Ali that he is still too young to talk to strangers about these kinds of subjects. The brother deleted all messages with this person. The management of the centre and Ali's parents were informed about the situation and supported Ali in his decision to resist believing the recruiter and communicating with him.

5. Peace education offers alternative non-violent avenues for community activism and engagement

"We have to participate in training courses, gatherings and discussion sessions to develop our skills, prove that we can help the Syrian society and improve our future."[53]

Peace education makes a valuable contribution to building resilience by providing non-violent avenues for community activism and engagement. Research and evaluation feedback has highlighted young people's need for a sense of agency and autonomy, and that in some cases armed groups can provide this sense of purpose through violent means. Some of the peace education approaches, particularly for older children and adult youth, focused on developing peaceful activism, social initiatives and projects.

Project activities have shown positive signs that young Syrian participants want more opportunities to effect positive change through community initiatives and peaceful activism. These are building a sense of optimism that peace is possible and building new ways of critical thinking, thus challenging collective narratives of grievance and revenge.

Evidence is building that suggests participants are increasingly receptive to alternatives, and developing a more positive attitude towards peace, agency and the ability to bring about social change. A group of 14–15-year-old participants in activities in Tripoli developed their own initiatives to rehabilitate a house and plant roses, and asked the community to be involved as a symbol of peace.

It should be noted that, due to the short project cycle, joint, non-violent initiatives are mainly at the planning stages or have just been launched so therefore they could not be fully assessed.

6. Peace education protects the most vulnerable hard-to-reach children that formal education cannot reach

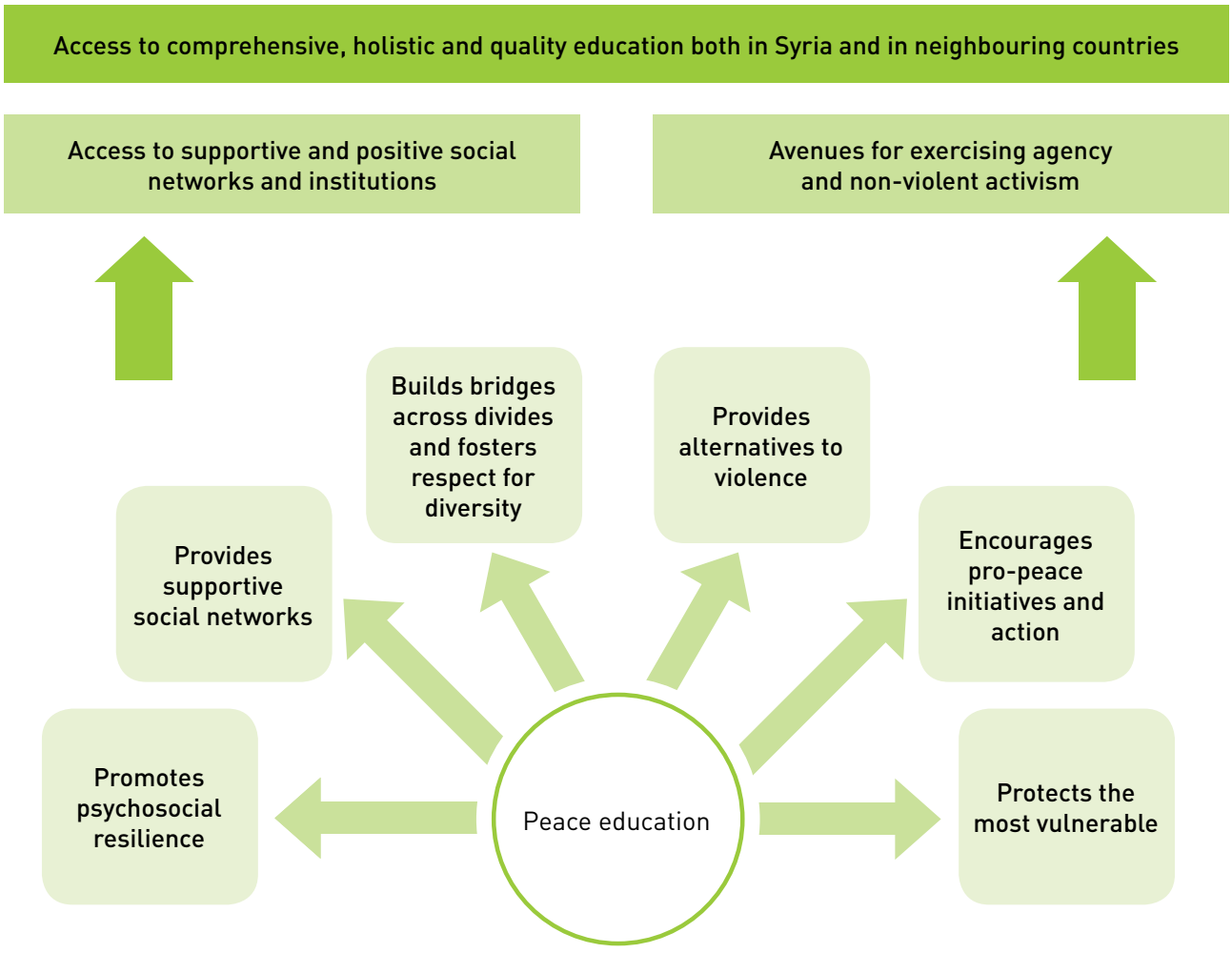
The project took a broad view of vulnerability, in terms of social and economic vulnerability, vulnerability to abuse and exploitation, as well as in terms of vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups. All of the peace education approaches involved working with vulnerable children and young people, including extremely poor or marginalised populations, those who had been survivors of violence, displaced, suffering trauma and those with disabilities. It is important to highlight that, as a result of the conflict, working with Syrian children de facto involves working with vulnerable populations. Centres, which served local communities, also worked with local hosts and their populations, including Lebanese and Palestinian communities, and some of the most marginalised in these groups. Two approaches focused on vulnerability more explicitly – one with a focus on trauma (using an arts-based approach) and the other working with street children ('Life Street').

53 FGD with young women in Beirut, Lebanon in February 2016 by International Alert as part of the project research process

While this study emphasises that peace education is complementary to – and should not replace – formal schooling, the peace education programmes implemented provided access for some of the most vulnerable children. The peace education approaches emphasised working with children who are at risk of falling outside the reach of formal education programmes and support. Partners, embedded in communities, were able to identify the most marginalised children and focused on supporting hard-to-reach children and young people, including street children. Some partners worked in particularly deprived neighbourhoods or in areas with a high number of displaced people, who have less access to formal support. In many cases, particularly in Syria, these non-formal peace education projects were the only access to educational, psychosocial support or structures, or supervised recreational activities that these children had.[54] In addition, the open-door nature of some of the centres and the holistic educational approach (combining more structured lessons with play-based approaches) was warmly received by children and parents alike, encouraging more children, including those out of school, to register.

The outreach approach with street children aimed to access some of the most hard-to-reach children living and working on the streets, who have no family support networks, limited access to education and increased risk of exploitation and abuse. The pilots in Damascus and Beirut demonstrate a high willingness and appetite to engage in these activities and support from local communities, traders and authorities who interact with these children regularly. The approach focused on developing self-awareness and community safeguarding mechanisms to build self-resilience, recognise dangers and protect young people from exploitation (including establishing a referral mechanism for children with specific needs or vulnerabilities). As this is a new approach, a full assessment of the impact of this work cannot be made at this stage.

FIGURE 1: HOW PEACE EDUCATION BUILDS RESILIENCE



54 Confirmed by FGDs held with community and parents in the project final evaluation in March 2016. Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming

TABLE 1: BUILDING RESILIENCE: HOW PEACE EDUCATION DIRECTLY SUPPORTS RESILIENCE TO ENGAGEMENT IN ARMED VIOLENCE AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Resilience factors	Project approaches that demonstrated capacity to support resilience	Limitations of the project approaches to support resilience
Access to comprehensive, holistic and quality education (formal and informal) not provided by armed groups	• Vocationally relevant knowledge, which complements formal education • Balanced curricula providing non-violent, hopeful narratives to understand the conflict, as well as psychosocial support • Critical thinking – delegitimising violence and providing alternative non-violent narratives • Re-establishing social capital, a sense of routine and purpose, continued development of learning	• Not formerly accredited • Unable to operate in ISIS-controlled areas (ISIS strictly controls education), currently limited scale and scope • Does not necessarily translate into a job (limited market)
Supportive, positive and inclusive social networks and institutions	• New supportive social networks with facilitators trained in protection • Safe places for mixed identity groups to gather and develop • Techniques to increase empathy and understanding of diversity and differences (sectarian and gender) • Building capacity of civil society to support preventative responses that allow for more nuanced contextualised approaches that afford sustainable responses	• Scope of offered referral systems limited (limited services etc., particularly in Syria), protection elements more limited for outreach with street children, only extends to the classroom (cannot protect kids from conflict risks and limited authority to act if abuse is reported) • Mixed inclusive space is difficult, for example, segregated schooling in Lebanon, displacement; challenges in joint education for girls and boys and topics on gender restricted due to social norms • CSO networks isolated, continued conflict and displacement • Continued conflict exacerbates social breakdown, loss of loved ones and absence of resolution to the conflict
Alternative avenues for exercising agency and non-violent activism Autonomy and control over life's outcomes; narratives to make sense of experiences; purpose and meaning	• Empowerment and psychosocial methods – helping children navigate current conflict and a future post-conflict environment by emphasising their agency and ability to bring about social change • Trusted, trained mentors and role models • Narratives to make sense of conflict experiences • Providing alternative outlets to achieve a sense of empowerment, status and personal significance	• In chaos of conflict and in difficult, dynamic contexts, a sense of autonomy and purpose is limited • Difficult to establish initiatives and projects in a conflict or divided setting (safety and security risks) • Continued conflict reduces individual agency and safety

Broader impact of peace education

Beyond the direct benefits for children and young people participating in the programmes, peace education approaches were generally well received by parents and community members, demonstrating the project's capacity for wider impact and relevance. Indeed, the project evaluation highlighted that all parents interviewed saw value and relevance of these activities, and generally reported positive changes in their children's behaviour as a result of attendance. There was also a number of cases of parents seeking to enrol other children in the activities and requesting similar programmes tailored to the adults themselves, after hearing from their children what they learned in the sessions.[55] Parents and community members consulted in Syria consistently stated that they were not aware of any similar programmes being implemented in their areas and that these projects had a unique role filling a gap in services.[56] In some cases, the peace education was the only form of education children were receiving.

This wider impact, particularly among parents and families, is particularly important considering the influence that parents and families and the home environment have on children. In activities with street children in Beirut,

55 Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming
56 Ibid.

local traders in the area reported changes in attitudes and behaviour of the children, such as noting a reduction in aggression and vandalism.[57]

While family and community feedback was broadly positive, there were some concerns and suggestions for improvements in the peace education approaches. Despite parents broadly feeling that interactive, play-based approaches were effective, the most consistent complaints related to the physical nature of some of the activities, which were not seen as culturally appropriate. Some topics relating to sexual abuse, exploitation or early marriage were also negatively received by parents and community leaders, particularly in North Lebanon. Some concerns were expressed about the frequency of the sessions, with some parents thinking they were too frequent and at the expense of formal study, while others thought they were too infrequent. There was also feedback about ensuring that centres were accessible for children with disabilities.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project has demonstrated evidence of peace education building children and young people's resilience and resistance to engaging in violence, as well as positively influencing parents' attitudes and being welcomed by communities. There are, however, challenges to delivering effective peace education in dynamic and conflict contexts, and limitations to peace education's ability to reduce vulnerability to recruitment. Over the course of project implementation and from the M&E stage, the following lessons, opportunities and challenges were identified:

Peace education is effective but needs to be consistently supported over the longer term. The project pilot period of six months was sufficient to demonstrate potential and evidence for effectiveness. Because peace education programmes seek to bring about change in behaviours and attitudes and often work with an extremely vulnerable target group, long-term engagement and consistency is critical. Where operating within or overlapping with the formal education sector, either within school hours or as extracurricular activities, at a bare minimum, peace education programmes should be run for the duration of the academic year, and ideally over two academic year cycles.

Peace education approaches were particularly effective and demonstrated potential for longer-term impact in three key areas: providing supportive networks, safe spaces, trusted mentors and positive role models for young children; addressing the impact of psychological trauma and building psychological resilience; and building bridges across divides and fostering intercultural understanding and respect for diversity. Integral to the success of all approaches was the establishment of safe spaces and building robust and safe relationships with experienced facilitators, mentors and role models, as part of a social support network. While potential for peace education to support alternative non-violent avenues for community activism and engagement was demonstrated, the short timeframe for implementation and assessment did not allow for full implementation.

Peace education is likely to be more effective if applied as part of an integrated approach to building resilience and reducing vulnerability. This is most evident in the case of economic drivers of vulnerability (need for income, which can be exploited by armed groups). Addressing economic issues, which reduce attendance, is outside of peace education's direct remit. However, this is something that could be developed as a complementary approach to provide holistic peace education and livelihood support.[58]

Peace education relevance and effectiveness is significantly influenced by local context and locally tailored approaches work best. Local context, including children's cultural environments, conflict dynamics and community needs should be taken into account in planning and delivering peace education. Partner organisations, which were embedded and from communities where they delivered peace education and tailored their approaches to take local sensitivities into account, demonstrated the most impact. This was because they understood complex and nuanced dynamics in the communities they worked in, could build trust with the communities, families and children, and could frame and adapt the peace education content in a way that was relevant to children, using examples from their daily experience. For example, sensitivities addressing themes around sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as early marriage were highlighted as particularly sensitive in many areas, but relevant in others. Active conflict in some sites in Syria led some project partners to rethink how and where they delivered sessions to encourage attendance, while maintaining physical safety as much as possible (for example, changing location of classes) and placing more emphasis on some elements of peace education curricula, such as psychological resilience and protection.

57 Facilitated partner reflection session report (internal project monitoring data), March 2016
58 Final third party evaluation report, forthcoming

Peace education is most effective for children aged 10–15 and should be adapted to the needs of younger children. This is partly because many of the children under 10 had left Syria at a very early age and had little memory of the situation there, and therefore the approaches were not suitably tailored. It is still important to work with under 10s, as they are experiencing the destructive impact of conflict at a critical point in their development. However, these approaches should be specifically adapted to young children's needs. Experience demonstrated the difficulty in accessing those aged 16+ because these young people are likely to be working or looking for work, and therefore do not enrol in or drop out of activities. In addition, the project evaluation indicated that this age group self-identified as, and is identified as, adults in their social environments and were therefore less likely to attend.[59]

Peace education should be combined with additional support, as required, for children and young people with acute and special needs. Peace education, with experienced and trained facilitators, can be beneficial for children with a wide range of needs and abilities, including those experiencing psychological trauma, learning difficulties and disability. However, children who have acute mental health needs, severe trauma and who are at immediate risk of exploitation or abuse require a broader network of specialist services to meet their needs. There are cases of children with acute learning difficulties and mental health needs being assessed and referred on to other service providers who could better serve these children's specific needs. Efficient referral and coordination between actors, including specialist service providers, is critical to providing this support.

Peace education is also relevant for adults. Parents and other adult relatives of participating children expressed a level of interest in engaging in peace education activities. This engagement would be of particular value in cases when there are negative influences at home and to provide a positive enabling environment for children to practise what they have learned as part of the programmes outside of the centres, as well as the opportunity to embed impact beyond individual children.

Finding safe spaces to conduct activities in live conflict conditions can be very challenging, especially during air strikes. Partners had to find more secure locations (such as basements) to carry out activities. Fear over physical safety in areas under bombardment also resulted in reduced participation, as parents feared their children going outside of the home.

CONCLUSION

Despite the many positive effects of peace education, there are a number of limits to its application and effectiveness.

Security concerns, ranging from intimidating security checks in Lebanon to the risk of aerial bombardments in Syria, have been a major challenge. This not only has practical security implications for delivery, but also raises questions about the appropriateness of delivering peace education activities while children are still experiencing traumatic events. This has led projects to deliver alternative curricula for those living in Syria and for those in more stable neighbouring countries. These tailored approaches take into consideration the fragile environments young people are living in, level and nature of conflicts, the readiness of young people to engage in activities, and the potential of interventions to antagonise local armed groups and generate suspicion among conservative communities.

Engaging in peace education is a highly fraught endeavour. Content that attempts to counter wider social norms within a community runs the risk of antagonising armed groups and thus impacts on the scope and content of delivery.

All projects experienced challenges in navigating local gatekeepers, community leaders and armed groups sceptical of programme activities. It should not be understated that engaging in peace education is a highly fraught endeavour. Content that attempts to counter wider social norms within a community runs the risk of antagonising armed groups and thus impacts on the scope and content of delivery. The approach was taken to prioritise the safety and security of young people by working with communities, and to bring them on board rather than choosing to actively challenge them.

Projects are beginning to demonstrate a positive impact but it has been recognised across activities that peace education requires a long-term consistent approach and that transformation is limited when working in such a short timeframe. In order to make a lasting impact for beneficiaries, staff must build trust with young people

59 Ibid.

over time to embed learning that can generate meaningful change and bring the community with them on their learning journey.

Trauma of both youth and staff was another factor affecting the quality of effective delivery, especially in Syria where active conflict and the potential for constant re-traumatising exist. Safe spaces are available to young people for only a short time – and outside this window of safety, they return to their communities and are surrounded by those that may exploit and abuse them. To effectively mitigate against this entails working beyond the individual and with the whole community. This sensitive balance requires experience and understanding of the local context. It is therefore beneficial for activities to be led by local communities and actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the pilot project implementation, and the challenges encountered and lessons learned, this study makes the following recommendations to donors, practitioners and implementers working in the fields of peacebuilding, education and child protection in the context of the Syrian conflict:

- **Plan and deliver peace education-related programming over at least two-year programme cycles, if not longer, to maximise impact and reduce potential negative consequences of providing short-term psychological support without follow up.** A longer programme cycle will also allow time for demonstrating and assessing impact. It also allows for programmes to respond to the continuing reality and impact of the conflict, risk of exploitation, abuse and recruitment of children and young people, and presence of armed groups.
- **Refine targeting and focus of peace education programmes to 10–15 age group and tailor the approaches to these needs.** Continue to target peace education activities towards 10–15-year-olds, which is the age group for which it is proving most effective.
- **Develop strategies to attract and retain participation of vulnerable children and young people aged 16+** in order to reach the broadest possible category of the 12–24 at-risk age group, including targeting hard-to-reach young adults outside of education, who are actively seeking work (instead of going to school).
- **Refine approaches to meet the needs of under 10s now as part of a long-term approach to building resilience and reducing vulnerability.** Young children are being impacted by violence, conflict and displacement at a critical point in their development. Providing peace education and psychosocial support to 6–10-year-olds can combat the destructive and traumatic impact of the conflict environment young children are experiencing.
- **Plan and deliver peace education programmes as part of a comprehensive package of support for children and young people.** This includes providing peace education activities, alongside formal education, as well as support, which addresses other factors of vulnerability for young people, such as economic factors. Seek partnerships with other agencies, including national institutions, local and international INGOs and intergovernmental agencies, providing social, humanitarian and development assistance to deliver integrated support, encourage effective referral and information-sharing mechanisms and learning. Encourage a broad range of educational actors and agencies working with children to tailor and integrate the most aspects of peace education approaches and content to their work to support resilience.
- **Further refine peace education modules and consider how to address the gender dimensions of vulnerability for children and young people.** This would include refining culturally sensitive modules, which address the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, early marriage and child labour. These should be developed and tested with communities to ensure appropriateness and relevance.
- **Establish robust referral mechanisms for at-risk children and children with special needs:** Develop and widen the referral network for children and young people with specific vulnerabilities and needs, so that those most at risk receive the most tailored support possible and these children do not 'fall through the gaps'.
- **Develop complementary adult peace education programming.** This would respond to the interest and need expressed by parents to participate in peace education programmes. This would also help to support a positive and enabling environment within the home and family networks to encourage sustainability of change beyond individual children.

Plan and deliver peace education-related programming over at least two-year programme cycles to maximise impact and reduce the potential negative consequences of providing short-term psychological support without follow up.

This paper was written by Meg Aubrey, Rosie Aubrey, Frances Brodrick and Ruth Simpson, with contributions from Caroline Brooks, Rebecca Crozier, Olawale Ismail and Krystel Moussally.

About International Alert

International Alert helps people find peaceful solutions to conflict. We are one of the world's leading peacebuilding organisations, with 30 years of experience laying the foundations for peace. We work with local people around the world to help them build peace, and we advise governments, organisations and companies on how to support peace. Find out more at **www.international-alert.org**

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