




***“To build peace, it is
hard but not impossible.
We have to do it.”***

Children and young people as actors in
peace processes and peace building



Save the Children



*"Children and
young people
want peace, help
us to build it."*

*"I wished good
things only for me
and my family, now
I wish for peace for
the world."*



Dear reader

In the first part of this publication children and young people tell about their involvement in peace building and what they are doing, why they are committed to this, what they have achieved and their future plans and dreams. They are members of child clubs and organizations in Save the Children's programs in more than 20 countries worldwide. They have participated in local, national and regional workshops, some have attended a global workshop and a few young people from four countries will be representing their regions in the UN side event in New York in 2012.

In the second part of this publication we in Save the Children present our approach to support children and young people's participation in peace building. The core of our work is that this is child-led, gives ownership to knowledge and information to the youth themselves; and is action-oriented. Examples of children's contribution to peace building in achievements and results are presented. We also look into possible future challenges and commitments for adults to respond to children and young people's strong longing for peace and their readiness to be involved in peace processes and peace building. This includes working towards a UN Resolution on children, youth and peace building.

Oslo, 24th of August 2012

Annette Giertsen
Save the Children



*“I will
change from
the bottom of my
heart in order to
change others.”*

In diverse settings around the world

(in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East and Europe) children and young people are actively involved in defending their rights and are taking action to promote and sustain peace in their families, schools, communities and in wider society.

Children are promoting awareness and dialogue on peace through discussions, paintings, drama, rallies, songs, magazines, traditional ceremonies and radio programs. They are working to prevent violence and conflict by encouraging their parents or caregivers and teachers to use positive discipline approaches and to resolve conflicts through good communication; and through their engagement in conflict resolution especially in schools. Through their Child Groups they are

addressing discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, disability, income and other factors; and children are reaching out to include and support their peers from marginalized backgrounds, including former child combatants.

Children are also actively participating in local and national governance mechanisms to influence practices and policies affecting them, and they have been consulted on constitutional processes (for example in Nepal and Zimbabwe) and in peace processes (for example in Uganda).

***What
we are doing***



The adults are always fighting. We, children, are not thinking of differences so we are working together to come up with a plan to stop this, we come up with activities”

Why we are doing this

Peace is important to children. They have expressed a desire to end violent conflict, insecurity, violence, discrimination and inequality that have negatively affected their lives and the lives of their families and community members. Children seek a peaceful life where they can live without fear of violence or conflict, and where basic services such as education, protection and health, can be provided to all citizens without discrimination or corruption. They dream of homes, schools, communities and societies where the rights of every girl, boy, man and woman are respected; where their voices are heard in decisions affecting them; where they experience security, care and protection; and a green environment.

“We know that we have to start with ourselves if we want to make a change in this sometimes unfair world.”



“We
deal with
the issues
ourselves.”

What we have achieved

Children and young people’s participation in peace building contributes to positive changes in the lives of children (individually and collectively), families, schools, and communities.

Benefits to **individual children** include: Increased self-confidence to raise their voices for peace and other matters concerning them; Increased communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution and negotiation skills; Increased consideration of other people’s needs and views.

Benefits to **children through peer support and collective initiatives**: Reduction in violence, abuse, discrimination and early marriage; Increased access to education (for example for working children in Afghanistan, former child combatants in Nepal); Children’s views are more respected by adults.

Achievements in families: Improved communication among parents and children and increased respect for children’s views; Reduction in corporal punishment and family violence or conflict.

Achievements in schools: Schools are more safe and inclusive; Reduction in corporal punishment and discrimination in schools; Increased conflict-mediation by children; And children’s views are heard.

Achievements in communities: Increased awareness on peace and child rights; Reductions in violence, abuse and discrimination facing children in the community; Increased respect for children’s views.



“Teachers are no longer bringing beating sticks to the classroom.”

When provided with space and opportunities to participate in local and national governance mechanisms, children and young people are also able to influence agendas and action on children’s rights and peace. Key achievements include:

A children’s radio program in South Sudan **inspired the governor to take action** to ensure the release and family reintegration of abducted children.

Through National Children’s Forums and meetings with government officials children have **influenced government action planning** to reduce violence against children (Romania, Myanmar).

Children have **informed the new Constitution** (Zimbabwe, Nepal), including increased attention to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (Zimbabwe).

Children’s views **influenced the draft peace agreement agenda** concerning reconciliation and accountability (Uganda).

“One day in 1991 my father was killed by the LRA rebels whereby I was having feelings of revenge. But when I joined the peace club and attended some workshops I realised that revenge is very bad. I have changed from the spirit of revenge to reconciliation and forgiveness. Now there is peace in my heart.”


Children and young people are inspired and dedicated to continue their peace work. Their future plans in diverse contexts encompass a focus on:

- *Individual responsibilities* to non-violence, to treat others with respect, and to be active agents of peace and good role-models to others in their families, schools and communities.
- *Strengthening inclusive children's groups and partnerships with adults* to better assert their rights, to address discrimination and contribute to peace building at different levels.
- *Increasing children and young people's capacity on peace building skills* and share with peers
- *Reducing violence and discrimination* in families, schools, communities and wider society
- *Continuing children's media initiatives* on peace; and developing child friendly materials.
- *Advocacy for children's representation and participation in local governance and national governance* on issues affecting them, including peace and reconciliation processes.
- *Advocacy for government budgets* (especially at local governance level) for child and youth led action initiatives on child rights and peace building.
- *Strengthening local, national, regional and global networks* among children and young people for experience sharing, learning and joint advocacy on child rights and peace building.
- *Advocacy for a UN resolution on children, youth and peace building*

Our
future
plans and
dreams

“We should work with children for children so that the shadow of the past does not hinder our future“





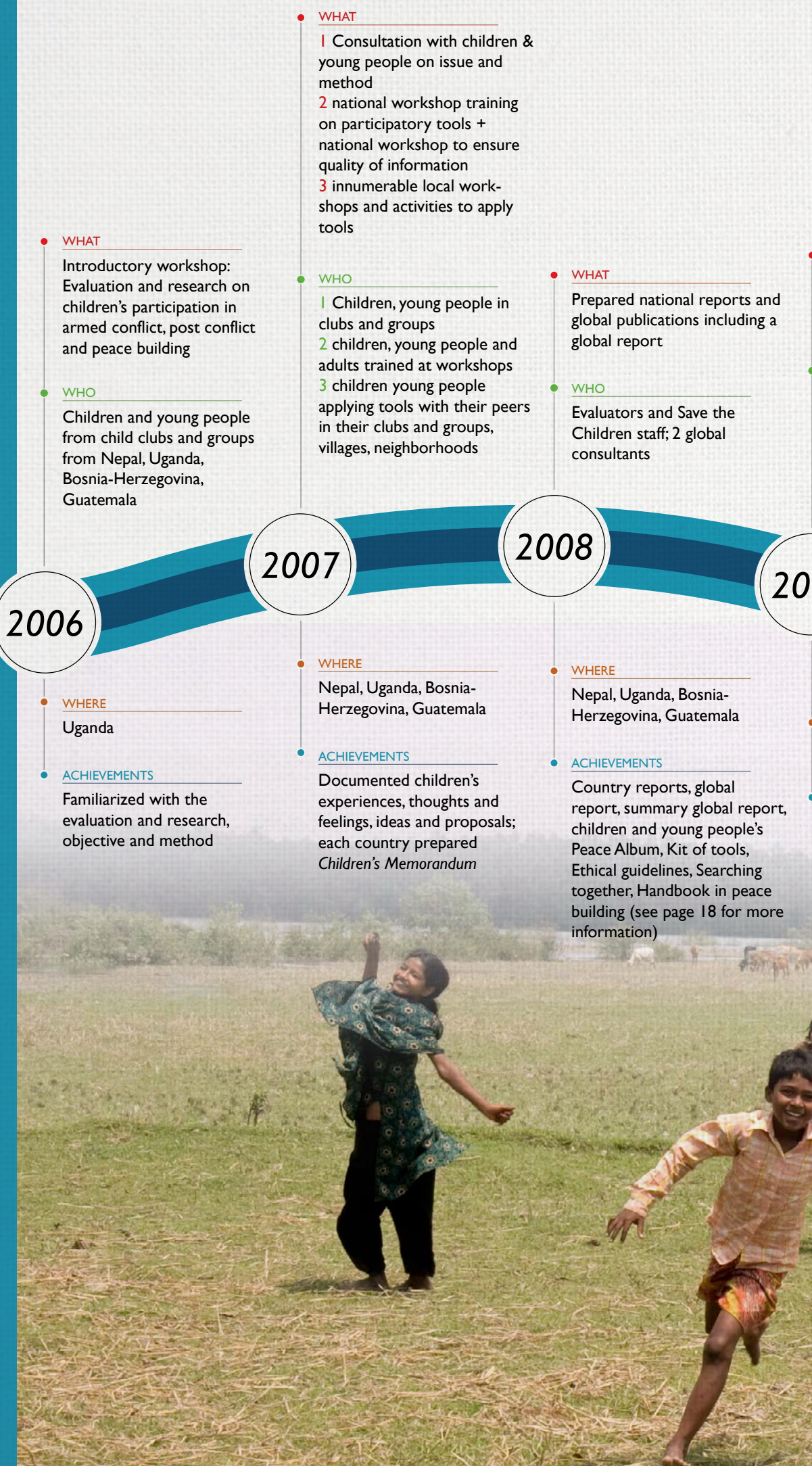
“My wish is a community where no tribal conflict exists.”

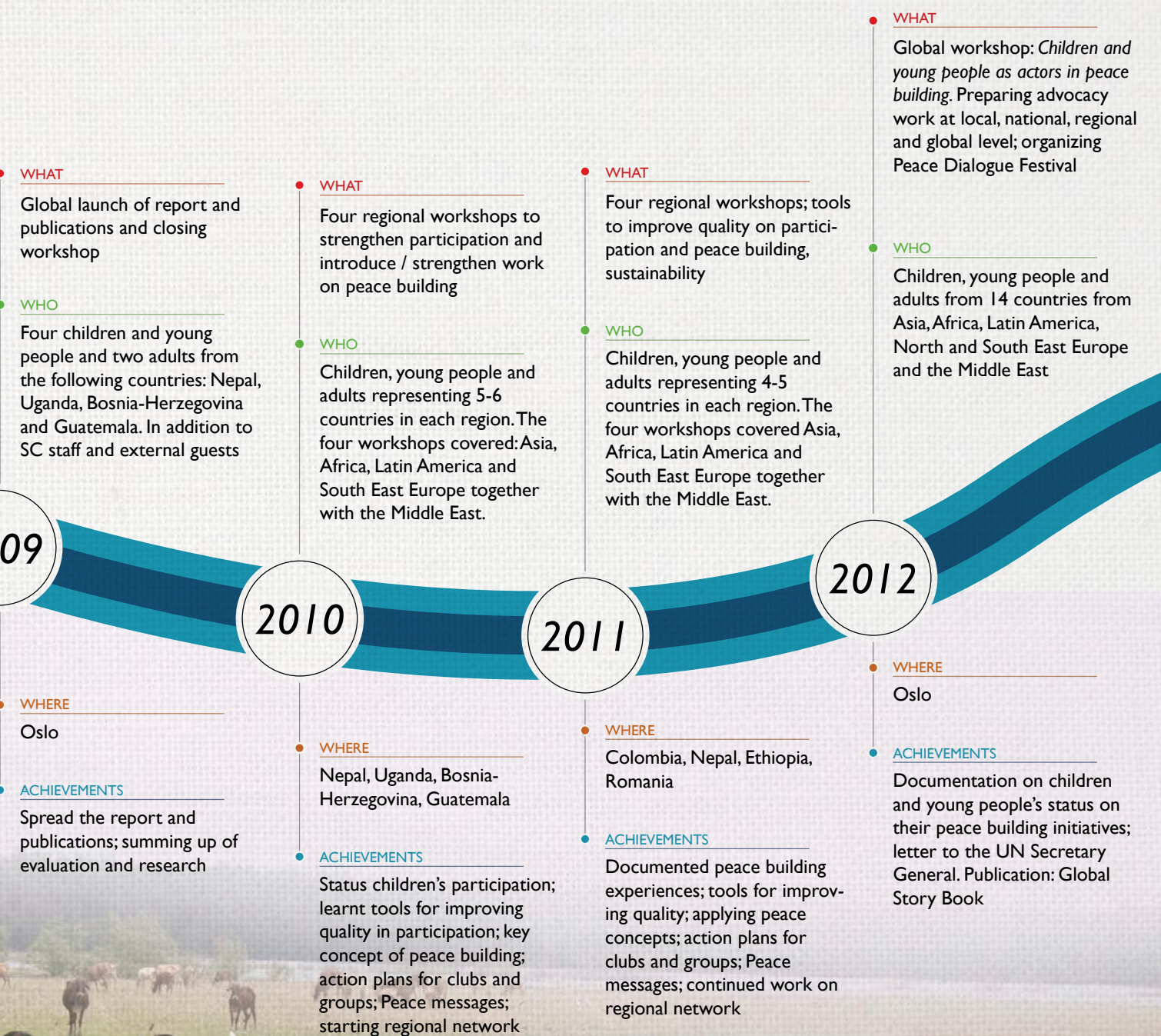
”I will start in my family, and end up with the whole world, to live in peace and harmony”

Timeline

This timeline shows the long term process of Save the Children's work with children and young people's participation in peace building from 2006 till today.

This long term process provides a solid foundation for a sustained, genuine and meaningful participation of children and young people in peace processes and peace building.





Supporting children and young people's peace building

Save the Children's approach

Children are deeply affected by armed conflicts, and by the violence that follows them. In order not to inherit the hate, chaos and destruction caused by war, it is imperative that the young generation has some ownership of the processes towards achieving peace and reconciliation, and that their capacity to participate in and contribute to such processes is both recognized and supported.

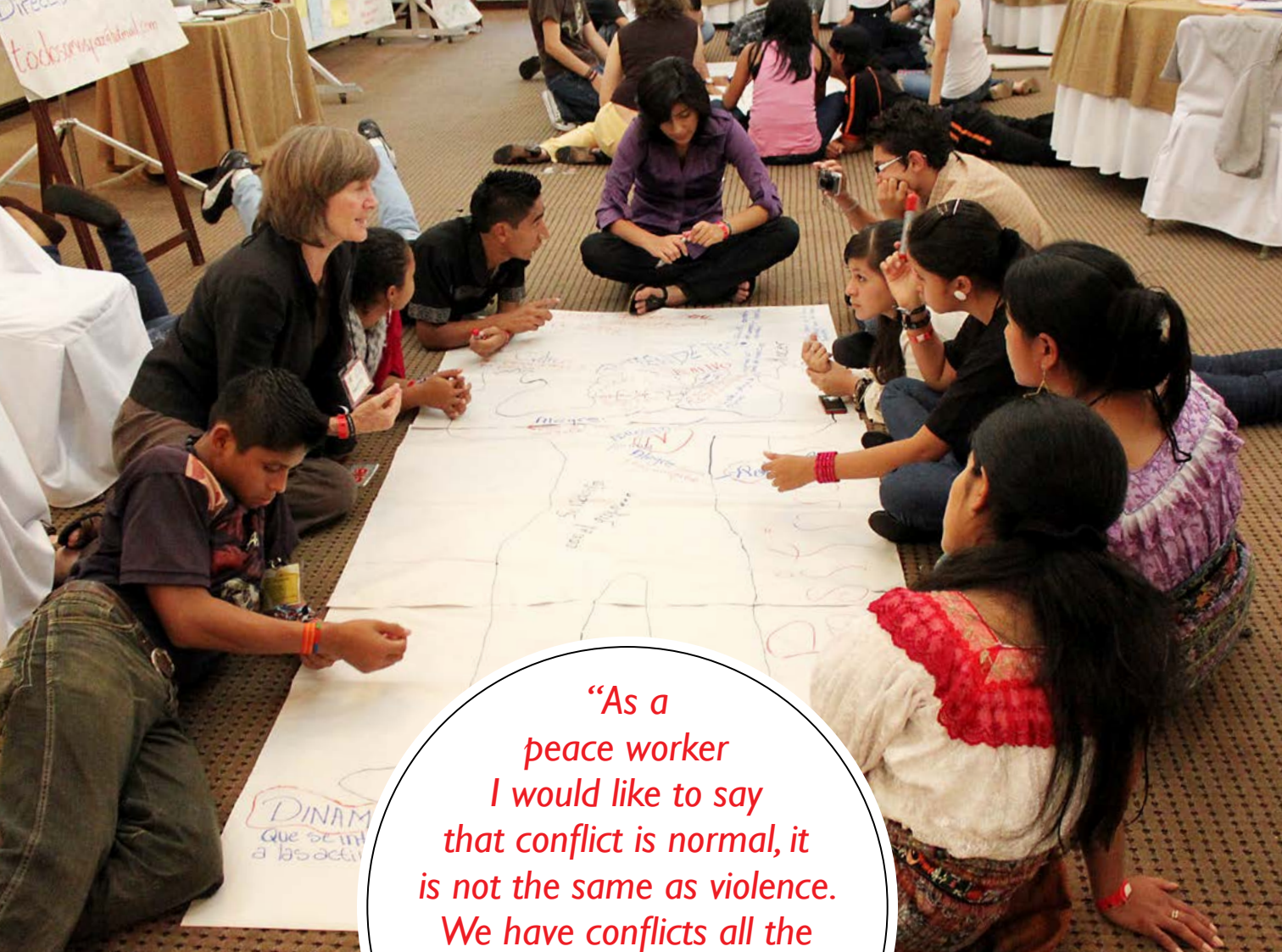
Children's initiatives in peace building can have enormous impact on improving their everyday life situation and in fulfilling their rights, increasing security in communities, reconstructing their society and supporting reconciliation and reintegration.

In 2006 Save the Children began to explore and assess children's participation in peace building. An evaluation which addressed children and young people's longing for peace and for taking part in peace building, was organised. Children in Guatemala, Uganda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Nepal participated in collecting and analysing their experiences and reflections about violent conflicts, post violent conflict situations and peace building.

Our work is characterised by three components: it is child-led, it emphasizes owner-

ship of information and knowledge, and it is action-oriented. Child-led means being based on children and young people's concerns and proposals. This work builds on their key priorities. Through *Formative Dialogue Research*, a method intending to give people, in our case children and young people, opportunities to improve knowledge and recognition, children and young people have been involved in collecting and processing information. We have organised training on participatory tools to improve their abilities to map and report significant experiences and aspects of their lives. By using these tools, they have achieved a deeper recognition of their situations and also of the recent or ongoing armed conflicts in their countries.

The participatory tools have also improved the possibilities for many of the children and young people to find ways of dealing with atrocities they had experienced. These changes were immense and impressive, especially for those who had been involved in armed groups and acted as child soldiers. The changes gave hope and a direction for the future; young people became actors in constructing their lives and societies and they saw themselves as agents of peace. To be able to collect and process information, and to do it collectively in groups, has been an enormous



*“As a
peace worker
I would like to say
that conflict is normal, it
is not the same as violence.
We have conflicts all the
time. What matters is how
we deal with them.”*

Kai Brand-Jacobsen,
adult peace worker

inspiration to them. The processes have led to new ideas, which were discussed and some developed into plans and actions. The method opened up for impatient young people to put their ideas into practice.

The work builds on ongoing initiatives, ideas, commitment and efforts of several children’s groups and organisations; movements and networks, and cover today more than 20 countries. The activities are contextualized, firmly situated in their situations and experiences, which is a way of promoting sustainability as well as avoiding risks and improving safety. In 2010 and 2011 Save the Children organised regional workshops with the objective to support children and young people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and South East Europe and Middle East to share experi-

ences and knowledge and to support their creativity, analysis and action as actors in peace building at different levels. Another

intention has been to increase recognition of adult support for meaningful, inclusive and safe ways for children and young people to participate in peace building and peace processes at all levels.

In 2012 a global workshop was organised where children and young people from 13 countries met in Oslo. Together they analysed key achievements, gaps and recommendations to strengthen their peace building initiatives at different levels. They also identified issues they wanted to present to decision-makers in national, regional and global contexts to increase support for children and young people’s role in peace building.

Achievements and results

Our experience shows that children and young people can be active participants in peace building and contribute substantially to peace in different situations, in armed conflicts, post war and situations with no open violent conflict. From the examples below we see that building peace is a steady ongoing work in everyday life.

Support reconciliation and reintegration. After violent events it is important to restore values of civil society, and to repair the wounds by recreating trust and showing that we may believe in each other. In Uganda and Nepal young people have promoted reconciliation when they prepared families and communities to receive children who had been abducted by rebel groups, some of them had acted as child soldiers. Reconciliation also took place when peace club members in Uganda met youth soldiers with forgiveness and opened up for them to be full members of the clubs.

Restore social relations. In Bosnia-Herzegovina young people restored social relations when they organized a round table conference with community and religious leaders to make the grown-ups aware of the strong impact that the massacre a generation ago had made on them.

Increase security. Peace has to be taken care of. In Nepal children and young people increased security when they stood up against rebel groups trying to recruit them. And also when they negotiated with rebel groups and managed to release abducted young people.

Do mediation. Peace has to be preserved again and again, in everyday life: In Uganda young people have acted as mediators in their local communities and also in sensitive situations as within families.

Exercise the right to be heard. Rebuilding society has to do with the right to have a voice and build institutions. In Nepal children and young people stood up to be heard. They asked for a meeting with the local rebel leader who had stopped their campaign on primary education for all. They were listened to and the campaign could continue.

Influence national politics. In Nepal children and young people were involved in the Constitutional Election process. Representatives from children's clubs in 48 districts participated in a national children's conference in December 2007 where they developed a declaration, which was presented to various political parties. In April 2008, prior to the constitutional election representatives from different political parties signed a joint declaration of commitment to children.



PEACE CLUBS
AS ARENA FOR
RECONCILIATION
AND REINTEGRATION



SUPPORT
REINTEGRATION



DIALOGUE
GROUPS WITH
CHILDREN, YOUNG
PEOPLE AND
ADULTS



Dates Developed and Composed: Saturday to Wednesday

Subject: Recommending an UN Resolution for Children's Peace Messages.

Dear United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban President Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser and Mr.

This letter you are reading now comes from children's experiences, representing children and youth from the Mediterranean, and Latin America and responsibility of representing and promoting the from our own countries and regions to share with

From Saturday to Wednesday, 12 - 16 May Children and Youth Participation in Peace Process the support of Save the Children and the National discussing our mutual efforts and ways to communities, countries, regions and world some problems and solutions that we want them with us. We know that we have to sometimes unfair world. Therefore, we Resolution that focuses on Children. Your priorities that we would like to reconu worldwide through national and region We are ready to work with you to ensure

1. Education: Basic to Advanced Education First, and most importantly, we are weapons is enough to ensure the education in school worldwide, instead spent on ensuring a worldwide. Second, and just a peace education in both formal ensure that our families, communities

2. Participation: Children's and and Peacebuilding. The second aspect we felt with you is that children's matter to our lives is vital, participation and represent that know better than any today. We feel the direct



our communities, countries and regions. We want the right heard, to participate with you in making a more peaceful world

3. Safety and Security: Children and Youth Living in Peace in Last, but not least, we discussed the importance of our schools, communities, countries, regions and globally. We sort of conflict and many of use by very violent communities, countries and regions. We ask that you work of child and youth soldiers, the investment in military weapon that we work together to ensure children and youth live communities, countries and regions around the world. We that.

We have taken the first steps to ensure peace in our families, We are now asking you to join us and we'll be able to effective peace. Recognize, as we do, that children and youth are important eager to ensure zones of peace, to connect these zones of peace for Resolution focused on Children, Youth, Peace and Security is vital this, and invite you to work with us.

This letter represents the messages from children and youth from across children from 14 countries from across Asia, Africa, Europe and America. We are so different, yet so importantly equal. We agree the same in all parts of the world: PEACE We are working to invite YOU to join us.

Yours Sincerely,

The Children and Youth from Norway, Palestine, Ethiopia, Fin Albania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Myanmar/Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Nicaragua.

Junick Thydel
Jael Baker
Karin Bredan
Sofie Sævereth
Magnus & Eng
Mona G. Moghadam
Pinar
Amar
Anna Kothalia
Thane

This letter was prepared by children and young people from 14 countries during the global workshop in Oslo in May 2012 and expresses their readiness to work with adults for a more peaceful world. Three key issues are raised: Education: Money used for weapon should be spent on appropriate education for every child worldwide; Participation: Children and young people's participation is vital, this includes participation in peace processes and peace building; Safety and security: Work with adults to put an end to violence and ensure children and youth live in safe and secure families, communities, countries and regions all over the world. The letter is available at www.reddbarna.no/chp

Looking forward

"We have to work together, we must speak up for ourselves, we need to be creative and to participate, and to cooperate, and to continue even though it's difficult."

Summing up at the global workshop in Oslo

Adults' challenge: Children and young people have capacities and strong desire to contribute to peace. The challenge goes to us as adults to find ways of supporting them in dealing with violence we leave to them and in managing conflicts before they escalate into armed fighting.

We want to challenge the idea that issues such as armed conflicts, peace building, reconciliation and mediation are too difficult and important for children and young people to get involved in and that they should not be burdened by adults' responsibilities. We want to encourage adults to develop exploratory attitudes of finding ways to listen to, communicate and have true dialogue with children, and to involve them according to their capacities, meaningful and ethical participation.



“I have one principle – you are not allowed to say that it is an accident if children are killed. You are not allowed to blame other grownups if you are killing children.”

State Secretary Arvin Gadgil,
Norwegian Ministry
of Development

“We need the brave young voices to help us in the work and we need the young voices to help us identify what is the most important thing to do.”

State Secretary Gry Larsen,
Norwegian Foreign Ministry

We want to change the way children and young people are regarded, so that their resources, energy and creativity are recognized, that they are considered as active members of society, considered as vital participants in peace processes and peace building, in reconciliation and conflict prevention and transformation.

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 young people as part of the population we may say that a significant part of the people is still excluded from these processes. Hopefully, the time will soon come so that young people’s insights and efforts will be recognized and included in peace processes in the world. Important initiatives are made at grassroots and national levels; however there is also a need for international support and commitment. Our hope is that UN members will commit themselves to including children and young people in peace processes and peace building. To ensure sustainability of this we see a need for a UN resolution on Children, youth and peace building.

If you want to read more and watch films

2012 Children and young people as actors in peace building PUBLICATIONS

- *Global Story Book. Children and young people as actors in peace building.* A book of children and young people's peace building initiatives from 24 countries.
- *Children and Armed Conflict. Child Friendly Version of the UN Security Council Resolution 1612*
- *Peace and Security, Women and Girls. Child Friendly Version of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325*

2010 – 2012 Looking forward: Building peace – Children and young people's initiatives FILMS

- *Four films portraying the regional workshops* (30 min.) for Asia, Africa, Latin America and South East Europe and the Middle East (2010). Each documentary provides an in-depth story of the involvement of the workshops and how Save the Children has been working with children's participation in peace building.
- *One film presenting the four regional workshops* (30 min.) This film gives an overview of the four regional workshops.
- *A film for advocacy purposes* (6 min.) portraying Save the Children work on children's participation in peace building.
- *A film for advocacy towards the UN* (3 min.) addressing a call for a UN Resolution on children, youth and peace building.

2009 Adults' war and young generation's peace PUBLICATIONS

- *Global Report of the Evaluation of children's participation in armed conflict, post conflict and peace building.*
- *Summary of the Global Report of the Evaluation of children's participation in armed conflict, post conflict and peace building.*
- *Executive Summary of the Global Report of the Evaluation of children's participation in armed conflict, post conflict and peace building.*
- *I painted peace - a Handbook on peace building for children and young people.*

In this handbook you will find examples of peace building from children and young people in four different countries. They present experiences, achievements and plans. The handbook may be used by children and young people in other countries in their efforts to contribute to peace.

- *Kit of Tools for participatory research and evaluation with children, young people and adults.*

The tools have been used and assessed by children, young people and adults during the evaluation on children's participation in armed conflict, post conflict and peace building. The tools may be used in different contexts and for different purposes.

- *Searching together - Formative Dialogue Research made easy.*

In this publication you can read about the method called Formative Dialogue Research. It is the result of a collective process to understand the method and includes examples from children and young people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda.

- *Ethical guidelines*

These guidelines will help support adults working with children and young people to ensure that their participation is ethical, meaningful and inclusive. The guidelines have been developed together with children and young people. The publication includes scenarios of different situations and from different countries to exemplify dilemmas and use of the guidelines.

2009 Publication by children and young people

- *Children and young people's Peace Album*
Children and young people members of Peace Clubs in Northern Uganda, took the initiative of making their own Peace Albums. The idea was shared with the other peace and child clubs and groups in the countries involved in the global evaluation on children's participation. This global Peace Album consists of stories, poems, songs and drawings from children and young people in the four countries.

2008 Adults' war and young generation's peace COUNTRY REPORTS

- *Bosnia-Herzegovina:* Children's participation in armed conflict and peace building
- *Guatemala:* Children's participation in armed conflict and peace building context
- *Nepal:* Thematic Evaluation of Children's Participation in Armed Conflict, Post Conflict and Peace Building
- *Uganda:* Thematic Evaluation of Children's Participation in Armed Conflict, Post Conflict and Peace Building

All publications can be found on
www.reddbarna.no/chp



Save the Children

OUR VISION is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

OUR MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Cooperation with and financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2006.

This publication has been financed with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ISBN: 978-82-7481-193-5

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Quotes from: children and young people from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and from participants in the African regional workshop in 2012 and the Global workshop in 2012.

Graphic design: Amund Lie Nitter

Photos: Save the Children and Prasanna Ratnayake

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"Give us an opportunity to express ourselves, we have the strength and desire to change the world into a better place"



Save the Children