

## Transcript: Interview with Dan Toole, UNICEF's former Director of Emergency Programs

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Conflict contributes to making children invisible in a number of ways. In the most direct way, it kills children. And so it has a very direct contact and influence on the survival of children. Indirectly, it's also a problem in that conflict deprives children of schooling. It closes their schools. It sometimes abducts children for work in the armed forces, and therefore they miss the school and are taken away from their families. It disrupts government budgets, which means that children then have no support for school.

It also robs children of essential services. When wars come in, budgets get diverted: it goes to the military instead of the school, it goes to the military instead of the health services, and so in many countries where there are conflicts, you end up having weaker health services, education services, and weaker social services that support families and networks. And so it's a combination of effects that are both direct and indirect, and make children the most vulnerable, the most affected.

Perhaps the best example of how war affects children is in Sudan where there has been 18 years of war. There is now a peace agreement. But it means that for 18 years, particularly in the south of Sudan, there's been no capacity to restart schools on a large scale, there's been no capacity to ensure that health services reach all kids. We're looking at putting in immunization services for basic things like measles and polio. And we're not talking about small operations, we're talking about all the children who need to be immunized. Whereas the rest of the world has pretty much caught up. We have very high levels of immunization in most of the world. Sudan, Afghanistan before the end of the war—many of the countries that are in conflict—are those where children are least provided with services, and have the least access to education, and therefore the least likely positive future in front of them.

Source: [www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/full\\_child5.php](http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/full_child5.php)

1. What does Dan Toole mean when he talks about the “direct” impact of armed conflict on children?  
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2. What are the “indirect” effects that he mentions?  
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3. Why does he say that children are “the most vulnerable, the most affected” by war?  
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