

## Education and Conflict

The civil wars and violent conflicts that have occurred throughout the world over recent decades make it difficult to distinguish between phases of war and peace. The transition from humanitarian aid to sustainable development cooperation is therefore becoming increasingly blurred. In complex emergency situations and in reconstruction for crisis prevention, the promotion of education is gaining increasing significance on an international scale. In the long term, the promotion of education is vital for peace building and crisis prevention, as it can guarantee that the necessary competencies are acquired and it can reduce the potential that education systems have in exacerbating conflicts.

### Core messages

- Wars and violent conflicts prevent children from acquiring basic competencies.
- Education can make a significant contribution to peace development and crisis prevention by promoting peaceful co-existence and social cohesion.
- However, education also has destructive potential and may play a role in exacerbating and escalating social conflicts if the education system
  - reproduces socio-economic disparities,
  - does not tolerate differences and is guilty of social exclusion,
  - ignores existing ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.
- Education promotion is a humanitarian task in emergency situations, long-term crises and in reconstruction for crisis prevention, because
  - education alleviates the psychosocial stress that war and violence cause and provides a degree of normality and stability in the everyday lives of children and adults;
  - education has an important role in protecting individuals against exploitation and abuse.
- In post-war settings, investment in education has a positive impact on social reform and transformation processes. There is a significant correlation between higher rates of school enrolment and a lower risk of recurrence of civil war.

### Range of services

The range of services is geared towards capacity building in the education sector and within civil society to promote peaceful co-existence, social participation and a culture of dialogue. It largely consists in transferring knowledge concerning concepts and instruments for the crisis-sensitive promotion of basic education and consultancy on preparing and implementing Technical Cooperation (TC) projects in the education sector and in the priority area of peace development and crisis prevention. The services provided primarily concern eight complementary areas of action in education promotion:

- preparing comprehensive **conflict analyses** and conducting conflict-sensitive **impact monitoring** for the education sector
- designing crisis-sensitive education systems by promoting an **inclusive education policy**: ensuring access for all population groups and offering basic education services for disadvantaged children and young people (refugees, internally displaced people etc.)

- integrating **peace education, human rights education and democracy education** in school curricula and teacher training, developing the appropriate instructional materials (e.g. school textbooks and teachers' guides) and providing pre- and inservice training for teachers and multipliers in education settings
- promoting **intercultural competence** by providing multilingual education, countering prejudices and biases (e.g. in school textbooks on history and civic education) and providing opportunities for intercultural encounters
- **community-based school development** by promoting constructive conflict transformation and violence prevention measures, making schools a safe place in which children can learn, promoting a democratic and participatory culture of learning while recognising social diversity and equal rights
- setting up **psychosocial counselling and care services** linked to schools
- **strengthening civil society** through small-scale fund-assisted measures to promote basic education – combined to form programmes integrating comprehensive knowledge management and quality assurance measures
- promoting **non-formal basic education services** in conjunction with income-generating and vocational training measures as part of reintegration measures for disadvantaged children and youth in post-conflict situations (e.g. child soldiers).

## Experience

Selection of TC projects and programmes:

- Promoting Basic Education, Afghanistan
- Reintegration of Child Soldiers, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Promote the Quality of Basic Education, Guatemala
- Documentation Centre on Anti-Colonial Resistance, Namibia
- Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Pakistan
- Basic Education for Young People in the Post-Conflict Setting, Sierra Leone
- Education for Social Cohesion, Sri Lanka
- Disaster Preparedness and Management/Psychosocial Care, Sri Lanka
- Urban Conflict Management Project, South Africa
- Basic Education in Urban Poverty Areas, Uganda
- Sector project Education and Conflict Transformation, supranational