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Gender, Education and Peacebuilding

A review of selected *Learning
for Peace* case studies

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
Background	1
Introduction to the case studies	1
What this review aims to achieve	2
2. Understanding the projects in context	5
2.2 Promoting the role of young women and girls in education and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	7
2.3 Support to community early childhood development centres in Cote d'Ivoire	10
2.4 Communities Care programme: Pilot projects in South Sudan and Somalia	12
3. Strategies for gender-transformative education in peacebuilding: Findings from the case studies	15
3.1 'Building back better' to promote positive gender relations and social norms	15
3.2 Empowering women and youth to promote and participate in building sustainable peace	17
3.3 Invoking positive models of masculinity and supporting at-risk male youth	19
3.4 Addressing gender-based violence	20
4. Lessons learned	23
4.1 What is the role of education in promoting gender-transformative peacebuilding?	23
4.2 Strategies for investing in gender-transformative education for peacebuilding: What has potential?	26
References	29
End notes	33



Introduction

Background

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Learning for Peace programme has been a catalyst for exploring how social services – particularly education – can break cycles of violent conflict, by addressing its root causes, to contribute to long-term, sustainable peace. Evidence indicates that improving gender equality in peacebuilding initiatives has a positive impact on both their durability and outcome,¹ and as such, Learning for Peace adopted gender considerations as a cross-cutting principle at its inception.

Such considerations are grounded in the [UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014–2017](#), which highlights the differential impact of conflict on girls and boys, and underscores the need for tailored programmatic responses as part of strategies to mainstream gender equality in education, and the importance of peacebuilding interventions to this end.

Education is more than a social service: It can serve to develop identities and influence deeply seated cultural norms, and it plays a vital role in shaping the understanding of gender roles and responsibilities and in internalizing positive gender norms during childhood and adolescence. Conversely, education that legitimizes potentially harmful gender stereotypes at an early age can pose a challenge to education access and quality – and can undermine girls' and boys' ability to contribute to peacebuilding, possibly even fuelling violence.² The education system and the teachers who work within it thus play a critical role in the process of promoting gender equality and providing opportunities for girls and boys to contribute equally and positively to peacebuilding processes for future generations.

Introduction to the case studies

Global analysis conducted by Learning for Peace has demonstrated that conflict is less likely in contexts where there is gender parity in terms of average years of schooling. Analysis has furthermore shown that gender inequality in education increases in response to the incidence of conflict.³ At the country level, Learning for Peace has shown linkages between attitudes related to gender equality in education and the strengthening of social cohesion.⁴ Indeed, Learning for Peace activities at the country level have provided opportunities to generate important lessons on and stimulate promising practices around the role of education in implementing gender-transformative peacebuilding strategies.

The present document reviews and analyses evidence from four selected Learning for Peace projects. The overarching question the review seeks to answer is: How can education interventions address gender inequalities in contexts of armed violent conflict and in the process contribute towards sustainable peace? In other words, what do the four case studies tell us about how a gender-transformative approach to education for peacebuilding can strengthen its policy and practice?

The four case studies cover a range of contexts, institutional settings, categories of learners, and educational activities (see *Table 1*). In Uganda, the review examined the Gender Socialization in Schools in Uganda (GSSU) teacher training pilot project in the country's Karamoja region, which

aimed to support teachers in managing safe and equitable classrooms. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the review selected a component of work in Equateur province in which in-school youth were mobilized to design their own peacebuilding projects. In Côte d'Ivoire, the review examined an initiative to provide members of Mother and Early Childhood Clubs with training and mentoring, enabling them to support the village-based early childhood development centres (ECDCs) that cement relations between women from different ethnicities. The focus of the final case study is the Communities Care (CC) programme, which concerns the development of a methodological approach for working at the community level to reduce the incidence of violence against women and girls (VAWG): The methodology, which seeks to transform negative social and gender norms into positive ones, is encapsulated in a toolkit manual and will be applicable in any conflict environment. The approach is currently being piloted in South Sudan and Somalia.

In each case, Learning for Peace commissioned research to delve into the potential of the project to contribute to gender-transformative peace in its various aspects. While the research for two of these case studies (Uganda and the CC programme) took the form of an impact evaluation based on randomized controlled trials,⁵ research for the other two case studies (the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire) was carried out using qualitative methods at the community level.

What this review aims to achieve

The purpose of this review is to summarize the findings of the four case studies, and to outline conclusions of relevance to future peacebuilding strategies and programmes seeking to adopt gender-transformative⁶ strategies.

While the intersections between gender equality, education and peacebuilding are many and varied, this review focuses on four strategies through which education providers may seek to play a role in gender-transformative peace, as identified in earlier stages of the Learning for Peace programme.⁷

These strategies are:

- 'Building back better' to promote positive gender relations and social norms
- Empowering women and youth to promote and participate in building sustainable peace
- Invoking positive models of masculinity and supporting at-risk male youth
- Addressing gender-based violence (GBV)

Although this is not an exhaustive list of potential strategies, the four strategies above cover a broad range of topics and encompass a large swathe of initiatives in this field. It is therefore likely that they will provide lessons of relevance to a wide range of situations.

Section 2 of this report presents an overview of the case study projects and the contexts to which they respond. Section 3 is devoted to an analysis of the four strategies mentioned above, which draws on evidence from the case studies, and Section 4 summarizes the wider lessons to be learned from this analysis.

SUMMARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASE STUDIES

Project	Uganda: Karamoja pilot	Democratic Republic of the Congo: Role of young women and girls in education and peacebuilding, Equateur	Côte d'Ivoire: Support to ECDCs, Cavally and Tonkpi	Communities Care programme: South Sudan and Somalia pilots
Time frame	March to November 2015	October 2015 to April 2016	August 2013 to June 2016	2012 to 2016
Institution	Primary school	Secondary school	ECDCs	Community
Learners	Teachers	Pupils	Mothers	Communities, service providers
Main aim	Demonstrating the peacebuilding potential of promoting safe and equitable classrooms	Mobilizing in-school youth to promote peace and gender/ethnic equality	Mobilizing mothers to promote community cohesion	Transforming social norms that facilitate VAWG
Gender explicit in design?	Yes	No	No	Yes
Main activity	Gender, identity and peacebuilding training for teachers	Establishing youth groups to promote peace in self- defined ways	Bringing together mothers of different ethnicities in joint activities centred around ECDCs	1. Community engagement activities: dialogue; community action plans; communications strategies on rules, laws and policies 2. Strengthening care and support services at the community level through the training of service providers, increasing availability, access and quality
Research approach	Impact evaluation based on a randomized controlled trial	Qualitative research in the community	Qualitative research in the community	Impact evaluation based on a randomized controlled trial



Understanding the projects in context

2.1 Gender Socialization in Schools in Uganda: Karamoja pilot project

The Karamoja context

Although Karamoja has not experienced the type of armed rebellions witnessed in other parts of Uganda, several forms of violence, including armed violence, beset the region. Violent conflict has been recorded between the Karamojong and neighbouring groups, between different Karamojong clans, and between the Karamojong and the Ugandan state, as well as tensions and violence at the interpersonal level, including between men and women and between older and younger men. Karamoja records the highest levels of GBV of all regions in northern Uganda, and this violence includes female genital mutilation/cutting, early marriage and child labour.⁸

Cattle raiding between different Karamojong clans has been largely eradicated following government campaigns against the practice, including disarmament, but small arms are still widely available and pockets of violence remain.⁹ Without cattle, and in the prevailing conditions of poverty, men are under intense pressure to provide for their families. When they are unable to do so, men can turn to using crime and violence as an alternative livelihood strategy to cattle raiding, and this can cause tensions, and ultimately violence, within the family.¹⁰ Pressures caused by poverty and insecurity exacerbate the potential for gender-related conflict, offering men incentives to violence in their relations with other tribes and clans, and encouraging violence in intimate partner

relations and within the household in general, including, for example, between co-wives fighting over access to land.¹¹

Socialization practices encourage young people to foster a strong sense of their own tribal or clan identity, which often implies an enduring enmity towards other tribes and clans. Poor social interactions between different segments of society are exacerbated by linguistic differences, which limit communication between groups. Masculinity is associated strongly with ownership of cattle, marriage and fatherhood, and to a lesser extent with land ownership, while femininity is associated with marriage, child rearing and providing for household needs.¹² Cattle ownership is therefore important to both feminine and masculine identities.

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence appear to be widespread in Karamoja, with women and girls bearing the brunt of this violence.¹³ Men often abuse courtship and marriage practices by forcing women into marriage through rape and defilement, child marriage and widow inheritance. Women's domestic responsibilities are demanding, and whereas in the past women alone were responsible for agricultural production – providing them with some measure of resource control – pressures on cattle stocks (once the source of livelihood for most boys and men) have led men to encroach on women's traditional resources.¹⁴ Gender relations, as currently practised, do not only discriminate against women: Boys and younger men who have not yet undergone initiation rituals to attain the social status of adulthood are – like girls and women – under the sway of older men and particularly the elders of the community, who have considerable power to either uphold or undermine the cultural acceptance of violence.¹⁵

Education in Karamoja

In this context, schools in Karamoja face many challenges that undermine their capacity to contribute towards social cohesion. Communities display a widespread mistrust of education, and school enrolment rates are low, especially among girls. School management and pupil performance are negatively affected by social problems in the community, including communal disputes, alcoholism and domestic violence.¹⁶ Many schools lack basic infrastructure, and conflicts are frequent between education stakeholders (for example, between parents and school authorities). The majority of teachers in Karamoja schools originate from outside the region and turnover is high: Working as a teacher in Karamoja is considered a hardship posting. A recent survey carried out for UNICEF found that a greater proportion of people in Karamoja (34 per cent) reported teacher-on-pupil violence than the national average (19 per cent). The same survey found that poor feeding was a major concern in the region, with 84 per cent of Karamojong respondents citing it as a trigger for violence compared with 50 per cent of respondents nationally.¹⁷

Programme intervention and theory of change

The GSSU Karamoja pilot project was implemented during 2015.¹⁸ The pilot provided training to over 1,000 primary school teachers that aimed to enhance their knowledge, attitudes and practices relating to the promotion of gender equality and conflict management. The project was designed on the basis of evidence that an enabling environment is an important factor in the effectiveness of school systems.¹⁹ Activities were therefore designed to operate within existing systems of teacher support, including established training, supervision and mentoring mechanisms.

The training covered teachers' understanding of concepts related to gender equality (e.g., the difference between gender and sex, gender roles and gender socialization) and to conflict resolution, as well as the practical application of these concepts in the classroom. Teachers were asked to draw up action plans for their schools based on the training they had received and to record their experience of implementing these.

Since the pilot intervention was implemented over a short time frame of less than one year, its impact was expected to be limited to changes in teacher knowledge and attitudes. The research design, however, aimed to also capture any promising tendencies towards shifts in practice and identify how these might contribute to social cohesion in the long term.

The pilot intervention was based on a theory of change that posited that teachers' enhanced knowledge as a result of the training would improve their capacity to recognize and address gender inequalities and conflicts within the classroom, and that this in turn would generate a more gender equitable environment in schools and, ultimately, in the wider community – helping to strengthen social cohesion.

Impact evaluation methodology

The impact evaluation carried out by American Institutes for Research²⁰ used a cluster randomized controlled trial design, involving a comparison of outcomes – for the same individuals before and after the intervention – between treatment and control groups using a culturally validated survey administered to teachers. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to assess the impact of the intervention on teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices. Survey questions reflected the content of the training manual and were either direct questions or used vignettes – fictional scenarios about which subjects are asked to make judgements – to assess teacher knowledge, attitudes and practices.

Qualitative methods included semi-structured and key informant interviews with head teachers, coordinating centre tutors and implementing partners; focus group discussions with teachers and students; participatory assessments, including role plays and facilitated discussions, with Primary 4 students; and classroom observation in purposively selected schools. Three high-performing schools were selected as subjects for in-depth case studies.

Main findings of the impact evaluation

In brief, the training succeeded in increasing teachers' knowledge of some gender equality concepts. Teachers who had taken part in the training acknowledged the equal capacities of girls and boys, and were aware of the effects of gender-based discrimination on girls' social interactions and confidence and on their likelihood of missing school during menstruation. Teachers displayed enhanced knowledge of how to promote a more gender equitable environment, including through classroom set-up, equal participation and representation, and responsibility sharing in the classroom.

As anticipated, it was more challenging for teachers to translate this new knowledge into practice. Teachers who had participated in the training reported that their classroom behaviour had changed and that pupils' performance (especially among girls) had improved as a result. In particular, they reported distributing resources and tasks among girls and boys more equally and making more of an effort to encourage girls in subjects that had previously been considered inappropriate for them such as mathematics. Researchers' observations and discussions with pupils cast doubt on how far these changes went, however, and the teachers' action plans showed that teachers had not entirely internalized the training. Teachers themselves tended to see traditional views on gender roles held by the wider community as a barrier to progress: It was challenging for teachers to take progressive action in the context of what they perceived to be conservative gender norms in the community.

Achieving changes in teacher practices requires multiple interventions over a longer time frame than was available to the Karamoja pilot project. Following experience from elsewhere, however, we should expect teachers' confidence in a new approach to grow exponentially as their experience of implementing it expands.²¹ Moreover, the impact evaluation did show that although gains in changing teacher practices within the short timescale of the pilot project had been limited, the strategy of raising teachers' awareness of their role in promoting gender equality and non-violence does have the potential to bring about transformative change over time.

2.2 Promoting the role of young women and girls in education and peacebuilding in Equateur province, the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Equateur context

A conflict analysis conducted by UNICEF²² showed that although Equateur does not face the same unrest as other parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, instead enjoying a relatively stable environment, several types of conflict disrupt the social cohesion of communities in the province. Land disputes and family or inter-community conflicts sometimes lead to violence in which women, men and young people take part. In the recent past, some such conflicts have escalated into much larger conflicts – for example, in 2009, clashes between two ethnic groups erupted over the control of a fish pond, resulting in a number of brutal rapes, the death of 200 people and the displacement of 100,000 others. Given the relative peace usually experienced in the province, its population saw this extreme violence as shocking, particularly the participation of youth mobilized through youth wings of the conflicting militias.

Education in Equateur

It emerged from the conflict analysis that education is both a driver of conflict and potentially a force for peace. Although schooling is theoretically free of charge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, teachers are underpaid and so children must contribute – in cash or in labour – to teachers' upkeep or else risk being expelled. Teachers, for their part, often take on other work to supplement their salaries. Other problems found to affect the education system in Equateur include conflicts around school management, resentment over the lack of transparency in decision-making around resource allocation, teachers demanding sexual favours from girls, and difficulties in integrating Batwa and Bantu children. At the same time, teachers

have the opportunity, given the appropriate training and support, to impart peacebuilding skills to their pupils.²³

With regard to gender-related issues in the province, women and girls are generally marginalized and relegated to second place in public and family matters, as a result of customary, religious and social norms. In contrast, men are perceived as heads of household and pillars of community. The younger generations are more likely to question the dominant gender relations, especially in urban areas, and to a lesser extent in semi-urban areas. Increasing communications beyond local communities has led to a degree of openness and to the introduction of alternative models – identified as Western – in particular by women's associations. In some ethnic groups, however, women already tend to play stronger socio-economic roles within the community.²⁴

Programme intervention and theory of change

The Equateur component of the Learning for Peace programme aimed to address the following four key issues identified from participatory assessments: inter-ethnic conflicts, especially those between Bantu groups and the minority Batwa group; poor governance, particularly within local authority structures; unequal distribution of resources; and the poor quality of education, reflected by very low enrolment rates, especially among girls.²⁵

Building on existing Learning for Peace activity in Equateur province, a theory of change related to the programme's youth strategy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was developed: If it is possible to influence the role of youth in conflict situations to enable them to contribute to peace, it is therefore possible to shape the dynamics of the entire conflict. Youth currently represent a significant portion of Equateur's population and are most affected by the poverty, conflict and difficult socio-economic conditions in the province. In areas of conflict, young people are also in the front line, and are particularly affected in regard to access to education. Including youth and children in peacebuilding initiatives raises their awareness from a young age and enables them to become agents of change within their communities.²⁶ The focus on the role of women and girls in the Equateur Learning for Peace work was based on

UNICEF conflict analysis²⁷ findings that young women are seen as particularly committed to finding non-violent resolutions to conflict, and therefore play an important role both as educators and as a voice in support of peace.

The Role of Young Women and Girls project was implemented by non-governmental organization Search for Common Ground as a component of Learning for Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and aimed to consolidate peace by encouraging the participation of young women and girls in both peacebuilding initiatives and education opportunities. The project lasted six months and was implemented in two urban areas and one semi-urban area. As a first step in the project, a selected group of in-school youth drawn from different ethnic groups took part in a one-week holiday camp, with a view to enabling the project staff to understand how such individuals would interact with each other when playing games and engaging in other activities. The discussions and observations made during this week led to a series of further activities with a wider group of students, which was mainly planned and implemented by the students themselves and carried out under the slogan that they had designed: 'Peace among us first'. This slogan became a rallying cry for the students' activism and was called out as a challenge when physical or verbal violence was observed. The students involved in the holiday camp also identified the dove as an emblem of peace, and this was painted on a number of school buildings.

Activities sponsored by the project included participatory theatre, youth journalism workshops, poetry and song competitions, and the establishment of peace clubs in schools to bring students together with teachers, head teachers and parents to discuss issues that they had jointly identified. Participatory theatre was particularly instrumental in promoting students' self-identification as agents of change, since it involved students developing their own presentation around issues they had identified as important rather than having messages targeted at them. Issues addressed in these productions included girls' education, discrimination against some ethnic groups, and poor governance of educational institutions

BOX 1. An example of student advocacy through theatre

A particularly impressive participatory play performed by students in the presence of the former Governor of the Province addressed the issue of the lack of benches in schools. In a region where forests cover a considerable section of the total area, several schools are devoid of benches and some students have to sit on the floor. The play was performed directly before the local authorities in the Governor's buildings, and led to the delivery of 2,000 benches by the Ministry of Education after the performance. Students' direct advocacy with local authorities helps break several barriers and develop an original mode of expression where students express themselves directly to the authorities without passing through other adults, teachers or heads of institutions.

Source: Search for Common Ground, *Case Study: Equateur PBEA Programme*, Forcier Consulting, 2016.

Main findings of the case study

In brief, the research identified a host of ways in which the mindset of students and teachers had changed.

Specific gains made included:

- A reduction in the levels of verbal abuse and physical violence in schools, including the use of the whip by teachers in classroom settings, and violence and verbal abuse among students.
- A reduction in the level of discrimination against the minority Batwa ethnic group, although progress on this has been less marked, reflecting the deeply embedded attitudes of superiority towards the Batwa by Bantu students and teachers alike.
- An increase in the self-confidence of girl students, who even in mixed-sex schools formed the majority of participants in project activities. This outcome was not foreseen as an objective of the project but came about because of the openness and encouragement of project staff. The significance of this result is that the project activities – especially the participatory theatre and the journalism training – offered opportunities for self-expression and confidence building that were unavailable to girls elsewhere.
- Some indications that learnings from the project were being applied out of school, for example, the finding that girls and boys had started to share household tasks. Many interviewees, however, expressed scepticism that significant change would come about in social and gender norms, or in relation to harmful practices such as GBV, within the communities.

Case study methodology

The qualitative research conducted by Forcier Consulting aimed to understand the role of young women and girls in peacebuilding and education in Equateur province.²⁸ Its main method was focus group discussions: 22 were conducted in four locations. Ten focus group discussions were conducted with students who had participated in the Role of Young Women and Girls project, while seven were with adults from the same communities and five with women's associations. In addition, key informant interviews were carried out with UNICEF and Search for Common Ground staff, with provincial education directorate staff and with head teachers and teachers of the participating schools.

2.3 Support to community early childhood development centres, Cavally and Tonkpi regions, Côte d'Ivoire

The Cavally and Tonkpi regions context

Cavally and Tonkpi regions are located in the west of Côte d'Ivoire, bordering Liberia and Guinea, and are inhabited by a large number of ethnic groups, each with its own characteristic mode of livelihood. For the last decade, this geographical area has been at the epicentre of inter-communal tensions. While these tensions are in part economic, centring on conflicts around land and the agrarian economy, underlying these are wider political and governance issues.²⁹ Conflict and political crisis have in turn generated mass displacements, and although some displaced persons are starting to return to the area, social tensions continue. The decline in the support given to state services (including education) has contributed to the deterioration of the social fabric.

Before the project was designed, a conflict analysis conducted by UNICEF identified land conflict and domestic disputes as the main types of conflict prevalent in the area.³⁰ Land conflicts commonly involve formerly displaced persons returning and reclaiming the land they had vacated, and they also involve intra-family disputes, including around claims by women who require access to land but have been excluded from land ownership as a result of inheritance norms. Domestic disputes are generally between husband and wife. Other, less common types of conflict arise when community members dispute actions by people in authority (including school management) and when misunderstandings arise between people of different ethnic groups. There have also been conflicts around local elections.

Education in Côte d'Ivoire

The disruption in Côte d'Ivoire over the last 10 years has had a serious impact on the country's education system. The education system has weakened as a result of the 10-year crisis and has been subject to politicization, enabling the institutionalization of divisions, violence and conflict in schools and universities. Grievances are fuelled by large-scale regional inequalities in the provision of social services, including education, in particular between the north and south of the country and between urban and rural areas. There are also large gender gaps in primary school enrolment and completion, secondary school enrolment and literacy rates, particularly in the northern regions. Evidence also suggests that conflict-affected groups, including refugee and migrant children, are at greater risk of school-related GBV.³¹

Programme intervention and theory of change

With the aim of promoting greater social cohesion in the Cavally and Tonkpi regions, the implementing agency Caritas Internationalis, with Learning for Peace support, undertook a peacebuilding project in 17 of the most vulnerable villages. Project activities included the building of an ECDC in each village (supported by teaching staff provided by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research) and the establishment of Mother and Early Childhood Clubs centred around these. Approximately 20 such clubs were established, bringing together around 800 mothers across the 17 villages, along with their 1,000 or so children aged 3–5 years. Preschool teachers, literacy teachers and ECDC managers, as well as community leaders, also benefited from the support provided by the project.³²

Support to the Mother and Early Childhood Clubs included the provision of training in literacy and numeracy, children's and human rights, associative development and social cohesion to mothers of preschool children. The mothers were also supported to undertake communal income-generating projects (generally producing vegetables to sell), which have the dual purpose of funding supplies for the ECDCs (food and equipment) and providing a context for the women to engage with each other in practical activities.

Project activities were developed based on the theory of change that if mothers are supported to champion the education of preschool children and to collaborate with other mothers across conflict lines in this process, then they will help to enhance the foundation for children's educational opportunities as well as for the strengthening of social cohesion. The strategy was to create a peaceful environment in which children of a young age drawn from the different populations could learn together, and at the same time to elicit the support of their mothers to participate in inclusive and collaborative activities, which would further ensure the sustainability of the project.³³

Case study methodology

The qualitative assessment was conducted in six villages. In each, focus group discussions were held with women attending the various activities associated with the ECDCs (including the income generation activities and the literacy course) as well as with their husbands and other community members. Key informant interviews were also conducted with local head teachers and officials. Questions explored the activities of the Mother and Early Childhood Clubs and their impact on the mothers, their children and the wider community.

Main findings of the case study

The research³⁴ found that each Mother and Early Childhood Club had around 50 members. Their main role was to take it in turns to clean the ECDC associated with the club and to prepare food for the children who attended the centre. Not all club members were mothers or had children at the ECDC: Children are seen as belonging to the whole community and are therefore everyone's responsibility. Clubs had each received a grinder and a rice husker, and were growing rice, cassava, corn and vegetables on donated land; some produce was prepared for the children to eat and the rest was sold at the local market to support other club activities. Some women from the clubs were also found to participate in Peace Messenger Clubs (village-level structures), as a result of which they had received training in conflict analysis and conflict resolution and had gone on to take part in community initiatives to promote harmony and solidarity.

Respondents cited a range of benefits arising from their participation in the Mother and Early Childhood Clubs. Many women had gained confidence and skills from the literacy and numeracy training, and were using these to start small businesses and generate a small income for themselves. Parents were pleased that their preschool children who had attended the ECDCs appeared to have adapted well to primary school – largely because they had already been exposed to speaking, reading and writing in French – which enabled the parents to have high hopes for their children's futures.³⁵

Most importantly, the qualitative assessment found that the mothers were contributing significantly to social cohesion in their villages by developing closer relationships with other women and within their households. The club members had initially found collaboration difficult in the earliest stages of membership but they had gradually learned to accept each other over the course of the training and through participating in the common activities.³⁶ The women believed that this growth in communication and togetherness was also affecting their male partners, since club members were actively encouraging their husbands to develop relationships with men from other groups and to avoid getting into disputes. The research noted a falling off in the attendance rates at some of the ECDCs, however, raising questions about the real level of interest in the idea of preschool, as well as inspiring the recommendation that the sustainability of the income generation component of such a project must be guaranteed.³⁷

2.4 Communities Care programme: Pilot projects in South Sudan (Warrap and Central Equatoria states) and Somalia (four districts of Mogadishu)

Global context

The CC programme – which focuses on the development of a generic methodology and toolkit rather than on a specific geographical area – is a response to the prevalence of sexual violence, and other forms of GBV, in conflict settings. The methodology is based on evidence that social norms pertaining to gender, sex and violence are all drivers of GBV, and that the transformation of such norms can effect a change in behaviour. The two countries in which the approach and tools are being piloted over a 3.5-year period from 2013 to 2016 are both settings that have experienced intensely violent conflict over the last few years, and are believed to suffer from particularly widespread sexual violence.

South Sudan context

In South Sudan, the country's independence from the Republic of the Sudan in 2011 was followed within a year by a descent into political fragmentation and armed violence. The extent and brutality of the ensuing war increased steadily, and by April 2014, 1 million South Sudanese had been displaced within the country and 300,000 more had sought refuge in neighbouring countries. A United Nations assessment mission to South Sudan in early 2016 reported a shocking catalogue of abuse – sexual violence (including rape, gang rape, sexual slavery and extreme brutality), abduction, forced labour and targeted killings – which it concluded would constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes if brought to court. The report also detailed the recruitment of child soldiers, the persecution of journalists, and widespread starvation.³⁸ In April 2016, the two main factions in the conflict reconciled, forming a unity government.³⁹

Though women have borne the brunt of abuse by all belligerent forces, it is also clear that there are high levels of domestic violence and sexual violence against women and girls in the general community. Indeed, women's status is closely entwined with the factors that contribute to conflict, given the links between bride wealth and cattle raiding. South Sudan's legal framework supports women's rights, but its implementation is limited by social and cultural constraints. Social indicators for women – for example, women's access to education – are extremely low, women are grossly overburdened with work and women's political representation is limited. Survivors of sexual violence are reluctant to report the abuse, either because of the associated stigma or because they are not confident that they will obtain redress. Early marriage is given greater impetus as a result of the insecurity faced by women, since many families view it as a form of 'protection' for their daughters.⁴⁰

Somalia context

Somalia has been without a functioning national government for 20 years and has endured decades of civil war. Despite the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, insecurity is still high in certain regions, notably the disputed border between Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, and most particularly in the federal capital, Mogadishu, and in the various parts of South Central Somalia contested by the al-Qaeda-linked rebel movement, Al-Shabaab.⁴¹

Groups that suffer marginalization and are particularly vulnerable to violence include women and girls, minority groups, internally displaced persons and young men.⁴² Decision-making is largely in the hands of adult and elder men, with women and youth excluded from both formal and informal decision-making. Somalia operates three separate legal systems (statutory, Islamic and customary), with customary law the least favourable to women and also the most commonly observed. Although women have been an influential force in peace and reconciliation processes behind the scenes, there is a cultural bias against women in public leadership, which has effectively excluded women from public life.⁴³ The most frequent victims of sexual violence are women from minority and displaced communities; these women are doubly vulnerable, since

they and their menfolk suffer discrimination, causing both to keep silent, fearing further discrimination and exclusion. In this way, sexual violence has become 'normalized'.⁴⁴

Programme intervention and theory of change

The CC programme vision is the creation of safer communities for women and girls through the transformation of harmful social norms that contribute to sexual violence into positive social norms that uphold women's and girls' equality, safety and dignity. Its dual objectives are, on the one hand, to transform social norms and, on the other, to improve the care and support given to survivors by the community and by a range of service providers. The two resulting programme components – the Community-Based Care (CBC) and Community Engagement and Action (CE&A) elements – are guided by a toolkit, the four parts of which cover: building knowledge and awareness, programme planning and monitoring, strengthening community-based care, and catalysing change.⁴⁵

The problems that the CC programme theory of change seeks to address are the limited availability of, access to and quality of support services, and harmful social norms, which contribute both to poor outcomes for survivors of sexual violence and their families, and to acceptance and tolerance of inaction against sexual violence.

The programme implements a six-step pathway to address these problems:

1. *Strengthen* community-based care and support for survivors – including health, psychosocial, law enforcement and education services – by addressing gaps in services; identifying barriers to access; and providing training and mentoring for providers on sexual violence, social norms, self-awareness and survivor-centred care.
2. *Reflect*, through group discussion, to raise awareness of these problems among core groups in the community who can act as agents of change, and to stimulate reflection among these groups about the relationship between community values and the rights of all people.
3. *Explore*, through deeper and facilitated discussion, beliefs and practices that contribute

to sexual violence against women and girls, and those that promote non-violent, respectful relationships between men and women.

4. *Commit* – community members collectively commit to taking action to prevent sexual violence, including organizing public actions that demonstrate their commitment to change.
5. *Communicate* positive norms to others in the community, as well as to different communities, making these changes visible.
6. *Build* an environment that supports members of the community in sustaining change, by identifying and advocating for laws, policies, protocols and other mechanisms that support new practices and behaviours; by addressing violations; and by further strengthening the capacity of institutions and services to provide care for survivors.

Main findings to date

The CC programme is being piloted in South Sudan and Somalia over a 3.5-year period beginning in 2013 and ending towards the close of 2016. At the time of writing, both the CBC and CE&A elements have taken place, and follow-up activities are ongoing.

The CBC element involved a total of 600 trainees from the two countries, comprising community and facility-based health workers, psychosocial support workers, and education and law enforcement staff. All participated in a foundation course on social norms, sexual violence, self-awareness, survivor-centred responses and sector-specific training, based on training modules from the CC programme toolkit adapted to the local context. Other activities included a mapping of services and the identification of gaps and barriers to care, and how to address these and improve coordination. An impact evaluation has recorded substantial improvements in all areas following the training as indicated by tests that were administered before and after each training. To give but two examples, the average scores of participants in the case management training in Somalia improved from 20 per cent to 82 per cent, while in South Sudan education actors increased their scores from 40 per cent before training to 94 per cent after.

Under the CE&A element, community discussion leaders were first selected and then trained and supported to facilitate community discussions using a discussion guide. In Somalia, 12 community discussion leaders facilitated 26 discussion groups (325 participants); in South Sudan, 24 community discussion leaders facilitated 25 groups (620 participants).

The education system and schools in particular were key elements of both the CBC and CE&A components in the two countries: Teachers, head teachers and education officials were among the groups to receive the CBC training, while schools were an important element within the community dialogue strand of the CE&A component.

The full results of the impact evaluation will be available at the end of 2016. Preliminary findings suggest that key changes include fewer people believing that protecting family honour is the priority when a woman/girl has experienced sexual violence, and fewer people believing that husbands have the right to use violence against their wives.



Strategies for gender-transformative education in peacebuilding: Findings from the case studies

3.1 'Building back better' to promote positive gender relations and social norms

Building resilience – the capacity not only to survive a crisis but also to undermine its contributory factors, thereby 'building back better' – is a useful way to think about recovery from conflict.⁴⁶ In terms of building resilience into gender relations, this means understanding what capacities women and men possess to withstand shocks, adapt to stresses and make radical changes in gendered power relations. And to what extent can education contribute to this process of building back better?

The Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo case studies demonstrate that the school system has the potential to positively affect the attitudes and behaviour of teachers and students, even in conflict settings, and this includes influencing gender roles and responsibilities. For example, the Ugandan teachers who underwent the GSSU training acquired the understanding that, contrary to common belief, girls and boys have equal aptitudes for mathematics and science, and were able to emphasize this in their interactions with girls, with the result that many girls improved their marks in these subjects. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one effect of the project was that, in many cases, girls and boys started sharing household tasks more equitably in their home settings. In both examples, the self-confidence of girls was enhanced, with many declaring that they could do whatever boys can do.

The findings of the research conducted in both Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, however, made the case emphatically that whatever changes had taken place within the school had had no appreciable effect on attitudes in the wider community. Influencing community attitudes via projects involving schools alone seems to have little likelihood of success. In those projects where the focus was on changing beliefs at the community level, however, significant change was recorded. This was especially true in the case of the two CC programme pilots in South Sudan and Somalia, where change came about as a result of the community dialogue methodology being tested. At the outset of the project, community members – both women and men – tended to stigmatize survivors of sexual violence and to accept women's subordinate status, but by the end, many had acquired a determination to fight against VAWG, and recognized the need to challenge wider beliefs and practices that enabled an environment in which VAWG was possible (e.g., inflexible household gender roles that impose heavy work burdens on women and girls). In South Sudan, for example, men graduating from the programme made public commitments to change their behaviour such as by sharing household tasks with their wives and by supporting the education of their daughters.

Education, both in-school and informal, therefore has a wide range of roles to play in influencing gender norms – providing information, generating debate and, importantly, using the power of educational facilities as institutions to bring people together to decide how to change, model different behaviours and thus proactively set trends for transformation. The extent to which these roles can be harnessed to contribute meaningfully to social cohesion is dependent upon school-focused initiatives being conducted in concert with broader efforts to engage the wider community.

BOX 2. James Majok Kuot: A teacher taking the lead in changing norms in South Sudan

James Majok Kuot has been a teacher at the Wunriang Primary School in Gogrial West County for 14 years.

"The reason that I like being a teacher," he said, "is that I empower each and every student." James has recently made a commitment to also empower his wife at home. He now contributes to the workload around the house, a custom in South Sudan that is rarely heard of or accepted in the communities. This change came about after James took part in a 15-week UNICEF Communities Care programme, which aims to promote gender equality and prevent sexual violence.

In the family compound, James has taken on many jobs that would traditionally be his wife's duty. James fetches the water, sweeps the house, washes the clothes, attends to their two children, and even cooks. "My commitment to work alongside my wife is very new," James admitted. "We all have human dignity," he continued. "I have learned that, so this is how I've made my new plans ... that we work together," he said.

The changes in his home are something that he, as a teacher, intends to share with others. "If you see something that you think is not right, then you can teach people to change. From the discussions we have just

acquired this knowledge," he said. After completing the 15-week Communities Care programme, which involved 30 community discussion meetings, James and other participants were asked to make commitments to address gender inequality in their lives.

James plans to pass on the information that he has used in his own life and family to help others in his community understand the benefit of having men and women work together. Of course, some people have challenged his changing beliefs. "One person asked me, 'Why are you washing the clothes?' I explain to them that the women cannot work alone because the work is heavy," he tells his friends. "They are supportive and they think that this is good and maybe that they can also adopt that system," James said, confidently.

Even in his own home, the changes have not come easily, but now that his family is growing accustomed to the changes, things are improving, and he is passing the knowledge on to his children. "In the evening hours when we are sitting and eating together, then I can teach the children and give them advice," he said. At first, James' wife did not want him to cook. But, after some time, she also grew accustomed to the new ways. "My wife is very happy ... you can even see she is not around right now," he joked. "Of course the original cooking, her cooking, is still better than mine," he laughed.

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, *Communities Care: Transforming lives and preventing violence, Programme Report covering January 2012 to January 2016*, UNICEF, 2016.



3.2 Empowering women and youth to promote and participate in building sustainable peace

Violent conflict, for all its destructive force, may result in constructive outcomes to the extent that it offers windows of opportunity to change ingrained attitudes and practices, provided that certain conditions are met.⁴⁷ Among these conditions is the commitment of institutions (e.g., governments, schools, communities) to use their power to support the empowerment of those who have previously had no voice. Education systems are among those institutions that have the potential to engage in social transformation as agents of change, and to support post-conflict shifts in gender norms and roles. Has this proved the case in the Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo projects, which aimed to promote the peacebuilding roles of women and youth respectively?

In the Mother and Early Childhood Clubs formed around the ECDCs in Côte d'Ivoire, members interviewed for the case study research attested to the effectiveness of this approach in several respects. Many women used their literacy and numeracy skills to start small businesses and generate a small income for themselves. Preschool children who had attended the ECDCs appear to have adapted well to primary school, enabling their parents to have high hopes for their children's futures. Most significantly, women of different ethnic groups developed relationships with each other across conflict divides. Respondents described the "new spirit of togetherness and friendship" shaping their relationships across all ethnicities, and the support and counselling they received from each other through the clubs.⁴⁸

Members of the Mother and Early Childhood Clubs believed that relationships within the household had also improved, with husbands showing greater inclination to take notice of their wife's views and more willingness to share tasks. Club members encouraged their husbands to be more communicative, both within their marriage and with other community members, in part to prevent their menfolk from getting involved in quarrels. In this way, participation in the clubs enabled women not only to take an active role in their children's education and

well-being, but also to grow in stature as role models because of their voluntary work and their championing of cohesion between different elements of the community.

In this case, however, the gains that the women were able to make were based on and derived from their 'traditional' roles as wives and mothers. Although the training enabled participants in the Côte d'Ivoire project to engage in activities that increased their income, and enabled them to acquire literacy and numeracy skills in a way that was impossible in the past, this did not amount to providing them with financial independence – or independence of any other kind. Nor did the project seek to challenge the fundamentally unequal power structures within the community. While ECDCs provided women with the time to pursue non-traditional business activities, the intervention was designed primarily to provide support to the centres. This suggests that if a gender strategy had been deliberately integrated into its design, even more significant transformations might have resulted.

The success of the Democratic Republic of the Congo project was in part due to its participatory methodology, which asserted the agency and capacity of young people: The students themselves identified their campaigning priorities as well as the media they wished to use to pursue them. Youth therefore became real agents of change in their schools and in their direct environment, developing skills to convey messages to the authorities about poor governance and unequal access to quality education between girls and boys. An important contributory factor was that teachers and education authorities, as well as the students themselves, realized the importance of peacebuilding and gender equality and gave the project their support.

To be educated offers young people future opportunities for employment and self-actualization, which may be a powerful factor in constraining their militarization and criminalization. The development of critical thinking and self-reflection likewise seems to enhance relationships and encourage reconciliation. Moreover, sharing facilities with other individuals from different groups makes it more difficult for dissension to be sown between them, and can promote a sense of trust and belonging, a fundamental element of social cohesion, as seen in the Côte d'Ivoire case study. Meaningful change, however, requires strategies that intentionally seek to challenge fundamentally unequal power structures and which are based from the outset on a comprehensive gender analysis.



BOX 3. Testimonies from Mother and Early Childhood Club members and a member's husband

"Before the crisis, we didn't know each other, each one of us was by herself. When we woke up in the morning, we headed to the field, not knowing the concept of working together. Today, ethnic Doula and Moussi women work together with Gueree women and they get along. Some of them have also learned to speak Gueree."

"When we saw our children studying and playing together, we asked ourselves: what should stop us the adult from doing the same? I feel that our kids have motivated us to unite."

"I am a foreigner to this country. When I arrived with my husband and kids, we didn't know anyone in the village. Thanks to this group, I meet other women and I feel less lonely."

"I am the oldest member of this club and I act as an adviser. I am the one who solves conflicts when they arise in the field. For instance, when we are working and I notice disputes between the women, I ask them to stop fighting and I explain the importance of our work as the only thing that will help us in the future. These disputes usually occur when some women are too lazy to work, so they just sit. The other women working get obviously mad and they start arguing. So my role is to advise those not working to stop being lazy and go back to work. I tell them, look I am too old to work, but I still work."

"In our village, we say behind every man, there is a woman. So when the woman is good, she can influence positively her husband's reactions. For instance, when I had recently a small issue with another villager, my wife calmed me down. She asked me: how is it possible you are fighting with this man and I am cooperating with his wife every day in the field? Thus, just because of her argument, I abandoned the fight. Imagine, if she would have said otherwise, I would have acted differently."

Source: Mokadem, Sarah, 'Case Study Report: Peacebuilding in 17 Villages through EDCs', Unpublished document, 2016.



3.3 Invoking positive models of masculinity and supporting at-risk male youth

Exploring how men fit into gender, education and peacebuilding scenarios is a key concern of the examination by Learning for Peace of gender-transformative education approaches. This is in line with its view that “Gender [should be understood] alongside other intersections of power – race, class, ethnicity, education, disability – [as shaping] a person’s opportunities, vulnerabilities, limitations and assets.”⁴⁹ Although policy interest is now moving beyond approaches that simply include women and girls, this ‘relational’ and ‘intersectional’ approach remains relatively new and only limited evidence exists to date of its application in the field of education and peacebuilding.

The CC programme is an example of an intervention that shows promise in successfully promoting positive models of masculinity. In both South Sudan and Somalia, facilitated dialogue within communities is showing striking changes of attitude on the part of both women and men. This has in turn increased mutual support between wives and husbands, with men taking on board issues such as women’s workload, girls’ education and the need to counter VAWG. While the main focus of both CC programme pilots was sexual violence against women and girls, in each case the process was designed to engage the community in a more general discussion of power and violence, which included mapping the experience of violence for both women/girls and men/boys.

Equally, in Uganda, the GSSU teacher training intervention adopted a unique approach in its focus on both male and female gender issues and efforts to promote positive notions of masculinity and femininity in response to identified drivers of gender-related conflict. The impact evaluation showed some evidence of related change among teachers who had participated in the training, in that they were less likely to hold opinions conforming to traditional masculine stereotypes than teachers who had not participated in the training. The Côte d’Ivoire intervention showed positive results regarding improved communication and division of

labour between wives and husbands, as well as in regard to women discouraging their husbands from engaging in conflict within the community. Such results reveal a great opportunity to integrate intentional strategies to promote positive masculinities within transformative interventions as part of efforts to challenge unequal power structures.

Interventions that acknowledge the risks that men and boys face, and support those most at risk, are few and far between, however. This is particularly significant from a peacebuilding perspective given evidence that indicates that men and boys are more likely to adopt negative coping strategies, including strategies that are violent in nature, in response to experiencing traumatic events.⁵⁰

We know from the evidence of the Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo examples that young men and boys do often face discrimination from the school system, albeit of a different sort to that faced by young women. Girls and boys in Karamoja, for example, both recorded the view that teachers inflict grossly unfair levels of corporal punishment on boys. This is an area where teachers in the Uganda case study displayed some nascent attitudinal shift as a result of the training they had received, although this was not observed to translate into changes in teacher practices. Indeed, the impact evaluation identified this as an area requiring greater attention in future.

3.4 Addressing gender-based violence

Levels of sexual violence frequently increase in contexts of armed violent conflict. This may happen in one or both of the following ways: combating forces may perpetrate sexual violence, thus increasing any pre-existing incidence, and/or the incidence of sexual violence in the population at large may increase, perhaps as a result of the breakdown of social norms or because of a lack of social control. Militarized violence has been clearly established as having occurred in a number of armed violent conflicts ranging from Nepal to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;⁵¹ the factors that contribute to this happening in some contexts but not others are the subject of continued research.⁵² In regard to heightened incidences of sexual violence in the general population, quantitative evidence of an increase is difficult to obtain – in part because of the absence of comparable pre-conflict data – but qualitative research shows that conflict-affected communities face increased exposure to risks and threats of sexual violence.⁵³

An important consideration in efforts to address sexual violence in armed conflict is its link to underlying structural violence. Social and gender norms that perpetuate gender inequality enable sexual as well as other types of GBV (e.g., female genital mutilation/cutting, early marriage and intimate partner violence) and may also result in the stigmatization of survivors, leading to impunity for the perpetrators. While a raft of measures may be needed to address the incidence of sexual violence in conflict situations – including policy and legislative interventions and the strengthening of police, courts and other statutory services that are characteristically weak in such settings – evidence has shown that work to transform the social norms that perpetuate sexual violence should form a key component of any approach. Such work should strengthen the capacity of communities not only to provide care and support to survivors but also to address the beliefs and practices that perpetuate sexual violence. It is this perspective, founded on an evidence-based methodology, that has informed the development of the CC programme and its pilot projects in South Sudan and Somalia.

BOX 4. Examples of changes in beliefs about VAWG from the Somalia CC programme pilot

In preliminary analyses of midline data for the Somalia pilot sites, there appear to be promising trends, with the intervention communities having significantly greater improvement than the control communities on some of the social norms measured. In particular, data indicate that intervention community members report seeing fewer husbands using violence against their wives, as well as more community members who disagree that a husband has a right to use violence against a wife. Furthermore, people in the intervention communities report seeing fewer people protecting family honour when a woman or girl has experienced sexual violence and more people who think that protecting family honour when a woman or girl is raped is wrong.


Monitoring data show a positive shift in personal beliefs regarding violence-supportive norms collected from discussion participants in Somalia. Participants were asked to give their personal beliefs about a number of scenarios related to violence against women and girls before, during and after participating in the discussion programme; in each case, there were positive changes in beliefs.

"Before I started these discussions, I thought violence was part of my life, now I have the confidence and knowledge to share with the community to speak out against it." (Female discussion participant from Somalia)

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, *Communities Care: Transforming lives and preventing violence, Programme Report covering January 2012 to January 2016*, UNICEF, 2016.

What is the potential of education to strengthen the capacity of communities to address sexual violence and other forms of GBV in conflict settings? Addressing GBV in emergencies is a key component of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, which states, "Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights across the world."⁵⁴ The CC programme was set up specifically to enhance the capacity to transform negative gender norms that facilitate VAWG into positive gender norms. It does this partly through a community mobilization process that includes community dialogue among other initiatives – an approach that has been found to be very successful in transforming harmful practices in many contexts.⁵⁵ At the same time, it also undertakes a host of measures to strengthen the quality and availability of support services. These include training and mentoring for service providers – for example, government officials, paralegals, health service professionals and teachers – to raise their awareness of the norms that make sexual violence possible and to explain how these can be challenged. The measures also include identifying and addressing gaps in service provision and access. (Service providers are also integral to the community dialogue process.)

Often such activities involve making professionals aware of codes of conduct intended to govern their behaviour but about which they may not have previously received information. For example, teachers in South Sudan were unaware prior to the CBC training of their code of conduct, which outlaws intimate relations between teachers and pupils, a common source of sexual violence and an issue that discourages parents from sending daughters to school. Education sector participants – teachers, parents and school management – together drew up action plans to outlaw sexual violence in their schools, and ongoing CC programme monitoring has found that these plans have been substantially implemented (see Box 5). Preliminary findings show promising indications of shifts in social norms and, as highlighted earlier, demonstrate the important role of informal education and community mobilization alongside school- and teacher-focused interventions.

A photograph of three young children, likely of African descent, smiling and looking towards the camera. The child in the center is pointing their right index finger towards the viewer. They are wearing colorful clothing, and the background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

BOX 5. How the CC programme has worked with the education sector in South Sudan

The CC programme recognizes the critical role of education in preventing GBV and responding to the needs of child survivors. In South Sudan, several incidents of rape by teachers have been reported, and parents are hesitant to send girls to schools because they could be raped. In consultation with the Ministry of Education in each state, several target schools were selected for training from the CC toolkit. Participants included teachers, school principals, head teachers, student representatives, school management committee members, representatives from the parent teacher associations (PTA), and representatives from the state Ministry of Education.

Prior to the training, 90 per cent of participants were unaware of the code of conduct to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by teachers. They were also unaware of how to report incidents of sexual violence and refer survivors. After the training, however, the participants drafted a plan to prevent and respond to sexual violence in their schools. The following are some

of the recommendations made by the participants:

- Raise awareness about GBV during lessons, school assemblies, PTA meetings, and extracurricular activities.
- Establish reporting and referral mechanisms for incidents of sexual violence (e.g., place suggestion boxes in strategic areas in the school where students can report). Identify and train senior female and male teachers to support students and serve as counsellors and focal points for referrals. Dedicate safe spaces in the schools where students can consult with them.
- Conduct trainings for teachers and non-teaching staff to understand and sign the code of conduct.
- Implement a 'zero tolerance' policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Incorporate life skills into the curriculum to promote self-esteem and confidence among students, especially female students, and to challenge negative social norms.

By the end of December 2015, UNICEF and partners conducted a monitoring visit to three out of five schools, and all three schools had implemented at least one of the recommendations they had made.

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, *Communities Care: Transforming lives and preventing violence, Programme Report covering January 2012 to January 2016*, UNICEF, 2016.

Lessons learned

During the past two decades, we have witnessed substantial advancements in the normative framework on gender equality and peacebuilding. But significant gaps remain in knowledge of good practices as a result of limited direct investment in strategic programmes operating at scale, and a lack of rigorous evaluation and documentation.⁵⁶ Important ongoing processes – from the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals to the 15th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – provide momentum to drive new approaches and strategies to close these gaps (see Box 6). Learning for Peace has generated important lessons on the role of education in promoting gender-transformative peacebuilding as well as promising strategies for related investment.

4.1 What is the role of education in promoting gender-transformative peacebuilding?

Education has enormous potential to influence attitudes, identities and capabilities in the most difficult circumstances

The overarching lesson to be drawn from the four case studies reviewed in this document is that education has enormous potential to influence the formation of gendered attitudes, identities and capabilities, even in the most difficult circumstances. A safe and equitable education system can provide the foundation for a safe and equitable society. The potential is evident at all levels of the education system, and in both in-school and informal settings.

Many components of the education system may play a role in delivering transformative change – for example, curricula, training and leadership. In Côte d'Ivoire, the content of the teaching on conflict resolution helped mothers to manage their daily interactions with each other; in Uganda, teachers acquired the potential to be role models for gender-sensitive behaviour; in South Sudan, collaborative relations between parents and teachers enabled action plans to combat GBV to be drawn up and put into operation. And at the core of

BOX 6. The related Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Source: United Nations General Assembly, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, United Nations, New York, 25 September 2015.

all such processes are interaction and dialogue, which serve both to inform and to challenge learners. These broad systems issues are important to consider during the design phase of a project so that they can be directly incorporated into the ongoing mechanics of the project.

Moreover, we have seen how the positive shifts in gender relations that education can promote can in turn make a significant contribution to social cohesion, helping people to empathize across conflict divides, question stereotypes and forge new relationships. Gender equality, education and peacebuilding can thus be seen as mutually reinforcing goals.





Education and cultural context reinforce each other: Importance of the school–community link

Evidently, improving gender equality and achieving conflict reduction and sustaining peace will depend critically upon the two-way relationship between school and community. A clear conclusion of the research conducted for the Democratic Republic of the Congo intervention was that transformation was starting to happen within the school population, and to a small extent within the households of the youth participants, but that these changes in themselves had very little influence on the wider community. If a broader impact were desired, the project would have to change gear and focus on working with a much wider range of institutions, including local government and other professional bodies.

Indeed, in Karamoja, the relationship between school and community is sometimes perceived as having negative impacts in both directions. Evidence points to community mistrust in the education system, and student resentment of the violent and discriminatory behaviour of teachers. Teacher effectiveness can be constrained when conflicts that exist in the wider society impinge on classroom relations. Sustained change depends on overcoming any disconnect between school and community. Systems-level school- and classroom-based strategies to promote gender equitable environments must be cognizant of and complement wider community-based initiatives and informal education approaches aiming to shift social and gender norms. This should include such initiatives as prevention of GBV in conflict-affected areas. To this end, survivors of GBV may be women, men or children. At present, the incidence of sexual violence experienced by boys and men is under-researched and there are few opportunities for boys and men to discuss their vulnerabilities and trauma.⁵⁷ Efforts to further understand the scope of the issue are particularly pertinent from a peacebuilding perspective given the negative repercussions that such violence may have at the individual, family and societal level if left unchecked.⁵⁸

Efforts to strengthen the school–community link require long-term strategies and support from multiple stakeholders across government and the community if shifts in gender roles, power relations and conflict dynamics are to be achieved at the macro level. Indeed, it was envisaged

that the short-term Learning for Peace pilot interventions would inform such strategies. For example, evidence from the impact evaluation in South Sudan and Somalia will contribute to the development of a standard methodology and toolkit for addressing sexual violence; in Uganda, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports and UNICEF Uganda are collaborating to scale up the positive results emerging from the GSSU pilot by integrating lessons and research findings on positive gender socialization into the national teacher training curriculum.

4.2 Strategies for investing in gender-transformative education for peacebuilding: What has potential?

Clearly not all educational initiatives live up to this potential, and where they fail, the impact of education can be negative. For example, where there are disparities in access to education or the quality of its provision (e.g., disparities in terms of class, ethnic group, regional identity or gender), grievances surrounding this inequality may be a factor in driving conflict.⁵⁹ This finding only serves, however, to reinforce the crucial significance of education provision that is equitable, both in terms of access and in terms of the messages it conveys.

The case studies also show that although education offers the potential for gender-transformative peacebuilding, realizing this potential is not automatic and requires intentional strategies to be adopted from the outset.

The overarching lessons to emerge from the review are as follows:

Gender and conflict analysis should form the foundation for project design, monitoring and evaluation

While all four projects addressed the roles and needs of women in conflict-affected contexts, they varied in the extent to which a gender analysis of the conflict context had been carried out to inform the design of the programme. How gender is understood is an equally important consideration. Approaches to gender in peacebuilding broadly fall into two categories: the 'women's rights' approach or the 'relational gender' approach.⁶⁰ While the two are not mutually exclusive, there is increasing evidence that prioritizing women's rights in the absence of a broader analysis of gendered power relations as they play out in each individual context may be counterproductive and miss opportunities to identify comprehensive and inclusive solutions.⁶¹

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the project addressed women's practical needs, but did not involve reflection on their position or on the gendered power relations that constrained women's equal participation in the affairs of the community, thus potentially missing an opportunity for transformation. In contrast, the CC programme design was grounded in a gendered conflict analysis, drawing on extensive global experience of working to combat sexual violence in conflict situations. This may account, at least in part, for the quite substantial changes that the project recorded.

The Learning for Peace experience has shown that the deliberate inclusion of a gender strategy at the design phase of an intervention is imperative, as significant transformation can only be achieved through activities that seek to challenge the fundamentally unequal power structures within a community. Such strategies must be developed on the basis of clearly identified drivers of gender-related conflict in order to successfully mitigate factors that can undermine social cohesion while simultaneously promoting principles of gender equality.

Sustained change requires deep-rooted and multiple approaches and a long-term perspective

Gender transformations cannot be expected to occur meaningfully in the short term, or through one particular intervention. Gender is a component of all aspects of social and cultural life, and so lasting change in gendered values and practices will not happen unless it is addressed from many points of view and unless it seeks to operate at many levels. For example, although the GSSU teacher training in Karamoja had an impact on teacher knowledge and attitudes, further work clearly must be done to support teachers to translate learning about gender and peacebuilding into real-life situations, whether in the classroom or in the community. Few teachers were able to see a way past the constraint of prevailing community norms. If teachers are to become agents of change, they will need to be more secure in both their grasp of the issues and in their confidence to effect change as part of a longer-term strategy.

Learning for Peace has demonstrated in particular that investment in longer-term interventions is required to build upon the United Nations Women, Peace and Security agenda to reflect a broader and deeper understanding of gender and conflict issues. Such interventions must incorporate an understanding of how society and social norms are gendered and how they intersect with a range of different identities such as ethnicity, religion and age. Learning for Peace has shown the potential in the short term of such programme strategies, which research indicates are likely to yield transformative effects in regard to gender and peacebuilding if scaled up over a longer period. Evidence from these Learning for Peace initiatives is informing investment in government education systems such as in Uganda, where the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports is working to integrate lessons learned from GSSU into the national teacher training curriculum.



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