



WE ARE NOT TOO YOUNG **TO BUILD PEACE**

CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS ACTORS IN PEACE BUILDING
GLOBAL ADVOCACY IN NEW YORK 2012



DEAR READER,

SAVE THE CHILDREN IS DELIGHTED to share experiences from a global advocacy initiative with children and youth on their participation in peace processes and peace building. This was done when a side event and meetings were organized in New York in September 2012. Seven youth from four regions spoke to UN institutions and missions, international NGOs and others and advocated for a UN resolution on children, youth and peace building, why it is needed and what it should contain. Participatory processes at local, national and regional levels for several years made it possible for seven youth to represent their peers in four regions, Asia, Africa, South East Europe and the Middle East, and Latin America.

THE AIM OF THIS PUBLICATION is to inform about the event and the processes that made it possible. We hope that this will influence and inspire children and youth to take part in and also initiate activities to make the changes they want to see in the world. We also hope that adults in a various positions will be encouraged to recognize the need for children and youth's involvement in peace building and to actively support them in their peace building efforts.

Oslo, 15th of August 2013

Annette Giertsen



PART

I

CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS AGENTS OF PEACE

Experiences from four continents

SAVE THE CHILDREN STARTED to work on children and young people's participation in peace building in four countries: Nepal, Uganda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Guatemala in 2006. The emphasis in this work has been on children and young people's work in their clubs, groups and organizations. The approach has been to organize workshops together with children, youth and adults at local, national, regional and global levels. Results of the workshops, as well as processes and initiatives in the countries, have made up the basis for the global advocacy work. The global advocacy work builds on a six year process with children and youth founded on their commitment to peace building.

THE PREPARATIONS for the global advocacy work were done in cooperation with child clubs in 20 countries in four regions, including information gathered by and from children and youth at the regional and global workshops.

THIS MATERIAL IS PRESENTED in three key categories: children and youth's major concerns; good practices and challenges. Their experiences and thoughts vary according to situations of violence, conflicts and insecurity where they are living, still some experiences are common for all regions and countries.

Latin America

*These experiences are gathered from five countries:
Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Nicaragua and Colombia*

KEY CONCERNS

Incidents of violence that were most often mentioned, had taken place in the family, among peers and in the streets. Parents slap their children and they experience psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Children and youth gave high importance to the high level of conflict and violence in some communities. Many of them experienced that their ways to school were insecure due to gang violence in the streets, including assaults, kidnapping and rape.

Abuse of alcohol and drugs was also among their concerns. Poverty, racism and discrimination reflect that their rights are not fulfilled. They held that they received little or no information about their rights and how to respond peacefully to all the violence, and that there is limited space to raise their concerns and opinions.

GOOD PRACTICES

Children and youth work for peace in their groups and organizations. They reach out to their peers outside their closer neighborhood; and participate in different sport activities to bring about good communication and coexistence between communities. Through radio programs they use communication to stop violence in communities. At school they find ways of promoting respectful relationships and they work to make people show respect for other people's diverging views. In addition they also organize days of cleaning and caring for the environment, because they consider that protecting the environment is a way to promote a culture of peace.

CHALLENGES

A key challenge is to make adults listen to and take children and youth's views seriously. The limited areas and spaces for participation in society make it difficult for children and youth to share views on their rights and ideas about and experiences from peace building. Gang violence restricts their possibility to move freely around and to express their opinions. An overall challenge is the lack of recognition to resolve conflicts without violence.



EXAMPLES of GOOD PRACTICES

Reducing violence in family, school and local community

Child clubs have influenced their parents to make them respecting diverging values thus reducing violence in families and prevent children running away to the street. Young people's radio programs work to reduce violence in communities. Children have promoted respectful relationships between teachers and students and among students.

In Nicaragua child clubs have organized workshops on peaceful



“Every day boys, girls and adolescents die because of violence. **Conflicts between youth groups who are part of youth gangs cause many death.** [They are] killed due to thefts or extortion.”

YOUNG PERSON, COLOMBIA

coexistence. They have prepared a handbook with three themes: identifying violence, building alternatives in order to control anger, and creating new ways of relating to each other. As a result children and youth have noticed improved communication between parents and their children and teachers recognize the importance children and youth's participation in peace building.

Making themselves heard

Children and youth in various countries have actively been using radio and television to spread their views on peace building and children's rights. They make use of media to express their thoughts and feelings in their way. In their opinion people get closer and society more connected when people are listening to each other.

Strengthening a culture of peace

In Honduras *Children's communication network* has produced two television programs on prevention of violence and promotion of a culture of peace. This led to demonstrations that involved more than 2000 people. This was organized by local authorities, the youth network, and the children's communication network and was supported by a wide range of other civil society groups.

Africa

*These experiences are gathered from five countries:
Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ethiopia and South Sudan.*

KEY CONCERNS

The main concern mentioned by children and youth in Africa in relation to conflict and violence is divorce in families. In addition violent conflict has hindered many children's access to basic needs like education, food, shelter and clothing. Conflict often results in child neglect, abuse or school drop-outs as well as child headed homes that result in school dropouts. They also mentioned that their voices were not heard and appreciated by adults.

GOOD PRACTICES

Children and youth have organized in child parliaments, councils and groups at national level to engage in advocacy addressing their situation. They have settled conflicts in school and family through counseling and decision making; and they have done awareness rising in schools and communities on peace. They also act as role model for their peers when they are supporting other people in their communities.

CHALLENGES

African children and youth report that they lack support to carry out their peace building activities, especially in remote areas. They experience that adults undermine their views and that their needs are not prioritized. This is especially evident when it comes to street children and the reintegration of children who have been associated with the LRA and are returning to their communities.

They also face challenges in their peace building efforts regarding insecurity and conflict. Child club members sometimes may for example expose themselves to risks of abuse or accidents when they travel around in their communities to spread their learning about their rights and peace building.

They want peace building and conflict resolution to be an integral priority in their lives.

EXAMPLES of GOOD PRACTICES

Reducing violence in family and school

Child clubs in Ethiopia have started networking with schools, the police and local authorities to reduce conflict and violence in families and schools. They have supported abused and vulnerable children; and arranged meetings with parents and community members on child rights. Young people from child clubs have played a mediation role in conflicts between parents and children and teachers and students.

In a school in Ethiopia teachers used to beat children. The child club members believed that people use violence because they





*“We have to avoid tribal and inter-clan conflicts and promote peace among the peoples. **Let’s take peace building and conflict resolution as an integral priority in our lives”***

YOUNG PERSON, UGANDA

do not know how to solve problems in peaceful ways and wanted to raise awareness on such ways of dealing with conflicts between parents and children, teachers and students and among children and youth. They talked to the teachers and from that day the teachers stopped bringing beating sticks to the classroom.

Non-discrimination and inclusion

In South Sudan child clubs used drama to reach out to street children and some children left the streets after having seen the drama. The child clubs wanted to cooperate with street children

and the government to support the children to leave the streets and start education. The clubs and the government reached a common understanding on this goal. The government has supported street children to return to their families.

Inspiring an archbishop’s work for peace

When the archbishop in South Sudan heard children’s peace poems and songs on inter-clan conflict and child abduction he got so inspired that he included the children’s peace messages in his work for peace. Together with community leaders, local

authorities, UN agencies and International organizations he started dialogues with communities exposed to clan fighting and child abduction.

Influencing national policy

As children and youth make up 70% of Zimbabwe’s population, the child clubs wanted to have a say when a new constitution was planned. Supported by organizations working on children’s rights, they were able to give their opinions and ideas on the constitution. Their dream is that children one day will be represented in the government.

Asia

These experiences are gathered from five countries:
Afghanistan, Nepal, Laos, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

KEY CONCERNS

Concerns of children and youth in these countries were first and foremost the forced migration, and separation with their parents - caused by conflict and violence – and their harmful effect that this has on their physical and mental health, their possibility to have a stable family life and good education. They were also worried about lack of proper security and the discrimination of certain groups of children. They thought that they were neglected by community and society; that their societies often have failed to fulfill their rights to be heard and participate.

GOOD PRACTICES

Children and youth have been spreading awareness on peace in various ways such as street dramas, puppet shows, wall painting and magazines, peace rallies; and they have made television and radio program about peace and security. Child clubs have been active in schools and local communities to stop child marriage, child trafficking and child labor and in reintegrating children into their families and back to school.

CHALLENGES

In Asia children and youth strongly feel the lack of support from adults, family and government. Local authorities do not give priority to children's voices, some authorities and decision makers do not believe that children can take lead and make contributions.

Children list a series of challenges which hinder them in participating in peace building:

- effective laws and policies about the role of children and youth in peace building are lacking
- suitable programs on children's role in peace promotion are not prioritized often because of limited budgets
- there is lack of participation of children in peace committees and ineffectiveness of the committee at implementation level.

In South East Asia children and youth's peace building activities are not always regarded as positive by society at large.



EXAMPLES of GOOD PRACTICES

Child clubs influence local authorities to reduce violence

In Sri Lanka child clubs identified alcohol abuse as a major reason for violence against children. They asked decision makers in their community to prepare an action plan to better the situation. Two months later the authorities, *Divisional Child Rights Monitoring Committee*, started to work with the *Department of Police* to find out about illegal alcohol production and how to take action against it.



We are
being included in
political processes, *we*
tell ministers our opinions,
but we don't know what they
are doing about it, or if they
are really taking us into
account.

YOUNG PERSON,
SRI LANKA

Working against discrimination

In Nepal children have used drama to address caste-based discrimination. They have shown that this still exists and send the message that all individuals are equal. Their drama has been a huge success and caste-based discrimination has been notably reduced.

Reintegration of child soldiers

Children and youth have contributed to reintegrate child soldiers in the community and schools In Nepal. When a 17

year old girl managed to flee from the rebel group, which she had been forced to join, child club members convinced her to go back to school. They talked with the principal but he hesitated as he was afraid that the girl could negatively influence the other students. The child club convinced him that this would not happen as she had been in the rebel group by force and she really wanted to continue her studies. Because of all encouragements and support from her friends the girl went back to school.

Schools as zones of Peace

In Nepal this was started by teachers, parents and children due to the violent conflict and its impact on children. One way to protect children was to declare *Schools as zones of peace*. Social norms, *Do's and Don'ts*, were established in each school. The norms were monitored by teams of children and community people. As a result conflict management was included in the teaching and corporal punishment and violence in school were ended. In this way schools were kept open during conflict, and armed presence in and around school was reduced.

Europe and The Middle East

This information is gathered from Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

KEY CONCERNS

European and Middle Eastern children and youth have identified violence in schools and domestic violence as their key concern. Social exclusion and deprivation, prejudice and discrimination as well as hatred between different nationalities are also of high importance together with honor killings. Weakness in the educational system and child labor and exploitation are mentioned, and also lack of freedom of movement and the lack of real participation.

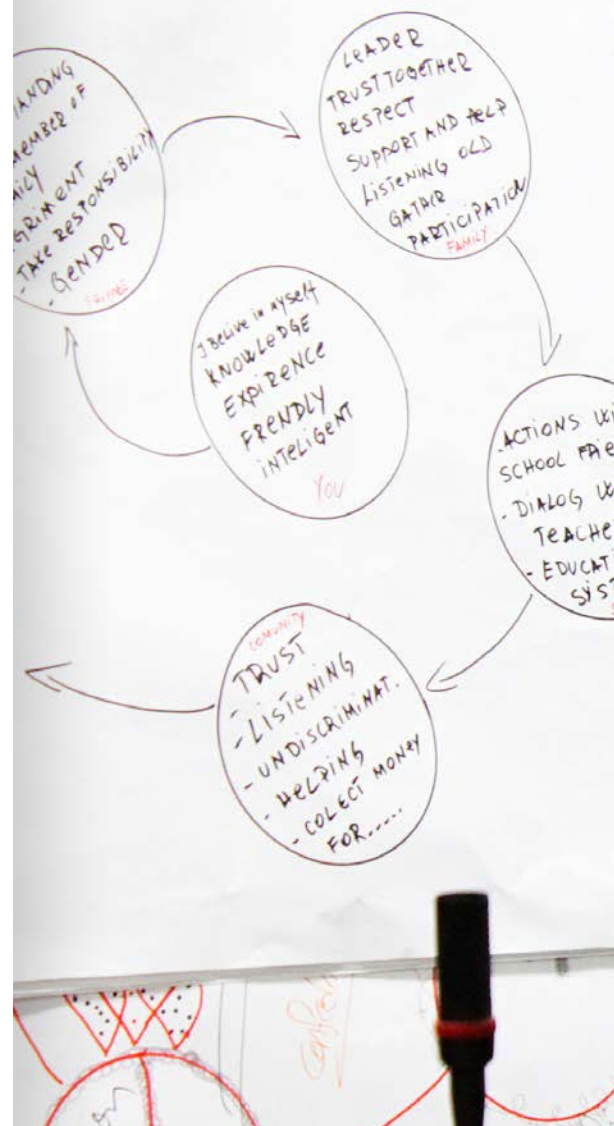
GOOD PRACTICES

Members of child groups have reduced violence in school by being able to express their opinions freely through poetry, song, dance and drama. They are also working on peace building in their families. They take part in direct meetings with peers from other parts of their country and with neighboring countries to get to know one another, break prejudices and discuss peace building for a better future.

In the Middle East children and young people recognize the different kinds of conflict: structural and cultural. The structural violence stems from the situation of being occupied by Israel; the cultural violence are acts originating in culture and tradition, for example domestic violence. It has helped us a lot to think in this way, and we are working with these perspectives in our programs, our clubs and activities. Through television and radio, which reach out to many people, we talk about the importance of child rights and the work against violence and abuse.

CHALLENGES


One challenge is a culture of violence which is hard to break. Child clubs experience that it is difficult to convince adults and other young people that violence is not a positive way to deal with conflicts, and that it does not improve our society and world. Some children and youth experience that their opinions and contributions are not valued highly by adults. Children are not respected and adults do not take children seriously.



EXAMPLES of GOOD PRACTICES

Reducing discrimination in school

In Montenegro, Serbia and the Occupied Palestinian Territories children and youth want a more inclusive society. They have worked to reduce discrimination in school. In one community children with disabilities were excluded from the school their friends were attending. Child club members talked about the need to involve everybody, also children with disabilities. They were supported by parents and



We do not have war but there exists conflicts in our country, *we have physical and emotional violence in schools, communities and families.*

YOUNG PERSON, ALBANIA

the community. Now the primary school allows all children to study together.

Working against violence and abuse

In Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina children have been aware of the risk of human trafficking. In Albania young people work at *Youth Centers* to prevent other children and young people from being captured or fooled into trafficking. They make children more aware of the dangers. Through these activi-

ties they have become visible in the communities and the local government has invited the young people to participate in decision-making. In this way the *Youth Centers* have supported the young people in reaching out to more of their peers.

Finding solutions together

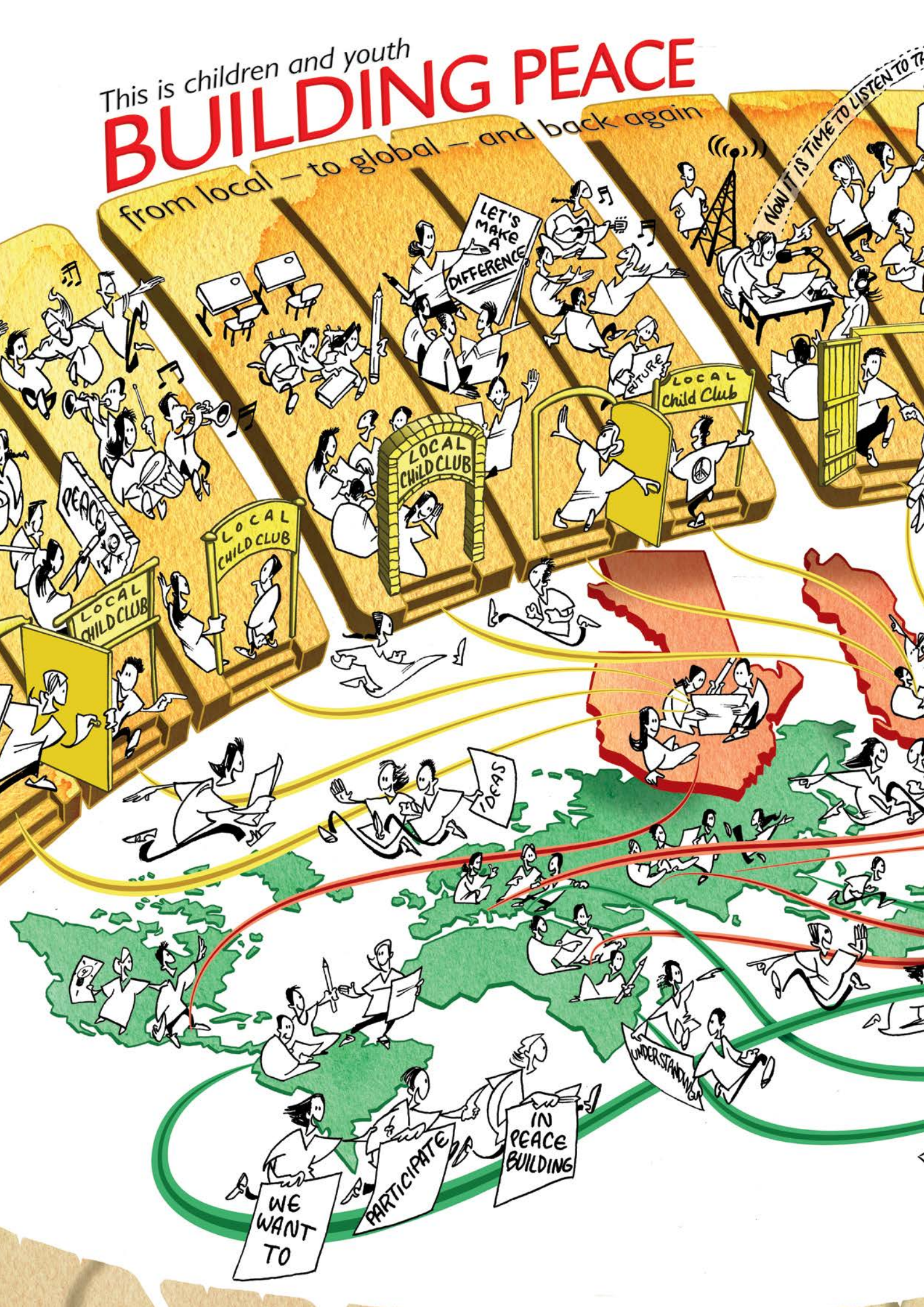
In Romania children and youth have addressed their challenges by using *the forum theatre* and in this way have invited adults to find solutions. They act out various problems that children face

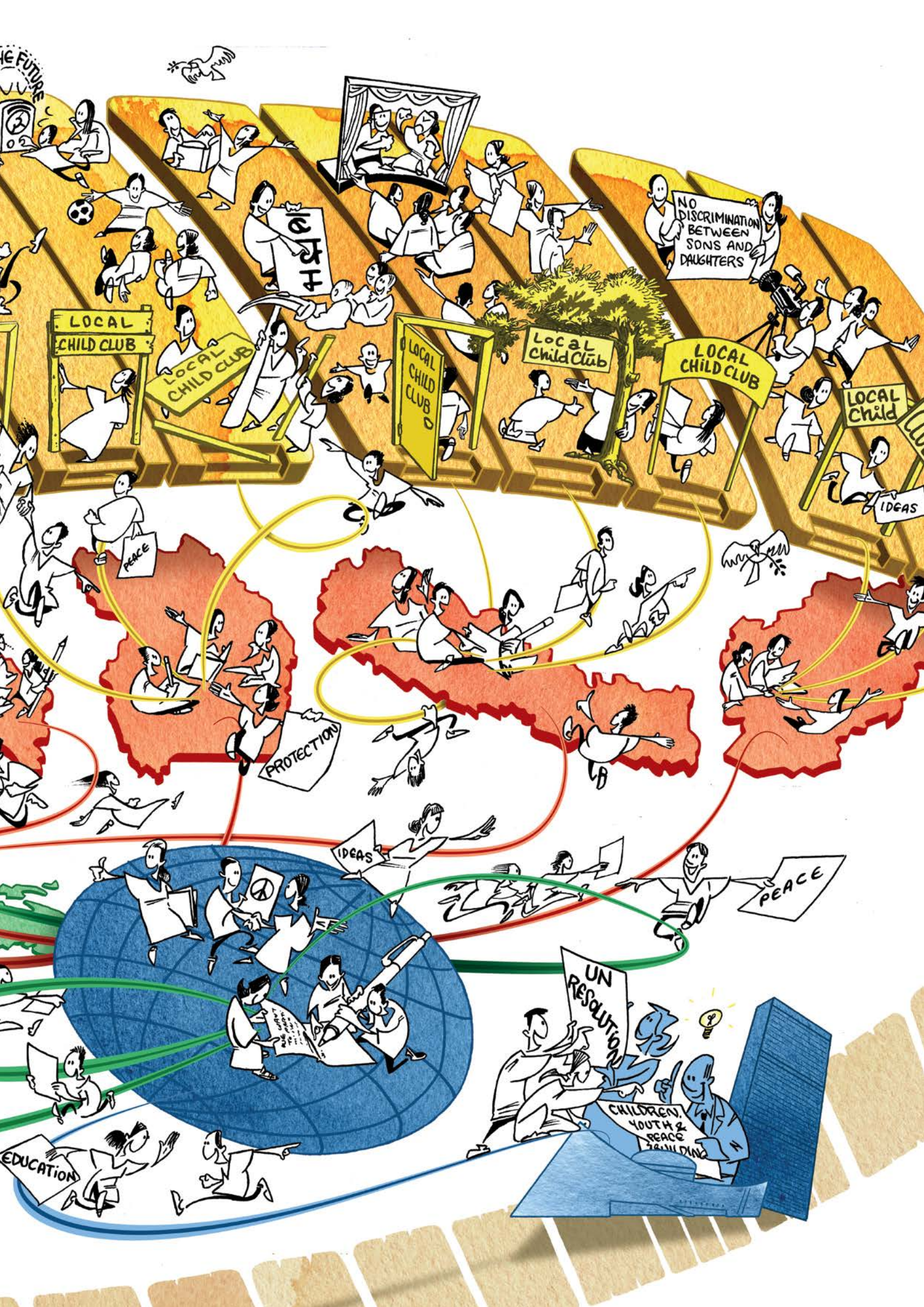
in their everyday life, especially bad treatment that some are suffering, such as girls, Roma people and other minority groups, children with HIV and AIDS, differently abled children and children living in institutions. After the theatre presentation the youth have invited the audience to discuss the problems presented. The message has often been that we have to respect people who are different from us and we all have the same rights.

This is children and youth
BUILDING PEACE
local – to global – and back again

BUILDING

from local – to global – and back again

An illustration at the bottom of the page shows several stylized figures. One figure is holding a sign that says "LET'S MAKE". Another figure is playing a musical instrument. The background is a textured, yellowish-brown color.



SUMMARY OF PEACE BUILDING ACTIVITIES

THE EXPERIENCES from Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East demonstrate that children and youth when given the opportunity can be active agents of peace and contribute noticeably to peace in armed conflict, post war situations and situations with no violent conflict.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH'S REPORTING on their activities to create a more peaceful society may be summarized in five key categories: reduce / eliminate violence in family and school; reduce discrimination and increase inclusiveness in society; enhance children's rights; strengthen their participation also in peace building; and influence policy at local and national level.

WHILE THERE ARE STORIES that give hope for future regarding children, youth and peace building, children and youth also bear witness of major challenges. The concerns that they mention are multiple and distressing. While their experiences from conflict and violence vary, they all share a concern that their opinions and proposals regarding peace building and other matters affecting them are not taken into account when decisions are made.



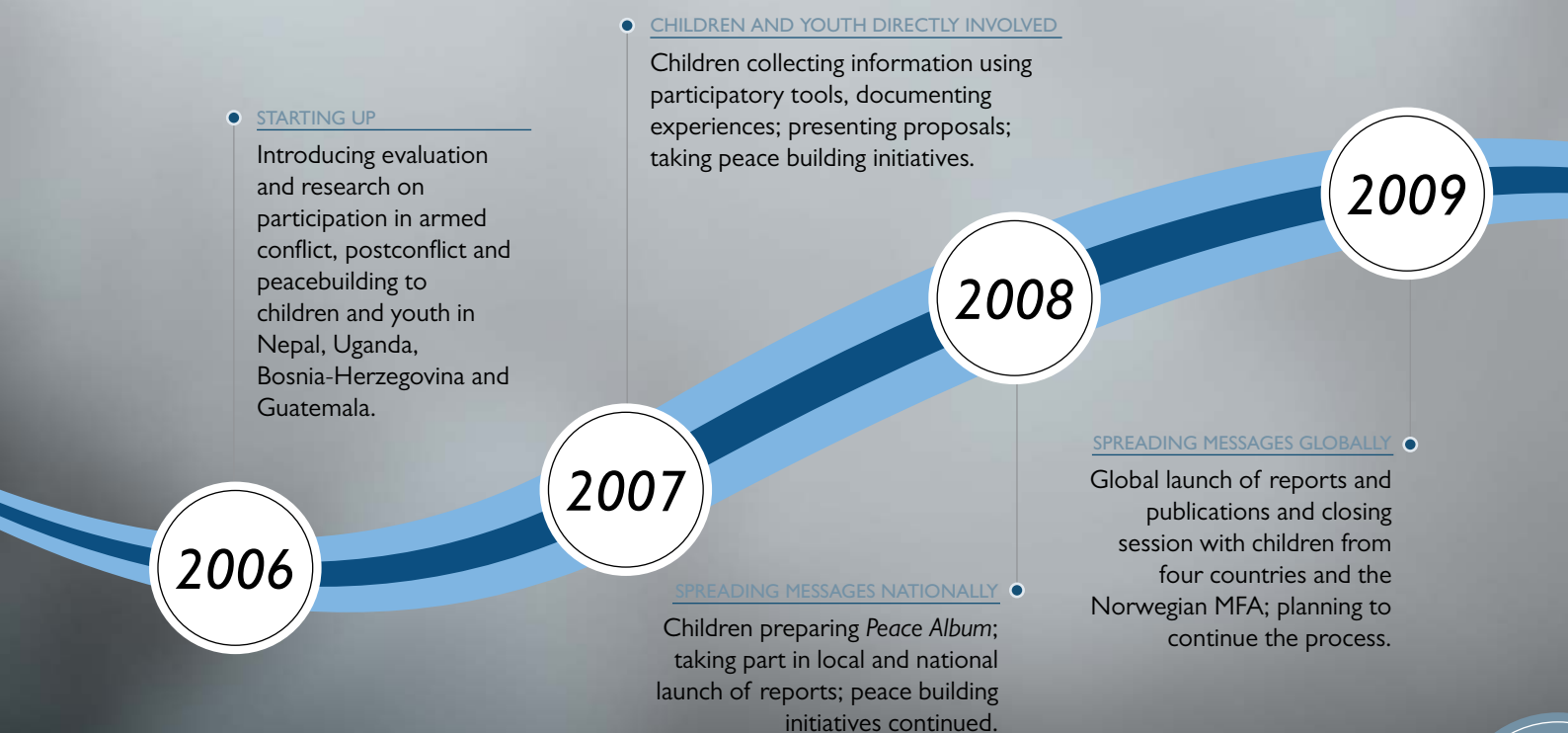
From local to national, regional and global levels

LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

This process of peace building by children and youth is an example of how they together with adults may work together for a common goal by taking on complementing roles. This work is based on children and young people's priorities during armed conflict, which are education, peace and participation, among other. Peace and participation were chosen as pillars for this work which started as a global evaluation and research on children's participation in armed conflict, post war and peace building in 2006. The work has three components, it is *child-led*, emphasizes children and young people's *ownership of information and knowledge*, and is *action-oriented*. **Child-led** means that the process is informed by and based on children and young people's concerns and proposals and their active involvement from the beginning. Children and young people have been involved in collecting and processing information; and they have been offered

training on participatory tools to map and report significant experiences and aspects of their lives. In this way they have also achieved a deeper recognition of their situations and of the recent or ongoing armed conflicts in their countries.

The method, *Formative Dialogue Research*, allow the participants **to get ownership to information and processes**. This has been an important inspiration to the children and young people when they were able to collect and process information individually and collectively. These processes have led to new ideas and some have been developed into plans and actions. The method opens up for participants, in this case children and young people, **to put their ideas into practice**. For example, young people in Guatemala used mural painting to tell the recent history of their country, that of the civil war, which was neglected in their schools.



REGIONAL LEVEL

Eight regional workshops were organized in Asia, South East Europe and the Middle East, Africa and Latin America during 2010 and 2011. The aim was to strengthen children and young people's ongoing work on participation, to give training in peace building and support their peace building initiatives. These workshops are being followed up in more than 20 countries by more than 20.000 children and young people in close to six hundred child clubs and groups.

GLOBAL LEVEL

Save the Children decided to organize a global workshop in order to bring together experiences and ideas from the regions with the aim of responding to their continued dedication and strong interest for contributing to peace. Such workshop would enable the participants to share experiences and ideas across regions and to consolidate the work as well as recognition of being part of a worldwide initiative. In May 2012, 27 children, young people and adults from 14 countries came to Oslo to take part in the global workshop. One of the results from the workshop was a letter to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, the letter has three recommendations (see below).

SCALING UP: REGIONAL LEVEL 1

Four regional workshops with children from 22 countries; strengthening participation and peace building; action planning for peace

2010

2011

SCALING UP: REGIONAL LEVEL 2

Four regional workshops with 19 countries; documenting children's peace experiences; improving sustainability; action planning for peace

2012

GLOBAL WORKSHOP

Meeting in Oslo with 14 countries: status on children's peace building; organizing Peace Festival; preparing advocacy work at local, national and global level

GLOBAL ADVOCACY TOWARDS THE UN

Seven young people to New York advocating for a UN resolution: open panel discussion; dialogue meeting with UN agencies.

EXTRACT FROM **THE LETTER** TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL BAN KI-MOON
FROM THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE GLOBAL WORKSHOP

1. Education: *Basic to Advanced Education and Peace Education.*

... we demand that the money used for weapons is instead spent on ensuring every child and youth receives an appropriate education worldwide.... we request that every child and youth receives peace education in both formal and informal education sectors.

2. Participation: *Children's and Youth's Participation and Representation in Peace Processes and Peacebuilding.*

... children's and youth's participation in situations and decision making that matter to our lives is vital. ... We want the opportunity to raise our voices, to be heard, to participate with you in making a more peaceful world. Please.

3. Safety and Security: *Children and Youth Living in Peace not Fear, Loss and Pain*

.... Importantly, we request that we work together to ensure children and youth live in safe and secure families, communities, countries and regions around the world. We all deserve that and you owe us that.



GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Young people bring their messages to the UN

ADVOCACY FOR PARTICIPATION

and peace has been a key issue of this process and taken place at local, national and global level. In September 2012 seven young people aged 15 to 17 years from four countries, Nepal, Uganda, Guatemala and Albania, travelled to New York to advocate for children and youth to participate in peace processes and peace building at all levels. The purpose of the trip was to raise awareness among UN member states, UN institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations on children and young people's roles and contributions to peace processes and peace building, to propose a UN Resolution on children, youth and peace building and start identifying the steps for the promotion of such resolution.

Calling for a UN Resolution

ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PEACE BUILDING

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PANEL

ERBLIN

ALBANIA

... We children are born and living in a world of transition,.. full of conflict and war, we know the meaning of conflict because we are living in it.

Some adult say that we are too young to be involved in solving conflict, but are we old enough to be soldiers, to be deleted by the fear that we could be killed, to be manipulated by politicians in awareness raising campaigns?... We are injure, killed, raped and we are physically and emotionally traumatized by use of violence. Our hopes and efforts have supported us so far to build peace, and we know we will succeed. Martin Luther King said: I have a dream... we also have a dream that the trillions of dollars that are spent on weapons will be spent in peace building.... that one day all children will know how to build peace ...



KEVIN GUATEMALA

... We are boys and girls who know and agree about our realities, but **we also know what we can do to resolve the problems. .. for this reason we need a resolution:** [and have the following recommendation] ... the 1st one is space for the participation of boys and girls in peace building processes, this includes a bigger budget [to] support children and young people's organizations.. The 2nd is that schools should be Zones of peace.. curriculum in all schools should include teaching of peace building, guidance and methods on conflict management. Our 3rd is that schools should be safe and inclusive... no more recruitment of children for armed conflicts and gangs., governmental schools should guide all students to prevent problems. Our 4th is that more laws and policies should be implemented to ensure the protection of boys and girls.

ADULT PANEL

ISHMAEL BEAH

FORMER CHILD SOLDIER, AUTHOR AND UNICEF ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY WAR



"To include children and youth in peace building questions is absolutely necessary as the exclusion might lead to more violence."

HENK JAN BRINKMAN

CHIEF OF THE POLICY, PLANNING & APPLICATION BRANCH
THE UN PEACE BUILDING SUPPORT OFFICE



"[They] hold the future. For a lasting peace it is therefore important that we include children from an early stage, during peace negotiations, at the community level, at the national level and through government structures."

A side event on children, youth and peace building was organized with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the International Peace Institute in relation to the open discussion on the annual report on children and armed conflict. The young people shared their experiences and concerns; their longing for peace and desire to do peace building. These extracts are taken from the young people's speeches at the side event.



ABILASHA NEPAL

... Now I am here in front of you to say to you all what children are doing to end violence and conflicts, to shake your perceptions.... children are raising awareness through peace rallies, street dramas, puppet theatre, painting, poems, ... organizing workshops with peers, teachers and parents for the sake of information ... to end the violence and conflict ... child clubs in my region are active ... to stop child labor, gender and caste discrimination, but still it has not completely stopped. ... We children are trying our best, to make our world the best, and **now I would like you people to concentrate your minds for the children's wants and desires.** ... we want your great support and we want unity.. [and] a UN Resolution on children and youth peace building

GLORIA UGANDA

We are young people representing Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. More than 3000 children and young people have been directly involved in this peace building process. All are part of child clubs and groups. **We are here because we have been affected by war.** Children have been abducted by warriors and are being trained as child soldiers... Children are also disposed to street life. When they lose their parents they have nowhere to go. Many children are suffering. ... there is a lot of violence in the homes, since the war has affected so many. People are still coping with life without war...

UMAR ANURAY JHA

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY
GENERAL FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT



Stressed the importance of having children's voices heard in peace agreements, in transition periods and in peace building in general.

ANNETTE GIERTSEN

SAVE THE CHILDREN



"That the preparation of [a resolution on UN Resolution on Children, Youth and Peace Building] includes children and youth worldwide, in authentic, meaningful and safe ways."

Meeting with UN agencies

DIALOGUE SESSION BETWEEN UN AGENCIES AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE

The group got the opportunity to meet with UN agencies, UNICEF, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, UN Women, and UNDP. After a brief introduction from each of the young people a dialogue between adults and the young people took place.



How can we use education to promote peace?

We can put peace in the curriculum. We are only taught about violent conflict from the 9th grade, but we need to know these things from we are small. It could be taught at different levels from primary schools, adjusted to fit all ages. Schools as zones of peace can be part of the teaching. Children can learn how to prevent and manage conflicts between their peers. Material for teachers including methodology for peace building could be available.

How can we reach the children that are not in school and not in child's clubs to help us build peace?

If children's peace clubs are introduced in the communities, then at least all children will have access to them.

Are there any differences when it comes to the participations of girls and boys in the child clubs? What are these barriers and what can you do in your clubs in order to include boys and girls from all backgrounds?

In Albania parents may refuse girls to go to the children's club because of a certain mentality. This leads to an overweight of boys in some clubs. In Nepal

gender discrimination is decreasing day by day. Still communities do not take girls as seriously as boys. When youth do some awareness programs in evening time, up to late, the parents may not allow girls to go out or talk friendly with other people. It is hard to deal with this, and really difficult for the girls.

What is the most important thing you have learned through the process of becoming young peace builders and how can we give you more of these skills?

The first step is to feel peace in you. Then you can be talking about peace to others in your surroundings. We have learned how to do group-work and how to promote our work, and we strongly build people's confidence; and how to solve problems between people. We have learned the skill of decision-making, expressing our self freely, and being confident. I feel strong when I give a speech. We have learned ways of sharing our views, to make radio programs and to make peace messages.

Sharing of ideas on children, youth and peace building and a possible UN resolution:

The UN agencies held that *the work on a resolution needs to be a process* that would take time and efforts. The young people want this to be a child-



led process, and were encouraged to include every generation, also younger children, in their work. Although the process should be child-led this does not exclude consultations with other organizations working on these issues.

The young people's proposal on *reallocating a certain amount of money used on weapons to be used on education* instead was appreciated by the UN representatives: While this large amount of money is invested in producing weapons, few countries spend money on training children and youth to deal with conflicts and hence contribute to peace

The adults presented their recommendations:

Since the United Nations are discussing *the Millennium Development Goals 2015+* at the moment, this might be the right time to bring peace building to the table. Peace building is an important and interlinked part of sustainable development. Because of that exclusion of children and youth from peace building would mean to divert important resources that could be used for building society.

The UN representatives mentioned some *challenges when working on peace building*. Experience shows that far too much of what is called peace education does not deal with what is happening in the local communities when conflicts are being

handled. Therefore there is a need to put substance to the matter when dealing with peace building. Another challenge is to consider the environment in which peace building is taught. Schools are often hierarchical and corporal punishment might be used. Structures like peace clubs will support children and youth to practice peace building.

The need to focus on the ideas of children and youth in peace processes was also recognized. Forums for and with children and youth are separated from influencing processes and the forums rarely have any substance. It is critical that children and youth are empowered to participate in the influencing processes, not least because children and youth are so deeply affected by conflict. This argument should be included in a UN Resolution on children's participation in peace building, and not only in the resolutions on children in armed conflict. It is crucial to see the aspects of protection and participation together.

Another recommendation concerning the legitimization of a new resolution was to emphasize the fact that *children and youth make up a substantial percentage of the world's population*, also up to 40 – 60% of the combatants in violent conflict. Youth should therefore be regarded as an inherent part of peace building.



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN LATIN AMERICA, AFRICA, ASIA, EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Children's views should be heard and respected
- Children's views need to be considered especially when planning and working on children's issues
- Need opportunities for meaningful participation, especially in decision-making
- We must learn to resolve conflicts through dialogue and without violence
- People should be sensitized on children's rights and responsibilities
- Peace building should be taught in schools
- Physical violence and discrimination by teachers must stop, schools to be safe and accessible for all
- UN should: officially recognize children's role in peace building. Most possibly through a separate resolution of the security council on children's role in peace building

FILLING THE GAP: A UN RESOLUTION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PEACE BUILDING

The existing UN SC resolutions on protection of children in armed conflict fail to give adequate attention to possible roles of children and youth in peace building and peace processes, their resources and likely contributions. The resolution on women, peace and security fails when it comes to concern about children's involvement and guidance on how to support the safe and meaningful participation of girls, children and youth in peace processes.

A decade ago, during the international campaign to include women in peace processes, a central argument said that half of the population was excluded from such processes. Considering also children and youth as part of the population we may say that a significant part of the people is still excluded from these processes.

ONE YEAR AFTER: WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND NEXT STEPS

SINCE SEPTEMBER 2012 the support to children and youth's peace building has continued mainly in two areas, one is supporting child and youth clubs and groups, the other is advocacy work at global level. In October 2012 a global network was established, *Global Partnership to support children and youth participation in peace building*, with several organization members such as *Search for Common Ground*, *PATRIR*, *World Vision*, *United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)*, *Save the Children* and other international organizations and resource people. In addition a global *Children and youth reference group* is about to be established based on child and youth clubs and groups, organizations and networks. Coordinated initiatives have been started among the members of the *Global Partnership*, one of them is to do a multi-national and multi-agency evaluation and research with children and youth on their participation in peace building. Such evaluation will enable greater resilience to violent conflict; codify best practices, lessons

learned, minimum standards, and norms in this sector, and will highlight areas for greater investment. The value of working with children and youth in peace building has suffered from poor understanding and low recognition. This global evaluation would address this poor understanding in several ways.

THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN will do advocacy work regarding children, youth and peace building. In July 2013 UNOY in cooperation with Save the Children, organized an event in New York, *Youth and Peacebuilding in the Post-2015 Agenda – Including Youth as Positive Agents of Change*. The aim was to raise awareness among civil society organizations, international agenda, and UN Missions about the importance of meaningful youth participation in all levels of peacebuilding processes and to link this discussion to the Post 2015-Agenda. UNOY's Youth and advocacy team talked about their experiences as young peacebuilders and gave their response to the High Level Panel Report.



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“Our target is to achieve peace and we expect your good company to achieve our target and to reach our destination.”

ABILASHA ACHARYA, NEPAL

“Let us acknowledge and celebrate what youth can do to build a safer, more just world. Let us strengthen our efforts to include young people in policies, programs and decision making processes that benefit their future and ours.”

UN SECRETARY GENERAL BAN KI-MOON (2010)



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