

## UNICEF-Supported Projects for Children in Armed Conflict: Case Studies

The following short case study highlights some of UNICEF's work in Afghanistan. After reading the story, decide which approaches from Handout #4 from Lesson 1 are being used.

### Afghanistan

Afghanistan has experienced two decades of war. Following military action by the United States in 2001, a new government was formed. By 2002, 3 million children who had been out of school returned to classes. Of these, 30% were girls, who had not been allowed to go to school under the Taliban government. In 2007, about 6 million children were in school, and nearly 40% of them were girls.



But Afghanistan's education system is still shaky following years of political turmoil during conflict with the Soviet Union, under Taliban rule, and currently under the new government. In August 2006, UNICEF reported an increasing number of attacks on schools, including 1 missile attack, 11 explosions, 50 school burnings and 37 threats against schools and communities. Six children have died as a result of this violence. Schools are beginning to close, shutting out an estimated 100,000 children.

UNICEF is monitoring this situation, and working with religious and community leaders to raise awareness of the importance of education, especially for girls. When attacks on schools occur, UNICEF provides classroom tents, teaching materials, blackboards, chalk, and floor mats, in order to restore the normal functioning of schools as quickly as possible. It also works with the government on major reconstruction projects, and is helping to train 50,000 teachers in all subjects, including landmine awareness.

Afghanistan also suffers from a high child mortality rate—over 25%. UNICEF is supporting an immunization campaign to reach more than 4 million children under the age of five with the vaccine against measles, a leading cause of death. It also aims to vaccinate 4.2 million women of childbearing age against tetanus, a leading killer of mothers and babies. Immunization stations, as well as door-to-door campaigns, will help reach as many families as possible with basic health services in remote areas where the population is scattered and travel is dangerous.



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The following short case study highlights some of UNICEF's work in Colombia. After reading the story, decide which approaches from Handout #4 are being used.

### Colombia

Four decades of armed conflict between the government and drug-trafficking militias have caused an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Approximately 3 million people (75% of them women and children) have been internally displaced by violence in the past 15 years, and have little access to



safe water and to basic health and educational services. Despite a law prohibiting the use of children under age 18 in the National Army, there are still an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 child soldiers in militias. In addition, landmines kill at least 3 people in Colombia each day, as they are found not only in combat zones, but increasingly in school yards, near water sources, and on rural roads.

UNICEF and its partners have provided emergency assistance—food supplements, hygiene kits, and shelter—to thousands of people displaced by violence. UNICEF has helped to repair water and sanitation systems damaged by conflict, and established simplified water and sanitation systems in areas where people are displaced.

In addition, UNICEF has helped build schools in conflict-affected areas, giving thousands of displaced and out-of-school children the chance to resume their education.

UNICEF and its partners have been demobilizing and reintegrating hundreds of former child soldiers. They are also providing sports and other programs that give adolescents alternatives to joining armed militias, especially in areas of high recruitment—through which over 19,000 youths have benefited. And former child soldiers are being helped with shelter, job training, formal education, health care, counseling, legal protection, and other approaches to help them rejoin their communities.

UNICEF and its partners have trained hundreds of teachers to provide psychological support for children traumatized by violence. It also has trained youths as recreational therapists, who have assisted psychologists in caring for over 15,000 traumatized children.



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The following short case study highlights some of UNICEF's work in Lebanon. After reading the story, decide which approaches from Handout #4 are being used.

### Lebanon

During the conflict between Israel and Lebanon in the summer of 2006, UNICEF worked to get aid convoys with badly-needed supplies to war-affected Lebanese families. The supplies included:

- Hygiene kits
- Blankets
- Soap
- Mattresses
- Buckets



In addition, UNICEF was the lead UN agency for water and sanitation in the area, providing bottled water and water purification kits. With extensive damage to water systems, UNICEF is now working to set up large water tanks that will replace the use of bottled water.

During the summer of 2006, UNICEF convoys also provided essential medicines. They started a vaccination campaign aimed at protecting children—often living in crowded shelters—from measles, and also provided nutritional supplements.

For children who were displaced and living in shelters, with little opportunity for play, UNICEF supplied children with recreation kits containing games and sports equipment.

Following the cease-fire, it is estimated that up to 50 schools were destroyed and 300 damaged.

UNICEF is currently working to re-establish education in villages and towns where schools were destroyed by providing supplies, teaching materials, and support for reconstruction projects like helping clean and repair schools that were used as emergency shelters. This is important not only so that education is not interrupted, but to help bring a sense of normalcy back to children who are coping with trauma.

Psychosocial support groups are also being set up to deal with the stress experienced by children who have lost their homes or family members. These groups will provide sports, art, and other activities that will help ease children's transitions, as well as identifying children who may need more psychological assistance.



## UNICEF-Supported Projects for Children in Armed Conflict: Case Studies

The following short case study highlights some of UNICEF's work in Timor-Lesté. After reading the story, decide which approaches from Handout #4 are being used.

### Timor-Lesté (formerly East Timor)

On 20 May 2002, Timor-Lesté (or East Timor) became the world's newest country. This followed a long struggle for independence from Indonesia that damaged up to 70% of all buildings in the country. Health services were heavily damaged during the conflict, and Timor-Lesté today has high levels of infant mortality, maternal mortality, and child malnutrition. Immunization rates are low. At the time of independence, only 20% of the rural population had access to safe water and 10% to adequate sanitation facilities. Nearly all schools needed significant repairs to latrine and water facilities following the crisis.



Since independence, UNICEF priorities have included increasing immunization rates, providing nutrition services, and providing water and sanitation facilities in rural villages and schools, as well as upgrading the quality of the schools themselves.

However, in the summer of 2006, civil conflict broke out. Many residents of the capital city, Dili, have left and are living in camps for displaced people, where child malnutrition is widespread.

UNICEF is conducting nutritional screening of children in the camps. To address the lack of safe water, UNICEF is providing water, water containers, and water purification tablets to displaced communities.

Emergency classes have been set up for children whose education has been disrupted. In addition, UNICEF is providing support to rural schools that have been overwhelmed by an influx of children escaping Dili.

Music, dance and art activities have been planned in camps to help children cope with stress. UNICEF has trained volunteers to provide activities to children who have too much free time because their schools are closed. Recreation kits providing sports equipment give children an alternative to less constructive activities.

